Object Relations, the Self, and the Group

CHARLES ASHBACH
and VICTOR L. SCHERMER

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This work presents a framework for integrating group psychology theories of object relations, the ego, and the self. The authors review earlier work and explore the similarities and differences between individual depth psychology and group dynamics. They call for a new epistemology and paradigm shift from the separateness of the individual and the group to their continuity, interaction and complementarity. General Systems Theory is the perspective recommended for understanding the individual to group linkage.

Ashbach and Schermer see the principles of psychological space and of boundary shifts among hierarchical levels of the group matrix as bridging constructs between the individual and group dynamics. They emphasize the application of such constructs to group training, psychotherapy and development, and examine the nature of myth and symbol as both internal and social processes. A research investigation of group interaction is provided as an example of a quantitative study of object relations/self dimensions in group process.

In addition to providing its own theoretical and practical perspectives, *Object Relations, the Self, and the Group* will be useful as a text for courses in group dynamics, group therapy, object relations theory, and ego and self psychologies. Key constructs in each of these fields are defined and discussed in relation to one another, and practical examples are provided.

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> The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a good deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely.
>
> Sigmund Freud
> *Group Psychology and the*
> *Analysis of the Ego (1921, p. 1)*

Object relations, the self, and the group

A conceptual paradigm

Charles Ashbach and Victor L.Schermer

Foreword by James S.Grotstein, M.D.

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Foreword
James S.Grotstein, M.D.

With the exception of a few, meager, though incredibly profound
and prescient papers on group psychology by Freud, Bion, and a
handful of other analysts, psychoanalysis seems to have become a
psychology of individuals independent of the group, though
affected by the group. Group psychology *per se* has failed, in the
main, to attract the attention of psychoanalysis, as shown by the
fact that, in the last thirty years there has been only one panel on
groups in the semi-annual meetings of the American
Psychoanalytic Association.

The recent contributions of Kohut and his followers in self
psychology have serendipitously brought to life the hitherto
unsuspected paradox that classical analysis, with its emphasis on
infantile sexuality, the autoerotic zones, the Oedipus complex, the
developmental phases of autism, symbiosis, and separation-
individuation, was all along a group psychology, one where
analytic theory shepherded the infant from its autistic caul into
the progressive stages, zones, modes, modalities, and techniques
of relating to ever-changing images of their nurturing objects.
Kohut unwittingly revealed this paradox by bifurcating
individual development into two separate components, one being
the development of the self as a participant in the Oedipal phase,
with the parental objects. Object relations theory, whether of the
British school or its American counterpart, was quick to realize
that whatever the status of the drives, the infant really is
searching for a mother, not only, now, to discharge his/her
instinctual tensions, but to relate to, to get reassurance and
warmth from, to be given meaning by, to be cared for by those
auxiliary functions still residing in mother and father, such

functions as soothing and stimulation, which ultimately will become the legacy of the properly developing infant.

Until Kohut and others made these postulations, psychoanalysis had been dependent, as stated above, largely on Freud's and Bion's contributions to group psychology. Freud held that the group may act in a way which is analogous to the psychology of an individual, and its component members characteristically project their own egos, as well as ego ideals, onto the group leader, thereby creating a state of idealization and idealized expectation of the latter. Bion formulated the concept of the container and the contained, as a basic paradigm for all individuals, groups, and cultures. It was a refinement of Kleinian psychology and a notion borrowed from cognitive psychology, which postulated a matrix relationship between figure and ground, where the latter frames and defines the former. The group is the container which must absorb, direct, plan for, and withstand, the impact of the vitality of the individual; yet, at the same time, the group establishment must plan for the future of its members, and therefore must anticipate the Messiah, or the 'Messiah thought,' process it by challenging it, and/or welcoming it. Also, characteristically, groups convene to do work in a single-focused way, but are interrupted or undermined by resistances in subgroups, which can be understood not too dissimilarly to individual psychology, according to Bion. Yet it is important to realize that both Freud and Bion postulate that the individual in the group is no longer merely an individual, but is now a 'group individual' and therefore operates by psychological forces and directives which, though intrapsychic from one point of view, find their origin in the more mysterious lair of group psychology atmospherics.

Freud and Bion devised their concepts of group psychology from the discovery of the internal object. Long before brain laterality studies by neuropsychologists established the duality of normal consciousness and, as a consequence, the presence of alter egos within a single self, Freud first, and Klein and Fairbairn later, established that the infant, in having a narcissistic relationship to his/her objects, treats (a) the object as part of the self and (b) the self as part of the object. As a consequence of projective and introjective identification, the amalgamized objects ('selfobjects') are internalized in the ego and superego in variegated ways so as

to secure the basis for an internal subculture of selves conducting 'conversations' and relationships of great labyrinthine complexity which nevertheless seem to bear a correspondence to their counterparts in the external world, thereby verifying Hermes Trismegistus, the ancient philosopher, who stated, 'As above, so below.'

Kohut's second emphasis, that of empathic or introspective observation of the patient, as opposed to detached observation (experience-near as opposed to experience-distant) became a second departure from which perspective one could now glean that classical analysis was yet again more a group psychology than not. If empathic observation is the mirroring of the patient's experiences so as to affirm, validate, or notarize them from the empathic point of view, then challenges to the patient by the analyst, such as confrontations and 'reflective' (as opposed to 'mirroring') interpretations, remind the patient, as they reminded his/her predecessor, the infant, that (s)he is a member of a group from the very beginning—where the first group is that of the infant and its mother, the second group that of the infant with mother and father, then with siblings, etc. Thus, from many different standpoints, it became obvious retrospectively that classical analysis was the study of how that benign savage, the infant, had to accomodate and adjust to civilized culture and indoctrinate him/herself into its laws, mores, practices, and language.

Lacan puts it well when he states that the infant loses his/her innocence as (s)he descends into the symbolic order in the name of the father. We now have two different group psychologies based upon individual psychology, that in which the infant is in an intimate inter-subjective fusion with the maternal object and protected *from other group interaction*, and a second group formation, in which the infant is released and weaned into group participation. Thus we can see a dual track between bonding with a primal group and weaning into a more nearly permanent group. Further, we can see a dual track in the experience of the individual alone, in his own right, and also as an intimate, participating member of a group with which he feels an identification or a bond.

Systems theory, as postulated by von Bertalanffy, postulates that all biological entities can be thought of as comprised of systems

with feed-back and feed-forward inputs so as to adjust and to maintain the homeostasis of all systems. A pathological system may develop in a family or a group which might be a myth, an untruth, a sacred belief, etc., which is held in high esteem and believed by all members of the group, thereby constituting a 'system' in order to maintain the integrity and unity of the group. 'Psychoanalysis must be practiced only by physicians' would be the system employed, for instance, by the American Psychoanalytic Association, to maintain the unity and integrity of its establishment continuity.

From the Cartesian point of view, systems can be thought of as entities observable from a distance by any observer trained in the same technique to observe them. A dialectical counterpart to the Cartesian mind/body dualism would be *autopoiesis*, as formulated by Maturana and Varela, which sees all elements of biological life, from the unicellular to the mega-cultural or cosmic, as vital, unknowable entities having their own inscrutable laws and lending themselves only to observation and imputation by the observer, the latter of whom imputes 'cognition' to them, but the exact nature of this cognition is never knowable. We thus see a dualistic (observing self versus observed object) theory of a group as a dialectical contrast to the holistic and holographic notion of the group as a complex, self-governing entity which does not lend itself to Cartesian dissection.

How and why groups function is the task of social psychology and group psychology to divine. Human beings seem to be gregarious and seek group networks in order to mitigate individual weaknesses and to borrow of the strength of the group network for higher order protection and gain. It is the 'side effects' of grouping which have called themselves to history's attention across the long corridors of time, whether it be war against an 'inferior' group, or a predator group—or whether it is the need to find, within the group or outside it, some delegate of human anguish or misery who is to be selected to be the human sacrifice. We must allow the Oedipus complex to emerge from the tight strictures of the legendary Oedipus' putative incestuous and patricidal impulses (as an individual with an unconscious mental life) and demonstrate its relevance for groups as well. Yes, groups, like individuals, appear to have an Oedipal complex, and the selecting of a Messiah and of a human sacrifice seems to be its

deeper function, as was the case with Oedipus himself and/or with Christ, or compositely, as in the case of the Holocaust. Time is wasting, and groups are choosing. We all hope that this book will help the group pause before it selects again.

Beverly Hills, California

Preface to the paperback edition

It has been seven years since the original publication in 1987 of *Object Relations, the Self, and the Group,* and the printing now of a paperback edition gives both the authors and readers an opportunity to appraise how well it has stood this brief test of time. Developments in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy have moved along at a rapid pace, adjusting to advances in knowledge as well as the exigencies of changes in the health care system and the rich international exchange of information and ideas that has occurred in recent years. Is *Object Relations, the Self, and the Group* still current and contemporary? If the authors were rewriting it today, what changes might they make?

When published in 1987, the book was, for the most part, highly praised, and it created a small stir in group dynamics and group therapy circles. Members of the Group Analytic Institute faculties in Europe found the book innovative and scholarly and used it as a teaching text. Book reviewers in the US praised the book's comprehensive, in-depth understanding of psychodynamic, group psychology, and the book was regarded as 'state of the art' in that respect. Systems theorists such as Jim Durkin and Larry Gould considered the book to be a genuine breakthrough in integrating object relations theory and systems approaches. The work seemed to succeed in its goal: to explore and update a range of inter-relationships between individual and group psychology with object relations theory and self psychology as a foundation.

In the seven years that have passed, there have been significant advances in psychoanalysis and group therapy, and also some 'old wine in new bottles'. Colleagues will disagree with us and amongst each other as to what is real change and what is simply a rephrasing of what has come before. There follows a summary of our

view, which may serve as a brief guide for the reader in bringing the book up to date.

There have been several major and related shifts in thinking which are especially relevant to this volume. One is the study of infant psychology and mother-infant pairs; for example, the work of Daniel Stern and of T.Berry Brazelton and their associates and students. Their research endeavours affirm the crucial nature of *interaction* from the very beginning of life, as object relations theorists such as Winnicott and Fairbairn had inferred many years before. In addition, the infant studies lend some support to the psychoanalytic paradigm shift urged by Stephen Mitchell, i.e. towards an interpersonal rather than 'instinct' or drive theory of development. *Object Relations, the Self, and the Group* took a conservative position on the drive theory, criticizing it in some respects but recognizing its virtues as well. In particular, it is as yet difficult to see how Mitchell's position would incorporate the profound significance of primitive phantasy and internalized object relations without positing some 'wired in' urges or predispositions. We would still, even today, urge caution about 'throwing out the baby (of self regulation and internal predispositions) with the bathwater (of an outdated "closed systems" view of the organism)'.

A second important shift in thinking relates to Atwood and Stolorow's important work on 'intersubjectivity' in the psychoanalytic session, which by extension would apply to the group setting as well. Intersubjectivity may be thought of as the subjective, phenomenological component of the 'objectively observed' interactions, dialogue, matrices and systems that are established when human beings 'relate' to one another in a dyadic, triangular or group-qua-group context. If we were rewriting this book today, we would doubtless include intersubjectivity as a significant mode of understanding relationships and mental process in groups.

Self psychology has continued to develop and expand as a school of thought of its own as well as in tandem with object relations theory. Lichtenberg and others have helped to integrate self psychology and infant research, considerably enlarging the scope of self psychology. The understanding of so-called 'self-object transference' has gone beyond the original mirror and idealizing transferences to include a variety of self-object functions from merger to soothing to 'adversarial' or assertive states. In addition,

self psychology has recently been applied to the understanding of borderline and psychotic states.

Finally, there are two developments within object relations theory which should be highlighted. One is the British Independent School as it has evolved with the work of Bollas, Kohon, Casement and others. Their work highlights the interpersonal matrix of psychotherapy, as well as the countertransference, and also gives a contemporary flavour to some of the work of Melanie Klein, Winnicott and the other pioneers of object relations theory. In addition, the contributions of W.R.Bion have taken on increasing significance in many parts of the world, and Bion's understanding of psychosis, thought disorder and catastrophic change would most certainly receive more elaboration by us.

On the whole, though, the book seems remarkably up to date to the authors, who must admit their narcissistic investment in it! The reader will, of course, be the final arbiter of this matter.

All of our lives, our cultures, and our planet have changed in many ways over the past several years. Given some of the world crises that have occurred, we can only echo what Jim Grotstein said in the Foreword: 'We all hope this book will help the group pause before it selects again'. However, we can also take heart that groups do make healthy choices. For example, Routledge has put the likes of Malcolm Pines, series editor, Edwina Welham, general editor, and Jennifer Binnie and Ann Grindrod, desk editors, at our disposal in arranging and preparing the paperback edition, and, for that and our current support team in the United States, we are very grateful.

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Charles Ashbach and Victor L.Schermer
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relations, who through their pain, insight, and progress have contributed to any enlightenment to which this volume can lay claim.

A note to the reader

Two overlapping 'audiences' are addressed in this book: psychoanalytic psychotherapists and group psychologists. The mood, it is hoped, is one of reconciliation, and the structure of the text is designed to meet the needs of both disciplines.

This work is in four parts. Part 1 consists of a statement and philosophy of the paradigm. Part 2 is a selective review of object relations theory and self psychology with special attention to group dynamics. The novice will find this section useful as an introduction, while those who are more knowledgeable may use it as a review and also to inform themselves of the authors' position on basic issues. Part 3 presents a conceptual framework and a 'Group Analytic Grid' for making observations and inferences about groups. Part 4 is a set of independent essays on selected topics. Chapters 9 and 11 on group evolution and psychotherapy respectively were contributed by Victor Schermer, while Chapters 10 and 12 on mythology and 'act by act' research with the large group are the work of Charles Ashbach. An Appendix provides a matrix presentation of the 'Group Analytic Grid' which summarizes in chart form many of the concepts discussed throughout and to which the reader should refer as (s)he reads the text.

It is hoped that this structure will facilitate the use of the text in classroom and supervisory contexts.

Part 1

Elements of a paradigm

The great extension of our experience in recent years has brought to light the insufficiency of our simple mechanical conceptions and, as a consequence, has shaken the foundation on which the customary interpretation of observation was based.

Neils Bohr
Atomic Physics and the Description of Nature (1958, p. 2)

Chapter 1
Introduction and overview

This monograph introduces a paradigm for the understanding of group phenomena based upon the development of object relations, the self, and the ego. From this perspective, groups, in their evolution, embody and recapitulate the symbiosis/separation-individuation process (Mahler, Pine, and Bergman, 1975). The child's inner life and interaction with the environment are repeated in groups and form a conceptual model for a process in which the group forms a cohesive entity, defines boundary conditions and roles, and copes with issues of power, task, and intimacy. Such a view is complementary to the Oedipal perspective (Freud, 1913, 1921) in which group dynamics are seen predominantly as a function of the members' transference to the leader as a 'father-figure' and totem object.

   In the newer paradigm (Kuhn, 1970), group life develops as an ambivalent movement towards separation-individuation, achieved through internalization and externalization as defensive and adaptive maneuvers, the management of anxieties related to fragmentation, object loss, and the diminution of ego boundaries, and the need to preserve and modulate narcissism and self esteem. It may be said that groups exhibit three predominant levels of social organization reflecting conditions of psychic integration: part-object pre-Oedipal, Oedipal and object-constant, and mature self reflection and self criticism.

   The paradigm further defines the way in which psychoanalytic object relations theory and self psychology illuminate the group entity and vice-versa. Individual mentation and group activity are points along a continuum. *Object relations theory asserts that mentation is established in interaction with significant others, so that to think and to experience is also to participate in*

a transactional situation. Psychoanalytic developmental psychology has progressed from the 'closed system' libido theory to 'open system' concepts which relate the interactive and the intrapsychic. Such 'interactive constructs' (Schermer, 1980b) include projective identification (Melanie Klein, 1975), the transitional space (Winnicott, 1955), the merged selfobject (Kohut, 1971) and symbiosis. These terms refer to the interface between the mental and the interpersonal in which intrapsychic and group structure, process, and content emerge from an 'undifferentiated matrix' (Hartmann, 1958), the bio-social equipment of the infant-person in the context of his beginning social interaction.

A brief review of the thread in group science which leads up to the present discussion, and emphasizing the contributions of Freud and Bion, will orient the reader to the origins of such a paradigm for group relations.

Origins of the paradigm

Psychoanalysis has, from its inception, been concerned with the family and group situations. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) Freud hypothesized a 'natural continuity' between the dynamics of the individual and those of groups and advanced a theory to explain 'the psychology of groups on the basis of changes in the psychology of the individual mind' (p. x). Freud's intrapsychic model of group phenomena focused primarily on processes of identification and libidinal attachments, and also on the then newly introduced concept of tripartite structure, id, ego, and superego (including the ego ideal). Freud viewed identification with the leader as the motive force of group life and saw two mechanisms operating: (1) identification of the members' ego with an object, and (2) replacement of the ego ideal by an object. In the former, ambivalence towards the leader results in an identification with him, his values, behavior, etc. In the latter, a more primitive narcissistic relationship is formed in which aspects of the ego ideal are projected onto the leader, attributed to him, and reintrojected.

Here may be seen two bases of group behavior, one as a recapitulation of the Oedipal situation, seen in the group context as the totemic overthrow of the leader and the incorporation of his ideals; another, expressing narcissistic and other pre-Oedipal concerns in which the group as a maternal environment is cathected as part of the self and yet at the same time facilitates that dawning

awareness of a world beyond the self which is necessary for social ties to exist.

Freud commented on the preservation of narcissistic cathexes with respect to the problem of how each member could maintain a feeling of special importance in the eyes of the leader under conditions where it is contradicted by the reality of the presence of other group members. He exemplified these dynamics in two social institutions: the Army and the Church.

In 'Totem and Taboo' (1913) Freud, however, had earlier asserted the centrality of the Oedipal conflict in group development, comparing the group to the struggle between the father and the primal horde, and emphasizing incestuous and rivalrous impulses among the members as displacements from the unconscious murder-guilt theme in the group's attitude towards the leader. Bennis and Shepard (1956) as well as Slater (1966) have utilized this model to account for the characteristic development of training groups from a leader-centered to an inter-member orientation. Slater, however, pointed out the limits of the model, especially its lack of attention to the role played by female members, and Bennis (1961) suggested that 'depressive anxieties' appeared in groups and facilitated role differentiation.

Bion (1959) extended Freud's lines of investigation of the group but, emphasizing the work of Melanie Klein on object relations, utilized formulations of primitive dynamics, the paranoid-schizoid position, and psychotic anxieties to portray the foundation of group culture: the basic assumption states of dependency, fight/flight, and pairing. He indicated (pp. 188–9) that

> it is not simply a matter of the incompleteness of the illumination provided by Freud's discovery of the family group as the prototype of all groups, but the fact that this incompleteness *leaves out the source of the main emotional drives in a group* [emphasis added].… In fact, I consider… primitive anxieties of part-object relationships…to contain the ultimate sources of all group behavior.

Bion facilitated the transition from Freud's individualistic orientation to an examination of unconscious group process *per se*. He added valuable considerations on group-level interpretations, group regression, anxiety and defense, and phantasy and role formation to the repertoire of the group

psychologist. In contrast to Freud's Oedipal-familial model, Bion saw the prototype of group existence in the relationship of the infant to the mother's breast. Entry into a group, in his view, recreates the helplessness, the tendency toward fragmentation, the overwhelming impulses, and the condition of need experienced in the first months of life.

A precipitate of Bion's work has been to regard the group as an evolving 'maternal entity,' a container for projective identifications which evolves higher forms of organization corresponding to the process of separation-individuation and the establishment of individual and group identity. Following upon the work of Bion, a fresh approach to groups evolved whose premises may be summarized in the following points:

1 The group takes on the qualities of the maternal object (*'in locus maternis'*, Slavson, 1956) evolving from part-object relations to object constancy and the 'work group' (Ashbach and Schermer, 1978).

2 The group regresses to various levels of development as a function of its task, the leader's position and interventions, and the balance of social forces affecting differentiation and structuralization.

3 Anxieties and defenses characteristic of the earliest years of life are commonly evoked in groups, and are to be regarded as a property of groups rather than just a manifestation of individual characterology (Bennis, 1961; F.Fornari, 1966; Gibbard, Hartman, and Mann, 1974).

4 Changes in group structure reflect changes in affects, ego boundaries and the predominant mode of object relations of the members.

5 Group fantasy, myth, and ritual are simultaneously ways in which the membership defends itself against primitive anxieties and adaptive vehicles for the evolving group culture (Hartman and Gibbard, 1974).

6 The group leader or therapist is subjected to particular countertransferential pressures centered around group issues as well as individual transferences. In particular, massive projective identifications into the leader and the struggle for separation from him present special problems which test the limits of his neutrality, empathy and forbearance.

These premises form the basis for an analysis of groups which derives from the landmark work of Freud and Bion but proceeds beyond them. It is clear that what has evolved since their work is a *field and systems framework for investigating unconscious and primitive group dynamics*. Certainly, contained within this framework are important and seminal clinical and educational insights and quite promising theoretical 'leads' and perspectives. The position of the present work is that, in addition, a new scientific paradigm has emerged, a special set of theoretical assumptions, and, still more deeply, an epistemology or theory of knowledge concerning the relationship between the person and the social context. Where in the past there had been two more or less separate domains of individual depth psychology, on the one hand, and dynamic group psychology on the other, it appears increasingly that psychodynamics and group dynamics are interlocking systems which possess an underlying unity. Such a unified perspective implies literally new ways of observing groups and theorizing about them. This monograph attempts to take the step of articulating some of the fundamental assumptions of a paradigm which would represent the unity of the psychonanalytic investigations of the unconscious with the field theoretical, contextual, and sociocultural study of the group matrix.

Chapter 2
Towards a paradigm and epistemology for psychoanalytic group psychology

What follows is a paradigm for linking object relations and self psychology with group psychology in a systems interactive view of individual and group process. Here, some epistemological and conceptual premises are stated as a basis for further principles and practice.

Kuhn (1970, p. 175), reviewing his groundbreaking work on the philosophy and history of science, notes that,

> the term paradigm is used in two different senses. On the one hand, it stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community. On the other, it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, the concrete puzzle-solutions which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science.

'Normal science' is for Kuhn the accepted theory and practice in a particular field at a particular time. For example, the notion of discrete particles possessing momentum is part of the normal science of Newtonian mechanics, while in quantum mechanics, particles are replaced by 'quanta' of vague dimension and location, having properties of both matter and energy, particles and waves. It took a 'crisis' in physics which precipitated a 'scientific revolution' (Kuhn's terms) to achieve acceptance of the new point of view. Similarly, psychoanalysis created a change in psychology and psychiatry by postulating unconscious motivation for behaviors and symptoms previously considered random or consciously intended. In group psychology, the concept of a dynamic field and matrix established the study of collective behavior and mentation as group-

wide patterns rather than an aggregate of social 'units'. Today, group dynamics is 'normal science'. It has its own terminology, theoretical formulations, and research efforts which differ from the study of individual dynamics.

For Kuhn, scientific truth is based not on data alone, but on a frame of reference, part of which cannot be stated explicitly but which contextually informs the perceptions and activities of scientists. Polanyi calls the implicit factor 'tacit knowing' (Gelwick, 1977, pp. 57–82) and maintains that, although it can never be fully articulated, it is as crucial to scientific investigation as the facts and laws themselves. He says, 'We know more than we can tell.' Theories depict only the surface of what one has experienced and observed. In psychoanalysis, 'tacit knowing' is present in the productive elements of the analyst's countertransference and his skill in making interpretations. In group work, the consultant's intuitive awareness of a group event, phase, or culture often likewise precedes its conceptual definition.

Problematically, the very same frame of reference which allows knowledge to be accumulated can act as a resistance to change. Kuhn (pp. 62–5) points out that, while a 'normal' paradigm is necessary and useful in working out problems and investigations which derive from its explicit and implicit premises, it can obscure and edit out the anomalies, that is, the dissonant information that emerges. That is what has happened in the relationship between psychoanalysis and group psychology.

Historically, psychoanalysis was conceived as the study of the inner life of the individual. Data which suggested that the deep unconscious is inseparable from human interaction was often excluded from its purview on the assumption that the mental life is determined within the 'somatic core'. Group life was considered secondary to and derivative of impulse discharge and tension reduction. The impact of the analyst on the patient's transference and the richness of the newborn's interaction with the social environment are but two of the empirical findings which, until recently, have been systematically excluded and considered secondary to the inner core of the personality. The mental life was altogether interiorized, creating an impression of a closed 'intra-dermal' system (de Mare, 1972, p. 101).

In this respect, Amacher (1965) has suggested in an historical assessment that Freud's metapsychological assumptions derived from the anti-vitalist, reductionist 'pledge' of the

physiologists Brucke and du Bois-Reymond (p. 10). Brucke was Freud's mentor in medical research and advocated an explanation of all neurological events in terms of physical and chemical laws, which for Freud became the drives or instincts. Freud, who admired Brucke, maintained this stance throughout his theorizing. The neurological theory of the time consisted in a type of reflexology which implied a stimulus-response psychology. One wonders what Freud's psychological theory might have looked like had he been exposed to the much later neurological gestalt field theory of Merleau-Ponty (1964) or the more complex holographic theory of Pribram (1969). These latter viewpoints imply that the nervous system (hence the mental life) functions as an integrated whole and is one with the environment.

Finally, Amacher documented how Freud borrowed from Meynert, who advocated that every action of the nervous system had a specific energy, allowing Freud to explain dreams and perceptions in terms of inner and outer stimulation (p. 24). In retrospect one can see that Meynert confused energy (or quantities of excitation) with information processing. Freud's theory was thrown out of synchrony with the nervous system by this assumption. The point of reviewing these historical findings is to suggest that Freud adopted a 'closed system' neurology and psychology which systematically reduced and excluded the primary organizing impact of the social environment on the mental life and vice-versa (even though he always recognized it clinically!).

Group dynamicists have on the whole unfortunately agreed with psychoanalysts' perceptions of themselves as investigating the singleton, or perhaps the dyad, but certainly not the life of the group. Thus, the group psychologist, regarding psychoanalytic data as individualistic, was not to be concerned with the idiosyncrasies and interiors of personalities, but rather with the social life as either behavior or phenomenological field. As a consequence, the unredoubtable experience of group practitioners that groups are organized and motivated by primary process thinking and regression has been poorly assimilated into group theory itself. The universality of deep, repressed and split-off factors in group formation and evolution became an object of selective inattention to the consultant or the therapist whose orientation directed him to the here-and-now aspects of group communication. Yet in truth there is no group dynamic which does not resonate with the deep structures of thought and feeling and identity, forged historically, of both the

sender and receiver of the message. (Dynamically and countertransferentially, the observer who insists on a split between the inner world and the life of the group is defending against the continuity of his self with that of others.)

Even today, psychoanalysis and group psychology maintain assumptions and methods of observation which, to a degree, render each other paradoxical and anomalous. 'The group in depth' becomes too often a science of *ad hoc* borrowings from the analyst's couch or the social psychologist's experiments rather than an integrated field of investigation. For this reason, a third paradigm is called for, one which integrates key elements of both psychoanalysis and group dynamics but is not bound to the assumptions and prejudices of either, taking only what is useful to create itself anew. The paradigm has many sources and tributaries, some of which will now be highlighted.

Conceptual origins and issues

Object relations theory, which evolved primarily in Great Britain beginning with the work of Melanie Klein, took the first promising steps towards a psychoanalysis that was equally concerned with the depth unconscious and the environmental context. A corresponding group development, also from Great Britain, was Foulkes' group-analytic psychotherapy (1948), an approach which held the individual and the group to be in a reciprocal 'figure-ground' relationship. Ezriel (1950), Bion, and Sutherland (1952) each made major contributions towards synthesizing object relations theory and group dynamics. These were followed up with in-depth analyses of group dynamics in a number of sectors, including, for example, leadership and organizational relations, group climate, and aggression between subgroups (cf. Gibbard, Hartman, and Mann, 1974; Colman and Bexton, 1975).

The American approach has been more eclectic and diverse than the British. The work of Wolf and Schwartz (1962), Slavson (1979), and others has been devoted to developing a practical framework for the conduct of psychoanalytic group psychotherapy. Scheidlinger (1952) and Helen Durkin (1964) sought to use basic Freudian formulations to bring together the budding insights of group dynamicists with psychoanalytic theory and practice. Whitaker and Lieberman (1964), utilizing Lewinian field constructs, evolved a 'group focal conflict' model for group

treatment based on ego psychology and the structural model of psychoanalysis. Schutz (1958), Bennis and Shepard (1956), and others advanced theories of group development with a psychoanalytic base, initiating the study of group phases and the forces promoting maturation of the group and its members.

Problematic in these profoundly insightful viewpoints is the lack of a common language whereby different theories could be compared and unified. To take one but instance, Schutz called his first phase of development 'inclusion' while Bennis and Shepard labelled theirs 'dependence-submission', and it is difficult to tell whether these terms refer to the same stage of early group bonding, or whether the groups they observed exhibited different conditions and a different pattern of evolution. The lack of a unified terminology with clear observational referents is an unusual state of affairs for people concerned with communication and can only reflect the absence of a paradigm. Indeed, numerous theories of group development have been published and reviewed (cf. chapter 9, this work), each with its own terminology, a condition resulting from variation among groups and their membership as well as the schools of thought underlying each theory. From the standpoint of Kuhn, a proliferation of theories indicates that a discipline is pre-paradigmatic, that it has not arrived at a unified structure. Such was the case in physics before Newton and in the theory of the unconscious prior to Freud. Prior to a paradigm, 'theories' are actually 'free-floating' amalgams of data, philosophy, and common sense. The paradigm provides a consistent structure, but only time will attest to its validity.

The pre-paradigmatic vocabulary confusion and interdisciplinary problems reflect, however, a deeper epistemological dilemma. The individual and the group have over time become reified entities, 'things' compartmentalized into separate areas of investigation, thereby disguising the underlying unity of the processes of human interaction. The resulting need for a reconceptualization of the two disciplines of individual and group psychology into an integrated point of view has been discussed by Pines (1980a) and succinctly expressed by him (1983, p. 155) as follows:

> There is a creative tension in the struggle to bring together, and, if possible, to synthesize and then create a new level of theory, one that may encompass both psychoanalysis and group analysis.

It is difficult to conceive that the traditional notions of 'individual' and 'group' could remain intact in such a global rethinking of the field. Pines is talking about an essential 'paradigm shift', a change in basic premises underlying research, therapy and training.

The linking paradigm

Premises integrating psychoanalysis and group psychology can be found in the literature in both fields. The purpose here is to provide a frame of reference where these ideas can be examined, critiqued, and unified to form a conceptual schema.

Premise I:
The centrality of interaction in linking individual
and group processes yields a trisystemic model of
object relations

The fundamental premise of an integrating paradigm is that *through human interaction the inner life becomes transformed into social experiences and systems and, conversely, group experience comes to be personally and internally represented. The two dimensions of inner and group life are linked by an interface, a network system* (perhaps epistemologically and developmentally prior to both the person and the group) *consisting of verbal and non-verbal interactions linking members of a group.*

   Bridge-building between psychoanalysis and group dynamics therefore must be based operationally in the study of communication. The 'individual' and the 'group' are actually two levels of analysis of communication. In one level of analysis, subjective report, empathy, and 'trial identification' reveal the inner and affective experience of the persons involved in the interaction, moving towards inferences about the underlying meaning of mentation and emotion. Here, one uses the psychoanalytic (or a related) method. On the other level, one studies the organizations and systems which emerge contextually and in multiperson configurations. By correlating communicative acts with the inner life and group organization and structure, one links the deep and developmental with the group process.

   Such a similar 'strategy' for analysis was stated early on by Thelen and Whithall (1949):

It is proposed that we should start with extensive introspective and other techniques for eliciting data from the internal frame. Certain situational aspects…might emerge as things which could be satisfactorily treated from the objective…frame — Our theory would then relate two frames of reference commonly held to be the object of theoretical inquiry, namely

Behaviour=function of personality and environment (Lewin)

Interaction=relationship between internal and objective conditions.

In psychoanalysis, Langs (1976a) has emphasized the centrality of the total system as a field of interaction in the psychoanalytic situation. The communications between patient and analyst take place within a contractual 'frame' and an 'adaptive field,' and modify the internal states of both parties to the interaction. The adaptive field is contextual and may include significant others as well as the institutional and socio-economic background for the analysis. It consists of group dynamics surrounding the treatment dyad as well as the non-human environment (the arrangement of the couch, the private and confidential setting, etc.). The term 'interaction' has been borrowed from Langs and is to be preferred to 'interpersonal relations' because it (a) unequivocally includes deep, unconscious layers of communications and (b) is a systems construct that refers specifically to what takes place between two or more persons. Through these concepts, Langs, in effect, introduced group dynamics into the psychoanalytic hour.

Thus, the paradigm linking psychoanalysis and group dynamics calls for the observation of the relationship among three or more systems or processes: the internal or intrapsychic system of the persons in the group; the system of communications and 'acts' among two or more persons; and the group-*qua*-group. These are not discrete units, but rather processes which translate from one to the other. To a great extent, the intrapsychic representations are internalized group systems, as for example dreams are often about significant others. Groups are projections of inner objects. Communications include empathically conveyed inner states and projective identifications of part objects into a container and may also represent 'monitoring' and 'transport' activities across organizational borders (cf. Miller and Rice, 1967).

To see how this tri-systemic observational window relates to the problem of the individual to group linkage, consider the nature of the object relation itself. Internally, the object includes a libidinal or aggressive phantasy of someone or something in the environment. The psychoanalyst focuses mainly on the internal representation, but attention must also be paid to the external object to see how the person reacts to it. For example, the borderline patient engages in splitting the object into 'all good' and 'all bad' components 'as an active process of keeping apart introjections and identifications of opposite quality' (Kernberg, 1977, pp. 29–30). In most cases, this splitting was reinforced in early life by intrusive, overprotective, or abandoning behaviors of real persons, pointing to a connection between real interactions and inner defense and imagery. *Actual parental ministrations and the child's perceptions and unconscious reactions to them form a 'feedback loop' which evolves simultaneously into an inner world and a social system.*

The concepts of group psychology, like those of object relations, have multiple referents to different systems or levels of organization. Kurt Lewin's classic statement, 'The group is greater than and different from the sum of its parts,' reflects this orientation. The object relation in the group context has a third level of organization: a family, group, or organizational configuration generated by *a multiperson synthesis of inner representations*. The 'enmeshed,' 'skewed,' and 'pseudomutual' family patterns (Wynne *et al.*, 1958; Lidz *et al.*, 1957, 1965) defined by lack of individuation and emotional communication respectively are examples of such group 'field' patterns, as are the roles of 'scapegoat' and the 'dual of the leader' to be found in therapy and training groups.

Foulkes' classic remark, 'The individual is a nodal point in the group matrix,' similarly implies that the group is primary and, in addition, that the individual is an area of intense activity within it. Both Foulkes and Lewin reversed the perspective of the psychoanalyst, regarding the individual as a subunit or precipitate of the group as it differentiates into parts, while the analytic perspective on the object relation is that it results from the coming together of persons. These two points of view express the differentiation and integration which occur together in all living systems. *The group is an integration of persons, and the person differentiates out of a group matrix.*

An example from a therapy group will show the close relationship between the intrapsychic, interactive, and group systems:

Jim, a twenty-year-old male from a blue-collar immigrant family and neighbourhood, presented with multiple symptoms of anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse, and homosexual panic. The historical factors linked to these symptoms included a sexual seduction by an adolescent male when the patient was six, an overprotective, depressed mother, and an angry and withholding father, and a case of acne during the patient's teens which caused feelings of shame and exposure and inhibited social development. Diagnostically, the patient showed borderline personality organization with paranoid trends reflecting the use of splitting and projective identification to ward off unpleasurable feelings of frustration and envy.

The group consisted at various times in its four-year history of from five to eight persons who were making the transition from adolescent to adult life and had multiple symptomatology and borderline features in differing characterological structures. Thus, the predominant focal conflicts in the group were separation (from each other, the therapists, and objects of the past) as well as the attainment of individuality and the resolution of identity diffusion.

About a year into the group's development, as the members were achieving a degree of independence from the cotherapists, Jim became the center of attention. His overdependence seemed intractable, and he was holding the group back. By this time, he had acquired a definite role in the group: the dependent one, its baby, its youngest sibling, who was to be both protected and attacked. At a part-object level, he perceived the group as a breast from whom he demanded protection, attention, and nurturance. The group, in turn, exhausted its energies attending to him and complained of this to the therapists.

The group process revealed that the interpersonal dynamic of this patient was helplessness and a refusal to separate from a symbiotic fixation to his mother. Individual therapy sessions clarified that the inner objects were of a paranoid nature, leading to feelings of persecution and narcissistic rage whenever the source of nurturance

and gratification was threatened. *Thus, the system of inner objects and the group system could be seen to work in tandem.*

From the point of view of the evolution of the group, the patient's valence for a particular group dynamic emerged at the point of group-qua-group separation and individuation from the therapists. The members projectively identified their own dependency needs into Jim and began to care for him as a defense against their own separation anxiety. Jim's role was both an element of his own personality structure and the reflection of an evolving group dynamic. *Jim was at once from different vertices (a) a person with a distinct personality and an inner system of object relations, (b) a nodal point in a group matrix of communication, and (c) a differentiating element of an initially fused symbiotic group field.*

Premise II:
The individual and the group emerge from a
primal unity through the creation of a boundary
which distinguishes one from the other

The problem that underlies the study of multiple interactive systems, especially human systems, is epistemological, that is, it has to do with the nature of what is known and by what means that knowledge comes about. If one deals with a single system and isolates it off for investigation, one can within limits consider it to be an entity which is separate from the observer and all of whose features potentially can be described and predicted. Interface disciplines, on the other hand, focus on relationships among complex systems. These relationships are for the most part not apparent to the senses and the 'gestalts' which they form are in part a function of the observer. For example, an object relation can never be 'seen' in its entirety, and the interior and exterior features which one chooses to investigate appear different from different vantage points.

The fundamental error of observation and inference is reification, what Alfred North Whitehead has called the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' (Coles, 1983, p. 7), the tendency to equate what one observes or theorizes about with agents, forces, or things which are assumed to have a real and permanent existence in the world. When one observes, one 'brackets off' (Husserl's 'epoche') certain perceptual gestalts, phenomena, and systems for investigation. Invariably, other features, determinants, and elements are excluded from awareness. *This process should not be*

construed to mean that one has discovered an external 'entity' or 'force' but rather that one has arranged conditions so as to bring into view a certain side or dimension of a total phenomenon. There are no 'groups' that have an existence independent of 'individuals' or of 'mental apparatuses,' etc. The tendency to construe events in such a way as to constitute truly fantastic entities and treat them as real is a special countertransferential vulnerability of the group consultant who is exposed to regressive pressures that encourage concretistic, illusory perception. These pressures exaggerate the difference between inner and group 'forces'.

Groups, from one point of view, consist of solitary individuals who band together to engage in a common activity. Theoretical structures reflect this definition. In psychoanalysis, the principle of psychic determinism holds that all mental associations stem from the internal workings of the unit organism. This boundary, a product of the relationship between the observer and the observed, changes markedly when one observes a group. Here, it appears that the causes of behavior are outside the person, and that the group itself is the entity whose workings and boundary conditions are of primary importance. In one framework, the person is self-contained. In another, he is part of a larger group system. Both frameworks, paradoxically, are 'true.'

The principle of the unity and relativity of observer and observed is basic to modern science, undoing the reification of discrete observing instruments and forces acting on them. Zukav (1979, p. 86), states: 'According to classical physics we get to know something by observing it. According to quantum mecha nics, it *isn't there* until we do observe it!' Not only are observer and observed interrelated, they come into being at the same moment and through each other.

That the group is not a thing has been expressed by D.Napolitani (1980): '…the "group" is not an object of our sensorial perception, because this only tells us something about single individuals, but nothing about eventual "ties" existing among them. It has no character of steadfastness, neither has it an objectively definable borderline…' Bion (1959, pp. 119–20) articulated a similar viewpoint:

> I attach no intrinsic importance to the coming together of the group…. This congregation of the group at a particular place at a particular time is obviously very important (for reasons of

observation and demonstration)…but it has no significance whatsoever in the production of group phenomena…. The point that I would like to make is that no individual, however isolated in time and space, can be regarded as outside a group or lacking in active manifestations of group psychology.

D.Napolitani (1980), in agreement with Freud, suggested that a group is a set of implicit bonds and attractions. Bion implied that a group is a conception rather than a location and, also in agreement with Freud, that individual and group psychology are part-aspects of a person's functioning.

Agazarian and Peters (1980, pp. 31–4) stated that the group dynamic is 'invisible' and known only through a process of deductive reasoning by which hypotheses and predictions can be made concerning its effects. The same non-visibility, non-thingness is true of the personality. A unit organism is certainly visible, and to some extent self-contained, autonomous, and separated from the environment by a boundary, but the 'personality' is not. The psychological domains of the self and object, identity and personality have no fixed physical location, but refer partly to persons and groups which are far removed from the organism in its current interactions. Further, the concept of the individual is different from that of the organism. An individual has *individuated*, has learned to distinguish himself or herself from others and the group, has gone beyond the symbiotic oneness of infancy.

The individual and the group are therefore not things but are delimited by observational boundary conditions. The unity of the person and the group and the boundary nature of their interaction are epistemological principles in a paradigm which strives to integrate contemporary psychoanalysis and group psychology. In the older viewpoint, individual and group were distinct entities. Object relations, for example, were predominantly individual 'cathexes' of the environment. They belonged in the personal realm. Groups and cultures, on the other hand, were part of the psychological environment. In the newer viewpoint, object relations are both internal and external representations of the same living systems. The difference is that when one closes the boundary around the person, one sees regression to the primitive imagery experienced as internal, and when one opens the boundary to group interaction, one sees the external manifestation as a process of group interaction, fantasy, or myth.

To summarize, the integration of group psychology and psychoanalysis requires that the epistemology of a concrete distinction between individual and group be supplemented by the systemic and structural nature of both. This development entails recognizing that individual and group are points along a continuum, that concepts in both psychoanalysis and group theory touch upon both aspects with differing emphasis, and that what one observes is a function of the boundary conditions of observation. Paradoxically, such a perspective makes the study of groups more human, personal, and alive, for although it rejects reification, it acknowledges 'the difference between all possible abstractionists and all livers in the light of the world's concrete fullness' (William James, quoted by Coles, 1983, p. 7). The inner life and group life are closely interwoven.

Premise III:
The principle of complementarity accounts for the multi dimensional nature of group relations

Related to the principle of the oneness of observer and observed, hence of individual and group is that of complementarity, a concept which derives as well from quantum physics. Lichtenstein (1961), Grotstein (1982), Wurmser (1983), and others have noted the relevance of this principle to psychoanalysis, and J.Durkin (1980), on the basis of the work of von Bertalanffy (1968) in general systems theory, has developed some of the implications for group dynamics. Complementarity is a systems model that is useful in reconciling two diametrically opposed points of view, such as those of a psychology which emphasizes internal, biological forces and one which points to the environmental and social field as the crucial determinant of behavior. Complementarity is conceptually related to paradox, contradiction, and asymmetry in nature and man. It therefore resembles both transpersonal, existential, and religious insight and at the same time the nature of myth, metaphor, and primary process thinking.

Lichtenstein (1961, p. 250) quotes the physicist Neils Bohr, who gives a succinct definition of complementarity, stating that 'seemingly incompatible concepts pertain to mutually exclusive situations characterized by a different drawing of the line between subject and object.' That is, *when one systematically changes the conditions of observation and experimentation, the phenomenon*

shows opposite, contradictory properties. Thus light acts like both a wave and a particle. There are a number of such complementarities in psychology: sometimes a person behaves like an 'island' and sometimes like 'a part of the main'; sometimes like a thinker and sometimes as if driven by instincts or motivated by affects and fantasies; sometimes as possessing component parts in conflict and sometimes as an organic whole in a state of development towards higher forms.

Most relevant to the current thesis is that, depending on the frame and context of observation, the 'group' or the 'intrapsychic' system will best account for behavior, and that closer scrutiny will reveal them to be not different 'causes' and 'effects,' but a complementary field which exhibits both characteristics.

Devereux (1980) suggested that Freud himself utilized the notion of complementarity. Freud saw the relationship between a symptom and its corresponding unconscious conflict becoming conscious as both identical and reciprocally substitutable. Lichtenstein (1961, pp. 249–50) held the relationship between the drives and identity to be in a complementary relation, a thesis which is crucial also to Kohut's formulations about developmental lines of narcissism and object relations:

> What I am suggesting is that one might employ here and elsewhere two different theoretical frameworks—that, in analogy to the principle of complementarity in modern physics, we might indeed speak of a psychological principle of complementarity…that of a conflict psychology and that of psychology of the self (1980, pp. 77–8).

Grotstein (1982, p. 2) stated: 'I wish to call attention to the importance of the principle of complementarity which predicates a dual track orientation for the perspective of all mental phenomena.' He emphasized the reciprocally facilitative and interactive nature of primary and secondary process thinking with the former related to oneness and symmetry and the latter affording a linear, segmented, and boundaried view of self and world. Wurmser (1983) held that psychoanalysis employs two complementary models of man: as, on the one hand, conflicted and, on the other, a unified developing organism. The former he regards as essential to man's psychology and the latter to his biology:

[There is a complementary] distinction between an overarching, more encompassing principle—that of growth-adaptation-deficit ruling over all of biology, including man, and a more narrow one, that of inner conflict, more or less *specific* to man…. Drives are, not only Freud, but the entire philosophical tradition held, common to biology and human psychology, always related to objects, yet also always in some way referring to an inner tension presumably of physiological origin. Again the principle of complementarity!

Greenacre (1958) suggested the term 'identity' has two meanings which capture the essence of the complementary relationship between the individual and his group:

The term *identity* has two significant faces—an inner and an outer one. It means, on the one hand, an individual person or object, whose component parts are sufficiently well integrated in the organization of the whole that the effect is of genuine oneness or unit. On the other hand, in some situations identity also refers to the unique characteristics of an individual person or object whereby it can be distinguished from other somewhat similar persons or objects. In the one instance, the emphasis is on likeness, and in the other on specific differences.

The 'unique characteristics of an individual' constitute the person and his psychodynamics. The 'organization of the whole' is the boundary and linkage between the person and the group and, as Greenacre notes, 'is closely related to identifications, whether as an inner process or psychic determinism or an act of recognition by a human being toward an outer object, animate or inanimate' (ibid).

What have been documented are historical and contemporary precedents, going back to Freud, for regarding complementarity as *essential to the metapsychology* of psychoanalysis, that is to its paradigm. This does not mean that one can resolve theoretical disputes by an appeal to a 'both are true' formula, but rather that one is challenged to articulate the connections between distinct, paradoxical phenomena and to determine the conditions in which these phenomena appear and 'substitute for' one another.

J.Durkin, writing about the group as a system, noted (1980, p. 15):

the first foundational idea is that living structure manifests itself not through one, but through two complementary modes of description. Complementary relationships are paradoxical. Each component description of a complementary pair is a total description of the whole phenomenon, not a part description of different aspects of a single underlying unity…. It is extremely difficult for our objectivity-conditioned perceptions to experience complementarity directly. What we do experience is a dialectical dance in which the phenomenon in question fluctuates autonomously back and forth between its apparently distinct states.

That is, the observer of a group experiences opposite and paradoxical effects, for example, the oscillation of positive and negative emotions in the evolution of basic assumptions, and the group as a composite of personalities or alternatively as a single, resonating unit, reflecting different sides of the 'return of the repressed,' the presence of unconscious activity and thought in a differentiated or oceanic state of awareness. Both are true descriptions of the same group process.

For Durkin, the most fundamental complementarity in groups is *'action structure* and *language structure'* (ibid, p. 15). 'Action structures are embodied physically and are made of matter/energy. Language structures are made of information.' This distinction is neglected in group theory. Schutz (1958), for example, related the successive modes of interpersonal relations in groups: inclusion, control, and affection, to oral, anal, and phallic drive cathexes, respectively. More precisely, however, inclusion, control, and affection are semiotic expressions of interpersonal relations. Drives, on the other hand, are motives which leads towards discharge, towards action. This is not a moot distinction. For example, oral (drive-induced) behavior and fantasy in a group can occur in any of Schutz' phases. The wish to be included may be experienced as phallic and 'penetrating,' and one can be 'hungry for affection.' The drives are manifested in groups in terms of regulating immediate inner tensions and anxieties, while interpersonal relations appear most often as group-wide 'language structure' patterns of group formation and evolution.

Object relations theory is similarly a complementary formulation to drive theory. The object contains the informational (linguistic/

representational) template for human interaction, while the drive regulates the intensity and 'style' of the action.

Extending the principle of complementarity to group systems leads to a more general concept of 'multiple dimensions.' Thus, if one examines any particular group event, it, like a crystal, has many facets (and also like a crystal, a unifying structure) and viewed from different points, angles, and theoretical and subjective 'lights,' will have a different form or appearance. Indeed, the very nature of a group is that each person will perceive it somewhat differently: it is a 'house with many mirrors.' Since, in the case of a group, the mirrors make up the house, a group is almost by definition a multi-perspective sense organ which creates at times an almost Cyclopean effect.

Agazarian (1983) pointed out the utility of a multi-dimensional perspective in the conduct of groups, emphasizing the personality, role, and group-qua-group as systems of organization. In a previous work (Agazarian and Peters, 1981, p. 29), she connected a multi-dimensional systems orientation to Korszybski's semantics, where he articulated a multi-valued logic to account for paradox and complementarity in nature. Both the self and object of psychoanalysis and the group-qua-group are best understood through such a multi-valent paradigm, because both the internal structure of the mind and the outward structure of groups are paradoxical with respect to the implicit reductionism by the perceptual apparatus of all experience into a Euclidian and spatio-temporally ordered world.

Some implications of Premises I, II, and III for psychoanalysis

The application of the principles of the unity and complementarity of person, interaction, and field to psychoanalysis has taken several directions. Langs' emphasis on the interaction between the analyst and the patient is one that has already been mentioned. Langs (1976a) utilized an object relations framework for conceptualizing this interaction, viewing it from the standpoint of mutual projective identifications in which analyst and patient interact at an unconscious level by placing (in fantasy) anxiety-provoking mental content into each other and setting up in each other reactions which may either facilitate or disrupt analytic work. Such situations are understood to be the common experience of all groups and not only

the patient/analyst relationship. Green (1978) and others have noted the importance of Winnicott's transitional space during the therapeutic hour. Green hypothesized that thoughts ascribed to the patient are in actuality created within the communication process, much as the transitional object is the creation of the child in the presence of the maternal object (p. 177). Searles (1979, p. 45) observed the significance of 'non-human' objects in the consulting room for what transpires in the analysis of certain patients. The upshot of such viewpoints, which are coming to occupy an increasing role in psychoanalytic discussions, is that the inward, intrapsychic view of the patient must be complemented by one which includes communication and the environmental field, the inseparability of transference and countertransference, of subject and object, of observer and observed.

A recent trend in psychoanalysis is to emphasize the relationship between object relations and the self. Although Kohut stands out in this regard as a controversial figure, there has always been interest within psychoanalysis in assimilating the notion of the self. The self, in its essence subjective and open to choices, does not fit easily within a psychology of blind forces acting in a deterministic way. Yet the recent study of disorders of the self has encouraged psychoanalysts to regard it as a distinct structure, and despite the conceptual difficulties of subjectivity and free choice, to investigate its dynamics. Since the self cannot be separated from its object relations, the two form a complementary pair. The strivings of the self evolve somewhat independently of external attachments, yet there is a mutual impact between the child's need to express and experience himself in a narcissistic way and his need to achieve intimacy in the face of inevitable frustration of his self-centeredness. The self and the object are different, but there is an aspect of the object in which it is a part of the self, pointing to the essential unity of the two.

These viewpoints reflect a growing awareness of a metapsychological dilemma. That dilemma owes itself to the individualistic character of the drive theory and will be fully resolved only when the interactive and 'multi-body' aspects of psychoanalysis are fully incorporated in its theory.

Finally, and all-pervasively, psychoanalytic theory therefore contains two complementary views: an instinct or drive theory, in which the focus is upon the individual personality regarded as a closed system of mental representations rooted in a somatic core of

biological tensions; and an interactive social model, emphasizing the interconnectedness and 'field' character of the person in relation to his environment and group matrices. The intrapsychic model is a product of the Cartesian epistemology in which the observer and observed are separate entities, so that the person becomes a self-contained unit. The interactive model is congruent with the phenomenological and gestalt principle of the unity of observer and observed, in which inner experience and group life form a 'dual unity' (Mahler's term for the mother-infant pair), suggesting a transactional model of the psychoanalytic session itself, pointing to its underlying similarity to the group analytic session. The interactive model brings psychoanalysis ever closer to group dynamics and a 'multi-body' psychology.

Implications of the Premises for group field theory

Theories of the group-as-a-whole have been varied and complex. A listing of some of the more familiar conceptualizations includes Bion's 'mentality' or 'culture,' Ezriel's 'common group tension,' Whitaker and Lieberman's 'focal conflict,' Foulkes' 'matrix,' and Lewin's 'field' and 'life space.' The emergence of General Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968) led to a number of additional developments, most notably Miller and Rice's (1967) application of system theory to large group and organizational dynamics and J.Durkin's (1980) work on the group as living system. It is epistemologically significant that the ways of conceptualizing the group-qua-group are so many and varied. No one point of view seems to describe fully what a group is, except that it is more than a summation of individual behaviors. These perspectives make clear in retrospect that Freud's account of group behavior in terms of individual transferences and identifications was a reductionist one though very powerful in its implications. It cannot be overemphasized that reductionism and complementarity are radically different philosophical positions.

A major obstacle in the way of psychoanalytic group psychology has been the lack of systematic explanation of how deep, unconscious forces can influence group configurations. It is easy to comprehend how an individual group member might react with his own unconscious dynamics (his 'valence') to a group situation, but more difficult to see how the situation itself can be conditioned by and even embody unconscious processes. The premise of a 'group

mind' is a contradiction in terms, an anthropomorphization and reification of mentation to the social system. For this reason, group-as-a-whole theories should avoid mentalistic constructs. At the same time, there can be no question but that the characteristics of groups are profoundly influenced by the unconscious: both Freud and Bion pointed out that the Army, the Church, and the State (to which Bion added the Aristocracy) are social systems built around intrapsychic and interactive aspects of aggression, dependency, and control (and, for the Aristocracy, sexuality).

The conceptual dilemma posed by group dynamic theories is illustrated by the work of Kurt Lewin. Lewin's goal was to develop a set of laws and subsidiary hypotheses about group interactions, to create a science of groups. He therefore made a distinction between individual and group dynamics in a. way which contradicts a psychoanalytic understanding of groups as unconscious processes. Lewin conceptualized the group field as a psychological *environment* which *caused behavior* in the here-and-now by affecting the perceptions of persons who entered the field, i.e. participated in the group situation. Although he did allow for 'regression' and 'retrogression' of groups to earlier states of evolution, this corollary to his theory did not markedly alter his contention that if one knew all the current external forces acting on a person in the present moment, one could predict his behavior. His schema minimized the role of unconscious processes by reiterating a formula which separated the group field dynamic (as a set of environmental forces) from those deep and hidden internal forces in the human unconscious which Freud has considered the ultimate determinants of behavior.

There is, however, a subtle turn of phrase in Lewin: he defined the environmental 'life space' as a *perceived* space, reflecting his background in gestalt psychology. The implication is that the life space is *organized* by the perceiver and therefore there is room in his theory for Freud's 'mental apparatus' to have considerable influence, specifically by affecting the way the environment is perceived. Thus, much Lewinian-based research and theory is strikingly psychodynamic. For example, Festinger's (1957) studies of cognitive dissonance, which focus on the reduction of discrepancies between past and present experience in social situations, assume that the person is uncomfortable with and tries to reduce differences between what he believes and what environmental feedback is telling him (or between what he wants and what he gets).

Such a social unit appears indeed to be following the 'pleasure principle' and utilizing 'defense mechanisms' such as rationalization to reduce inner tensions.

Lewin articulated correctly that the group was greater than and different from the collective of individual group members. What he did not state as clearly is the complementary proposition that the group field is *emergent from*, and an extension and transformation of, the perceptual, cognitive, and emotional matrices of the members (and vice-versa, the personality is an internalization of group dynamics). Chein (1946, p. 96), assessing Lewin, stated this point very sharply: 'We should not, however, lose sight of the organism as a very relevant part of the microstructure of the field, which through its perceptions and motives transforms mere geographical environment into behavioral environment.'

For a psychology which integrates psychoanalysis and group dynamics, Chein's is a necessary corrective to field conceptuali zations which emphasize the impact of environmental determinants on behavior. The inner personality and the group-as-a-whole are maintained in a continuous feedback loop (which in one respect, as shall be seen, is a projective identification) in which there is an ongoing exchange, transformation, and mutual impact of one on the other. The psychoanalytic contribution to knowledge of personal and group forces consists in the study of object relations and of the ego system, which includes perception and communication. The social psychologists' contribution is largely about the structure of the 'life space' as an outer environment and the possibilities which social structure creates for internalizations into the personality.

It should also be noted that Chein's comment is a very powerful statement about the field dynamics of groups: he is saying that the field itself is human: it is a *living* holistic system, one that is responsive to input by any of its members (or from an external, contextual source). Intersubjectivity, symbolism, and unconscious fantasy form important elements in its organization and structure.

The complementarity paradigm as evidenced in group formation

As a beginning formulation of the evolving relationship between intrapsychic/unconscious processes and group dynamics, the following is suggested. When a new group is formed, there is a shift

in the ego states of the members which increases the permeability of boundaries, so that there is potential for interchange between the individual and the group. This change in boundary conditions is called the 'group regression' (cf. Bion, 1959, p. 127) and is experienced by the membership as a partial merger of egos and superegos and a consequent loss of individual identity. Conditions are created for energy and information exchanges between the individual and group levels, i.e. the group develops isomorphic features which resemble those of the inner life (as in the basic assumption states and 'common group tensions') and hierarchical movement between these levels can take place (for example, an unconscious wish for a sense of total dependency and oneness can become translated into actions to establish roles and structures of a 'utopian' group style in which these wishes are partially gratified).

Transformations between the intrapsychic and group systems occur through a variety of interactive mechanisms which include conscious and unconscious processes. In this manner, object ties and group cohesion develop, and the self systems of the members become congruent with each other and with group goals and are also 'mirrored' by other self systems.

To conclude, the relationship between internal mental processes and external group realities cannot be accounted for by an environmental field theory which regards the group as a causative agent that is independent of the inner lives of those who participate. The group field must be understood to be emergent from and in certain ways isomorphic to mentation and unconscious processes. However, the hypothesis of a 'group mind' is *ad hoc* and constitutes no explanation at all. Instead, it must be seen that, through the system of interpersonal interactions and transactions across ego boundaries, inner realities are transformed into group reality, structures, and organizations. An essential transitional element between the individual and his group is the symbolic/mythological system which the group evolves as a regulatory structure mediating unconscious processes and group behaviors.

The fundamentals of the paradigm may be summarized as follows:

1 The relationship of observer to observed defines a phenomenological boundary which both separates and connects the individual and the group.

2 Person and group exist in a complementary relationship. Interactions and interpersonal relations are relevant to both the individual and group aspects of the complementarity, forming a system which mediates between the inner life and group reality.
3 Psychoanalysis and group field theory need to be modified to include each other in a unified framework. General Systems Theory expands the framework of field theory to include interactions and hierarchy shifts between systems, allowing for the mutual impact of deep unconscious experience and group reality.
4 The interactive perspectives of object relations theory, self psychology, and the ego-as-system are more closely connected with interpersonal relations and group dynamics than the drive and structural theories, although the latter retain their value as part of a general explanation of certain group events, and the importance of biological motivation and mental structure can never be denied.

In the following chapters, some key interactive constructs in psychoanalysis are reviewed and their potential value for group psychology are explored. This review is necessary for the further analysis of groups, a subject which is taken up thereafter.

Part 2

Object relations and the self: from intrapsychic to interactive constructs

Our whole inner world is reality, perhaps even more real thanthe apparent world. To call everything that seems to beillogical a fantasy or fairy tale is to admit that one does notunderstand nature.

Marc Chagall

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Chapter 3
Object relations theory

The purpose of Part II of this work is to document and demonstrate the interactive dimension of psychoanalysis, that is, to show that it has evolved a multi-person psychology complementary to the more familiar intrapsychic model of the mind. There already exists within psychoanalysis a range of concepts compatible with the paradigm that has just been articulated and which embody the premises of (1) the centrality of human interaction; (2) the emergence of the individual and the group from a primal unity; and (3) the application of the principle of complementarity as a means of assimilating multiple dimensions of experience into a coherent theoretical perspective.

From a practical standpoint, such interactive concepts should lead to treatment and training approaches which are fruitfully integrated with family therapy, communication and networking processes, and group dynamics by providing an holistic, systems vantage point compatible with the psychoanalytic theory of development and of unconscious mental life.

The interactive point of view has not always been popular in psychoanalysis, but rather as psychoanalysis grew closer to neighboring disciplines, took on a 'widening scope' of clinical disorders for treatment, and sought to account for a broader range of developmental, historical, and social processes, it evolved from a closed to an open system model, from an 'iddetermined' view to one in which the individual is in interaction with his environment, from a 'single-body' to a 'multi-body' psychology.

Psychoanalysis is a developmental psychology which considers early experience to be reactivated in adult life under conditions of anxiety and conflict, one source of which is the discrepancy between the demands of individuality and those of the group. In its origins,

however, its focus was upon a few nuclear complexes. The Oedipal Complex defined the field; it was the paradigm for the investigation of unconscious processes. Today, the psychoanalytic theory of development is broad in scope and constitutes a general psychology. It explores not only the idiosyncratic and pathological, but also the adaptive aspects of human life. It has, *in toto*, a great sweep and profundity which is largely due to the study of object relations, the self, and the ego.

The division among the modern formulations of object relations theory, self psychology, and ego psychology is both a meaningful classification and the outcome of historical circumstance. Object relations theory originated in England with the work of Melanie Klein, and ego psychology on the European continent and in the United States, with Heinz Hartmann as one of its seminal thinkers. Self psychology is descriptive of both a renewed interest in the self among psychoanalysts of various persuasions and, more particularly, the work of Heinz Kohut and his students. These orientations are considered separate schools of thought, but they overlap considerably. Object relations theory is discussed in this chapter, while chapter 4 is devoted to concepts of the ego and the self. The emphasis throughout is on the relevance to group psychology and therefore requires a different and more selective focus than would be given in a comprehensive review.

Object relations theory began early with the work of Freud, Abraham, and Ferenczi. Freud, in his essays 'On narcissism' (1914) and 'Mourning and melancholia' (1917) emphasized the reciprocal relationship between the ego and the object as processes whereby the ego modifies the object through identification and introjection and in turn is modified in its dynamics and structure. Abraham (1927) focused on primitive mechanisms of the oral and anal phases, stressing attachment, aggression, and primitive defense mechanisms. Ferenczi (1952) explored the relationship between patient and analyst and its impact upon cure, holding that the analyst could function at certain junctures as a real maternal figure, noting the intense deprivations which some of these individuals had suffered in childhood. Melanie Klein had personal contact with these psychoanalytic pioneers and she considered her formulations to be extensions of their work (Grotstein, 1978a).

Kleinian theory

The work of Melanie Klein has led to a number of important developments within psychoanalysis and in particular has had significant applications to group psychology beginning with the work of Bion and of Ezriel. Ms Klein's own contributions will be discussed first and those of others will be cited accordingly. It is important to distinguish between those who work primarily within a Kleinian framework and those who utilize her ideas within other frames of reference. In addition, there are a number of 'post-Kleinian' developments which are contemporary extensions and derivatives of Ms Klein's point of view.

Melanie Klein has occupied a controversial place in psychoanalysis. She has been criticized (cf. Yorke, 1971; Kernberg, 1976; Chessick, 1977; Balint, 1979) for overly attributing complex mental processes to the infant (in contrast to the notion that the child is a *tabula rasa* or a bundle of impulses who very gradually acquires a mental life), for her direct approach to interpreting primitive unconscious content in the transference, and for her acceptance of Freud's 'death instinct.' These criticisms have obscured the vital and lasting contributions of Ms Klein, who extended psychoanalytic theory into a rich understanding of preverbal development, evolved schema for the comprehension of borderline and psychotic states of psychopathology, and provided a psychology which complemented that of Freud.

Kleinian theory focuses on the inner dimension of unconscious fantasy as it is related to biological drives and the body image while directed towards an external object. The Kleinian semantic distinction between *phantasy* and fantasy shall therefore be used throughout. *Phantasy* is unconscious and fantasy is its conscious, symbolic representation. Thus, for example, the collective fantasy of a utopian group might, in Kleinian terms, symbolically represent the repressed archaic *phantasy* of a good, nurturing breast, etc. This usage expresses the importance of imagination, of symbolization, and of the object relation in cognitive and emotional development (cf. Segal, 1980, pp. 60–62).

'The child,' Klein said, 'is an intensely embodied person' (Guntrip, 1961, p. 49). Its world consists of body images and processes which, through later symbolism, are displaced and sublimated into an outer world of persons and cultural activities. In the course of development, the social group becomes increasingly

such an embodiment and world and its 'reality' retains the residues of childhood phantasies about the body. However, despite her emphasis on body imagery, Ms Klein (and to an even greater extent, her students) regarded primitive mental processes as efforts to communicate with and modify the human environment. It is this vantage point, in contradistinction to her instinctual bias, which gives her theory an interactive and ultimately 'group-minded' quality. For example, the inner experience of reducing discomfort or 'unpleasure' is associated for Klein with a phantasy of expelling a 'bad object' into the mother. This phantasy becomes, in turn, an activity which evokes a response from her. *The basic unit of mentation in Kleinian theory is strictly speaking not drive discharge but a feedback loop between a phantasy object and the reciprocal action of the outer 'real' object (Grotstein, 1980a; pp 375–381).* Ms Klein's work is paradoxical in its view of the psyche. There is both an inevitable biologism, especially in her view of the death instinct, and at the same time, hers is a theory of communication between the self and the outer object.

For Ms Klein, development is an evolution of the psyche through two basic constellations: the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions. The former is characterized by efforts to preserve the emerging self from danger, and the latter, occurring in the context of increasing reality orientation and the integration of the personality, is motivated by strivings to protect the love object (now experienced as separate) from the infant's aggression.

The paranoid-schizoid position

The self is especially vulnerable in the early weeks and months of life and is subject to real and imagined harm from overstimulation, neglect, and painful levels of the aggressive drive which, if not mitigated and contained by the mother's ministrations may be directed against the infant's own psyche and soma. The infant personifies these dangers in the form of primitive phantasies and internal and external 'persecutors,' that is, it attributes the danger to imaginary objects experienced as sensations, images, forces, and part objects such as breast, penis, or womb. The predominant distress of the paranoid-schizoid position is thus *persecutory anxiety*, the feared harm from 'bad objects.' Pleasurable and comforting experiences, on the other hand, constitute 'good objects' which also can be defensively mobilized to ward off the persecutory

ones. Dangers are therefore managed through contact with a good maternal breast, orienting the infant to an outer reality which is protective and rewarding, but since this reality is sometimes unavailable, hostile, or modified by projection of the negative objects into it, it too is sometimes feared and attacked.

The objects of the paranoid-schizoid position are called *part-objects* because of their association with positive or negative affect states and with body parts such as the breast, rather than the mother as a whole person. Part-objects are segmented portions of what will become integrated into a relation with the mother as a *whole object*, that is, a mother who is experienced as external, entire, and having an existence that is partly independent of the child's immediate needs.

> Part-object states and the paranoid-schizoid position are revived in group under conditions of anxiety and regression. For example, in a staff training group in a teaching hospital, the group developed a mild delusion that the video technician was giving the tapes of the group to the head of the Psychiatry Department who would use it as a basis for grades and residency appointments. The group considered what it could do to prevent this feared eventuality, but when reality testing was encouraged by the trainer, the members recalled their confidentiality agreement and recognized the emotional source of their distorted belief.
>
> The free associations of the members suggested that the persecutory phantasy was a regressive attempt to fend off the awareness that the group was to terminate shortly. As a defense, the trainer became overly idealized ('all good') and the badness was projected into the video technician and the institutional context. That is, to avoid feelings of loss and separation, the members projected an attack by significant authority figures whom they regarded as plotting against them. Working through the separation feelings related to termination of the group facilitated the integration of the 'good' and 'bad' part-objects. A mourning process ensued, leading to a restoration of accurate perceptions of the situation and the persons involved. The brief paranoid delusion is an instance of Bion's fight/flight assumption and of the psychotic-like anxieties which constitute an aspect of primitive group culture.

As Jaques (1955, p. 278) has said, 'one of the primary cohesive elements binding individuals into institutionalized human association is that of defense against psychotic anxiety', by which he means the anxieties of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. In the above illustration, group solidarity is temporarily a function of its projected enemy in the institutional context who has, in fantasy, denuded the members of their privacy.

The person or group mobilizes specific defenses against persecutory anxiety, projecting negative affects and impulses outwards and introjecting nurturing and comforting qualities. Projection and introjection occur together and are for Ms Klein inseparable. The emotion of envy accompanies these projective/introjective strategies in that the object is seen as possessing and depriving while the self is deprived. Part-objects are 'split off' (held apart from) and disavowed from the self, the processes of projection and introjection serving to maintain the alienation of the self from its objects, but at the same time the proper external management of the inner objects allows for their gradual assimilation, internalization and integration into the personality.

For Klein, defenses are associated with unconscious phantasies. The defense mechanism of denial, for instance, implies the phantasy of invisibility; devaluation includes the phantasy that the object has been marred by projections into it and denuded of power, excitement, and knowledge. The primitive defenses of the paranoid-schizoid position (projective and introjective identification, splitting, idealization, devaluation, and denial) occur together as part of an attitudinal set or 'position' representing a constellation of object relations, phantasy, and communication patterns.

Kleinian theory emphasizes the importance of splitting and projective identification because these mechanisms are of particular significance in psychic development. Splitting is the elementary division of experience into pleasurable and unpleasurable. It provides the infant's first cognitive map of emotions and interpersonal relations and serves the purpose of coping with pain and aggression.

Projective identification is in addition an early mode of exploration of the external world. An inner object and its associated phantasy content is split off and then 'placed' in the outer (maternal) object and identified with it. In the interactive feedback loop, the real mother performs functions for the infant which, by managing anxieties, enables the infant to reintroject the object in a

form which it can tolerate, represent imagistically, and make part of its inner experience. In the interaction, it has learned something about the real world. Thus, projective identification is related to Piaget's concept of 'sensori-motor operations' (Boden, 1980, pp. 23–42) and Reusch and Bateson's (1961, p. 209) 'metacommunication', i.e. the unconscious non-verbal component of a message.

In the present context, projective identification most often will be used in this broadened metapsychological sense. This definition is closer to that of Grotstein (1981b, pp. 123–38) and of Langs (1976c, pp. 575–7) than to Meissner for example, who advocates 'a specific connotation which implies the projection of elements of the self into the object and the experience of these self-elements…as belonging to the object' (1980a, p. 65). Grotstein, on the other hand, regards projective identification as a universal process which is both defensive and adaptive and ranges in its expression from the primitive level to cultural sublimations. For example (Grotstein, 1981, p. 123):

> In its more positive sense, projective identification is responsible for vicarious introspection and, in its most sublimated form, for empathy. It can be seen to operate in such processes as anthropomorphization and personification; it is active in romantic experience; and from it issues the impact of warnings, advice, and persuasion. As a primitive mechanism of communication it exists first between preverbal infants and their mothers, but it is also residual in adult life as a form of affective communication…

Langs (1976a) considers projective identification to be an interactive as well as intrapsychic process. In the psychoanalytic situation, there is an ongoing non-conscious communication between patient and analyst. This process consists of mutual projective identifications, the conjoint placing of mental contents into one another. The role of the analyst is, however, to 'contain' the patient's projections into him, to tolerate and accurately interpret them rather than to act out his own projections. This role can be taken as a model for group leadership during times when the membership is externalizing unwanted mental content into the group matrix and into the consultants.

Therefore, projective identification is a normative and adaptive interactive process as well as a defensive response. It has

explanatory value for group dynamics because *it points to the ongoing developmental relationship among inner mentation, interpersonal communication and interaction, and the group system as a container which is modified by the content that is projected into it.*

To review, the paranoid-schizoid position is a constellation of affects, defenses, and phantasies related to the preservation of the self from danger, i.e., the management of persecutory anxiety. It emerges in infancy in its most archaic, pre-verbal expression, but continues to be an evolving aspect of the mental life, manifesting itself as condensations with neurotic and mature patterns. For example, the Oedipal Complex has a derivative of persecutory anxiety in the so-called 'castration complex' where the feared attack is on the genitals rather than the self. Kleinian formulations thus point to deep and transactional layers of sexual complexes.

In group, the paranoid-schizoid position may manifest itself as a pervasive group culture, in interpersonal relations, or in individual valences. Split-off or repressed parts of the self are projectively identified into the group matrix and experienced in a location in the group rather than in the self. The group-as-a-whole (like the responsive mother) changes to accommodate the projected elements. Thus, projective identification plays an important part in group regression, role differentiation, cohesion, and leadership. Each of these dynamics reflects a process through which inner states promote or inhibit group organization in particular ways, and vice-versa. Projective identification is so fundamental to group psychology that it, in a sense, *creates* the group as a distinctive, coherent experience.

The depressive position

The next of Ms Klein's developmental phases, the depressive position, is signaled by an increased awareness of and concern for the mother. There is a series of indicators to suggest that the child is progressing from self-preoccupation and an attitude of omnipotence to awareness of and concern for a mothering figure seen as a whole and independent person. The emotions characteristic of this position include awareness of separation and loss, mourning, loss of omnipotence, and guilt, all of which stem from an integration of the good and bad aspects of the object and a differentiation between self and object. This process, however, is more prolonged and

gradual than the Kleinian view depicts (as peaking in the second half of the first year). Brown (1982) therefore proposed a 'transitional' position between paranoidschizoid and depressive, combining features of both. For Brown, the full depressive position is not present until perhaps the second to third year. In this respect the formulations of Spitz (1965) and Mahler, Pine, and Bergman (1975) also provide necessary correctives to Kleinian theory.

Intense over-activity in groups and a false hopefulness and optimism frequently signal that depressive position issues of termination, separation, and guilt are emerging. Bennis and Shepard's (1956) group phase of enchantment represents a group denial of guilt following the symbolic expulsion of the leader. This phase resolves itself into group-wide disillusionment and depression which is the precursor to accurate 'consensual validation.'

'Depressive anxiety' is the fear of potential harm to the object rather than to the self, marking the beginning of 'the capacity for concern' (Winnicott, 1950, p. 206). Ms Klein regarded the attainment of the depressive position to be a major developmental milestone:

> With the introduction of the complete object…marked steps in integration are made. This implies important changes in relation to objects. The loved and hated aspects of the mother are no longer felt to be widely separated, and the result is an increased fear of loss, states akin to mourning, and a strong feeling of guilt, because the aggressive impulses are felt to be against the loved object…. The very experience of depressive feelings in turn has the effect of further integrating the ego, because it makes for an increased understanding of psychic reality and better perception of the external world, as well as a greater synthesis between inner and external situations (1946, p. 14).

The movement of a group from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive orientation represents a developmental milestone and a crucial shift in group dynamics. Bennis (1961) illustrated depressive anxiety in a training group one of whose consultants was absent from the group, thereby focusing the group's attention on the problem of separation and loss. The group at first reverted to splitting and projective identification, disavowing parts of themselves and dichotomizing perceptions into all good and all bad.

Symbolic metaphors, such as the biblical Rock of Ages, represented the absent leader, who was both overidealized and devalued. Gradually, the sense of loss itself came to be verbalized, and mourning took place leading to a realistic acceptance of the leader and his absence. (The depressive position can in this way be related to the emergence of the reality principle.)

Bennis (p. 9) noted the use of 'defenses against depressive anxiety' as the group worked through the absence of its leader: projective identification, fantasy projection (the use of camouflaged imagination and symbols), manic denial, idealization, scapegoating, and restitution of the lost object. Characteristic of these defensive processes is the management of internally ambivalent feelings towards the leadership as the group experiences separation and loss.

In sum, the Kleinian formulations of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions describe patterns of anxiety, defense, ego development, phantasy, and communication which occur individually and in the collective. The thrust of Kleinian theory as an embodiment of the complementarity of internal and external is well summarized by Guntrip (1961, p. 222):

> Her work leads to a theory of living in two worlds at the same time, an inner mental world which forms the structure of the psychic personality and is revealed functionally in phantasy of all types, and an outer material world: there are ego-object relationships in both of these worlds and also interaction between them.

The ultimate human anxieties are over fragmentation of the self and harm to, separation from, and loss of the significant others on whom one is dependent. In addition, *the external object is in communication with the unconscious: it functions as a responsive container for disavowed portions of the inner self and object world*. Group membership, leadership, and the group-as-a-whole derive many of their characteristics by functioning as containing objects for unconscious mentation. They are molded and changed by what is externalized into them.

Primitive anxieties in groups: evaluation and critique

The mental states described by Melanie Klein and her coworkers have a very primitive quality. Are they normally to be found in groups? Bion theorized that 'psychotic-like' anxieties are at the root of group formation. The alternative viewpoint is that group evolution is based upon the family pattern and Oedipal-type transference dynamics. Opinions differ on the degree to which deep regressions are present in groups. In general, though, it may be stated that regressive forces are strongest (a) at the beginning phases of groups; (b) at group boundaries; (c) in large groups; (d) in groups with pathological populations; and (e) the less the structure and the fewer the cues offered by the leadership. It is also possible, of course, that the consultant will elicit in the membership experiences and reactions which his theory predicts will occur!

The paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions were conceptualized by Klein in relation to early infantile mental phenomena. The paranoid-schizoid position in particular describes states of fusion, fragmentation, and the loss of reality testing. Bion (1968, p. 127) referred to 'psychotic-like' anxieties in the basic assumption states, and other authors (Fornari, 1966, p. xx; Ganzarain, 1974, pp. 63–6; Ashbach and Schermer, 1978, for example) have noted fragmentation and delusional thinking in group interaction. By contrast, Freud's group psychology saw the neurosis rather than the psychosis as the prototype of group relations. The members ambivalently love the leader and form a pattern of intragroup relations analogous to the family and sibling constellation. This is a mode of relating well beyond the depressive position, and if it were the archetypal group dynamic, Kleinian formulations would be mostly irrelevant to group psychology (with the exception of some groups of severely disturbed individuals).

Kleinian theory, however, holds that psychotic-like derivatives are ubiquitous in human life. Slavson (1976), who is not a Kleinian, has nonetheless referred to these manifestations as the human's 'essential psychosis.' The hypothesized psychotic portion of the normal personality has been conceptualized as a 'double' or 'twin' personality by Bion (1950), and Grotstein (1979a). Dissociated from the conscious self, the double is repressed and exercises its influence by communication with the normal self. A normal group psychosis could be formulated as the derepression of

the psychotic twin. Feelings of fragmentation, loss of identity or of oceanic oneness could thus be thought of as stemming from a primitive self or double evoked by the group regression.

The use of the terms 'psychotic anxiety' or 'psychotic-like' is perhaps, however, an unfortunate accident of psychoanalytic science. The terms have a stigmatizing connotation and may reflect the abhorrence that mankind has for those early, primitive, unorganized or chaotic emotions and ideas that form the bedrock of the human psyche. The expression of the very primitive may in fact at times have a positive effect on group development.

In groups, regression to primitive, pre-Oedipal patterns is not all that uncommon. It would be tempting to call these patterns 'group pathology' except that 'regression in service of the group' frequently proves to be highly adaptive and necessary. Ganzarain (1974), for instance, pointed out that laboratory T-groups frequently show such regression. Such groups revive intensively in the 'here and now' identity conflicts and anxieties over differences and separateness (depressive anxiety) which are defended against by paranoid-schizoid defenses and look very much like brief psychoses. Their resolution appears to benefit both individual and group. Gibbard (1974), Turquet (1975), Jaques (1955), and others have described states of fusion, massive splitting and projective identification, and primitive anxieties in training and organizational contexts. Inter-group conflicts have been studied extensively (cf. Rice, 1965) and paranoid-type mechanisms in which the 'bad' self representations are projected into the out-group are consistently described by consultants and researchers.

While most group regressions are limited in scope, genuine hallucinations, delusions, and loss of time-space orientation may indeed take place under unusual group conditions. Therefore, the mental states and associated interactions and group formations termed 'psychotic-like' by Bion would be described clinically as varying in the level and intensity of the regression. Many features of a group, especially in its early stages, could best be described as 'borderline', the group equivalent of being somewhere in the border between between neurosis and psychosis. These conditions in groups are elucidated by Kleinian theory.

Kleinian theory as a metapyschological point of view

Although Ms Klein's work derives from Freud's, it must be considered on its own as well. Particularly through the work of those who have been strongly influenced by her (Bion, James Grotstein, Clifford Scott, and Hannah Segal, to name but a few), a different metapsychological stance has evolved from the Freudian 'scaffolding' of energics and forces. Grotstein (1978a) nicely conceptualized the differences between Freud and Klein as 'divergences within a continuum.'

The fundamental difference between Klein and Freud is that for Klein the instinct becomes virtually an inner object which is organized around biological necessity and body imagery. Instead of 'tensions,' there are images and phantasies associated with biological and environmental conditions. The libidinal and death instincts are 'biologized' objects which the infant (utilizing the maternal environment as a helper and a teacher) strives to organize in such a way that a state of organismic safety is achieved. The inner objects are psychosomatic: it is as if the primitive self consists of images associated with body awareness and the caretaking environment. For example, the infant deprived of nurturance for a period of time may begin to experience an inner object which is empty and an outer one which is cold, withholding, and powerful. The primitive self then frustrationally attacks the outer object, creating even greater emptiness in the inner domain. An excess of experience of this kind can result in development characterized by unpleasure and depletion, envy, jealousy, and hostility in interpersonal relations, and so on.

Kleinian theory links three levels of organization: the biological, the psychological, and the social, *via* the concept of the object, which is manifest in all three realms. The object brings together body organization, mental organization, and group organization: it is at the crossroads of three networks of human existence—the body and nervous system; the connections among mental associations in the psychic apparatus (communication among inner objects); and the group matrix, the network of social interactions. Systems isomorphisms among the biological, mental, and social realms may be comprehensible in terms of the object relation as the phenomenological representative of all three.

Object relations and cognitive processes

The Kleinian emphasis on the object as a phenomenological experience (imagery and cognition) gives the theory a natural affinity to cognitive psychology, the theory of thinking. Klein's student and analysand, Hannah Segal, pointed out (1957) that Klein connected emergence of the symbolic function with separation from the mother. As the child turns his interest towards the 'other-than-mother world,' he grasps this world and its contents as a symbolic equivalent of his mother and her body. The libidinized symbolism facilitates interest in the larger environment, including the family and the peer group, and also creates a distinction between inner fantasy and external reality. Thus, for example, the social group may represent symbolically a warm, supportive maternal environment (cf. Scheidlinger, 1974) while at the same time having its own external reality of tasks, identifications, etc. The symbol allows language and cognition to represent experience and manipulate it mentally. The symbolic function is therefore an essential ingredient of the work group, and it is part of the consultant's role to give symbolic form to inchoate group experience through his interpretations.

Segal showed how patients use symbols incorrectly in a reified fashion: they treat the symbol as if it were the object and vice-versa. She termed this the *symbolic equation*, the loss of distinctiveness between the symbol and what it represents. Such a tendency is apparent in group life in the concretized role of language as an emotional and ideological vehicle. In a group of addictive persons, for example, animosity developed between the 'addicts' and the 'alcoholics.' The patients reacted to the labels as if they were personages and quickly formed hostile subgroups. A more extreme and bizarre example was seen in a Tavistock group when a participant who wished to take a leadership role stood on a desk to address the group, equating height with power and the desk with leadership. There are, of course, numerous cultural examples of the symbolic equation: words can create actual war or peace, group membership is signified by tokens and gestures, and so on. The group itself can become symbolically equated with many aspects of phantasy: the mother, the body, the self. If the distinction between the group and the self is completely lost, the dissolution of the group can be experienced or acted out as a personal annihilation. Mass

suicide, such as took place at Massada and at Jonestown, may result from such a symbolic equation.

Bion (1967, 1977a) later developed the psychoanalytic theory of thinking into a sophisticated point of view based in Klein's work but going far beyond it. According to Bion, the maternal function of containing the infant's projective identifications allows thought to develop. The mother forms a 'thinking couple' with the infant, facilitating the capacity for delay, the connection between an inchoate experience and a concept which allows it to be remembered and subject to rudimentary mental processes. Bion terms this process 'the mating of a preconception with a conception' (Grinberg, Sor, and de Bianchedi, 1977, p. 54), and an internal mechanism for thinking, for making 'common sense' out of the sensory stimuli which impinge upon it. Bion thus hypothesized that thinking originated in an interpersonal process between the mother and the infant. He expanded the concept of projective identification into the formulation of 'container-contained', wherein the necessary precursor to all thought is the object's containment of inchoate experience (an impingement of stimuli without form). Container-contained is the object relations law of the perceptual gestalt which organizes experiences into patterns. For Bion, the initial gestalts are formed interpersonally between mother and infant, through the availability of her ego to the child.

That critical thought is interpersonal has implications for group psychology. A group is not a thinker, but it allows thinking to take place. Without a group, there can be no reality testing: thought becomes hallucinosis. This means that, at rock bottom, group participation is an antidote to psychosis—its function for the individual is that crucial. In group panic, thought and group cohesion dissolve simultaneously. The evolution of a group is the evolution of the ability to think.

Boyd (1980) connected Piaget with group theory by hypothesizing that group development is a progression or resynthesis of cognitive processes. Cognitive functions evolve in groups from Piaget's 'sensori-motor operations' to 'formal operations', from action schema to formal logic (see, for example, Boden, 1980). Faced with identity conflicts of a group-wide nature, the group uses primitive modes of thought first and progresses towards logical and intuitive solutions based upon consensual validation.

The Kleinian view of the Oedipus Complex

While for Freud the Oedipus Complex emerged (in the third to fifth year) in relation to the real parents (that is, the child did not experience concerns over incest and guilt until actively involved in a triangular relationship), for Klein the Oedipal Complex begins in phantasy in early infancy (the first year!) with a series of images about sexuality (particularly the primal scene), knowledge (cf. the Riddle of the Sphinx in the Oedipus myth), and aggression. These images fuse gradually with perceptions of the mother and father (the 'primal scene') and then evolve into abstract ideas and social laws prohibiting incest and murder, etc. The Oedipal Complex was thus regarded by Klein as a developmental line as well as a stage.

This perspective elucidates group developments such as the pairing assumption. Bion (1959, p. 136) noted that, while pairing involves sexual themes such as reproduction and a primal scene 'mating' of the pair, he does not regard the pair as mother and father figure *per se*. Rather, they stand for hope in the coming of a Messiah figure for the group. Bion is referring to a primitive oral incorporative Oedipal fantasy: the function of the pair is to produce an omnipotent figure who will become a leader whose values and strengths can be introjected into the group. The group's orientation to the Oedipal in the pairing group is narcissistic (the real parent—the group consultant—is not needed because the group itself has the magical power) and primitive (the imagery of incorporation and omnipotence). The pairing group and the 'Oedipal group' represent different but related levels of imagery and perception.

The concept of space in Kleinian theory

Projective identification suggests that there is a primitive awareness of the location of objects inside and outside the body, the self, and the mind. Spatial location allows the infant to 'place' painful stimulation (inner objects) 'into' the mother's breast for containment and modification. Space is a phenomenological awareness. Just as the adult has a perception of a three-dimensional environment with fixed coordinates, the child perceives and conceptualizes space according to his development. The child's space is subjective and imaginary: its dimensions and coordinates vary as a function of need and impulse, tension and state of consciousness (Grotstein, 1978b, p. 55). Changes in space

perception are present in adults as well. Claustrophobia is a sense of encroachment of the spatial surround, while agoraphobia implies a feeling of distance between self and objects. In psychosis, perceived space becomes disorganized or non-existent. Sensory deprivation experiments and mood-altering chemicals can produce similar changes in spatial orientation.

Metaphors of psychological distance can be thought of as derivatives of primitive spatial representations in which physical space, emotions, and objects are fused rather than separate dimensions of experience. In groups, comments like 'I feel very *close* to John today,' 'We're all *in* this together,' 'I feel *up*,' 'You seem to be *outside* the group very often,' and so on are spatial metaphors for psychological conditions of boundaries and projective identifications in the group. Groups, like inner phantasies, are experienced in spatial terms.

Kleinian 'space' is different from the Freudian topographic and structural models of the mind. The latter are hypothetical locations of ideas within a 'mental apparatus'. To say that an impulse has been repressed 'into the id' is to describe a change in the dynamic state of the impulse, for example that it is unlikely to appear directly in consciousness. But to say that a bad object has been projectively identified into the mother is to say that the infant has had an experience something like watching a magician who makes an object disappear and reappear somewhere else: there is a phenomenological awareness of a 'translocation' of an aspect of experience, although within a very rudimentary concept of space (in which, for example, objects arbitrarily appear and disappear).

Mental space is the inner counterpart of Lewin's life space, the location and freedom of movement that each member experiences in the group. Conversely, the group space is a projection and evocative realization of inner space into the interpersonal, interactive plane. It is a consensually validated cultural representation which has the capability to regressively dedifferentiate, under anxiety, into a primitive and fantastic space whose contents are inner objects rather than real persons. Foulkes (1964, p. 34) has called such a process the 'condenser phenomenon', the activation of a collective unconscious in the group. The 'sociogram' of the group consists not only of the relative position and influence of the members, but also of the distance they must put between the good and the bad, the degree to which they externalize their emotions into the group container, in general, the relationship between inner unconscious

processes and group processes. That is, the group contains an implicit set of distances between inner objects that in large measure determines the distance between actual, sociometric persons.

Thus, the group has a spatial representation at conscious and unconscious, adult and primitive, external and internal levels of experience. Inner objects are situated in this spatial representation and are modified by the space as a container. The group space is a consensual representation which mirrors the internal states of the members and is a projective identification of inner boundaries and distances into group boundaries and sociometric distance. Psychological space is fluid and affected by the objects it contains. It is analogous, not to Euclidean space, but to the relativistic space of modern physics. Piaget (Boden, 1980, pp. 57–8) has shown that the child's conception of space has such fluidity, relating it to the child's egocentrism, i.e. his shifting perception of space as a function of his location, and remnants of this relativity persist in adolescence and adulthood. Lewin's 'topological space' (1951, pp. 238–333) is similarly a space which is modified by psychological factors, and it may be hypothesized here that the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions play an important role in structuralizing the spatial field in a social context.

Summary and critique

Kleinian theory evolved from that of Freud and extended psychoanalytic insight into the primitive pre-Oedipal realm. Its central concept is the (interactive) object rather than the (intrapsychic) drive. The internal object is the mental representation of the biological-instinctual life, but it undergoes vicissitudes in its relationship with the external object. An instance of such a vicissitude is projective identification, where the inner object is fantastically identified with an external object. For Klein, the object, defense mechanism, affects, and interactions with the outer environment form a totality and a system which represents the phenomenological world of primitive object relations. This unity of intrapsychic and interactive components of experience makes Kleinian theory especially attractive for group psychology. Bion's work on groups was strongly influenced by Klein and brought her theories to the attention of workers in the field of group dynamics.

Klein has been criticized on a number of grounds. Yorke (1971) and Meissner (1980a) are among those who have provided critiques

from Freudian and ego psychological perspectives. While there is little disagreement about primitive anxieties (most analysts acknowledge anxieties centered around persecution, fragmentation, and harm to or loss of the maternal object), the existence of the elaborate infantile phantasies which Klein described has been questioned. A practical solution to this controversy, pending further research, is for the group psychologist to proceed from the surface to the depth, avoid hasty inferences and utilize only the aspects of Kleinian theory which are validated in practice. Knowledge of the deep unconscious is a subjective process, and there will always be differences in the way that latent content is understood.

There are two additional criticisms. First, Klein herself underplayed the role of the actual behavior of parenting figures. While she emphasized the need for and use of the maternal object, her focus was upon the fantasy life of the child and not on the environment (cf. Grotstein, 1983). To a great extent, the work of the 'British School', especially Winnicott, provided that balancing force in object relations theory which emphasizes the environmental context and the real qualities of the maternal object.

Finally, Kleinian theory does not give sufficient attention to the gradual unfolding of the person. Development is over-condensed into two developmental phases: the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions, both of which are presumably present in the first year of life. Development is in fact more gradual, and there are critical periods and phases throughout the life cycle.

These shortcomings are rooted partly in the lack of a sufficient theoretical scaffolding in Klein's work, likely due to the fact that she accepted Freud as her theoretician. Thus, she never gave her own definition of the 'death instinct', the ego, or other metapsychological categories, and her overall work gives the impression of great clinical insight without the theoretical integration that would lend it coherence and perspective.

The 'British School': Fairbairn, Winnicott, Guntrip, and Balint

The work of Melanie Klein thus offers a psychology of the inner object and its vicissitudes, with the external environment (breast, mother, family for example) serving as an auxiliary container and context. The 'British School' of object relations offers a

complementary set of theories which emphasize the impact of the interpersonal and cultural contexts on the evolving self, extending the work of Freud and Klein to the outer object as a determinant of development. In considering these psychoanalysts together as a school of thought, the present authors follow Sutherland (1980) who states:

> The reasons for taking this quartet as a group do not stem from any joint work they did. They did not constitute a group in that sense at all…. What gives point to their being bracketed together is the extent to which their contributions eventually embodied a common development (p. 829).

That common element is the way they viewed the infant and the maternal environment as an integral system out of which a self individuates. A second feature of the British School is its deemphasis on instinctual drives and the postulating of the self as a central element of psychic organization and a key developmental outcome of the vicissitudes of object relations. Fairbairn was the most forthright on these points, and Guntrip (1971, pp. 91–101) was largely in agreement with his arguments against the drive theory and his advocacy of a revised metapsychology emphasizing the self as the central structure and its connection to the object as the primary motivational force.

Winnicott concerned himself with issues of dyadic interaction (infant/mother, patient/analyst) and was always aware of the contexts of the 'facilitating environment' and the culture. Balint (1959, 1968) questioned the principle of 'primary narcissism' (the newborn person as a psychobiological isolate), regarding the infant as initially one with the environment (the basis of the view that the group is a primal oneness of selves rather than an aggregate). Guntrip stressed that the catastrophic loss of selfhood was the fundamental source of anxiety and the recovery of self the goal of psychotherapy. These differences are relevant to group. The choice of drives, self, or inner objects as the basis for group motivation and evolution critically affects the shape of theory and practice. The following overview is selective, illustrating the interactive viewpoint and its implications for groups.

Fairbairn on the drives, the self, and inner objects

Fairbairn made a departure from the instinct/drive framework, formulating a psychology based upon two premises: (1) the infant is innately object seeking, and the pleasure principle is subordinate to the need for the object ('Pleasure is the signpost to the object' (1952, p. 33), thus reversing the Freudian priority in which the object is sought for instinctual gratification); and (2) the person is born with a nascent self (which he called the 'pristine ego') which is originally whole and splits into part-selves in the course of development. The neonate is thus endowed with a psychological organization (the self) which is 'socially' oriented, that is, seeks contact with the parenting figure. Since many psychoanalysts hold that the infant has no 'self as such but only a biological 'id-ego matrix' which very gradually evolves into a self *as a result of* social interaction, Fairbairn's view is controversial. The self for him does not derive from frustration of biological drives: it constitutes its own level of organization. Importantly, this view is consonant with General Systems Theory for, according to von Bertalanffy (1968, p. 86), 'The analysis of general system principles shows that many concepts which have often been considered as anthropomorphic, metaphysical, or vitalistic are accessible to exact formulation.' The self is a system, one that for Fairbairn is of primary psychological importance.

   Fairbairn conceptualized psychic development in the following way. Over and above a biologically driven id, the infant has a unified self organization. Under the pressures of anxiety and frustration, this self splits into a needy libidinal ego (pleasure seeking), an antilibidinal ego, and a central ego (the core of the personality). These divisions resemble Freud's tripartite structure (id, superego, ego), but their origin is different. Fairbairn hypothesized an inherent tendency of the self to be organized into a system based upon meaning rather than pleasure dynamics. Further, this system seeks contact with an object, that is, it has the orientation to become part of a social system. It evolves in a social direction, but its initial fragility disrupts this process, creating a conflict between inner stability and social necessity.

   It is not clear whether Fairbairn was familiar with systems theory. In retrospect, however, he did regard the personality (as Lewin and Foulkes viewed the group) as a total field which becomes increasingly 'negentropic' over time, that is, more and more

differentiated and structured. The price exacted for this growth is, however, the loss of an initial oneness and homeostasis. When this system comes in contact with a larger system on which it is dependent—the mother or group—it is subject to stresses which threaten its striving for change. This problem of the survival and growth of the self is exemplified by Fairbairn in patients who show a schizoid type of splitting and withdrawal.

Fairbairn's *schizoid position* involves the internalization of the mother and breast as objects to be controlled, in fantasy, during periods of deprivation. Excessive deprivation leads to an overvaluation of the internal world, an attitude of detachment and futility (as a defense against anger and destruction), and withdrawal from the world of social interaction: '...the ego becomes quite incapable of expressing itself (due to the destructiveness of its love); and, in so far as this is so, it, very existence is threatened' (1952, p. 51). The relationship to the depressive position is evident, but for Fairbairn object love is primary and always connected to the survival of the self. Deprivation leads to a specific defensive process: a struggle to control the object through withdrawal into a fantasy world. For Fairbairn, 'The child's oral relationship with his mother… represents his first experience of a social relationship' (p. 24).

Here is implicitly a fundamental dynamic of group life. A group matrix conceptualized in this way evolves from an initial group fantasy of harmony and union (with the group-*qua*-maternal object). The actual group conditions constitute an instrument of socialization, and differences and status competition among members arouse aggression. *In response to the frustrating reality of the group situation, the members withdraw to inner fantasy objects*, establishing at one and the same time the basic assumption groups and ambivalence towards the leader. The further progression of the group is then a series of attempts to re-establish inner and group harmony through control of inner objects, partly by their externalization into the group matrix. Such a view regarding group formation reconciles the view of Scheidlinger (1974) that the group is perceived as a good nurturing mother and that of H.Durkin (1964) that the group is a depriving and frustrating pre-Oedipal mother. In the initial harmonious fantasy, the group is good and nurturing. As the group frustrates and deprives, attempts at control occur, bringing into play the bad objects.

It is worth mentioning that Fairbairn's description of development presaged more recent work on borderline and narcissistic psychopathology. Fairbairn saw the splitting of the ego as a fundamental development, not unlike the way in which Kernberg (1976) later formulated early mental organization as a division of an undifferentiated matrix into 'self-object-affect units' (pp. 25f., 29). Masterson's (1976, p. 62) notion of rewarding and withdrawing 'object relations units' parallels Fairbairn's point of view that the 'unsatisfying object arouses excitement because it is needed, and frustration because it rejects. With the intensification of these experiences, the exciting and rejecting aspects of the object are split off, along with the part of the self related to it' (Sutherland, 1980, p. 844). Kohut's (1971) emphasis on the cohesion of the self and the defense through splitting into grandiose (excited) and depleted parts is similar to Fairbairn's 'pristine ego' which splits into libidinal and antilibidinal components. Fairbairn was the first in a line of important theorists who utilized the concept of ego splitting in connection with the relation of the self to actual maternal ministrations and failures. For this line of psychoanalysts, the splitting into part-selves is a fundamental human process.

Here the connection between part-selves and group roles cannot avoid mention. *The differentiation of a group into the specific functions carried out by each member is a group equivalent of inner divisions of the personality* and at times uncannily seems to be a projection and transformation of the latter. Fairbairn stated such a theory of groups when he proposed that 'the nature of group relations is…determined by the externalizations or projections of an internal object' (1952). The group-as-a-whole can come to represent aspects of the self and of object relations, a thesis of the present work.

Summary and critique of Fairbairn (and a comparison with Melanie Klein)

Fairbairn's indebtedness to Melanie Klein is evident in his reference to part-objects, his emphasis on very early infant development, and the importance he gives to projection and introjection. However, the essence of his theory is different from Klein's and its quality is best grasped by contrast.

First, he took the step, which Klein did not, of a revision of the drive theory. For him, the object is needed for its own sake. On one

level, this assumption is consonant with observational/interactive studies, such as those of Spitz (1946) which suggest that deprivation of attention and contact is more injurious to emotional development than deprivation of oral gratification. On another level, that of intrapsychic dynamics, Fairbairn explains this paradox by suggesting that the maternal object is needed because without her the infant cannot sustain his self system as an organizer of experience. Without her, he will withdraw and fragment.

Second, Klein believed that aggression was innate while Fairbairn held that aggression was the result of frustration and that what the child ultimately fears is that his love will destroy the object.

Third, Fairbairn posited a self system not explicit in either Klein or Freud. The self for Fairbairn is the original structure of the personality, not a representation of introjected objects. Further, the self is inherently object seeking: it evolves into a psychological and social system that is not reducible to biological drives. Fairbairn's view is therefore in agreement with the non-reductionist position of group psychologists such as Foulkes and Lewin who believe that interpersonal, group, and social systems have their own laws which cannot be explained entirely by the subsystems which participate in them. The self as object seeking is part of the 'socius', while the ego as the rider of the instincts is a bio-adaptive system which evolved to regulate drive tensions. The Freudian 'ego' is the regulator of the soma, while Fairbairn's 'self' is the regulator of the object relation and the social life.

Fairbairn's conceptualization of the self and its object-seeking nature is therefore at the fulcrum of the individual/group complementarity principle. When looked at in its relation to the environment, it is social, always seeking the relationship which keeps it whole. When looked at subjectively and internally, it is deeply hidden and alone, preserving a precarious control of inner objects. This complementarity is the eternal dilemma of the human being whose schizoid nature results from the loss of his initial and precarious unity and bliss and who seeks to restore a modicum of oneness by reaching for something outside himself (group psychology) or gaining mastery of his inner nature (psychoanalysis).

Winnicott and the transitional space and object

If Melanie Klein's work focused on the internal object and Fairbairn's on the organization of the self, Winnicott can be said to

have discovered the 'space between' the self and object and the action which occurs in this space. Winnicott was truly a systems theorist. As a pediatrician, he recognized (1952, p. 99) that 'There is no such thing as a baby…one sees a nursing couple', i.e. mother and infant are the unit of investigation and the child only gradually forms a separate system from the mother. As a psychoanalyst, he applied this systems perspective to a variety of issues: psychopathology, the patient-therapist interaction, and cultural sublimation.

Winnicott trained with Melanie Klein, was strongly influenced by her, and accepted both Kleinian and Freudian theory as valid. He presented his ideas as additions to knowledge rather than challenges to extant theory and practice. Therefore, his original and imaginative ideas stand out from the field, but his connection or opposition to other theorists is obscure. His concepts dovetail well with object relations theory, ego psychology, and self psychology. Yet they stand apart from these developments as a separate creation in the same way that children at play (a phenomenon which he took as a metaphor for emotional development) always produce their own unique forms.

Winnicott wrote about a variety of topics (literally from children's toys to clinical depression), but there is a thread which runs through all his work: the way in which the growing person differentiates himself from the environmental object and context to establish (1) a deep inner self, (2) an area of spontaneous imagination and aliveness that is a synthesis of reality and fantasy, and (3) the 'capacity for concern' for the object, that is, the ability to manage aggression in the context of significant others. In other words, out of an initial oneness of mother-infant-environment as an undifferentiated whole, there develop three realms: (1) the inner self (and the inner phantasy life), (2) a region of creative interaction with the environment (which he termed the 'transitional space'), and (3) actual interpersonal relations and realities of the life cycle.

Winnicott did not propose a theory of stages of development, but a review of his work suggests the following perspective. The neonate's experience is global and undifferentiated. He exists in a contextual surround which meets his needs (the 'facilitating environment'), and the first differentiating experience is anticipation of mother, followed by a delay in her arrival. If this delay is not excessive, the infant can create a 'potential space' in which he can experience something which is both inside and outside,

both infant and mother. This experience allows the infant to cope with brief separation, and to be 'alone in the presence of the object' (1958, p. 36). Further tolerance for separation is established through the use of a 'transitional object,' the child's 'first not-me possession,' for example, a piece of cloth, a toy, etc., which has the characteristic that the child creates it and yet it already exists: it is both 'me' and 'not-me', fantasy and reality. The transitional object is the beginning of the world of 'illusion', those things, activities, and imaginative productions which allow the child to feel safe in the *absence* of the mother. It is this world which is the precursor of play, artistic production, and cultural sublimation. The line of development is from anticipation/delay to potential space, to the transitional object to illusion to imaginative activity and cultural achievement. The critical phase in development is the ability to substitute something inanimate for the mother and to use it for comfort, attack, and to create an intermediate realm of thought that integrates reality and fantasy.

It is clear that the group is such a transitional object in that (1) it gradually replaces the leader as a source of comfort and security; (2) it is a pre-existent reality which is also a self-created 'possession' of the membership; and (3) under proper circumstances it allows the membership to develop their cultural potential. The transitional space and object are, for Winnicott, the mechanisms underlying separation and individuation within a cultural context.

The group matrix, like the transitional object, is thus a particular comingling of reality and fantasy, self and object in an intermediate realm of experience which allows them to coexist. For example, the anthropologist Levi-Strauss (1963) holds that the 'deep structure' of kinship systems (a pre-given cultural and interpersonal reality) includes specific 'mythemes' (p. 310), the basic structural units of all myths, whose function is to complement in fantasy (and to reinforce) kinship structures and other cultural entities. This duality of myth and social reality is precisely the structural equivalent of Winnicott's transitional object and represents the figure-ground relationship of Foulkes' group matrix. It is as if Winnicott had recognized in the infant a perceptual gestalt which was a cognitive precursor of a group or culture as the adult experiences it, a self relating to an object (interpersonal transactions) with a third object being present (the group medium or matrix), and blending fantasy and reality.

The relationship between transitional space and the group matrix is worth examining in greater detail. (The authors are here indebted to the work of Colin James, especially his 1980 paper on this subject.) Extending Winnicott's theory, a 'stranger group' does not initially have a shared transitional object: it has to create one as its first 'not-me possession'. The precondition for this is the facilitating environment of the group itself, including a leadership that is capable of 'holding' (Winnicott's term) the intense internal states evoked by entry into the group; and sufficient responsiveness among the membership to allow for anticipation to be met with 'arrival' of the object, that is, a degree of empathy and an indication of being heard, without which there would be no communication. (Under conditions of sufficient holding and resonance, the membership can utilize elements of the group environment as transitional objects. Such objects may include anything from cushioned chairs to a 'mascot' group member to a familiar slogan or saying.)

These elements allow the membership to create the group itself as a transitional object, thereby determining that it will become a cohesive entity. The transitional group is both inside and outside the person, a region where communication can take place by means of complementarity of self and other, of multiple fantasies and projections, of group free association, to form a cohesive pattern, a group system that allows for growth and transformation.

Winnicott exemplified the transitional space in psychotherapy with children. The child drew something on a sheet of paper (representing his portion of the communication) and Winnicott responded with something of his own, and they would continue until something emerged as both a drawing (a creation in the transitional space) and an interaction between Winnicott and the child (an object relation, including the unconscious, internal objects and the real object: the therapist). This 'squiggle game' (Winnicott, 1953) is a prototype of the group matrix as a system of associations among the members leading both to interactions (object relations) and to an active creation, the group matrix or group-qua-group.

The coming together of the 'squiggles' (or group associations) to form a group whole bears a striking resemblance to the etymological derivation of the word 'symbol': 'from the Greek, literally token of identity verified by comparing its other half' (Webster), with a connotation of being *thrown together* to form a recognizable whole.

The symbol identifies the person as belonging to the group and completes a fragment into a recognizable whole.

A group psychotherapy vignette will illustrate the transitional aspect of the group matrix. The process was reported to the authors by a psychoanalytic group therapist who was conducting a group of borderline patients at a clinic. The group was required to move to another room, losing their familiar work space. In addition, it was nearing termination, creating separation anxiety. The following are the words of the therapist. The authors' analysis is in parentheses.

> Toward the end of the group, the clinic moved the room. The members had used exactly the same seats in the group and they became petrified about the move. (Here is the significance of the holding environment.) If someone switched seats, there would be anger: 'How dare you take my seat!' Entitlement is hardly the word. (This expresses intensity of the attachment to the transitional object for borderline individuals.) That seat had become part of them. At times they could talk about why they had chosen their seats, one because the chair had arms that he could hang on to, another because it was soft and enveloped her, another because she could sit across from me and could watch me. (The reassuring, comforting quality of the transitional object and the connection to the therapist as maternal object.) The cotherapist's passivity caused an imbalance. (He could not be cathected as a mothering object.) His passivity was seen as mirroring the group's rebellion against me. The group ignored him as if he didn't exist, and then finally that got talked about. Sexual issues about him came up, but these were at the level of early attachment: they were attached to 'mommy' and afraid of 'daddy'. It fitted in with their background of passive fathers and overwhelming mothers. (Having reestablished the transitional space, the group was able to verbalize a common focal conflict. The symbols of the conflict were the therapists.)

This vignette illustrates the necessity to establish a transitional space in order to function adequately as a group. For borderline patients, the transitional space has never been securely established as an intrapsychic mechanism, so that relocating the group led to disorientation. The transitional objects (chairs and seating arrangement) provided the degree of reassurance needed to restore

group cohesion and a group 'space' for the exploration of common tensions. In groups of 'normals', the same sequence takes place but with less anxiety. In addition, the transitional object has been replaced for them with the symbols of group life and unity.

Additional contributions of Winnicott

Winnicott developed two principles of psychoanalytic technique which are of prime importance for group consultants: 'holding' and 'objective countertransference'. Holding consists of the therapist's ability to sustain the patient during periods of intense emotionality or regression. The therapist functions as a maternal object and environment, not so much by his overt need-satisfying behaviors (some therapists have, of course, housed, fed, or otherwise taken care of their patients), but by the consistent and caring use of the listening process and of psychoanalytic technique. Thus holding is similar to Bion's concept of the 'container'. Holding by the therapist may include attentive listening, reliability of the therapeutic contract and process, and sensitively attuned and correctly timed interpretations, all of which indicate to the patient that he is not alone, abandoned, or intruded upon in the process of experiencing profound mental states and of placing his trust in the therapist. Winnicott's concept of holding, unlike therapeutic actions aimed directly at supporting the ego or meeting a need of the patient, is consistent with the psychoanalytic stance of exploring the deep unconscious. That is, Winnicott demonstrated how the psychoanalytic method itself is a holding environment.

The group consultant promotes group cohesiveness by holding the group system in the same way that this process operates in psychoanalysis. When the consultant's holding is not available, the group tends toward fragmentation, becomes distracted, acts out rather than verbalizes needs, or prematurely seeks to provide a structure for itself. Holding allows the group to experience deeply the emotions associated with group mentalities and to achieve a work group. In time, the members begin to introject these qualities of the consultant. At this point, the group itself becomes a holding environment for the process of insight and a cultural medium for a training, therapeutic, or personal growth experience.

Winnicott also was one of the first analysts to recognize the realistic component of the therapist's countertransference reactions. He suggested (1949) that profound feelings of love and

hate may be evoked *vis-à-vis* the patient, his transference, and his behavior, without implying that the analyst has an unresolved conflict of his own.

The awareness of 'objective countertransference' is a necessity for the group consultant, who is bound to experience enormous pressures from the confluence of group forces of primitive love and hate which will at times be directed towards him in the transference. The consultant may then act out with the group, become preoccupied with his own fears and anxieties, or dilute his interpretations and otherwise prevent the group from developing insight. The supervisor of the consultant may become discouraged with the supervisee's work or insist that it is the latter's personal conflict that is causing the group to behave ineffectively (Kernberg, 1978, pp. 3–4). The appropriate leadership response in such a situation is to introspect or reflect about the way one's conflicts may be influencing the group process and then to take the additional step of investigating what can be learned about the group itself from the leadership's responses to it.

The emotions of an entire group of people projected into the leadership may produce untoward effects. These collective emotions may be denied, distorted, or misperceived by consultants as well as membership and this may lead not only to poorly conducted groups but also to the loss of valuable information. Winnicott's concept of objective countertransference allows the consultants to use their inner reactions as an adjunctive, complementary research instrument to that of observing the group itself. The consultant is part of the group dynamic in every sense of the word: his inner responses are often the result of his being, in the words of Foulkes, a 'nodal point in the group matrix.' His own feelings are a barometer of group process.

No discussion of Winnicott would be complete without reference to his concept of the 'false self. Winnicott suggested that the child who is subjected to threats to his nascent selfhood may develop a split in which the self he communicates to others is a cover for what he is really experiencing, feeling, and needing. Meanwhile, the real self becomes walled off, buried, and split off from the emotional nurturance of others.

The splitting of the self into a social image and a hidden or alienated inner reality has been pointed out as well by Lacan (1949) and also in Laing's (1959) work on schizophrenia and Wynne *et al.* (1958) on pseudomutuality in the family. Social networks which

cannot permit the full expression of real feelings and issues promote false self interactions in which inner necessity is given at best a distorted representation in interpersonal relations. For example, Zaleznik (1977) suggested that such distortions may arise in business organizations which require excessive repression and conformity.

Guntrip and Balint: challenging basic beliefs

The work of Guntrip and Balint is included here to help round out the historical and theoretical picture of object relations theory as it emerged in Great Britain from the 1930s through the 1960s. (Numerous others should be included but that must wait for a much-needed definitive study of this profoundly important period in the history of psychoanalysis.)

Guntrip (1971, pp. 45–68) championed the cause of a non-mechanistic view of the person. His work brought into sharp relief two divergent understandings of psychoanalytic theory. On the one hand there is the concept of the mind as 'system ego:' a quasi-biological entity, a somatic and adaptive mechanism (cf. Hartmann, 1958). On the other, there is the principle of the higher-order elements of an emergent person, a 'supraordinate' self (Gedo and Goldberg, 1973, pp. 64–5). Guntrip interpreted object relations as such a higher order theory in which the human being is to be understood as distinctly subjective, interpersonal and social.

Such different views point to decidedly contrasting concepts of the group. The humanistic view espoused by Guntrip implies that the collective is a context for the establishment of human meaning. The 'self' and the 'object' in the group matrix are two specific constellations of meaning, and are derived from culture and the social utilization and adaptation of biological givens. The bioadaptive standpoint regards the self and object as mental representations and mechanisms which are required for the survival of the species. The group is merely a context for the playing out of inevitable biological imperatives which are unconsciously determined, timeless and beyond human choice. Object relations are merely the surface manifestations of shifting instinct gratification patterns.

The phantasy objects of Melanie Klein may be considered archaic expressions of survival through attachment (libido) and self-protection (aggression), or else representative of a distinctly human

tendency to become conscious of oneself (self-reflective knowledge) and to exercise free will (by managing the good and bad in oneself). Is the group ultimately a 'stage' for the display of instincts, or a forum for self-consciousness and self-realization? Such questions are the essence of the challenge that Guntrip presented to the metapsychology of psychoanalysis.

Following Guntrip's view, the group can be conceptualized as a network for, and the working through of, the interpenetrating subjectivities of the members. The individual members are changed by the choices they make, and it is the meaning they perceive and experience which shapes the very biological drives that infuse them. Guntrip's depiction of the person shows this (1961, p. 138):

> Freud's discovery of the super-ego and the development of 'internal object relations' theory accurately represents the human psyche as the kind of entity that carries on its own internal development by differentiating itself into a number of *dramatis personae*. Thus it maintains its own inner life in the personal form of a mental reproduction of its outer life as it feels and experiences. *The one person functions actually as a group of persons* [emphasis added-authors] and that is the psychologically objective fact that theory has to represent.

One may combine this position with Fairbairn's hypothesis concerning the nature of inner objects and group structure (1952, p. 153): The nature of the personality is determined by the internalization of an external object, and the nature of group relationships is in turn determined by the externalizations or projections of an internal object.' Fairbairn and Guntrip both perceived the introjective/projective relationship between the group in the person and the person in the group.

Balint made numerous clinical contributions, but his relevance to the present work focuses on his views regarding the non-differentiated status of the infant, *vis-à-vis* the environment, and the role of regression in determining the nature of the ego that the analyst is dealing with during various phases or aspects of treatment. Balint held that infant and environment-mother were biologically and psychologically a unit or 'interpenetrating harmonious mix-up', corresponding in this work (Chapter 2) to the unity of individual and group. He theorized that the infant was in a state of 'primary love' or object relatedness in opposition to

Freud's hypothesis of 'primary narcissism' or self-centered isolation. Disruption of this primary condition of relating produced a situation he termed the 'basic fault', a pathologically discontinuous state of the personality. This structural rupture was primary and superseded the problems of conflict and repression associated with the Oedipal phase. Balint maintained that therapy performed in the area of the basic fault implied important technical considerations, and he emphasized the change in the nature of language and ideation that accompanied such regressions. Concerns of existence, or ongoingness, and survival were hallmarks of this more basic phase. Like Guntrip, he emphasized anxieties about existence of the self, rather than the gratification of needs, as being at the center of development. In the group, regressions to this early, basic fault level are the common experience of all participants. The change in the members' ideation, and especially language, points to the activation of primitive dynamics and mentation, and a fusion and boundary awareness conflicts.

Review: the significance of object relations theory for group psychology

Object relations theory represents the confluence of psychoanalytic thinking centered around the relationship between the development of the mind and of human interaction. The central construct of this school of thought is the object, which is both an internal image and a real environmental person or context. The *exchange processes* between the inner object and the outer, real object form a *total system* which is the prototype of group relations understood as collective inner experience and as an actual spatiotemporal field.

The Kleinians emphasize the primitive defense mechanisms and phantasies inherent in human communications and interrelatedness. A shift away from the drive as the core construct of psychoanalysis was explicitly stated by Fairbairn, bringing object relations theory into general systems congruence with the study of interactive and interpersonal processes. The unconscious is not a drive mechanism but an expression of the need for completeness and unification through the object and a level of meaning present in every communication. Further, the individual is not a closed system who happens to attach himself to a social group but an open system whose dynamics are partly group processes, internally represented.

Winnicott's particular contribution was to view the mother/ infant dyad as a system and to give credence to the impact of the maternal environment upon the development of the self and its relation to the culture. The transitional object and space suggest a matrix where person and culture, internal and external environment meet (and can yet remain differentiated). This matrix is founded upon the responsiveness of the mother, facilitating a sense of security which can be appropriated by the child in his transitional object, which in turn evolves into metaphor, symbol, and culture.

Guntrip suggested that the basic human anxiety is over the loss of the self, i.e. the fear of fragmentation and annihilation, an interesting basis for the analysis of groups as a collective effort to restore a sense of self through the group and which points to the necessity for the consultant to assist the group in working out these profound anxieties. Guntrip was a synthesizer who advocated basic changes in psychoanalytic theory away from mechanism and biologism towards humanism. He articulated the viewpoint that the personality is an internalized group, that object relations and group relations directly parallel one another, analogous to Miller and Rice's (1967) proposition that organizational systems are projections of internalized object relations.

Finally, Balint argued for primary love over against primary narcissism, that infant and object exist in a primal oneness. The notion of a self-centered ego gradually extending its interest to include the object had to be replaced by a hypothesis of fundamental bonding. Balint's view is consistent with the principle of the gradual non-differentiation of the self out of the group matrix. It is interesting to contrast Balint's notion of a primary fusion of self and object with Kohut's narcissistic self-object discussed in the next chapter.

Working principles

Several linking constructs have been outlined here as potential candidates for an integrated psychology of person and group:

1 *The exploration of the primitive anxieties of the paranoidschizoid and depressive positions have stimulated important hypotheses about group motivation and cohesion.* Beyond conceptualizing group development as a reenactment of

the Oedipal Complex in which the leader symbolizes the father figure, it is possible to think of the group matrix as a maternal object and environment which is reacted to as both a comforter and as a threat to the integrity of the self and the scene of a ritual in which separateness, loss, and aggression are worked out. Entry into the beginning group elicits anxieties defended regressively through the basic assumption states. In time, the (depressive) tolerance for ambivalence towards the leader increases, leading to a mourning process. In this respect, *group development consists in a shift of interest from the self to the object with a gradual integration of part-objects into whole objects*.

2 *Projective identification is conceptualized from the vantage point of the communication process and the containment of inner mentation in external objects and structures, and the group fills the mother's function as a repository of both uncomfortable and ecstatic inner states*. The group-as-a-whole has the potential in its evolving structures and functions to contain and to be identified with the inner objects and phantasies of the membership. Projections are into a total group environment and its mental representation (cognitive map; life space) and Foulkes' notion of transposition may be regarded as a horizontal 'fanning out' of projective identifications into the various facets of the group. Since the inner objects are then, in a sense, 'lost' or disavowed through externalization, the business of the group becomes the reownership of the self and object elements that have been utilized in the creation of the group matrix. The themes of sacrifice and of rebirth common in group formation and in its idealization and protection reflect the giving of elements of oneself to the group and the birth of the self through identification with the group.

3 Group evolution from an undifferentiated matrix may be understood in terms of its transitional quality, incorporating both subjectivity and objectivity, fantasy and reality. *The structures of 'self and 'group' are defined in the intermediate area of the transitional phenomena. The group evolves its 'common tension,' 'focal conflict,' and/or climate through transitional space in which its communications are shaped into a unified gestalt*. At this juncture group communication has structured itself into three universes of discourse: the

internal world of each member; a transitional mythology and symbol system; and the group as group, which consists of the actual situations and cultural conditions.

4 Object relations theory posits 'a functional similarity (at a formal-structural level) between the context of different systems. Thus, the same abstract model frequently can be applied to different contexts in different fields or disciplines' (Kissen, 1980, p. 31). The personality is a stable configuration of internal objects acquired in the development of interpersonal relations, an inner group. *The singular identity of the person results from the gradual integration of multiple self and object representations in the same way that the group identity and structure is the outcome of the communication among persons.*

5 Finally, the challenges to the drive theory posed by Fair bairn's object-seeking hypothesis and Balint's primary love has important implications for group theory. The paradigmatic group is not the herd seeking to meet its survival needs, but a collective search for object contact and meaning. Leaky and Lewin (1977, pp. 203–05), for example, held that cannibalism is not instinctual in origin but an attempt to maintain cultural continuity. The anthropology of Levi-Strauss is consonant with this view, since he considers 'primitive' symbols and mythemes to be derived from the social structure rather than being simply the result of instinctual repression. It is not a matter of either/ or: either cultural or instinctual, object or drive, narcissism or object relatedness. Rather, it is the problem of what is central to the understanding of the phenomenon in question. The nature of the drives had to be grasped before a proper comprehension of object relations could be attained. However, it increasingly appears that *the correct view of the drives vis-à-vis object relations is that they are both crucial from the very beginning.* This theoretical shift is expressed by Loewald (1971), who states:

> …the object is no less an original element of the instinct than its pressure, aim, or source (p. 120).… In this connection it may be questioned whether the stimulation which becomes physically represented as instinct can be confined to 'inner', organismic stimulation, if 'external' stimulation by the mother enters into the formation of instinct (p. 122).… The problem is: how

what later is distinguished as object from subject, becomes differentiated, in the course of mental development, from instincts (p. 126).

Loewald, who is not an object relations theorist, is saying that the distinction between instinct and object, between the biological and environmental components of motivation, is not an innate given, but a psychosocial boundary that is formed in development. This point epitomizes the commonality among Melanie Klein, Fairbairn, Winnicott, Balint, and Guntrip. It is the relationship between group structure to internal objects which needs to be the basis of psychoanalytic group psychology. This relationship can be expressed as a movement from an initial undifferentiated state to one in which the boundary between self and object, internal and external becomes stable and distinct, a process which is never complete, but always retains its original quality of an 'interpenetrating harmonious mixup,' a symbiotic oneness of infant and mother, person and environment.

Chapter 4
Ego, self and identification

To continue the exploration of interactive constructs and propositions, if one thinks for a moment the study of development as a mountain and psychoanalysis as a tunnel to be made through it, then the digging may be started with either the object or the 'I', the ego. Eventually the two are likely to meet. In fact, in the history of psychoanalysis they have met many times, beginning with Freud's concepts of identification and of the internalization of an object relation within the ego. It is no accident that one of the earliest essays on the ego was Freud's 'Group Psychology the Analysis of the Ego'.

This chapter introduces a brief examination of ego psychology, the psychology of the self, and the processes comprising the separation-individuation phases of development, all with respect to their relevance to group psychology.

Ego psychology is an elaboration of Freud's structural model of the mind, its tripartite organization into id, ego, and superego. Freud (1922) gradually came to give the ego a central place in his theory, regarding it as performing multiple functions including those of signal anxiety, defense, conflict resolution, and reality testing. The meaning of ego shifted partially from the subjective 'I' of experience to a regulatory system and structure which had both conscious and unconscious components. As Grinker notes (Gedo and Goldberg, 1972, p. vii), this change was not clearly demarcated, leading to confusion over the psychoanalytic usage of the terms ego and self. Federn (1926–1952) and Anna Freud (1936, 1965) broke further ground, Federn through the study of the ego boundary which differentiates between self and object, and Ms Freud with her investigation of the defense mechanisms and her formulation of developmental lines.

Hartmann (1964) established ego psychology as a discipline which numerous workers have detailed and expanded. The positing by him (pp. 100–8) of autonomous and conflict-free spheres of ego-functioning opened the door to the study of a range of developmental processes. Conflict-free means that there are areas of behavior and mentation which are independent of the conflict between id and superego. The child development studies of Spitz (1959, 1965) and Mahler (1979) lean heavily on Hartmann's formulations, as do the investigations of culture, identity and the life cycle of Erickson (1950, 1959). Jacobson's views on depression (1971) and ego development (1964) represent a synthesis of ego psychology with object relations theory, and Kernberg's formulations about narcissism and borderline states are indebted to Jacobson (Kernberg, 1979) while extensively utilizing the views of other object relations theorists.

More recently, there has been conceptual confusion with respect to the pioneering work of Kohut on narcissism and the self. Kohut is clearly indebted to Hartmann in that he looks upon the self as a separate line of development from intrapsychic conflict. Yet Kohut's self is different from Hartmann's autonomous ego apparatuses. Kohut deliberately does not define the self (1977, pp. 310–12), making it difficult to compare his viewpoint with those of others.

Evolving views of the ego and ego boundary

The importance of the ego in group formation can be understood from three vantage points: (1) it is the portion of the mind which includes the perceptual apparatus and is in contact with external reality, and (2) it develops in large measure *via* the processes of internalization, that is, by assimilating significant others into its functional schema of self-images, object representations, and roles, and (3) it serves executive functions of monitoring and decision making. Thus, in its interaction with the group, the ego relates its activities to the external world as it is perceived, and as it is experienced under the influence of internalized representations of early interactions and familial experiences (modified of course by phantasies of the id). The 'decision' of which intrapsychic elements to activate, which to allow access to the group, and what to do about the subsequent feedback all belong to the gatekeeping, defensive, and decision-making province of the ego.

To condense a number of historical developments, three major shifts in the conceptualization of the ego have occurred in the evolution of psychoanalysis. First, the ego, initially equated with the conscious portion of the mind, has come to be seen as a system of functions and processes (of defense, identification, cognition, etc.). Second, this 'system ego' undergoes an epigenetic development in structure and organization according to a timetable established by biological and environmental forces which have the impact of a spatio-temporal field and not just discrete or traumatic actions. Spitz and Erickson, in particular, have formulated ego development in this way, borrowing extensively from embryology as a working model. A significant overlap exists between the ego field properties and the group field or life space, so that group development itself can be considered from the vantage point of epigenesis and the interplay of ego processes and group-*qua*-group processes, a view exemplified especially in the work of Slater (1966) and Gibbard (1974). Third, just as 'the shadow of the object fell upon the ego' (Freud, 1917), leading to object relations theory, so the 'penumbra' of self and identity emerged from it, that is, the implication that a 'higher order,' supraordinate system serves an integrating function for the whole personality with respect to the culture and the life cycle. In Foulkes' (1964, p. 180) terms, this integration is 'transpersonal,' bringing the person into a working alliance with his culture and reflecting early imprinting and mirroring processes.

The subsystems of the ego which especially interrelate with the group matrix are its boundary, identifications, and structuralization. The purpose now is to define each of these concepts and to show their group dynamic significance.

The ego boundary and group boundary conditions

According to Federn (1926–1952), the ego differentiates between wakefulness and sleep, reality and fantasy, self and world, by means of a boundary of which one is not ordinarily aware, but which under certain conditions such as the transition to or from sleep (hypnagogic and hypnopompic states) may become conscious. Wurmser (1978, pp. 248–53) quotes Heraclitus in a way that makes apparent the importance of the ego boundary in group life: 'Those who are awake have one and a common world; each one, however, of those who sleep turns to his own private world.'

The 'group-as-a-whole' is thus established through an awakening into it, and, as Friedemann (1974, p. 30) has suggested, its boundary is an extension of the ego boundary to the 'common world' of the group. It is a principle of the paradigm that *grouping is a state of consciousness* in which the ego boundary is selectively permeable in a way that allows for a hyper-awareness of commonality, Bion's (1959, pp. 88–91) 'protomental' effect and Foulkes' (1964, pp. 34, 290) condenser and resonance phenomena, a group analog to the skin boundary that surrounds the person, a delimitation of what is in the group environment. When the membership begins to talk with identification about 'the group,' they are referring to the phenomenological apperception of this change in boundary conditions, which is also the primordial psychological basis of group cohesion. Out of the many, one. The group boundary is thus a projection or extension of the ego boundary.

The ego boundary is both a contrast effect of what is inside and outside the self and a functional subsystem which 'opens' and 'closes' selectively to allow for exchange processes between the individual and the environment (Miller and Rice, 1967, pp. 52–5). This ego boundary makes the individual a 'nodal point in the group matrix.' In states of fusion, as evident in groups of psychotics or in enmeshed families, one can observe the lack of this nodal point or self-definitional quality as the group devolves into a disorganized and global mass, virtually without the 'who to whom' of individuated communication. Thus the ego boundary forms a semipermeable membrane and filter having variability of opening and closing (J.Durkin, 1980, pp. 27 ff.). As Federn points out, emotions such as oceanic oneness, anxiety, and paranoia are related to the permeability of the boundary, thus making these affects indicators of ego boundary conditions.

By way of an unusual example, a borderline female patient had acted out by ingesting psychotropic drugs about an hour before arriving at an outpatient group therapy session, presenting with a virtual brief psychosis. As the group, hearing the patient's withdrawn and primitive communications, became aware of her condition, panic and a contagion effect set it. There was a temporary loss of differentiation whereby members no longer spoke to each other but began to reassure themselves about their own

boundaries ('What's going on in here?,' 'I feel I'm losing touch,' 'What can we do?,' Should we ask her to leave now?'). The therapist responded to the panic as a call for him to manage the group. Reality testing was utilized as the method of crisis intervention, and as the group was able to monitor what was taking place, they became supportive of the self-drugged member and began to resume normal communication patterns and problem solving. They decided to allow the patient to remain for the duration of the session but established the rule that no one be permitted into the group under the influence of chemicals, that is, they managed their anxieties over fusion by setting limits (intra-group boundaries) and making aggressive demands (reestablishing themselves as persons). The event constituted a disturbance of ego boundaries of a brief nature where a group contagion effect could be observed directly.

Although the flux of ego boundaries in groups is rarely as pathologically-induced as in the above example, certainly such changes in individual ego states are related to group development (Hartman and Gibbard, 1974). One can make inferences about ego state from affects and communications which reflect degrees of fusion and differentiation (cf. Ashbach, 1986, and chapter 12 of this monograph).

The ego boundary faces outward to the group and inward to the self. It is a transactional structure which interfaces the self system and the group system. While group boundaries are not, as such, ego boundaries, but independent and higher order structures determined by the needs of the group (as, for example, subgroups or departments of an organization have geographic and status boundaries), the processes of identification and projection create a symbolic equation of the two. The degree of investment which the members have in preserving a group structure is a function of the ego boundary. When the latter is secure, members can tolerate much greater variation in group activity than when the ego boundary is subject to refusion, as in the early stages of group development. Thus, the ego boundary is equated in fantasy and action with regions of delimitation, change, and obstacle in the group life space. It is not exceptional, therefore, to observe in group relations conferences regressive behaviors in the interactions between subgroups and in peripheral or 'off-stage' areas of the

conference. As the group boundary is crossed, a variety of insecurities and inner conflicts occur.

To summarize, the ego boundary is a subsystem of the ego which distinguishes between inner or self experience and the outer group or world. The movement from individual to group life is a manifestation and cause of a change in the ego boundaries from closed to open. Despite its simplicity, the ego boundary touches upon many areas of interpersonal functioning and therefore may help to correlate the multiple systems which comprise the group matrix.

Ego identification and internalization

Group practitioners are well aware of the conscious identifications which members form with each other and the group to which they belong and which are a vital part of group evolution. Such identifications are made on the basis of observed or fantasied similarities, common goals, and empathy. The formation of a cohesive group is in large measure the result of mutual identification. Freud recognized that identification is the basis upon which individuals form a group, and he attempted to define some of the unconscious and transferential mechanisms involved.

The object relations theorists, especially Melanie Klein, saw that projective/introjective mechanisms are the earliest modes of identification. Freud provided additional considerations about the 'fate' of the object in the ego. He pointed the way to subsequent work on the connection between object relations and ego development. These changes involve two interlocking processes: internalization and structuralization.

Internalization consists of the ways in which an object becomes part of the ego and behavior patterns of significant others are imitated, role-modeled and otherwise made part of the person's own behavioral repertoire. Hartmann (1958) defined internalization as the means by which the organism achieves increased independence and autonomy from its environment. The result is that 'reactions which originally occurred in relation to the external world are increasingly displaced into the interior of the organism' (p. 40). Kanzer (1979, p. 319) sees this process as one in which inner structure provides the regulators that first made the organism dependent on external controls. A developmental example is the ability of the child to feed and groom himself. In groups, the

leadership function may be 'internalized' and thereby taken into new settings and situations. Pertinent to internalizations in groups is Sandler and Sandler's (1978) position that object relations are 'intrapsychic role relationships.' That is, the internalization processes which are most relevant to interpersonal relations are those which establish a predisposition or 'valence' to react to external objects in a social context. Internalization is a learning process which gives the person increasing autonomy in a social context by means of the structural changes effected in object relations such that they are transferred into functional parts of the ego system (Meissner, 1980b).

Schafer (1972, p. 412) maintains that internalization needs no other constructs to explain it than the phantasy 'of taking objects into the body' (incorporative phantasies). 'The unsatisfactoriness of "internalization" *for systematic purposes* is all the more apparent when…we realize that a clear need for this metaphor has never been established in psychoanalytic theory' (p. 434). For Schafer, the assimilation of behaviors from others can be understood at a descriptive level and does not require a quasispatial construct such as internalization. What Schafer omits to consider is that internalization refers not only to a change in location from outside to inside the body (which he correctly views as an incorporative phantasy), but also to a change of structure and function of the object relation.

This mechanism, as described by Freud in 'Mourning and melancholia' (1917), is a dynamic process whereby the ego literally remakes the introjected object through a metabolic process of mourning. *Internalization, in the case of depression, is a specific response to the traumatic loss of or separation from the object in which the ego incorporates the lost object, punishes it in the self, and transforms the object into a part (structure) of the ego ideal. The change of the object into structure is internalization.* This is the important 'addendum' of ego psychology to object relations theory and to the nature of introjections and identifications. A person or a group can role-model and imitate behaviors (of a parent or group leader for example) and have introjective phantasies without internalizing the object into the ego or the superego, the sociopath, for example, or the borderline group member who patterns himself after the therapist or leader but cannot assimilate the necessary ego functions which allow him to tolerate separations.

Internalization is a durable hierarchy shift from the system of external object relations, group, leadership to the ego and superego. Consultants and therapists who aim for persistent changes above and beyond temporary adaptation to group norms will be most interested in the dynamics of internalization. Schafer is, however, correct in issuing a warning against referring to imitation, role-modeling, introjection, or identification themselves as internalizations.

Meissner (1980b) adds that the real, external object is perceived in accord with the inner phantasy objects and their representations:

> The relationship with external objects will be modified in such a way as to confirm or realize the characteristics of these inner objects. The ego in a sense is thought *to scan the outer world for potential objects which either fulfill or can be manipulated into the role of the inner object* (italics added; p. 238).

What ultimately is internalized is the result of the interaction between the outer object and the unconscious phantasy or representation. Meissner's phraseology captures the quality of transference and resistance in the group situation: a scanning process to fulfill or manipulate roles in order to reduce the dissonance between inner and group experience.

Structuralization as a developmental process

Ego psychology, particularly the work of Spitz (1959) and Erickson (1950) on developmental phases, proposes that mental structure evolves epigenetically through a timetable which results from the interaction of biology and environment. Intrapsychic conflict can take place only when the id, ego, and superego have become sufficiently organized that the ego's prime task is to manage the demands of id impulses and is opposed by conscience internalized in the superego. For some psychoanalysts the tripartite model of internal conflict is the basis of all work. The ego psychology position is that these structures are the *culmination* of development, not the beginning of it. Therefore, some psychological processes cannot be understood as intrapsychic conflict, but must be interpreted in terms of primitive and narcissistic structures, i.e. early mental organization and the relation to the care taking object.

Group formulations based upon the tripartite model emphasize the influence of the psychic 'agencies' and of conflict in group formation. For example, the notion of the group as a collective superego assumes that this structure is externalized into the leader and the group matrix. There is some truth to that statement: a group *will eventually develop* norms and institutions which mirror and institutionalize superego structure in the form of law, guilt, and reparation. However, in early group formation, the massive regression produces a destructuralization the consequence of which is the lack of a firm superego and the resurfacing of infantile impulses. Freud (1921, p. 72ff), citing the work of Le Bon, describes the devolution of psychic structure in groups as follows:

> Here is yet another important consideration for helping us to understand the individual in a group [quoting Le Bon]: 'Moreoever, by the mere fact that he forms part of an organized group, a man descends several rungs in the ladder of civilization. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian—that is, a creature acting by instinct…' A group is impulsive, changeable, and irritable. It is led almost exclusively by the unconscious. Nothing about it is premeditated…it is incapable of perseverance. It cannot tolerate any delay between its desire and the fulfilment of what it desires. It has a sense of omnipotence; the notion of impossibility disappears for the individual in a group…. A group is extraordinarily credulous and open to influence. It has no critical faculty…. It thinks in images…whose agreement with reality is never checked by any reasonable agency…

The group as a crowd or mass, the regressed group, does not have a superego nor even an ego. It has regressed not only in the libido, but also 'formally,' that is, in its thought process. It cannot, according to Freud, tolerate a delay of gratification, and it thinks in (primary process) images. Psychic structure itself is undone, so that reality perception, conflict and conscience as such emerge only gradually in the evolution of the group, as they do in child development. The tripartite model and intrapsychic conflict are not appropriate constructs for regressive group formation.

Psychic structure, in such situations, undergoes a radical process of splitting wherein primitive phantasy elements erupt into the consciousness-container of the group system. This is commonly seen

through symbolic equations of the leadership with all good or all bad qualities. More advanced and sophisticated structures, and their functions, are isolated in other areas of consciousness. This can be understood when specified members become vessels for the 'lost' ego and rationality of the group.

The theory of group development needs to articulate not only the conflictual themes of group phases but also *the degree and kind of structuralization* in each phase. The concepts of 'common group tension' (Ezriel, 1950) and 'group focal conflict' (Whitaker and Lieberman, 1964), for example, were stated before a full picture of structuralization had been provided by psychoanalysis. Therefore, a task of group psychology is to incorporate structuralization into its framework. Saravay (1978) has made an attempt to do so:

> The appearance of the oral-dependent phase during group formation is explained by the regression induced in group-related ego and superego structures. Through the leader's interpretations of the transferences of each phase, identifications are acquired which produce a redifferentiation of the members' group-related ego and superego structures. Each structural advance produces a corresponding advance in the instinctual transference wishes modulated through these structures (p. 505).

Within psychoanalysis, there are several important formulations of the development of psychic structure. Kohut (1971) emphasized the development of the ego ideal as a narcissistic structure. McDevitt (1979) provided a description of structuralization of object relations within the framework of the mother/ child dyadic relationship. Meissner (1979) has given important considerations of the interrelationship and interpenetration of (a) relationships with significant others, (b) internal objects and their representations, (c) the development of the self, and (d) identification and internalization. These dimensions are necessary for a complete description of internalization.

An elegant model of structuralization has been provided by Kernberg (1976, pp. 19–54), utilizing formulations of Hartmann, Jacobson, Erickson, Melanie Klein, and others. It is summarized here as an example of how the development of structure may be understood, and should prove useful to the reader provided (s)he

keeps in mind that structure formation is a relatively new area of theory, many of whose facets have yet to be explored.

Kernberg begins in agreement with Hartmann that at birth there exists an 'undifferentiated matrix' of drives and functions which have yet to be organized. The first gradient within this matrix is between pleasure and unpleasure, so that there evolve islands of positively and negatively toned 'self-object-affect units.' The primitive expulsion of the negative affect states leads to the emergence of the defense mechanisms of projection and introjection across a primitive ego boundary.

Up to then, there is no ego as such, but only the 'management' of mental states using primitive mechanisms of defense. Kernberg holds that the ego develops from introjects which are organized through the use of splitting, as the differentiation between self representations and object representations becomes secure. That is, ego functions as such are first activated in a condition of introjection of part-attributes of the maternal object in which the distinction between self and other has been established. The ego system is subsequently organized around these introjects.

As the ego emerges as an organized structure, the positive and negative representations are integrated into self and object perceptions, facilitating the ego's stability and further consolidation as a structure. On the basis of these identifications, the ego exercises a repressive force against impulses, establishing the id as a separate agency. The superego similarly evolves through further identifications with parental demands and prohibitions. Finally, 'ego identity' represents the highest level in the organization of internalization processes, and Erickson's conceptualization is followed here closely. Ego identity refers to 'the overall organization of identifications and introjections under the guiding principle of the synthetic function of the ego' (pp. 31f).

Kernberg's schema has several important features. First, object relations, defenses, and ego functions work together to produce structure and in turn depend upon that structure. This means that when one describes object relations and defenses of the group, one can infer in some measure the level of structure formation in that group. Second, evolution of structure is as follows: (1) undifferentiated matrix, (2) selfobject-affect units, (3) self-object differentiation (ego boundary) with splitting, (4) integrated whole objects and identifications in an organized ego structure, (5)

repression and the development of the tripartite 'agencies', and (6) identity formation.

Kernberg's ideas give greater meaning to group psychological terms that hitherto have had only vague referents. For example, Bion's 'protomental' communication refers to self-object-affect units: there is no structure as such in this very primitive modality of expression. The identifications among the membership of which Freud speaks are a more advanced development which require ego differentiation and a perception of roles in the group, particularly that of the leader. The emergence of libidinized sexual themes in a group may be an indication of its organization along the lines of the tripartite agencies and the use of repression as a predominant defense mechanism. In this way, phase development in groups, as Saravay suggests, is the gradual recovery and reconsoldiation of psychic structure 'lost' in the regression that occurs in the formation of the group as an entity.

Structural development implies an emotional acceptance of the loss of the object relations characteristic of the previous stage. Objects become psychic structure, which conversely and regressively devolves into primitive object relations. In the evolving group matrix, object relations of previous stages have been internalized so that transference interpretations must be in the 'here and now' because the object relations occur in a new structural medium.

The psychology of the self

The psychoanalytic study of the self lacks conceptual clarity and poses special problems. It is intuitively and phenomenologically evident that the self is a reference point for human experience, though no single definition captures its totality or essence. It is described variously as the subjective 'I' (Jacobson, 1964; Kernberg, 1975), a supraordinate structure (Gedo and Goldberg, 1973, pp. 53–69) which organizes the personality via identity (Lichtenstein, 1977), or an interpersonal system (Sullivan, 1953). Whether the self is seen as an aspect of the ego, or an agency 'beyond' it, it differs from the ego in that it is the repository of experience and a system of regulation that incorporates 'definitional' dimensions of the person, and for which integration and cohesion are important dimensions.

Kohut's work (1977) on the self has given rise to theoretical and technical controversies. His emphasis on 'mirroring' and 'idealization' are, however, helpful to the study of the group. These features have always been key concepts of psychoanalytic group psychology. Foulkes' 'mirror reaction' and Freud's 'replacement of the ego ideal by an object' are group dynamic principles related to the self as a developmental system of the personality.

Mirroring, the self, and the group

Foulkes and Anthony (1957, pp. 150–51) consider mirroring to be a potent force in group psychotherapy:

> The group situation has been likened to a 'hall of mirrors' where an individual is confronted with various aspects of his social, psychological, or body image. By a careful inner assessment of these aspects, he can achieve in time a personal image of himself not grossly out of keeping with the external and objective evaluation. He can discover his real identity and link it up with past identities.
>
> In the development of a baby, the so-called 'mirror reactions' help in the differentiation of the self from the notself. The reflections of the self from the outside world lead to greater self-consciousness, so that the infant Narcissus eventually learns to distinguish his own image from that of other images. The mirror reactions are, therefore, essential mechanisms in the resolution of this primary narcissism.
>
> It can be assumed that a member of any therapeutic group has had a disturbed emotional upbringing, and that a good deal of narcissism belonging to his infancy still continues to function in his adult life. The mirror reactions in the group help to counteract this morbid self-reference. By sympathizing and understanding, by identifying with, and imitating, by externalizing what is inside and internalizing what is outside, the individual activates within himself the deep social responses that lead to his definition, in the first place, as a social being.

Despite a definitional ambiguity (self here is equated with self image, identity, self consciousness, identification, and internalization/externalization of the object relation), three

important statements are made. First, an aspect of all groups is their reflection of any number of images and representations in the self system (Pines, 1982, 1984b). Second, group mirroring modulates narcissism to more mature forms (one can question, with Balint, whether this narcissism is 'primary') and strengthens the ego boundary and selfobject differentiation. Mirroring thus facilitates the development of psychic structure. Third, one's definition as a social being occurs through what Freud terms the 'identification of the ego with an object.' Social interaction and self-definition occur together, so that the instincts alone do not secure the self, which is an organized entity formed in communication with another: the self develops from a mirroring type of object relation.

Psychoanalytic perspectives on the self come from a number of schools of thought (Ego psychology, Jung, Lacan, Kohut, for example). A 'composite' view shall be provided here which it is hoped will bring out a few salient points about the self with regard to the group process.

The infant, through coordinated activity with the mother (cf. Brazelton and Als, 1979) and through 'mutual cuing' and imitation, sees itself 'reflected' in the mother's behavior. Mutual recognition is invested not only with 'object libido' but also with 'narcissistic libido', that is, it is not only the attachment to mother, but also self recognition, cohesion, and love which is fostered. Insofar as the mother delights in the child, she becomes, in Kohut's terms, a 'selfobject', whose function is to mirror and support the infant's emerging grandiose/omnipotent self in its age-appropriate phase development. The vicissitudes of the self *vis-à-vis* the selfobject forms a developmental line in which grandiosity is gradually modified, by a series of 'trans muting internalizations' into healthy age-appropriate narcissism and self-esteem in each phase of development.

Kohut maintains that it is the cohesion of the self which is essential to its development. Cohesion (wholeness and integration) is facilitated by empathic mirroring, i.e., the ability to accurately reflect not only behavior but internal states as well. Faulty mirroring is experienced as a narcissistic injury which can lead to rage, fragmentation, and depletion. The failure of early mirroring can also lead to a pathological splitting of the self characteristic of the narcissistic personality disorder.

Kohut's point of view agrees with Foulkes' that a primary function of the group is to mirror the self. That is, group

participation can restore cohesion through empathy (and a compensatory grandiose overassessment of the self as a transference illusion shared by the membership). This mirroring correlates with a symbiotic oneness that is colored by early grandiose/omnipotent phantasies. The group becomes a selfobject for the members, a resonating and exciting experience which 'fuels' the self and maintains its cohesion.

This mirroring has both an infantile and mature motivational aspect to it. The seeking of the lost grandiosity of the symbiotic orbit and early practicing stage of development is one powerful reason for participation in the group. Such infantile gratifications can be understood to be a central element in all group membership. More mature mirroring restores and enlarges the self through empathic communication, and the differentiated participation in the lives of the other members.

The subdivisions of the mirror transference also help to locate the developmental level of the group at any given moment. Kohut sees the mirroring to be achieved through: (1) merger through the extension of the grandiose self (the most primitive level where the least differentiation is allowed), (2) the alter-ego transference (twinship) where differentiation has proceeded a bit further but the group member assumes that he and the group are basically at one, and (3) the mirror transference in the narrower sense, where the group is acknowledged but exists basically to mirror the narcissistic cathexis of the member.

In terms of both personal and social pathology, mirroring of grandiosity must gradually be tempered with realistic self assessment or the inevitable failures of the group and leadership will result in narcissistic injury and rage. Sociologically, the 'Ubermensch' (Superman) concept of Nazi Germany was a group representation of aggressively and pathologically fueled grandiosity and omnipotence. Other cultural 'symptoms' of grandiosity: *machismo* (the fusion of omnipotence and male sexuality), bisexuality, authoritarianism, polymorphous perversity, and addictions, for example, suggest that the culture has failed in its mirroring function, resulting in epidemiological acting out, developmental arrest, and/or the abrogation of leadership responsibilities (Lasch, 1978). Literature, such as Mann's *Death in Venice*, may deal with failures of mirroring in the culture. Mann's work explores the emptiness and depletion of the self and its search for a narcissistic homosexual identification of an idealized youthful love object in the context of a failing culture.

Kohut's theory implies, then, that the group matrix serves as both a mirror and an extension of an incomplete, fragmented, and/or depleted portion of a self system which is either threatened by the group situation itself or which experienced faulty parenting in a cultural setting that, for example, has not given adequate support to the mother/infant dyad (cf. Fraiberg, 1977). In this view, the group is considered not so much in terms of its externalized object relations (Fairbairn's position) but rather as a milieu or setting which potentially offers a degree of empathy and nurturing to the membership, with an allowance for the unfolding of the mirror transference. The latter, in Kohut's view, is a necessary development which promotes the growth of the self. Interestingly, the Rogerian approach to counseling, the Alcoholics Anonymous groups, and Virginia Satir's method of family therapy have long recognized the need of the self to be reflected empathically and to have a milieu which focuses on its growth and esteem rather than only its defenses and conflicts.

The selfobject is an interactive construct which differs from object relations concepts such as projective/introjective identification yet is connected to them. It exemplifies the complementarity principle: the selfobject is a real person who is at the same time an extension of the self (Ornstein, 1981, p. 357). The selfobject is outside the self but is experienced as a part of the self, and its absences or failures are experienced as a change in the self. The interactive boundary is around the self and selfobject together, a partial fusion of the two, while in projective/introjective processes, the self and object are primitively distinct from one another. An hypothesis which relates the two types of objects, and hence self psychology and object relations theory, is that the selfobject and the part-object of projective/introjective processes form a complementary pair which work together in the developmental process (cf. Grotstein, 1982). Such a synthesis suggests a 'dual track' view of groups as self processes and object relations dynamics working in tandem, a type of 'double helix' situation in which narcissistic mirroring and object attachment/ identification form concurrent dimensions of group development.

Kohut's view on the self is an important but incomplete perspective. It omits, for example, a consideration of the importance of images in narcissism. In the Narcissus myth, the protagonist is beset with images of himself in a pool. Images of a visual and auditory nature occur in this myth, and narcissism,

initially pleasurable, becomes punishment in the form of exile from others. In narcissistic depletion, these images become frozen and lifeless. Flaws or imperfections endanger the image like the hidden crack in a sculpture and unlike the resilience of the adaptive ego. The vanity of looking in the mirror creates a projected double (cf. Lacan, 1949) and its frozen, perfectionistic quality suggests a hidden terror of variation and ugliness. Similarly, the affect of shame is important to the dynamics of the group as the members begin to 'face' each other.

The group situation evokes comparison of oneself with other selves. In group, the self becomes alienated from itself and externalized into images, impressions, and personalities. Intimacy of the dyad is lacking, and a process of depersonalization takes place. Goffman (1979) exemplified alienation in advertisement photographs which included 'rituals of subordination' and 'licensed withdrawal.' Regarding the former, 'a classic stereotype of defence is that of lowering oneself physically in some form or other of prostration' (p. 40). The latter is seen in 'involvements which remove them psychologically from the social situation at large, leaving them unoriented in it and to it, and presumably, therefore, dependent on the protectiveness and good will of others who are (or might come to be) present' (p. 56). Body language here expresses the relationship of the self to its selfobject.

The healthy mirroring of which Foulkes and Anthony speak can only occur with the re-ownership of the self representations from their projected condition (Lacan, 1968). Such a restorative process takes place through feedback and empathy. Mirroring, in one respect, creates a double, a narcissistic image of perfection rather than a true self. Therapeutic empathy derives from a discourse which restores the subject to himself, a discourse which is at a feeling level, metaphorical, linguistic and auditory (Major, 1980) and which gives meaning to the group interaction. The face-to-face 'visual' mirroring so evident in the group can either obscure or facilitate the linguistic and auditory mirroring vital to the development of the self. According to Bower (1977, p. 38), 'The first complete smiles appear to be elicited by the human voice.' In addition, to quote Major (p. 459), 'The ear functions at the instinctual level. Like the voice of Echo, a voice is solicited, a circular voice is heard, it is everywhere, both inside and outside.'

A group must experience types of discourse which could be described as exegesis, myth, poetry, metaphor, and catharsis in

order for the members to recover their lost selves (Schermer, 1985; this work, chapter 10). For Freud, 'the myth…is the step by which the individual emerges from group psychology.' The self is established through a particular type of narrative in which its subjectivity is reflected back to itself and through which its authenticity and individuality can emerge from the group mentality. In this way, the initial 'house of mirrors' is 'transmuted' into cohesive selves.

The self and the ego ideal

There is a polarity in the self which corresponds to a duality of group life. This correspondence provides an important conceptual basis for linking several disparate ideas into a perspective on the relationship between narcissism and group life. The two poles are the mirror self and the ego ideal, which according to Kohut (1971, pp. 242–3) are related respectively to the ambitions and ideals which a person brings into his life trajectory and which can be assumed here to play an important role in the collective goals of the group-as-a-whole, especially through role development and particularly the role of the leader.

On the one side, there are ego identifications among the members, the group dynamic explicated by Freud (1921, pp. 105– 11). The 'mirror reaction' consists of such identifications. Mirror transference more specifically is a revival of the early narcissistic types of identification in which self and object are equated, in Kohut's terms, identifications with the selfobject; or if one prefers to use an object relations model, then the narcissistic identifications are introjects.

On the other side of the polarity is the ego ideal, particularly as it is projected into the leader. For Freud the ego and ego ideal are in the relationship of 'a differentiating grade in the ego' (pp. 129–34). He regards the regressive refusion of ego and ego ideal as the source of disinhibition of impulses in groups. Celebration rituals and other temporary reductions of social requirements stem from the false equation of ideals and id impulses in which the latter are projected into the leader or a unique member who is then perceived as encouraging the impulse behavior. Gibbard (1974) has referred to this group role as the 'seducer'.

Freud pointed to a relationship between the idealization of the leader and the identification of the members with each other.

Idealization and identification form a complementary pair in the group-wide transference.

According to Kohut, the relationship between the self and selfobject exists in a similar complementary pair: mirroring and idealization, considered as functions upon which the development of the self depends. The self system as conceptualized by Kohut and the group system as understood by Freud thus converge in the region of narcissistic identifications. The group and leader are selfobjects for mirroring and idealization respectively. In retrospect, the basis for Freud's analysis of groups in terms of the ego becomes clearer. Freud was suggesting that group dynamics are based upon a structural change in the ego or the self. This structural modification is caused by a dilemma: the fantasy of an exclusive attachment to the leader (which he compares to hypnosis) is in conflict with the awareness of the presence of others who bear a similar relation to the leader. The path of least emotional resistance to resolving this dilemma is narcissistic. The member, leader, and group become equated after the fashion of primitive narcissistic identifications in which the object, ego, and ego ideal are fused. *This interpretation supplies the true meaning of 'group transference', a mirroring and idealizing transference induced by the copresence of several or many individuals.*

Thus, the sum and substance of Freud's point of view regarding group formation is that it consists of *narcissistic identifications*. Freud established the paradox that the motive for group participation is not so much object love as self love. First and foremost, group life revives a condition of primitive selfhood in which the group is a mirror of internal states and of the omnipotent self.

Symbiosis and the separation-individuation process

Margaret Mahler and her coworkers have, over a period of four decades, evolved an approach to the study of child development which has great breadth and depth and utilizes both intrapsychic and interactive frames of reference, seeking to integrate observations of the mother/infant dyad with historical reconstructions from adult analyses. Their framework allows for the testing of hypotheses derived from the consulting room as well as detailing and linking together diverse observations about emotional

development. The focus thus far has been on the development of the ego with increasing emphasis upon object relations and the self. An overview of Mahler's thinking is presented here to suggest the utility of her schema for group dynamics as well as to point to the way in which the several facets of development interrelate and interpenetrate. For Mahler, the multiple dimensions of intrapsychic development achieve their integration in the interactive process whereby the infant separates psychologically from the mother in an ongoing dyadic relationship which expands to include significant others.

Mahler's work is based in direct observation of mother/infant pairs, and she has been commendably careful not to generalize her findings prematurely to adults. The present authors hope that a tentative application of Mahler's point of view to group psychology does not constitute too great an 'inductive leap' from a research paradigm intended primarily for the study of child development.

According to Kauff (1977), aspects of the symbiosis/separation-individuation process are repeated in groups as both individual valences and group processes. For example, as Kauff (pp. 9–17) pointed out, the termination of groups or members revives early conflicts over separation from the maternal object. Mahler's concepts are quite descriptive of the ways in which departing group members may relate to the leader or group psychotherapist. Additionally, group members separate and individuate from a group-wide symbiosis and groups themselves may separate from each other in this manner. That is, the separation-individuation process is one which is reiterated in the family, social group, inter-group relations, and culture.

A brief description of Mahler's methodology shows how she considers the mother/infant dyad to be a field phenomenon. Clinical studies of psychopathology in children are basic to her work, which began with the treatment of childhood psychoses (1968). However, the more recent focal point for Mahler is the way the normal mother and infant relate to each other as a pair. The manner in which the infant conforms to the mother's body, the mutual cuing that takes place between them, the physical distance which the child moves from the mother, the length of time the child can spend away from the mother, and so on, are considered milestones in the child's ego development and indicators of the quality of the mutual object relation. These observations are of space, communication, and interrelationship of boundaries as well as of mutual stresses and

tensions. Interactions are observed and inferences are made about the characteristics of the total system and the internal dynamics of each of the participants. For example, in Mahler's 'symbiotic' phase, the interactions include gazing, smiling, and mutual play with a highly sensitized awareness and bodily responsiveness. The total system of the dyad (and by extension, the group) has the characteristic of an 'orbit' (Mahler, Pine, and Bergman, 1975) or an 'envelope' (Brazelton and Als, 1979, p. 167). Internally, the infant is experiencing an omnipotence and sense of security corresponding to a state of intense caring and concern of the mother for him. The three processes: intrapsychic, interactive and total field or orbit work in tandem according to a developmental timetable.

An overview of Mahler's phases follows. The phase developments in her schema include the 'forerunners of separation,' i.e. 'normal autism' and 'symbiosis,' and the subphases of separation-individuation: 'differentiation,' 'practicing,' 'rapprochement', and 'consolidation of individuality and the beginnings of emotional object constancy.' The normal Oedipus Complex takes place subsequently in the context of emerging individuation and object constancy and is a culmination of the developmental process. The phase-specific developments are as follows, based on Mahler, Pine, and Bergman (1975) with additional comments about group process:

Normal autism (Birth to 1 month of age).

The age levels are from Mahler, Pine, and Bergman (1975) and are stated here only to give a rough idea of the timing of the phases. They may vary among children and among cultures.

The neonate, according to Mahler, is wrapped in a protective shell of the stimulus barrier, with extrauterine survival being the main developmental task. Most of the time the neonate functions in the mode of primary narcissism, where experience is self-contained and hallucinatory wish fulfillment is a predominant, omnipotent mode of thinking. Towards the end of this period, a beginning awareness of a need-satisfying external object develops. Coenesthetic receptivity—the perception of internal, bodily states—predominates over diacritic perception—the awareness of the outside world. (However, recent studies support Balint's hypothesis of primary love—certainly the infant has much more perception

and activity *vis-à-vis* the external world than is suggested by the terms 'primary narcissism' and 'autism' and in greater accord with the object-seeking and primary love hypotheses).

To suggest some parallels between this postnatal phase and group, one finds brief periods of withdrawal and preoccupation with internal states which have the quality of dreams and where the members barely relate to each other. Omnipotently self-contained phantasies are projected into the leadership. The 'primordial' group level (cf. the Grid and chapter 7) parallels this phase, and it is as if the group 'focal conflict' is between sleep and wakefulness.

Symbiosis (2 to 4 or 5 months)

Symbiosis refers to the psychological oneness of mother and infant. From the infant's standpoint, the fusion is total, while the mother regresses in order to empathize and service the baby. Mother and infant are in an intense interaction which excludes the world outside of their 'symbiotic orbit.'

The mother now provides the shielding from intense stimulation by her holding of the infant. She is for the child a need-satisfying object. The infant includes the mother as part of an 'omnipotent system,' a 'dual unity.' He shows a heightened interest in mother and his smiling response engages the mother, activating in her a range of holding behaviors which facilitate self and ego development.

The symbiotic orbit, as Colman (1975) has suggested, is perhaps the rudimentary basis of group-as-a-whole phenomena. Within this orbit, and outside of it, the infant begins to experience his family and other personages. Similarly, the group boundary protects against intrusions from the outside world, and the group consciousness is a system of individuals with a shared omnipotence and narcissism. Difficulties differentiating self and others can be seen in groups, and the group as a holding environment or emotional support system may be considered a derivative of symbiosis. Ego boundaries always remain fluid to some extent, and there are times when group members allow boundaries to dissolve in order to partake of the symbiotic omnipotence of the 'mother-group.'

The first subphase of separation-individuation: differentiation and the development of the body image (5 to 10 or 12 months)

Gradually, indications of self-object differentiation emerge with a heightened interest in the 'other-than-mother world.' Curiosity

about and fear of strangers become evident, and the infant engages in a study of new persons in a ritual that is termed 'customs inspection.' The mother is recognized as separate from self, a special individual who can no longer be easily replaced, and as distinct from others who intrude into their special relationship. The connection between this subphase and Melanie Klein's 'depressive position' is evident.

Differentiation implies the disruption of the symbiotic 'hatching.' The infant becomes increasingly aware of the discomfort produced by separation, and its increase in perceptual capacity is an incentive to explore the wider environment. The child begins to perceive its body as having a skin boundary and an inner somatic core, and begins to develop a self image.

Group recapitulations of the differentiation subphase include the stranger reactions which occur in new groups and with new members. The leader and the group are cathected as maternal objects while intruders create anxiety. All groups begin with undifferentiated symbiotico-narcissistic bonds (Fornari, 1966, pp. 145–7; Roheim, 1934) and a subsequent differentiation of self from other heralds the beginning of *interpersonal* relationships as such. The body image forms the basis for a representation of the group as having an inside and outside.

Mahler suggests that separation and individuation are distinct developmental tracks, which are, however, interdependent. Separation has to do with the boundary and space between mother and infant. It is a process of mutual distancing and of disengagement from symbiotic dependence. Individuation entails the development of ego functions: autonomy, perception, and cognition, long-term memory, and reality-testing. This track occurs in group life as the conflict over whether to merge with the group (group identity) or establish autonomy (individual identity).

The second subphase: practising (10 or 12 to 16 or 18 months)

With the development of upright motility, the infant, now toddler, explores the other-than-mother world. While autonomous ego functions are enhanced during this period, and healthy narcissism and pleasure in mastery ordinarily predominate, the child has not yet achieved object constancy, the ability to maintain a stable, integrated image of mother during periods of separation, and so mother's presence remains crucial to the child's security while

exploring the environment. That the child still needs mother in order to explore the world beyond her reflects itself in his use of her to 'refuel.' That is, after a period of autonomous functioning, he needs to come closer to her and engage in interaction with her. This contact restores his energy and enthusiasm for another round of independent activity.

Shifts in the group's attention from emotionality to group tasks include a component reminiscent of the practicing subphase. Refueling seems to be a patently observable group phenomenon and some group silences have a low-keyed quality in attempts to cope with separateness. Group maintenance needs are analogous to the child's utilization of the mother's presence to restore ego functioning.

The third subphase: rapprochement (18 to 24 months or longer)

With the acquisition of language, play, and representational thought, the external objects of symbiosis and of separation are internalized in the ego. Affects and images are organized into representations reflecting the child's increasing cognitive capacity. Pain becomes associated with separation and pleasure with the blissful symbiotic orbit from which the child is increasingly ejected. The child protests its thrusts into a new world of separate persons with tantrum behavior and extremes of mood, culminating in the rapprochement crisis, a period characterized by 'ambitendency,' an oscillation towards and away from mother. The resolution of this critical period occurs as the acceptance of ambivalence facilitates a representation of mother as a whole person who is both good and bad and has needs and concerns independent of the child. In this respect, the transitional object plays a major facilitating role.

While the significance of the rapprochement subphase for clinical work has been explored (Lax, Bach and Burland, 1980), its implications for groups have only begun to be studied. The present authors (1978) suggested that this phase can provide a conceptual model for groups that is equal in significance to the Oedipal complex. The phenomenon of group revolt, whose Oedipal components have been touched upon by Freud (1913), Bennis and Shepard (1956), Slater (1966), and others, may be more deeply motivated by an intensification of separation issues in a group. The members' awareness of their individuality and apartness challenges the fantasy of symbiotic oneness and of the magical meeting of

dependency needs. Such intense frustration may be funneled into aggression directed at the leadership, creating a condition of revolt, or at the members themselves, stimulating scapegoating, regression, and other attempts to restore the symbiosis.

The fourth subphase: consolidation of individuality and the beginnings of emotional object constancy (24 months on)

Resolution of the rapprochement subphase with a consequent structuralization of internalized object relations allows the child to function independently, to develop significant relationships with father, siblings, and the extended family, to form attachments and identifications leading to social adjustment, individuation, and identity formation. Perception of sex differences and the formation of sexual identifications form a continuing basis for the Oedipal Complex. The child learns to accept and tolerate the autonomous functioning of other persons.

Structuralization of the ego increases frustration tolerance and facilitates the resolution of splitting, leading to object constancy, i.e. the acquisition of a consistent, integrated, and differentiated representation of the mother which can be evoked in her absence.

Individuation and object constancy have no upper end point but develop throughout life. The process of symbiosis and separation-individuation integrates diverse concepts and forms a basis for examining a wide range of group phenomena occurring in settings which include families, schools, therapy groups, and training situations.

Recent related developments

The ideas and perspectives that have been discussed thus far are representative of contemporary points of view which form a baseline for the study of object relations, ego psychology, and the self. This discussion would not be complete, however, without a consideration of some seminal ideas at the cutting edge of the field.

Early cognitive abilities and object relations

The nature of pre-verbal thought is a key to understanding the mother/infant dyad as a prototype of group relations. Pines (1980b) has suggested that while the problem for the small group is 'how to feel,' the problem for the large group is 'how to think.' The ability

to think in a group is impeded by variables which include peer pressure, regression, psychopathology, and the projective identification into the leadership of the role of independent thinking. The question, 'What does it mean to think?' is an important problem of group psychology, and one way of approaching this problem is to look at the origins of mentation.

The spectrum of studies of cognition in the first months of life (Bower, 1977, chapter 7) shows that neonatal cognitive activity is quite complex. As research methods become more sophisticated, it is possible to detect capacities thought to be non-existent, a prime example of which is the infant's ability to distinguish the human face from other environmental stimuli (Fantz, 1961). The infant shows phases of 'alert inactivity' (Brazelton and Als, 1979) during which it scans the environment and shows acute anxiety if the mother does not reciprocate its eye contact, supporting Fairbairn's hypothesis of an innate object-seeking propensity and suggesting an inner cognitive map which allows it to identify rudimentary aspects of the human environment (an inborn object representation?). There seems to be an evolving complexity of conceptual schema, and even the most rudimentary sensorimotor operations show a budding intelligence which may be subject to both disruption and facilitation from the earliest days of life. These are further indications that the 'autistic shell' model of the neonate is not a correct assessment of the beginnings of mental life. Lichtenberg (1981), while maintaining a theoretically cautious stance, agrees, in a review of the literature of infant development, that psychoanalytic formulations are in need of revision, and the evidence cited here suggests that such a revision should be in the direction of a group-interactive psychology.

Bion's theory of thinking

In an effort to explore what it means to think, Bion (1962, 1977) restated psychoanalytic theory using Plato's and Kant's epistemologies and emphasizing the analysis of object relations, language and the listening process. His theory is both an extension of Kleinian psychology and an original statement. Bion saw that one of the major functions of early object relations is the development of the capacity to think. Sensations, perceptions, and internal states are 'things in themselves,' unmetabolized entites in search of a 'container to transform them into thought.' The container is typified by the breast which, in conjunction with the infant's inborn

preconceptions (Bion believes that innate ideas exist) form a 'thinking couple' which, internalized as an 'apparatus for thinking thoughts,' becomes a prototype of subsequent processes of mentation, including dreaming, myth-making, and reality testing. Bion hypothesized a series of transformations from unmetabolized experience to primary and secondary process thought. With regard to unmetabolized 'things in themselves', one is reminded of his 'protomental' phenomena in groups, i.e. communications between members which are reflex-like in character and provide a quasi-biological character to the group culture. The way the group forms a container for the evolution of unconscious perceptions into fantasy, myth, symbol, and the ability to think independently is an important dynamic consideration.

The mourning process

The termination of the group and the departure or absence of a member or leader evoke group-wide anxieties around separation and loss. Any event which makes the members aware of differences, apartness, aging, death and dying, etc. is a stimulus for such anxiety. The division of groups into subgroups, the appearance of a pecking order which implicitly separates members according to status, and even the leader's comment that 'our time is up for today' evokes in members a feeling of giving up something—a person, an idea, a hope, a fantasy—to which they have formed an attachment.

Ferschtut (1980) pointed out that in the process of becoming a member of a group, the person must yield past object relations as well as put parts of himself into the group and hold parts of himself which are at odds with the group identity in abeyance. Thus, participation in group life involves a mourning process in which particular introjects are decathected.

A way station in accepting the loss of a significant other is the internalization of the object into the ego. On account of anger at separation and the tendency to blame oneself, the object-in-the-ego is unconsciously punished. Normally, a selective identification with and idealization of the lost object ensues, facilitating the acceptance of the actual loss by its replacement in the ego ideal (Freud, 1917).

The greater the emotional object constancy, the greater the amount of time that the absence of the object can be tolerated. Mourning requires entry into the depressive position and enough

object constancy for the object to be recalled and internalized. The most primitive separation reactions involve a fear of loss of the self, which would be experienced as catastrophic. Once self-object differentiation has been established, anxiety centers around loss of the object. Rapprochement leads to a fear of loss of love and self-esteem, so that separations are felt as rejection.

Loss involves an equation between death and castration anxiety. Insofar as separation and loss are experienced as unconscious 'little deaths' they would be residues of anxieties related to sexual anatomy. Projected onto the group matrix, the group symbolizes the body and any loss might be tabulated on the unconscious ledger as a symbolic castration.

In groups, these themes are highly condensed. For example, in a stage of group revolt, the anticipated removal of the leader is associated with anxieties about his retaliation, the loss of his approval, and guilt related to the wish of patricide. At another level, revolts are formed out of a need to preserve a precarious sense of self. Since the self is tenuously maintianed by a narcissistic identification with group and leader, separation and loss of members can trigger depersonalization and identity diffusion. Ezriel (1952) pointed out the role of catastrophic anxieties in group life, and there is evidence that in large group conferences such as Tavistock-type meetings, participants will experience temporary fragmentation of the self. By the same token, movement towards a mature work group should involve mourning and separation from those archaic introjects which are operative in the primitive basic assumption states.

The reality principle

Differing definitions of the reality principle have emerged from the Freudian and Kleinian approaches. For Freud, reality is the objective fact by which the measure of all things is taken. It is discovered by the child through frustration of wishes and has an existence independent of unconscious phantasies. Klein, on the other hand, perceived a profound connection between inner reality and outer reality and exemplified this by the pattern in which some individuals take flight from inner experience into outer realities (1935). Inner reality is as important to emotional well-being as outer reality is to adaptation. Not all of what takes place in the unconscious is fiction or wish fulfillment but may include intuitive

knowledge of self. As the artist Marc Chagall has said, 'Our whole inner world is reality.'

Ms Klein believed that knowledge of outer reality (the physical, bodily, and social universe) is impregnated with inner experience because that knowledge starts with projective identification (1930, 1958, 1959). Knowledge is acquired through a subjective filter which includes the earliest fantasies and mental processes. This subjectivity of knowledge means that everyone in a group is a researcher who is attempting to understand the group from his particular vertex of perception. The group matrix is to a degree a creation of projective identification, so the group reality is a product of collective phantasies and their symbolic representations. It is as much like viewing a reflection of oneself, 'an alikeness,' as it is an objective entity, 'an-other.'

Summary and concluding remarks

An overview and group psychological commentary on developmental and psychodynamic formulations of object relations theory, ego psychology, the self, and the symbiosis/separation-individuation process has been presented. Ego psychology forms a bioadaptive scaffolding at a high level of abstraction. Despite differences among theorists, a surprising degree of unity can be seen among their positions. The interdependence of adaptation and psychic conflict, the profound and continuous interaction of the inner mental life and the environmental context, the importance of the dimension of oneness and separateness, the differentiation out of a symbiotic orbit of individuated persons, and the ego and self as structuralizing forces are common elements of diverse perspectives. Because the emphasis is on development rather than trauma, the normal repetition of early experience in adult groups is compatible with these theories and concepts. It is not so much that man is doomed to repeat the past as that his experience forms the basis of adaptation and growth. Because interaction is emphasized, the nexus between individual and group phenomena is more apparent than in a view of mind as a quasi-biological isolated entity and of group as a summation of isolated individual experience. As Freud noted, the group is an extension and projection of the ego and ego ideal. The more that one understands the ego (and the complementary structure of self and superego), the more one understands the nature of group relations.

Part 3

Systems theory, developmental psychology, and the group

I see inner space and outer space as reflections of each other. I don't see them as in opposition. Just as we are investigating atomic physics and the outer limits of the planetary system— the large and the small simultaneously—the inner and outer are connected.

Doris Lessing

Chapter 5
The group as an object relations system and representation

In the interactive dimension of psychoanalysis as it has evolved within object relations theory, ego psychology, and the study of the self and identity, the one-way vector of drive theory has been superseded by a feedback loop of interaction which connects deep internal processes with external objects and the group and cultural environment. The focal point of these models and theories remains, however, the unit organism. Interactive constructs imply that the person is a product of group experience and that the individual life merges with the life of others at all times, but such a standpoint does not directly address the group milieu itself.

The study of group dynamics requires a shift in perspective in which the interactive dimension is seen contextually in terms of multi-person configurations which constitute a higher order system. This change of perspective can be articulated only by beginning with the group itself as the frame of reference. The purpose of Part III of this work is to articulate group systems and their interrelationship, including the person and his interaction as subsystems of the group-as-a-whole.

Psychoanalytic group psychology requires a special formulation of the group-as-a-whole which includes the differentiation of group function and structure. Linking interactive constructs (cf. chapters 3 and 4) with a general systems framework helps to articulate the relationship between unconscious processes and group configurations. The present authors propose to call activity, personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal, which is based in the social-developmental process 'object relations systems', to include aspects of the object, the self, the system ego, and identity. These object relations systems include measurable 'facts' as well as the developmental aspects of the group matrix. The rationale for

adopting such terminology is to recognize the qualitative differences among potential expressions of object relations in individual pathology or identity, communication, and group-wide dynamics.

A systems/developmental framework for groups: overview

The purpose of this and the next two chapters is to use systems theory and developmental psychology to further conceptualize a paradigm linking psychoanalysis and group psychology. What is offered is a matrix for theory and practice, a schema for investigating group phenomena through depth psychology and developmental principles.

Thus far, the paradigm linking psychoanalysis with interpersonal and group dynamics has been elaborated in terms of interactions between ego and object, self and selfobject, mother and infant, etc. This essentially dyadic or two-person view needs to be extended to the group-qua-group and its various dynamic systems. The following are the assumptions that will be used in this task:

(1) *All individual, interpersonal, and group processes function by the principle of container/contained.* As examples, disavowed anxiety may be contained in the group as a basic assumption or group culture; an individual with a special capacity for depression or altruism may become the facilitator for the group's mourning a loss. A pair of group members may be the container for the hope of the group. Container/contained accounts for transformations among systems of the group matrix.

(2) Systems come into being through a potential space for activity, followed by demarcation of this space through a boundary, and finally by an object relation. Thus, *space, boundary, and object become axiomatic universals by virtue of the copresence of these elements in all human events and phenomena.* In this way, both similarities and difference among human systems may be expressed in a way which is near to experience.

(3) *A Group Analytic Grid is proposed and developed as a way of classifying and collating systems of the group* in terms of psychoanalytic developmental psychology.

In toto, the hope is to move more fully into a truly group systemic paradigm for psychoanalysis. That this task is a very difficult one which requires considerable further work is quite evident. Some times in a science, it is important to begin an investigation of a

problem, however far away it may be from a complete solution. That is what the authors propose to do now.

Application of systems theory

To link individual psychology and communication theory with totalistic group events, the present authors opt for a liberal use of General Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968), especially the principles of 'living systems' as articulated in the work, for example, of Maturana (1975, 1978), Varela (1976a, b), Bateson (1972), and, specifically in group dynamics, J.Durkin (1980) and Kissen (1980). It remains difficult, even today over a quarter century since 'GST' became readily available to social science, to decide which of its theoretical superstructures are most useful, but the authors are convinced that a shift in emphasis from a 'servomechanical' type of framework to a broader one of living systems, of 'action structures' and 'language structures' is imperative.

The present discussion begins with a 'metatheory' and a phenomenology of the mental processes and behaviors with which human beings create groups out of the raw material of their unconscious. As has been said, the minimum cognitive/emotion processes which facilitate human 'grouping' are a boundary, space, and object as a 'vocabulary' for connecting inner experience with group reality through Bion's principle of 'container/contained.' Boundary, space, and object may be thought of as common elements of all experience which allow thought and action to occur. Furthermore, these elements are capable of being represented in the group as a whole and its dynamics, and so provide a natural bridge to them. The group matrix in its most rudimentary or evolved forms can be hypothesized to be composed phenomenologically of a space, its boundaries, and a constellation of object relations which occur within them.

The Group Analytic Grid

In chapters 6 and 7, group life is considered from two simultaneous and complementary vantage points: (a) as three systems—the individual, the interactions, and the group-as-a-whole—in continuous interchange and transformation with respect to one another; and (b) as a developmental psychology in which each

system is composed of a number of developmental processes which are different from but interdependent upon one another. *The integration of systems theory with a developmental approach provides the most comprehensive vantage point for psychoanalytic group psychology.* In order to help systematize and organize the vast amount of data and concepts from psychoanalysis and group dynamics, an observing and theorizing 'instrument' called the 'Group Analytic Grid' has been proposed. Such a Grid (a concept from Bion, 1977b), intended only to be a working model and not a final version, is shown in appendix 1.

The Group Analytic Grid represents the domain of group experience viewed as a series of systems and subsystems, each of which, in interaction with the others, can regress or progress to any of six levels of development, from the most primitive and archaic phenomena to mature and self actualizing tendencies of the group and community. The Grid is a potential space in which experience may be contained, transformed, and given meaning. It is also a 'periodic table' of the elements of individual and group object relations. In time, the study of groups should clarify which of the several developmental processes are of greatest importance and which overlap considerably, thereby condensing the developmental lines to the most fundamental 'elements.' In addition, empty spaces in the Grid suggest that there are additional processes whose characteristics haven't yet been elaborated (at least to the knowledge of the present authors!), just as the gaps in the periodic table of chemical elements led to the discovery of further elements. The Grid as a mode of group analysis will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The group as living system

According to J.Durkin (1980), a group is a living system of exchanges of matter, information, and energy. Interrelationships and transformations of object relations among the several systems can take place because there exist common properties and elements (isomorphisms) among these systems.

As an application of the principle of exchange among systems, it has been postulated here that present in all interpersonal relations and their mental representations are the experiential organizers: space, boundary, and object. *Inner objects can be translated into group terms, phantasies can be externalized, and group reality can*

be internalized by virtue of their perceived or implied spatio-temporal organization with respect to each other.

J.Durkin (1980, abstract) spelled out the essential characteristics of groups as living systems. According to him:

> The four foundational ideas…[include]: (1) complementarity of action structure and language structure, (2) self-hierarchicalization which fluctuates freely to higher and lower levels, (3) linear feedback and nonlinear dynamic interaction as self-referential control configurations and (4) self-boundarying through complementary opening/closing as the basic operation of autonomy.

Most generally, the group, as a living system, has a self-sustaining and self-regulating ability in which energic and informational systems are organized dynamically at several hierarchical levels. Boundary processes regulate the interchanges between levels and among subsystems and the overall group system. Most fundamental to the present conceptualization is *the interpenetration of levels in a hierarchy of systems,* for example internal object relations, interpersonal relations, and group configurations. *The concept of hierarchy shifts is unique to living systems theory and not present in mechanistic or even some of the field-theoretical models of behavior.* It means that a subsystem can become manifest in a larger system and vice-versa. Internal dynamics (for example, a masochistic tendency) can become group roles (e.g. the role of the victim or scapegoat), etc.

Living systems increase in negative entropy (information) and organize themselves autonomously from within (Maturana, 1975) and as a consequence their internal boundary conditions evolve in complexity and function. To use a cybernetic or feedback model (in Greek the word cybernetics means 'steersman'), groups consist of exchanges and transformations of matter and energy which constitute its 'action structure.' These exchange processes include the task and maintenance activity of the group and are guided by equillibrating mechanisms such as the biological drives and group homeostatics. Such action systems regulate short-term adaptations to stresses, needs, and stimuli, guided by information which constitutes innate and acquired templates for group experience. The information systems, or 'language structures' are, in the human realm, symbolic and phenomenological phantasies, kinesics, roles,

mythology, and so on. *Equillibration among information systems follows the Bionic principle of container/contained and the Piagetian concepts of assimilation and accommodation in which information seeks organization in higher level schema*, while action structures are generally equillibrated servomechanically, that is, by preset quantities or amounts of matter and energy.

The intercalation of individual and group systems is here postulated to occur through processes of internalization and externalization, concepts which have been introduced earlier in the contexts of object relations theory and ego psychology.

Internalization and externalization: a living systems model

In attempting to formulate Durkins' principle of 'self-hierarchicalization' which fluctuates freely to higher and lower levels, it seemed Fairbairn's view that 'the group is a projection or externalization of an inner object' establishes a perspective wherein the group level emerges from the individual level. The complementary process of internalization, in which the individual differentiates out of the group, is summarized in the idea that the personality is an introjected social system (Guntrip, 1961; Colman, 1975; Kaes, 1982b). The problem with such hypotheses, however, is that they overemphasize the similarities of intrapsychic dynamics and group process at the expense of the hierarchy shift that occurs. *Externalizations into the group matrix modify an existing system of rules, laws, and necessities*. Thus, an interaction occurs between social elements and the personal/intrapsychic elements. In such a way, for instance, the child learns that his dreams and wishes are quickly modified by the environmental responses of parents, siblings, and peers. These interpersonal relations, however, are a different order of events from dreams and wishes and are not simply external representations of them.

What need to be investigated are the mechanisms of change from inner to outer and vice-versa. Here, projection is more than the experience of something 'inside' as it if were 'outside.' There is, in addition, a modification of the perceived 'gestalt' of the object relation as well as a particular 'receivership' of it by the group system. The essential difference between projection and projective identification is that in the latter there is a response from and an alteration of the environment.

When internalized object relations are projectively identified into the group they change in distance and contour, in emphasis and elaboration, while maintaining a coherence of inner meaning. If there is no 'acceptance' of the projective identification then the process 'fails,' and the person originating the process may feel misunderstood, rejected, or abandoned and may fear the 'fate' of his secrets, revelations, or intimacies when they are put into the group.

In addition to changes in phenomenological experience and psychodynamics in the group, *the group itself undergoes modifications in the location of experience and action.* For instance, in the phenomenon of the 'voice of the group' (Agazarian and Peters, 1981, p. 83), in which a particular member articulates and exemplifies needs, issues, and unconscious processes for the others, this 'voice' becomes, by virtue of empathy, projective identification, and the channeling and regulation of communication, a conduit for the group's emotionality (Rioch, 1975, p. 170). Not only has the group projected its affect and ideation, but it has arranged to create a group container by establishing a temporary role structure.

The processes of internalization and externalization, understood now as hierarchy shifts in object relations, follow qualitative rules as well as quantitative laws. That is, information must be mapped from one system to another according to a program which articulates when such an exchange shall be made and how the information shall be stored and modified. Such qualitative rules governing transformation processes between individuals and groups speak to the way in which private concerns (dreams, fears) become group structures and organizers (norms, myths, etc.).

In order to begin to articulate such transformational rules in a way which is also 'experience near' and relevant to day-to-day practice, the present authors found it helpful to add to the notion of living systems the concept of a representational 'space'. The spatial representation defines what is possible or not possible in a particular system. It is to be understood as a container for psychological and social events.

<div align="center">Intrapsychic, interactive, and group space: a
systems representation</div>

Groups can be said to consist of three dynamic systems, each of which has a spatial representation. The intrapsychic space is that of the mental life, the 'inner space' (Grotstein, 1978b) of object relations, phantasy and so on. The interactive space of transactions and communications form a 'web' or network which connects the points on the personal space to those on the group space. The group-qua-group space is that of the group structure, process, and content at a given point in its evolution. These spatial representations are dynamic and interrelated containers of experience.

The spatial representation of the group system

To the extent that a group is a mental representation held in common by those who compose it, its most basic image and function is that of the container or *étayage* for what the members imagine it to be and for what they would like it to become (Kaes, 1976, pp. 344–7). There is perhaps a residue in the collective memory and action tendencies of the membership an archetype or imago which forms an external entity having its own characteristics and properties as a distinctive group system, so that, for example, a new person may enter the group space, perceive its 'shape,' dimensions, and behavioral expectations and begin to respond to it as a construction having its own architecture and as a collection of subjectivities like himself who have something of a unified purpose and common tendencies of thought and action. Kaes (1982a) calls this process 'anaclisis' and the resulting structure the 'group psychic apparatus.' What has begun in the private imagination has become shared ideation and *a new psychophysical system* which has a special nature, dimensionality, and evolution.

In this sense the group is a potential space which forms a container for the projective identifications of the collective. 'Space' is used here in a modern relativistic and aesthetic sense as a changeable and malleable entity which responds to the objects and activities which occur in its milieu. Concretely, this space is the physical environment. However, spatiality is also a way of dimensionalizing any element of the group system. Such a concept as defined here resembles Lewin's 'quasi-physical' space, but unlike Lewin's is not purely topological (topology describes relationships

and juxtaposition, not quality or dimensionality), but has a greater connection with *images*, for example the paradoxical and fluid spatio-temporal changes that occur in dreams and other expressions of primary process thinking. The group space and container is thus a mental representation which may vary from 'concrete' and 'sensori-motor' to abstract and symbolic, a cognitive space of implicit meanings. At the same time, it is an outer entity which can be objectively described, investigated, and 'negotiated' by the membership.

This duality is seen in child development as the transactions between the real mother and the child's fantasy elaborations and defensive distortions regarding her. For example, just as the child may feel 'smothered' by the mother (claustrophobia), members may have similar spatial images on affective dimensions of group experience. Interpersonal distance, for example, is a common way of describing the level of intimacy and concordance in a group.

Maturana (1975, p. 315) provides a systems definition of space consistent both with the present formulation and with his own concept of the autonomy and 'autopoiesis' of living systems: 'Space is the domain of all the possible relations and interactions of a collection of elements, that the properties of these elements define.' In the psychological realm of unconscious representation of group and interpersonal processes it is axiomatic that the 'elements' are object relations. The space of relationships and interactions among objects is autonomously organized by ego identity and the group process; i.e. the structure and organization of the self and the social matrix. Space is the feature of experience which allows for autopoiesis (autonomy and creativity), an idea startingly anticipated by Winnicott in his concept of 'potential space' as a region in which there is a possibility for play and sublimation.

To summarize, a spatial representation is proposed to encompass internal mental processes and group systems and related to such psychological and group entities as ego differentiation, sociometric distance, the inner phantasy world, and the group climate.

Group space is responsive as a container to the objects projected into it, and its evolving characteristics will reflect the stages of cognitive development described by Piaget. For instance, space may be concretized into action so that when members become intimate, they act like a small family unit and when they become deliberate and bureaucratic they behave like a large organization. The perceived space may become de-dimensionalized briefly, so that

members feel confined, claustrophobic, 'unable to move.' In order to incorporate unconscious processes, space must be seen in the manner of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, a space of flux in size and content and which is capable of being 'dreamed' and 'fantasized' as well as perceived and objectified. In psychoanalytic terms, it is a space whose meaning can be interpreted, just as objects and images can, and in group terms, it is a space which can be negotiated interpersonally and which forms a backdrop and container for ongoing interaction.

As an example, the choice of seating arrangment in a group has a relation to unconscious phantasy and inner space.

> In an adolescent therapy group, the teenagers chose to sit informally and isolated from each other, rather than in a row or a circle. One sat near an open window, another with some drawing material, a third opposite the therapists and at some distance from the rest of the group. The group climate was at one and the same time negativistic and dependent: the therapists and the group task of exploring emotions were criticized, and yet the members could not make the simplest decisions. The associations of the adolescents went to a variety of life situations that had to do with disorganization, deprivation, and lack of purpose. One member spoke of spending his time on the street in an aimless way and meeting people who were social deviants. The rest of the group chimed in with similar stories of street life. Another boy spoke of feeling discouraged in a job placement where he felt isolated and misunderstood and lacking in direction and structure. And another talked about a father who came home drunk every night and whom he watched from a distance with fear and anger.
>
> The disorganized seating arrangement reflected the inner turmoil of the group members. In spatial terms, their inner object representations were projectively identified into unreliable external objects (deviants, disturbed parents, abandoning employers) which further disrupted inner space and created internal and external confusion. The symbolic container/breast of the social environment then became disorganized, so that it mirrored inner states in a chaotic way. This introjected space was then expressed in the way the members arranged to situate themselves in the group.

Interestingly, the adolescent who sat opposite the therapists then made a bid to lead and organize the group by expressing negativism and representing the 'bad' opposite to the therapist's 'too-goodness.' His aggressivized organizing function temporarily focused attention on him and the group process, giving the group some cohesiveness. The polarization of good and bad in a dialogue between him and the therapists gradually led the group to come together in a circle and to align themselves in the dialogue with one or the other position.

In a subsequent session, some months later, the group assumed a different seating arrangement. They sat stolidly in rows, wearing their coats, and remained silent for some time after the therapists entered. They seemed to be protesting and mourning at the same time, dramatizing a coldness, a 'freezing' of inner space leading to a sense of immobility.

The concept of a boundary, as discussed by Lewin in group dynamics and, alternatively, by Federn in ego psychology, is necessary to depict how group space differentiates into regions having particular characteristics and transactions among them.

Group boundaries as a containment process

The problem to be addressed now is how to elaborate such a spatial model to describe the group-as-a-whole and its develop ment in ways which are compatible with psychoanalysis and its interactive constructs.

To begin with, a group is defined by a singular boundary around it which delineates inclusion and exclusion of members and separates it from other groups and from the extra-group environment. Such a boundary surrounds an unformed aggregate of persons until connections are made among those who are within it. These connections form a matrix: channels of communication within the boundary through which further differentiation takes place. The group's boundary provides its most fundamental definition and is modeled developmentally in the experience of the 'holding arms' of the mother. The boundary and the space exist implicitly in each of the various groups with which each person identifies himself.

Initially, the matrix is 'empty,' unsaturated,' a void. However, one of the fascinating observations about groups is the rapidity with which the new group space is 'filled' with significance: the 'basic

assumptions' are quickly in evidence. The matrix forms a container for mental content which is altered by further content and develops a characteristic shape and responsiveness to communications and projective identifications. The container has supra-personal features: it organizes mentation at a collective level and is responsive to images and ideation of universal cultural significance. It evolves structures primarily out of what is known, observed, and introjected by the collective, and the collective thereby becomes a holographic representation or 'group sculpture' of what is initially internal.

The containing function of the group matrix makes it a receptacle for internal objects in the same way that the mother's breast and holding form a container for the child. Gradually, the group itself comes to be perceived as an object composed of what has been put into it as an externalization. At this juncture, the members respond as if it were a dream image or a familiar personage: they have a definite object relation with their group. Since they *are* the group, this object relation is narcissistic and reciprocal!

A group thus evolves via the formation of (1) a definitional boundary (the possibility of communication and conjoint action), (2) a 'spatial' container, and (3) an object.

The features of the boundary, container, and object define the group at a particular time in its evolution. These elements come to represent inner mental content and symbolism as ongoing interactions and transferences, so that their form becomes more structured and differentiated.

Boundary conditions and 'boundarying' in group dynamics.

Boundaries occur around and within groups. Webster defines 'boundary' as 'something that indicates or fixes a limit or extent;… a bounding or separating line.' According to J.Durkin (1980, p. 27), activity at a boundary is information. The group boundary establishes exactly one 'bit' of information about each person: whether he is in or outside the group. Yet this one bit has been the stimulus for wars, love, the establishment of new groups, etc. The meaning and motivational significance of the boundary is what is crucial: it creates conditions for action and preconceptions for thought. *The group boundary is equated in the unconscious with the ego boundary and with omnipotence.* Social boundaries are

given the implication of control of the environment, of 'guarantees' for the self, creating a potential space of possession in which one feels secure and victorious. The dissolution of a group boundary is experienced as a loss, a frailty, a death. Boundaries have primitive, narcissistic emotional significance.

The living systems view of boundaries is described by von Bertalanffy (1968, p. 215): 'Any system or entity which can be investigated in its own right must have boundaries, either spatial or dynamic. Strictly speaking, spatial boundaries exist only in naive observation, and all boundaries are ultimately dynamic.' He then goes on to relate boundaries paradoxically to man's openness: 'In contrast to the animal's limited "ambient", man is "open to his world" or has a "universe;" that is, his world widely transcends biological bondage and even the limitations of his senses.'

This viewpoint is included to emphasize the potentially expansive nature of boundary conditions, especially the openness to the group world, a condition of receptivity and semipermeability at the boundary. 'Boundarying' establishes differentiation and therefore adds information to a system (negative entropy), hence increasing the amount of usable energy in a system by organizing it. Conversely, when a boundary is dissolved or becomes more permeable, energy is expended, information exchanged, and activity increased. The mental representations of the tendency towards boundarylessness and entropy include (a) the wish for fusion, union, and merger (life instinct); and (b) destructive aggression (controvertially termed by Freud the death instinct). The life and death of the group is held in a precarious balance by structures which regulate exchanges of matter, information, and energy. The basic structuralizing agent is communication, and each communication contains a meta-message (Ruesch and Bateson, 1951, p. 23) about boundary conditions: about perception, about possession, about the subgroups to which one belongs, about what separates the person from the group and what he is identified with in that group.

Dynamically, a boundary evolves into a substructure in which are carried out activities such as monitoring and gate-keeping (Miller and Rice, 1967, pp. 48–9). The consultant, for example, intervenes to regulate the degree and type of activity in the group by giving it tasks of a specific nature, by choosing to clarify issues or have them remain ambiguous, by encouraging or discouraging regression, etc. It has been noted for instance that cognitive activity sharpens

boundaries and makes them more 'closed,' while strong emotional bonds create 'open' boundaries and 'strong' interactions in which lability and change predominate. Movement between thinking and affect is a form of boundary regulation which facilitates learning and personal growth in groups (Kissen, 1980, p. 33).

Group boundaries thus evolve from demarcation points and lines to selective membrances, sources of movement and change in the group. Slater (1966, p. 235) speaks of a 'continuum of boundary awareness' as a fundamental law of group life and its basic dynamic fact. The most highly 'motivating' boundaries are interpersonal, including possession (territoriality), roles, pecking order, taboos, and generational boundaries. These are rites and rituals which exemplify dependency, power, affiliative, and other interpersonal needs and wishes.

Interpersonal boundaries and ego boundaries are closely related. To the extent that ego boundaries have differentiated, interpersonal relations can occur at more intimate and mature levels. The systems hierarchy which includes ego, interpersonal, and group boundaries forms a dynamic in which the group boundary modifies the ego which in turn regulates the course of interpersonal transactions, and so on in a recurring feedback loop. Such an interlocking of boundary subsystems is probably due to their being perceived as similar and therefore equated in the unconscious. An example is the populace of a country which views a crossing of their national boundary by 'aliens' as a personal infringement on home and family. In group relations conferences, the entry of a member of one group into the space of another may similarly be responded to in a highly charged way. Groups sometimes place a boundary around the consultant, excluding him from the group interaction, and the feeling tone of the group conveys the impression that it is a part of the self, such as the conscience, which is extruded and surrounded (disavowed) in a symbolic equation of the therapist with an 'inner voice,' exemplifying the use of the group space to recreate the world of primitive objects.

Hartman and Gibbard (1974) formulated a bridging construct between ego psychology and interpersonal relations in group: 'ego state distress'. They define this construct as 'painful affects which are the universal concomitants of social experience and which trigger both adaptive and defensive responses by individuals and groups' (p. 154). The individual enters group life partly to ward off anxieties associated with change of ego boundaries. He strives to

achieve intrapsychic equilibrium and adaptation to the group situation and achieves at best a compromise: 'Boundary concerns are cyclical and fluctuating in their attention to internal and external demands. The shifting equilibrium of group boundaries generates ego-state distress, which in turn must be dealt with by means of structural change' (ibid., p. 159).

Group boundaries therefore represent environmental conditions or structures which precipitate anxiety in the ego as it experiences fluctuations in its own perimeter. Conversely, in its efforts to reduce anxiety, the ego may make an alloplastic (environmental) adjustment in which it manipulates the group boundary conditions.

Wurmser (1978, pp. 248–53), for example, has pointed out that drug dependent individuals have great difficulties with boundaries. One such eighteen-year-old male in individual and family treatment with one of the authors (Schermer) provoked his parents by leaving substances in his room against their injunction that he not bring them into the house or appear at home drugged. This neglect on his part could be understood as a cry for help, and it disrupted the family greatly, causing severe, incapacitating anxiety in the mother and leading the father to withdraw socially out of shame. By crossing the home and family boundary with his acting-out, the patient produced ego state distress in his parents, affecting their social and interpersonal behavior. The parents then responded with a conjoint projective identification: they intruded upon the therapy contract and frame, insisting on monitoring and controlling the treatment process. With the patient's approval, this manipulation was funneled by the therapist into a family session which focused on restoring the boundaries of each participant by encouraging them to re-own disavowed aspects of themselves and to take responsibility for their own behaviors and to earn each other's trust. The intervention restored a degree of harmony in the family, and it appeared to strengthen the patient's ego boundary, for he became temporarily more functional and independent, and his drug use subsided. (This change was sudden and of brief duration and it is important to recognize that temporary modification of individual and group boundaries is different from restructuring of such patterns at a deeper level.)

To summarize, boundaries are information-defining systems which regulate input-output functions by maintaining and changing differentiation within the personal and group space. Boundaries occur in all systems, from the personal realm to the cultural context. One of the important contributions which psychoanalysis can make to group psychology is to study the way in which individuals respond to social boundaries and vice-versa. The early responses of the child to limits and permission, to separation from the symbiotic orbit, to intrusions and abandonments by the love object, and to the need for self-definition provide important insights about social boundaries. As Anna Freud has said, 'Instinctual danger is what makes human beings intelligent.' Instincts are regulated by boundaries, and social intelligence is the pre-conscious grasp of a personal and group identity which allows the optimal space for oneself and others and so promotes ego adaptation.

The group as object

By establishing its primordial boundary and container, the group creates a potential space. Within this space, further demarcations map out a territory and a domain for each individual and establish a number of functional subsystems in the group to meet task and maintenance/emotionality needs of persons and group. Each subsystem as well as the group-as-a-whole become containers of meaning, parts of the self, projective-introjective processes, and object relations.

That the group is a phantasy object, and that this object relation is a transference manifestation which affects interpersonal behavior in the group, was first stated by Bion, who equated the group with the breast, an analogy which emphasizes the group's ambiguity, largeness, otherness, and anxiety-provoking regressive potential (1959, pp. 127–8). H.Durkin (1964, p. 80) postulated a transference evolution in two separate steps:

> (1) the idea of a group, i.e., a large totality of unknown power, conjures up the harsh, pre Oedipal mother image, reactivating the individual's narcissistic fear of her, and (2) the individual perceives the group accordingly in distorted fashion, and behaves toward it in a way that resembles his mode of reacting to his mother, but in 'modern dress.' Characteristically, the

opposing traits of submission and opposition are included, one gaining ascendance at a time.

Durkin goes on (ibid. pp. 80–92) to focus on the role of splitting and emphasizes that the early split projections are of a painful nature, so that the group becomes a 'bad' maternal object. There are always two objects of group transference, the group and the leader. This dualism of transference is not only a splitting, but, sublimated, also makes for a 'binocularity' which 'dimensionalizes' the group experience and is comparable to Winnicott's object mother and environment mother. The binocularized group/leader dualism provides a figure-ground holographic relationship for group interaction in the same way that the Oedipal triangle forms a context for sibling and peer relations.

Scheidlinger (1974) disagreed that the group is an object of negative transference. For him, it is experienced rather as a maternal surround of harmony and nurturance. Empirically, however, groups contain both positive and negative affects for the members. What is common to new groups is the temporary splitting of the transference. Without the powerful negative elements, the group situation would not evoke the existential anxiety so commonly observed. Therefore, the negative transference must be regarded as a fact of group formation.

Money-Kyrle (1950) held that the group has multiple objects comparable to an imaginary family: the 'good parents' of a maternal nature, represented in the norms and ideals of the group; the 'bad parents,' persecutors against whom the group values have to be defended; and the 'good parents,' particularly the father who defends the good mother and both of whom reappear as the leadership. Money-Kyrle's view takes into account both the positive and negative affect states and importantly recognizes that inner objects are projected into *subsystems* of the group: norms, the role of a persecutor, and leadership (as a parental couple). However, Money-Kyrle actually depicted a later stage of what a group may *become*, not the basis on which it is formed. The initial group object is less differentiated than a family: it is more like a context or container. Money-Kyrle's configuration is of the nature of a pairing group and Oedipal constellation, and represents an advanced level of group development.

Kernberg (1978), depicting the defenses, roles, and attitudes in Bion's basic assumption states, moved towards a similar view of the

group as a system of object relations, a cluster that derives from but is different from the internal objects and for that matter from the group personages themselves, suggesting that the group object as a commonly held representation is both an imaginary and real spatio-temporal organization that emerges from the projections. (It is, in fact, a *transitional* object, halfway between reality and fantasy.) Anzieu's (1980) concept of 'group-object' articulates how the group becomes a system which embodies the object relation and is more than an imaginary projection.

This connection between the group fantasy object and the reality of group life and dynamics as a series of 'events' is essential to the epistemology of groups. The nature of group reality is always problematical because to some extent it always remains a mental construct, a *psychophysical* rather than a purely physical or biological system. The group object is in this respect a transitional object, a mental construct and a physical system at the same time. When one talks about the 'group-as-mother' one is referring to the collective fantasy life and shared illusions and beliefs, and one is also referring implicitly to a social system which values the mother as an archetypal kinship symbol and sublimates this symbol in its group 'architecture,' its art and mythology, and its behavioral norms and expectations. There is a close connection between fantasy and social structure.

Function and development of the group space, boundary, and object

Group projective identification and the law of container-contained articulate the relationship between inner mentation and group reality and between the group object as phantasy and dynamic fact. The object of a projective identification is not the same as the object projected into it, yet they become 'identified' with each other as a person identifies with his group. The container represents a different level of organization from the contained, giving it form, structure, meaning, cohesion, and an 'extrauterine' existence, that is, motility and extension. For example, when the therapist properly contains the patient's projective identifications, he not only tolerates the emotions induced in him, providing a functional introject to the patient which allows him to grow by a subsequent internalization process, he also gives the inchoate phantasies and impulses a structure and meaning *via* his interpretations as he

facilitates the creation of an interpersonal matrix for them, a space in which previously unbearable or aggressivized mental content can be transformed into safe and tolerable interactions and in which the private self and the social identity can coexist. For example, there occur in groups moments of prolonged silence, generally following some group-wide conflict or disagreement, wherein the leader may feel 'invaded' by some relentless pressure or suffocating atmosphere. Such moments seem to be the time when the group attempts to projectively identify its struggle into the therapist. Where the group felt frustrated, angry, and helpless seconds before, now it sits in quiet contemplation, generally with rather sympathetic faces, as it awaits the leader's resolution of the problem. The 'location' of the overwhelming emotions has shifted from the patients to the therapist.

To review, theories about the group-as-object are in agreement that it is experienced as a maternal entity with the leadership playing the role of either a caretaker (basic assumption dependency), a parental couple (in Money-Kyrle's familial portrayal), or a father figure (in Freud's view of the primal horde; see also Slavson, 1979, p. 163). It is generally agreed too that the externalizing adaptative and defensive mechanisms through which the inner object is translated into a perception of the group situation are themselves primitive. For Scheidlinger, it is *via* a symbiotic merger or fusion. For Bion, the group level defensive mechanisms are 'psychotic-like'. For Freud, the group identification is made by introjection and projection: the 'identification of the ego with an object' and the 'replacement of the ego ideal by an object.'

There is partial consensus, as previously noted, among different authors that a 'bad' object lurks somewhere in the primordial group matrix. For Money-Kyrle it is the parents as persecutory objects; for Durkin, an overwhelming mother who endangers the group's harmony; for Bion, the object of fight and flight; and for Freud, the powerful, incestuous totemic father. Whatever the character of this dangerous object, it is the target of attempts to extrude it from the group, whether by scape-goating, dependence-submission, revolt, or denial of reality. The interplay of positive and negative sides of the object relation is a predominant motif of group life. Perhaps this object is the 'mother of separation' who contravenes the wished-for symbiosis.

Slater (1966, p. 248) expressed the principle of an evolving fantasy matrix in the group, although more from a Jungian than an

object relations perspective. He phrased it in Neumann's (1949) terms as a series of stages in the evolution of consciousness, holding that the members' relation to their group changes and has the potential to develop from a primordial fusion of self and group through a process of separation and individuation to a state of personal identity and a moral order, equivalent in Freud to the resolution of the Oedipal Complex and the formation of the superego as a conscience governing values and norms in the group. Slater further suggested that the evolution of the ego is exemplified by group mythology in levels of analysis which he calls 'psychological,' 'social psychological,' 'group,' and 'societal.' Slater's view thus contains the notion of an evolving group ego-object manifesting itself in multiple sytems, individual, interpersonal, group and contextual. He regards most of what happens in groups as pre-separation elements, that is, prior to Mahler's rapprochement subphase. Only the last two of his seven proposed stages involve an individuated and object constant perception of the group reality. Again, the primitivity of the group condition and the difficulty of achieving a personal identity within it are emphasized.

The evolution of the group object

It is proposed here that the group-as-object is not static but undergoes a phase development. At its most primordial level, the group is experienced as a nirvana-like womb and stimulus barrier which shields against stimulation and premature awareness. Such a condition emerges when there are sharp intrusions into the group boundary, such as the arrival of a new member, a separation, or a disruption of the dependency relationship to the leader.

> One Tavistock group dramatized this phantasy vividly when a subgroup of those who were being attacked for questioning the group norm of 'no physical contact' sat down in the center of the larger circle and formed a womb-like container in which they could be shielded from further verbal attack. At the same time, they seemed to be performing an act of masochistic submission and deference. Patients similarly utilize their therapy group or 'sheltered workshop' or partial hospital settings as a protective-submissive environment when they experienee the arousal of primitive object relations in their

daily lives. These expressions are perhaps derivatives of the unconscious equation, group=womb.

Symbiotic and paranoid-schizoid phantasies are quite frequent in therapy and training groups. A most significant instance is a birth fantasy which occurs at the beginning of group relations or upon a significant achievement of the membership. Such a fantasy was expressed by a patient who had 'a sudden image of myself as a baby in a maternity ward being observed by my parents through a one way mirror.' The indirect reference was to the cotherapists as voyeuristic and she (the patient) as helpless and infantile, accompanied by a wish to be born by the group. Self-disclosure and the establishment of cohesion and identifications among the members are dynamics which are experienced at an unconscious level as birth processes. In the birth fantasy, it is as if the group and personal boundaries turn outwards, similar to the way in which the child has a 'love affair with the world' in Mahler's depiction of psychological birth. The metamorphosis from a larva in a cocoon into a butterfly is an apt image and one that is often used in connection with this growth process.

The symbiotic maternal object and the beginning separation from her thus have expressions in the group matrix. On the one hand, the narcissistic identifications and mirror reactions implicate the group as an idealizing selfobject. The group is deified, attributed with great healing power, a source of 'mana' and self-esteem.

Representations complementary to Kohut's selfobject are Melanie Klein's part-objects of the paranoid-schizoid position. The group is then experienced as a 'fictive body' (Fornari, 1966, p. 134). The phantasy of the group as a body is connected with boundarying processes in the group, in contrast with the boundaryless quality of the selfobject. Group relations are concretized so that the members (the word 'member' itself is a body metaphor deriving etymologically from archaic words meaning flesh and thigh, and also referring to a limb or the penis) react concretely to one another and to aspects of the group dynamic as if actual pains, pleasures, and sensations were involved. At the same time, group boundaries demarcate symbolic body parts, the 'head' of the group, the 'arm' of the law, the 'inner workings' of the organization, the 'finger' being put on someone, etc. *The dynamic significance of these metaphors is that the group is evolving selective functions and roles.* Indeed, the group is a quasi-biological organism which has a periphery, a
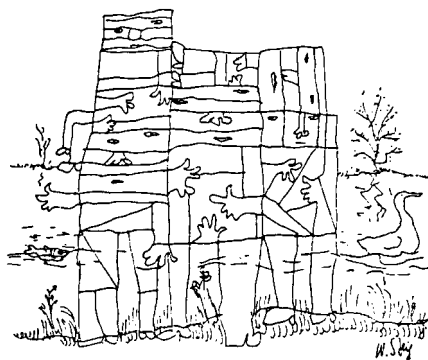
Lakeside Community

Figure 5.1 The group symbiosis and the group as a fictive body (first published in the *New Yorker*, May 5, 1980, p. 37)

collective 'sensory apparatus' to monitor input and output, and a 'digestive system' which metabolizes input into a useable product. The anthropomorphic element of the metaphor, however, is a realization of paranoid-schizoid dynamics in the group. Therefore, as the group differentiates roles and subgroups, it is not uncommon to find scapegoating, disavowal of feelings, and aggressivized object relations taking place. The group as a body image having various parts becomes easily eroticized or aggressivized, serving to maintain (or conversely to attack) boundaries between individuals or subgroups.

Figure 5.1 provides a light-hearted caricature of a group symbiosis and the group 'object' as a fictive body.

The selfobject and fictive body images of the group-as-a-whole are aspects of the group's symbiotic oneness with a maternal entity. An achievement of any group is to evolve from symbiotic fusion to the separateness of the object. The group becomes a 'good enough' mother who aids in the management of guilt and individuation. Such is the image which most people retain of their 'home group' (group of primary identification): constant, reliable, fondly thought about, and a source of strength and inspiration.

The group as it evolves into separation and individuation begins to manifest kinship relationships within a predominantly maternal orbit, the type of grouping analogous to a tribe or extended family. In its further development, a more distinct family constellation,

characterized by the Oedipal triad, may emerge. At an unconscious level, the object is an incestuous mother whom the membership protects and defends against the leader, who becomes a controlling and powerful father. It is expectable that at this point the men and women in the group will respond in accord with their respective triangular, eroticized conflicts. Unlike the previous phantasies in which group and leadership are equated, in the Oedipal pattern, group and leaders are experienced as opponents, and at the same time the leaders bear a secret incestuous relationship to one another which the members envy and wish to acquire. Here are the seeds of the totemic overthrow of the leader.

Upon the resolution of these various conflicts, one can begin to speak of the group as a mature, non-transference object. Group psychologists are generally agreed that there are such non-transferential group relations which are predominantly based on realistic, undistorted perceptions and current rather than archaic meanings, communications, and institutions. Bion, for example, spoke of the 'work group' and D.Napolitani (1980) of a 'project relationship'.

In its mature, work mentality, the group is experienced as an embodiment of the values and ideals of the membership. The members relate interdependently (Bennis and Shepard, 1956, pp. 427–33), and group structures become tools for achieving conscious goals. The group has truly become a cultural medium in which the members work and play, embodying Lewin's dictum that 'the group is greater than (and different from) the sum of its parts.' The group is now a creation of the membership, whereas earlier the members had been a creation of the group, that is, of their own projective identifications into it.

Chapter 6
The group analytic grid and the three systems: individual, interaction, group-*qua*-group

The view of the group as a system of object relations implies representational elements which can be experienced and expressed in any number of locations and subsystems. For a basic 'vocabulary' of such elements, the concepts of space, boundary, and object have been postulated as cognitive/affective universals which apply to the individual, to interactions, and to the group-as-a-whole. These are forms of experience elaborated by the principle of container/contained and rules of hierarchical transformation into multi-level group systems.

> For example, group members may express their own frustrated wishes for nurturance by using these elements to create a group climate of dependency and a structure which replicates the unbounded symbiotic oneness of the infantile period and allows for roles involving maternal care. Moving their chairs closer together, fantasizing that they are on a warm and bountiful desert island, and/or experiencing the leader as a feeding, nurturing breast exemplify these processes. Such a dependency/intimacy climate will 'take hold' if the participants recognize similar wishes in themselves and choose to embody the other members' object relations in their own behavior.

Although the group may come from diverse cultural and family backgrounds, they all 'know' how to create an 'object' in a space, and they will arrange to do so with great effort and motivation when their own internal object relations are activated. (This assumption of pre-given, *a priori* elements is consistent with the philosophy of structuralism in contemporary anthropology, cognitive psychology, and linguistics.).

The 'fate' of representational elements in the evolution of the group is determined by the way they fit into the systems and subsystems which comprise the group and its membership. That is, object relations are 'free-floating' ideational complexes which may cross boundaries and participate in systems which are ready to receive or contain them. Each system then becomes its own expression of the developmental process.

It is proposed here, in accordance with the principles of the paradigm already developed, that three systems: intrapsychic, interactive, and group-*qua*-group form the group matrix. The study of developmental patterns in each of these systems and the interrelationships among them defines a psychoanalytic and systemic group psychology (cf. chapter 7).

A systems-developmental grid for group psychology

To view the subject matter of the paradigm in terms of its basic dynamic elements, each would consist of a particular developmental process in a particular system and representing a relatively primitive or mature expression of that process. For example, the study of defense mechanisms in a group includes not only their psychodynamic aspects but also their effect upon group interaction and their organization into a group-wide pattern. In addition to this 'systems analysis,' it is important to characterize defenses developmentally as, for example, regressed and primitive (for example, fusion), or conversely in service of the work group and the self-actualizing of the membership (e.g. humor and generosity) or somewhere in between (such as repression of sexual impulse). Thus, a schema of developmental lines, levels and systems forms a mode of analysis linking psychoanalysis and group psychology. Such a schema will now be defined in its most general outlines. The reader should refer to the illustrations and to appendix 1 throughout.

Precedents for the group analytic grid

The Group Analytic Grid has two precedents in psychoanalysis: Anna Freud's (1965) developmental lines and Bion's (1977b) Grid. It borrows from them in certain respects but is different from either.

Anna Freud's developmental lines are separate but interdependent areas of human development which are formulated

The grid

	Defini-tory hypo-theses	ψ	Nota-tion	Atten-tion	Inquiry	Action	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	....n.
A β-elements	A1	A2				A6	
B α-elements	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	...Bn
C Dream thoughts dreams, myths	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	...Cn
D Pre-conception	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	...Dn
E Conception	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	...En
F Concept	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	...Fn
G Scientific deductive system		G2					
H Algebraic calculus							

Figure 6.1 Bion's 'Grid' for classifying and recording a psychoanalytic session. The rows represent the type of mental process, and the columns represent the 'action' taken by the analyst in relation to them

according to psychoanalytic theory but are close enough to experience that they may be assessed in naturalistic settings and psychological interviews. The lines are often used in patient assessment to obtain an initial picture, and then later on to note where progress has been made. The specific profiles developed by Ms Freud and her colleagues at Hampstead Clinic are not used in the present context. *The notion of separate but interdependent developmental lines which can be evaluated by observation and inference is the principle that has been adapted from her work.*

   Bion's Grid (figure 6.1) is a method for recording and making inferences about a psychoanalytic session. The rows of his Grid represent levels of cognition and affect (from unmetabolized 'Beta' or hallucinatory id elements to dreams and myths to abstract concepts) and the columns stand for the actions taken by the

analyst in relation to what the patient produces. Thus, if a patient reports a dream and the analyst makes an interpretation, that interaction between them could be recorded in row C, column 1. Again, the current classification scheme is very different from Bion's, but certain principles are similar. Importantly, Bion points out that the conditions of the psychoanalytic session make it possible to record processes that are close to the deep unconscious. That is true as well of the present Grid: it assumes that observational conditions permit unconscious processes to surface, for example in dreams, mythology, rituals, and roles. In a psychodrama this is usally the case, while in a highly structured business organization such observations would be far more difficult, perhaps requiring in-depth interviews of employees, etc. The ideal setting for the use of the schema is the 'unstructured' group, allowing for considerable free association and interactions.

Bion's Grid is a useful precedent in another respect. In it, he expanded Freud's distinction between primary and secondary process thinking into a continuum of mentation at different levels of abstraction (the rows of the Grid). Bion's greatness as a thinker was his ability to elaborate Freud's and Klein's concepts to reveal what was latent in them. For example, the Grid expands Freud's distinction between primary and secondary process to show that there are varying forms of thought from the most concrete (Beta elements) to the most abstract and notational (algebraic calculus). The developmental schema suggested here, and the basis of the present Group Analytic Grid, assumes that *individual and group processes exhibit developmental continuities*. Bion's own dichotomization of basic assumption and work groups, for example, has been elaborated by the present authors into a series of developmental levels expressing a continuum from primitive to mature levels of group formation. Bion's Grid points the way to an expansion and elaboration of constructs in both psychoanalysis and group psychology.

The grid and the paradigm

The Group Analytic Grid (see appendix 1) expresses the paradigm discussed in chapter 2. Represented (by a Greek letter) are three systems of group development including: intrapsychic systems (Psi=Ψ), those processes which are private and close to the core of the individual personality; interactive systems (Delta=Δ), the
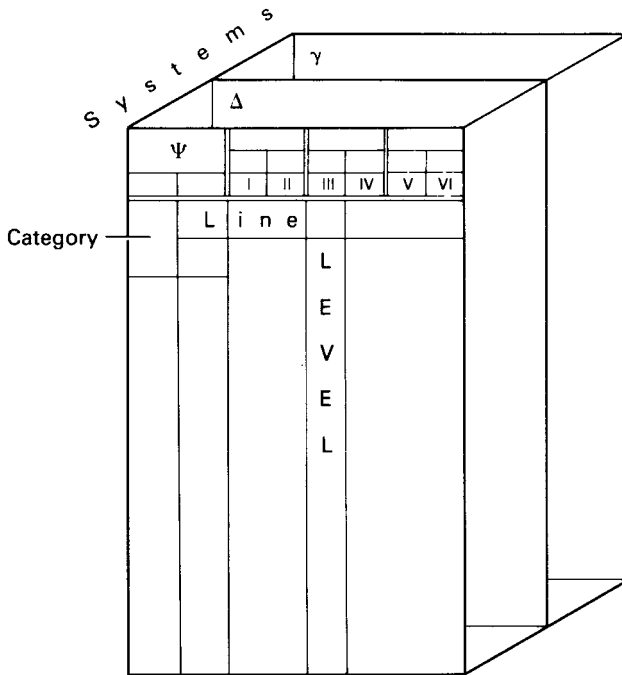
Figure 6.2 Overview of the Group Analytic Grid: systems, lines, and levels of development

communications among the members which mediate between the inner life and group organization and development; and the group-*qua*-group (Gamma=γ), the configurations, tensions, conflicts and structures which organize the group into a field which is 'greater than the sum of its parts.'

Each system is organized in developmental lines which have three predominant levels of development: 'regressed,' 'individuated,' and 'mature,' and, since a finer discrimination proved useful, the levels have been divided into sublevels, providing a six-level schema for a more sophisticated analysis. The levels will be defined and described later. At this point the reader is urged to think of them as *a six-point scale for coordinating diverse developmental processes.* The range of these levels is from the very rudimentary awareness of the individual and the group to the fulfillment of complex group tasks and the actualization of each member's deepest personal
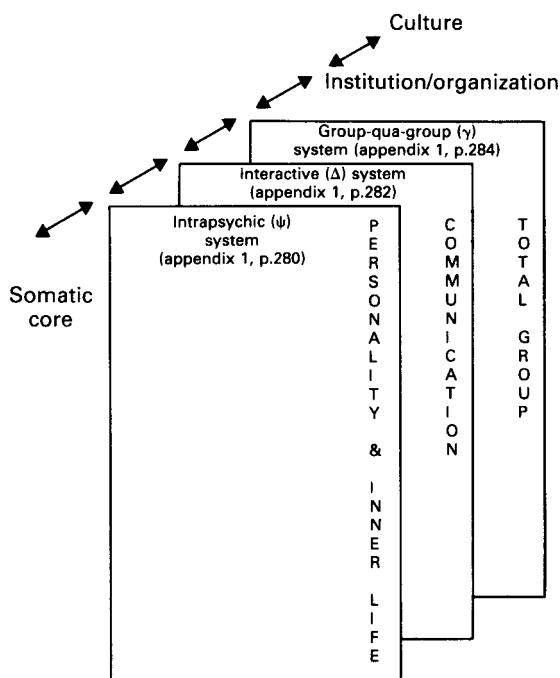
Figure 6.3 The systems of the Group Analytic Grid, showing how they interact with each other (arrows) and with soma, context, and culture

goals. Figure 6.2 affords an overview of the Group Analytic Grid. The left-hand column marked category will be discussed shortly.

Grid systems

The three systems constitute distinct but related universes of discourse, each with its own process, content, and structure: intrapsychic, interactive, and group-*qua*-group. It should also be remembered that they interlock with biological forces (somatic core), institutions, and culture (figure 6.3). If these were mechanistic entities, it would be possible to study the person, the communication process, and the group-as-group separately from each other, just as one would investigate the pistons, transmission linkage, and aerodynamics of an automobile. Such discreteness represents the paradigm of closed systems. The new paradigm

suggests that systems are open systems transformations of one another, and this principle results in similarities and interconnections among all living systems (von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 53), and for groups this interlocking of systems is based in their historical roots in the mother/infant pair, and in the feedback loops among various aspects of the group matrix. *Like an embryo, the group evolves out of an underlying unity and separates into distinct but related layers and functional entities: it develops epigenetically.*

At one level the systems are defined according to the vertex of observation. A psychoanalyst may view the fight/flight assumption as a case of paranoia, a communication theorist as a series of aggressive and submissive gestures, and a cultural anthropologist as a sacrificial ritual. To a degree, these are not 'real' systems but systems of *analysis*. At the same time, there are objective criteria for distinguishing between systems of organization: nature, not science, created the difference between an internal biological system and a social or group dynamic.

The systems thus express the essential unity of individual and group dynamics as well as the differences, emergent properties, and transformations that can occur between them, through communication, when we regard them as hierarchically ordered and distinct systems of organization. J.Durkin's (1980) concept of boundary openness/closedness (systeming and summing) suggests, for example, that the group may behave at certain times like an aggregate of persons and at times like a global oneness or mass, oscillating between relative states of fusion and individuation, so that the differences between the systems may be either obscured or highlighted. Emotionality and the basic assumption states, for example, represent openness on the oneness-individuation continuum, while cognitive structuring represents compartmentalized boundaries and a sharper 'gradient' between intrapsychic systems.

Grid lines

Each system can be subdivided into distinct but related developmental lines (figure 6.4). The choice of lines is a function of theoretical orientation and practical necessity. For example, a self psychologist would conceptualize emotional development from a vantage point that is different from that of a Kleinian. One of the
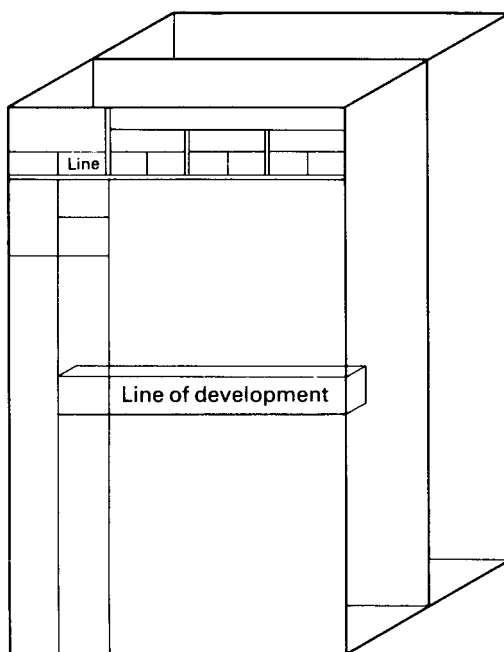
Figure 6.4 The location of developmental lines on the horizontal axis of the Grid

pressing issues in group psychology is to determine which developmental processes are salient in groups in general and in particular groups. Does, for example, the market place, agoraphobic atmosphere of the large group create a temporary 'narcissistic deficiency' which intensifies self-cathexis, while the small group elicits preoccupations with external objects? One empirical strategy is to utilize a developmental model which best fits the particular group, an approach similar to one advocated by Gedo and Goldberg (1973) in psychoanalysis.

Developmental lines and categories

Developmental lines may be classified under six categories which are aspects of all individuals and groups, including:

1 *Comprehensive views of object relations and the self*, those dynamic entities, internal and external systems which undergo the vicissitudes of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, and of the separation-individuation process.

2 *Affects/defenses:* affects and emotionality indicate the underlying significance of group events, and defenses speak to resistances to experiencing and exploring particular unconscious content and group realities.

3 *Phantasy*, the evolution of primary process, of conscious and unconscious fantasy, of mythology, and of ritualization. Lines of development of latent content include, for example, the fantasies (dreams, stories, imaginative constructions) expressed by the members in a particular session.

4 *Identification and externalization processes*, the transference based activities of displacement and projection/introjection in their intrapsychic, communicative, and group formative aspects.

5 *Cognitive mastery*, an often neglected aspect of psychoanalytic group dynamics, the means by which members reality test, problem-solve, and establish the truth and validity of experience.

6 *Boundaries and structure:* the development of an inner and outer 'architecture' or 'anatomy' which facilitates the implementation of individual and group functions.

It is hypothesized that these categories are universals in all human groups and manifest *in all three systems* as a set of developmental lines (see figure 6.5).

The epistemological and paradigmatic aspect of the Grid is the relationship between developmental lines and the systems in which they appear. *In the interaction of lines and systems lie the most fundamental problems of group psychology*. If, for example, the individual and the group were orthogonal (independent) vectors, the developmental lines for them would be distinct. If there were no difference between individual and group processes (if, for instance, the group were an aggregate or the person a purely social being), the lines would be identical. The actual condition is somewhere in between these extremes, and a convenient way to think of it is in terms of a vector in which the developmental lines of the individual system are related to those of the group system in a fluctuating manner (see figure 6.6). The relationship between personal identity
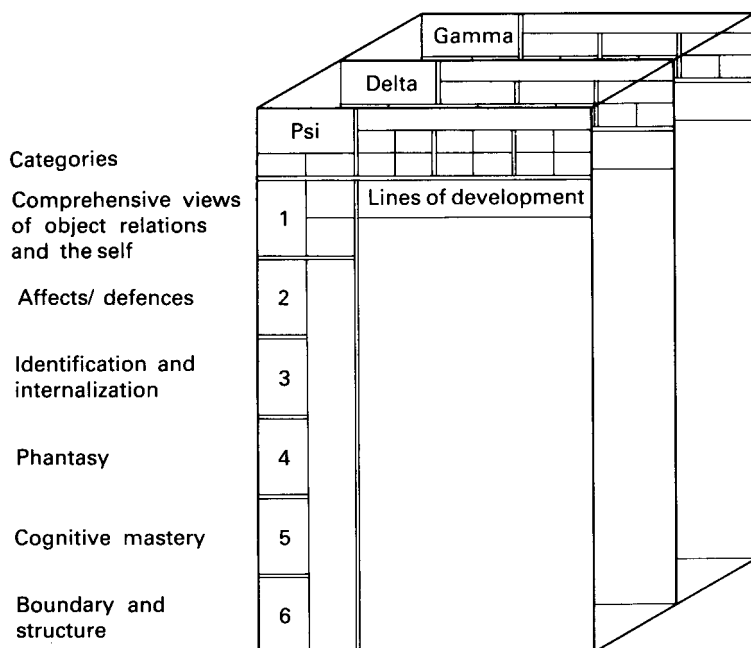
Figure 6.5 The categories of the Grid (universal in all three systems)

and group identity is exemplary of this interdependence. At times, the personal identity may be virtually one with that of the group, and at other times it may be orthogonal (independent) or diametrically opposite (conflicted): the relationship is a dialectical one.

Grid levels

The third dimension of the Grid is the level of development (figure 6.7). This represents the genetic point of view of psychoanalysis and the 'vertical' historical dimension of group analysis (horizontally, however, in the Grid!). Can a mental process, a communication process, or a group process be ordered developmentally? Does development mean an age level, a level of complexity, of efficiency and sophistication, of integrated functioning? Lewin (1951, pp. 93–6) preferred in some instances the use of 'retrogression' to 'regression' in order to avoid confusion between group events and individual development.
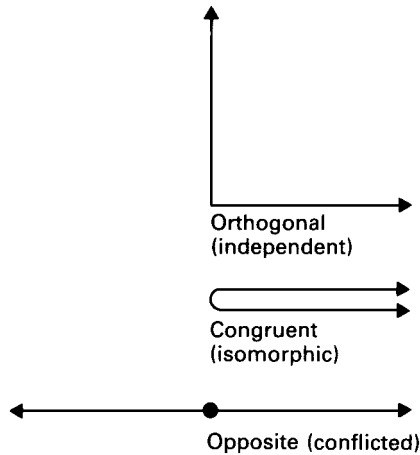
Figure 6.6 Three possible relationships between any two aspects of group systems, such as individual identity and group identity

Wilbur (1983, pp. 267–91) suggested that some stages of development remain omnipresent in adult life as structures of thought, while others are transitory and are replaced by later developments, hence play little or no role in adult experience but are way stations towards that experience. However, if the self cannot detach from that way station, adult life may be misperceived in terms of the earlier phase. The ability to mirror and identify with others' emotional states is acquired early in life and is crucial to group life. On the other hand, persecutory anxiety, while it persists to a degree in most adults, is generally regressive, and only by resolving it can the group proceed in its development. The levels suggest only what may be central to a particular personality or group event and are a probabilistic and goal oriented tendency rather than a fixed point.

The Grid thus expresses graphically an epistemology of groups which recognizes the importance and fluctuation of developmental processes. In principle, it is possible to discover the developmental 'profile' for a group event and to explore a variety of problems concerning its evolution and current state. The Grid represents the domain of developmental processes to be found in groups, and a specific group event is defined by its location in the Grid, by its profile and its clustering of experience.
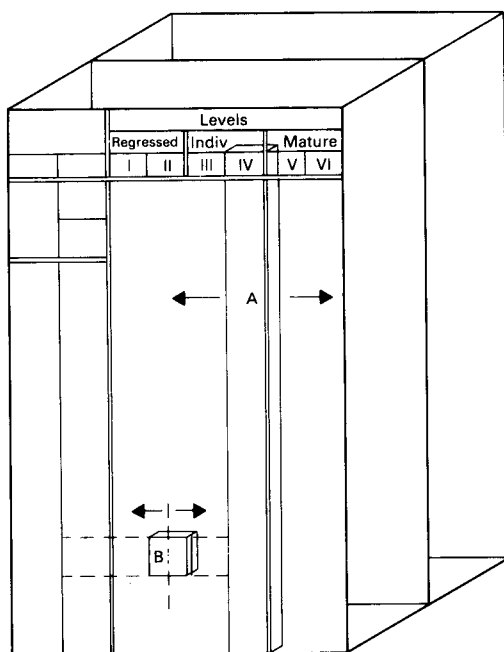
Figure 6.7 The display of levels in the Group Analytic Grid. The levels may be totalistic (uniform in all developmental lines) (A) or different for each (B)

The systems of the grid

The systems have been designated intrapsychic (Ψ), interactive (Δ) and group-*qua*-group (γ). Greek letters are used to codify the systems in an abstract notation to minimize the assumptions made about them and encourage the use of operational definitions. The differentiation between person, communication, and group systems is a construct that requires elaboration.

Agazarian and Peters (1981, pp. 56–94), for example, proposed a four-system view of the group: person, member, group role, and group-as-a-whole. Their person and group-*qua*-group systems are similar to the present ones, while their 'member system' represents the interactive component of the personality, and their 'group role system' consists of the differentiation and distribution of the group-as-a-whole. The formulation utilized here incorporates the member system under the intrapsychic and interactive systems and group

roles as part of the group-as-a-whole. Such differences in the analysis of group systems seem to be inevitable.

A fundamental difference between Agazarian and Peters' point of view and the present one is that while they advocate the use of psychoanalytic theory for the understanding of individuals and field theory for the grasp of group processes, the present position is that theories *cross* the systems: theories need to be integrated into the general systems view.

Arsenian and Semrad (1967) anticipated these classifications of group systems:

> As a first approach to the topic of the depth level in individual and group manifestations, there are four obvious major targets of attention: the individual members, the leader or central figure, the interactions, and the group-as-a-whole. Our observations find substance for the constructs individual, individual in a group, and group as legitimate constructs and levels of discourse (pp. 83–98).

The systems proposed here are: (1) the individual and his inner life (Psi), (2) the communications and contact among persons (Delta), and (3) configurations in the group-as-a-whole (Gamma). The remaining sections of this chapter are an attempt to define and elaborate the nature of these systems within the current paradigm. Special attention is given to the 'interactive system' because it is felt that there is much new research work to be done in this realm, where the unconscious and the group communication process meet.

The intrapsychic system (Ψ)

The position of Foulkes that the individual is a nodal point in the group matrix necessitates that one not equate the psychological person with the visible biological unit. Instead, one should describe the psyche dynamically in relation to biology and the surrounding social context. The fundamental principle defining the person as a dynamic entity is that of organismic integrity and continuity, what Kohut has called cohesion of the self, and Erickson, identity. The personality system must individuate sufficiently so that it has a stable structure and set of constants which it takes into any life experience. The intrapsychic system as defined here constitutes the enduring and evolving structures and dynamics which maintain the

coherence and identity of the individual in varying environments. Some of these features are hidden, private, or unconscious, and others are visible to others, public, or available to consciousness.

Angyal (1965) formulated a systems approach to the study of the personality as one which states 'the nature of the *material* that is organized in the personality structure, the nature of the *dimensional domain* within which the past processes are arranged, and the system principle which defines this holistic organization' (pp. 48–9). Personality seen in this way is no longer concretized, reified, or excessively bounded in rigid structural entities, and instead flows into other systems.

Object relations theory and ego psychology have recognized that it is the gradual structuralization of the mind (through its attendant internalization processes) which creates an individual from an erstwhile fusion with the maternal environment and achieves integration of a set of diverse 'ego nuclei', internal objects, and self representations. Current developmental theory is therefore consistent with Foulkes' 'nodal point' view, and both perspectives agree that 'The person is related to his social environment by means of a number of dynamic psychic structures *which vary greatly in the degree to which they are in open transaction with the environment*' (Sutherland, 1952, italics added).

Thus, the intrapsychic system may be defined as *a bounded set of inner dynamics, structures and objects which are stable over time and serve to maintain the psychological integrity of the organism vis-à-vis the inner and outer environment.*

> The difference between the use of splitting and projective identification as an intrapsychic defense system and as a vehicle for communication and group organization will illustrate what is meant by an intrapsychic system which functions within a group system. The borderline personality functions with a continual sense of splitting off and disavowing negative elements of self and object. This process operates in his fantasy life and in his habitual reactions to significant others as primitive transference objects. In normal individuals, these defensive operations are usually attenuated, sublimated, and superseded by more mature defenses such as repression. Yet normal persons, under the regressive pressures of certain group situations, will reactivate splitting and projective identification to cope with the group-induced

stress. This reactivation often occurs simultaneously in all the members of a given group and becomes an integral part of the group dynamic. *At this point, the group process and not the inner dynamic reinforces and organizes the projective identifications.* The equillibrating systems are in the group and not the individual, as shown by the new member who rather quickly evinces the same regressive ideation, and by the fact that, unless there has been an internalization process, normal behavior will gradually be restored upon leaving the group situation.

The 'nodal point person' or intrapsychic system is thus defined here in terms of organismic integrity, personal history and identity, and an inner, bounded 'space' in which is contained his mental life, his internal objects, his characteristic ways of organizing and experiencing them, and his psychosomatic matrix. Affective state and intrapsychic defenses are barometers of the person's responses to stimulation, reality, and the group. The inner basis of the personality includes the somatic core, the body self, and the private or repressed regions of the self. The external or group basis of the personality includes all those group processes which cross the ego boundary through perception, communication, projective/ introjective identification, etc.

The purpose of defining the person systemically rather than concretely is to allow for the possibility that what is sometimes considered 'internal' is really not 'in' the person at all but consists of information and symbolic representations which may be 'located' (and relocated) at various points in the individual and group matrices. The notion of 'idea' is thus separated from the notion of a 'place' (and of a 'thinker'). Such a premise permits system transformations and exchanges to occur. For example, a set of object relations contained in a dream may be externalized into group life by some such vehicle as the self-fulfilling prophesy (cf. Joseph's *dream* of 'the coat of many colors' in which his *inner experience* and imagery foretold his *group role* as leader). The distinction between the system and the information in the system radically alters the nature of psychoanalytic theory in a way which is only just beginning to be understood.

Thus, the intrapsychic system is that which remains stable in a person by virtue of his boundary conditions, while transactions

across those boundaries may be regarded as transformations of inner experience into interpersonal and group relations.

The interactive system (Δ)

Since information always must be interpreted by the receiver, the process of attribution (Carrilio, 1978) determines what significance shall be given to a particular communicative act. The group consists of persons who are busy construing what they are seeing and hearing and feeding back these constructions in subsequent communications, verbal and non-verbal, conscious and unconscious. Foulkes' concept of the group matrix extends communication theory to the group-as-a-whole by viewing it as a network, and 'structural family therapy' (Haley and Hoffman, 1967) is based on the premise that such networks set up coalitions and alliances which form enduring patterns of interaction. Thus, communication is embedded in a structure which it also creates.

In the present context, it is useful to consider interaction and communication as a general system which: (1) forms a linkage connecting the inner worlds of group members to each other and (2) regulates both inner processes and group processes. In the latter respect, interactions can create a group field dynamic from a set of inner dynamics and vice-versa, when these systems are ready to receive and respond to communicated input. Communications and transactions are gradually built up and structured in order that meanings be correctly interpreted, and they are 'coded' at primitive or mature, transferential or non-transferential levels. Bion's 'protomental' communication is a primitive system of interactions, while Bales' (Bales and Strodtbeck, 1951) 'Interaction Process Analysis' focuses on 'work group' verbal and adaptive communication, although it can be utilized as well for the study of primitive emotionality and phantasy.

Some features of group communication and interaction

On account of the central importance of the interactive system in object relations formulations, a diversion is taken here to explore several developmental aspects of inter-member relations and the 'network' it establishes as a feature of group life. This network

becomes an integral part of the cognitive/affective process in groups as well as its own transitional object and symbol system.

If one considers, for example, Kohut's 'selfobject' as a systems construct, the intrapsychic systems include self cohesion and 'transmuting internalizations,' while the interactive system contains the mirroring and idealizing processes. Similarly, in projective identification, the intra-psychic system consists of an unconscious phantasy, and the interactive system consists of the actions and manipulations which seek to create containers for constellations of phantasy and defense.

The following points about the interactive system will be made here:

1 Affective communication (group emotionality) is fundamentally the publication of inner states into the group matrix.
2 The most rudimentary form of group communication is a coordinated, synchronous flow of 'body language.'
3 The principle of container-contained is a law of group communication and has a precedent in the development of the child's ability to think.
4 Communication promotes thought, truth, and reality testing, but it also endangers individual thought by creating a 'group illusion' in which the membership is strongly invested.
5 Communication creates a transitional object which serves a variety of group functions.

Publication

One of the functions of communication in groups is to share and integrate information about the inner world of the membership. Bion's concept of 'publication' (cf. Grotstein, 1981b) expresses the vicissitudes which an inner mental process can undergo when it is externalized. Normally, the transmission of deep or repressed mental content is gradual, attenuated and modulated. For borderline and psychotic patients however, the communication of inner anxieties, wishes, and fantasies can have terrifying and catastrophic implications. Delusions of being observed, of thought telepathy, of shame and exposure, express the need for external or therapeutic management of self. Similarly, the group regression induces fears of publication of inner states. 'Publication' radically changes the character of inner phantasies, giving them greater

spatiality (in 'real' space-time) and allowing for new phantasy objects to be included, a process seen in group mythology, where time, distance, and significance are 'expanded' and exaggerated to allow for the 'display' of inner objects. The unbounded space experienced in psychoses is sometimes related to the avoidance of contact among objects of the inner world so that the objects become dispersed into vast regions of the 'universe'. In the area of childhood sexuality, Little Red Riding Hood's uncovering (publication) of the wolf in grandmother's bed releases the devouring tendencies of the bad phallic object and allows the hunter to do away with him at the same time. Publication makes inner objects conscious and subsequently manageable!

Synchronicity

Brazelton and Als (1979) have shown how the earliest communications of mother and infant are woven into a synchronous stimulus-response pattern, a two-person system or 'envelope' in which visual, auditory, and tactile interactions take place. This dyadic system is quickly organized and suggests a primitive self and social awareness in the infant, who initiates many of the interactions. The latter, in turn 'fuel' the ego system for further development and energize both members of the dyad. Importantly, the very primitive interactions become built up with new stimulus-response patterns, so that more sophisticated mutual play and communication evolves within the 'envelope.'

   The synchronicity of mother and infant is a prototype of group interaction. The initial group formation consists of a regressive and non-verbal form of synchronicity among an adult collective: a coordinated sensori-motor activity among the members. Groups sometimes manifest this pattern as a collective 'breathing' of the group.

   A rudimentary form of group-qua-group synchronicity was observed in a self-study group (Agazarian, 1975) which sat in movable chairs. Observing this group through a one-way mirror filtered out the verbal communication, and one could observe the group move about the room as a coordinated unit, maintaining its shape and form as it did so. In another group session, a videotape showed a literal 'choreography' of patterns, coordinated spatial body language, and verbal

communication in each of the basic assumptions. It was as if the members were subliminally attuned to each other and to the whole, as in an 'envelope.'

These coordinated movements reflect primordial projective identifications of mental functions. A portion of the mental life is fantastically evacuated into the group. It cannot be overemphasized that the externalization of the inner life into the group, the analyst, or any other 'location' is no mystical form of thought telepathy, but occurs through perceptual-motor communication of a highly coordinated nature. The magical *belief* in telepathy is, however, an aspect of such projections. In family groups, as Horwitz (1983) points out, the family members unconsciously train each other to respond to their projective identifications by manipulating parents and siblings into roles. Much of this 'training' is conveyed through body language.

Communication, cognition, and reality testing in groups

Leaky and Lewin (1977) held that man's ability to think evolved in response to the need to regulate social behaviors. Social living, they suggest, requires flexibility in response to the needs of others, and hence is on the evolutionary frontier of problemsolving (pp. 166–7). As social adaptation became more sophisticated, so too did the ability to master the environment depend increasingly on social cooperation, setting up an evolutionary pattern based on intelligence. If Leaky's hypothesis is correct, then mentation must at its roots be a group process: the act of 'cognizing' is in some measure an inherently social act, a linkage of persons into a unified field which is optimally adapted to the surrounding environment. In a very real sense, thinking itself takes place in the field of interaction.

Fornari (1966, pp. 141–4) noted that the group evolves a criterion for truth which is halfway between reality and fantasy, i.e. transitional in Winnicott's sense. The group denies an actual event at the same time that it accepts it by ritualizing it. For example, in the mourning process, the group preserves the dead in the funeral rite, but the same ritual enables the group to continue without the deceased being present and to resolve its intense emotionality. Generally, 'group think' retains portions of reality by denying other

portions. There is a component of communication in which it is, *pari passu*, a simultaneous negation/denial/repression of a thought and a fantasy realization of it. The group transforms thought as it expresses it, one of its most 'curative' yet dangerous potentials. Fornari suggested that if the aggressive component of persecutory anxieties cannot be neutralized through mourning rituals, the self-contradictory need to kill the object in order to mourn it may become necessary, and he sees this dynamic as the basis of war. Fornari's profound insight illustrates the intense emotional paradoxes attendant upon thinking in groups, particularly in the management of aggression, and shows how group interaction can alter reality testing.

Bion's 'thinking couple'

Bion (1962) considered thinking to be a multiperson process of container and contained. James (1984) applied container-contained to Foulkes' concept of the group matrix, regarding the social context as a container for inchoate emotional experience.

Bion proposed an evolution in the ability to think. The capacity for thought rests upon the mother's ability to be present with the infant while herself in a dream-like state of 'reverie,' a phenomenon parallel to the group's participation as an audience, a listening context. Initially there is the creation of a palpable idea, or conception, from the unformed stimulation (preconceptions) which provide vague awarenesses for metabolization and learning. This process is accomplished through the projective identification of the preconception into the mother where it is mated with its realization or external counterpart, giving inchoate experience a form and a representation.

The second and third stages provide a way to think about the conception, that is, an 'apparatus for thinking thoughts.' This apparatus is established through frustration, or the temporary absence of the breast. In the time delay between the projective identification and its realization, a space (akin to Winnicott's potential space) is created as a 'no breast' or negative realization. Then, in this space, the conception can be contained as a thought. The infant now has a thought and a way of thinking about it, which in the relation container-contained forms an apparatus for thinking thoughts.

Fourth and finally, container-contained can be used in a creative fashion to form new thoughts. Bion considers that this process of generating thoughts happens by the infant focusing on the selected fact and integrating his 'knowledge' around it. For Bion, this activity resembles movement from part to whole objects, from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position.

Bion uses primal scene imagery throughout his discourse on thinking: conception, mating, male and female symbols, etc. While he never clarified his intent, it is likely that he was interested in the curiosity drive being linked by Ms Klein to the primal scene. Thinking can become eroticized, penetrating, seductive, and passionate. These considerations provide a potential link between thinking and the pairing assumption. The couple in the pairing group is a 'thinking couple' and they are going to produce an idea which will become a selected fact for the group. In Fight/Flight they may wish to kill or flee from this idea, and in Dependency, they place it in the leadership for safe keeping. The primordial idea may be that the group itself exists as a personal death and afterlife, as a double of the self, and as a sacrifice.

The formation of the thinking couple and the apparatus for thinking thoughts is paradigmatic of the establishment of a group container. Speech transforms inchoate preconceptions into the relationship container-contained. In this respect, a group is both a breast and a no-breast, or negative realization, which forms in the group a *space* for thinking thoughts.

In this respect, any communication represents a cognitive coupling, a linkage of two or more 'apparatuses for thinking thoughts.' The preconception of the sender mated with the realization of the receiver creates an image, a concept, or a hypothesis which now properly belongs in the group. In this way, the group establishes its own set of symbols and fantasy elements which will be the tools for its subsequent dialogues and development. In some respects, the group's concept will be new and creative as well, a 'play space' representing the features of the particular group and its accumulating vocabulary of ideational elements.

The group thus proceeds from a state of reflexive mutual contacts without a specific object of the 'message' and the content of the communication being unmetabolized projective identifications to a point where the group object and the communication process become containers for images and representations which can be utilized in

group process, including the use of the 'selected fact' to integrate information. In this process, the message and the 'metamessage' become differentiated, that is non-verbal and para-verbal (vocal modulation of the texture, pitch, rate, and emphasis) expressions take on the functions of modifying and regulating the stated meaning. Truth and falsehood become confirmable at the group level because 'the occurrence of falsehood becomes evidence that *the group is one based on mutual awareness of perception*' (Ruesch and Bateson, 1951, p. 209, italics added).

The group transitional space and object

James (1980b, 1984) observed that communication is related to the transitional space and object. A portion of the communication is in the sender and a portion in the receiver, and still a third, transitional element is created which is both. The ongoing metacommunications sustain this space and facilitate its evolution. Eventually, the transitional space will develop a pattern and meaning of its own and cultivate a transitional object. The new object is in effect both a quasi-group and quasi-person, that is, it has features of both and acts as a way station between them: it is a model or analog of individual and group process constructed out of communicative elements. The group members relate to this transitional object as if it were the actual group, and it is, in effect, a 'group illusion' (Anzieu, 1980). The group transitional object is what everyone imagines the group to be, a type of legend or story about it, a 'dream play,' a partly imaginary structure which bears a relation to the real features of the group and its membership.

The transitional space and object are located in the communications matrix and have an important function in the linkage between individual and group dynamics. Patterned after both, and using elements from both, they have the capacity to undergo a hierarchy shift into individual or the group-*qua*-group systems, thereby transforming them into new sets of structure, process, and content. (This is how a basic assumption state becomes translated into a cultural institution such as the Army, Church, or State.) The transitional object of the group is thus a virtual image and blueprint of the group and at the same time of the mental life of the members.

To illustrate, a supportive psychotherapy group for addictive persons met daily in a partial hospital setting. The senior psychotherapist actively played the role of a supportive and confrontive figure, an auxiliary ego for the membership. He consciously applied the approach to the father transference which August Aichorn (1935) had described in *Wayward Youth:* that is, he manipulated the transference by acting a part of it. The group maintained a passive-dependent orientation towards him, complying with his instructions and interpretive remarks, but rarely taking the initiative themselves. On one particular occasion he was absent from the session and the cotherapist, informed of the reason for his absence, did not disclose it to the group and remained neutral and non-committal. The group at first gazed helplessly at the empty chair, remaining silent and inactive, as if they had lost a part of their functional mental equipment. However, instead of displacing their neediness into the cotherapist, a typical transference reaction, one member began to imagine out loud what the absent therapist would do. Several other members of the group took up this line of association, and a rather elaborate 'portrait' of the therapist emerged, including memories of his past behaviors in particular situations. The group then began to adopt (introject and internalize) portions of his actively therapeutic roles as instructor, clarifier, and nurturer for themselves, displaying some of their own distortions of these roles as they did so. By the end of the session, they had evolved a temporary group structure which contained the functions served by the absent therapist. The therapist, in his absence ('space'), became a transitional object and 'blueprint' from which a group structure emerged, first in the imagination, and then in the group reality. The blueprint contained as a transitional object both their own introjections and the actual qualities of the absent therapist.

To summarize, communication and interaction in groups begins with the realization of a concept through the relation container-contained, a form of projective identification which allows ideas to develop in an interpersonal context. Thinking then becomes channeled into focal conflicts and group tensions through the process of group free association. Such 'selected facts' become embodied in a transitional space and illusion which functions as a

way station between intrapsychic and group dynamics. A symbol system and mythology may then evolve, providing the group with an ideology and with metaphors for transforming personal experience into group culture and vice-versa. The power of the symbol derives from its condensation of multiple inter-member dynamics into a single unified group representation.

The group-*qua*-group system

The epistemological problem of what constitutes the 'group-as-group' shall now be reviewed from a standpoint of inquiry into what useful knowledge might indeed be extracted by regarding the evolving group as a distinct system of organization. This need is more pressing for the psychoanalyst, whose customary mode of listening is directed towards the individual, than for the group practitioner, who is accustomed to group dynamics. Even the latter, however, may confound personal with group processes rather too easily and so needs rigorously to remind himself what he is defining as 'the group.'

Many psychoanalysts remain skeptical of the value of pursuing the study of group process. At a meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association, a many-times honored analyst commented in private conversation that he could not understand why there was a need to talk about groups, that group dynamics seemed to him to be mystical rather than scientific in nature. (The writer of the foreword to this book, another honored psychoanalyst, similarly refers to the group as 'a mysterious entity', p. ix). Individually oriented practitioners are skeptical about the scientific investigation of groups and listen only to individual contributions to it, not to the group process itself— that is, they selectively inattend to the group dimension.

On the other hand, there are those who display an intuitive grasp of groups with the same ability and fervor that the psychoanalyst displays in listening to his patient. While it is not at all evident what they are identifying, for them groups 'exist' graphically. Wright (Ashbach and Schermer, 1980) hypothesized that such an attunedness to group processes stems from experiences in the family matrix which were of particular dynamic significance for the person. The present position is that there is an urgent need to foster an awareness of the group level in psychoanalysts, in order that they may apply their special tools and intuitions more fully to it. It

should be added that it is not only the family which serves as a developmental basis for group awareness. Colman (1975) pointed out the importance of the symbiotic phase of development in the later perception of the group-as-a-whole. Furthermore, it would seem that some individuals have a heightened awareness of specific configurations such as leadership, cohesion, or consensus and decision making in groups. That is, associated with the group system are a number of 'perceptual gestalts.' The approach to the study of group systems is to attend to these gestalts, a discipline which requires overcoming the tendency to think in terms of individual social isolates.

One model of group dynamics, which might be called 'psychophysical', is to regard the group as a level organization of matter, information, and energy which coordinates individual actions. This framework is consistent with the notion that the group consists of externalized object relations. In principle, the infrastructure of boundaries, roles, and subgroups represents a differentiation of function within the overall group level of organization. Mythology, the 'as if' fantasy mode of the group, is similarly a restructuring of those dream symbols and 'archetypes' which enter into the personality at a supraordinate group level. One is reminded of the story of a cathedral destroyed by a fire during the Middle Ages. The devout from numerous towns and regions came together to rebuild it. Among them, they possessed the 'internal representations' necessary to recreate an entire and complex symbolic structure. In addition, they had the desire and devotion to cooperate in the group task. The motivation to work together, which stems from the superego and from the libido or 'life instinct,' facilitates the transformation of individual resources into group structure, process, and content. Not incidentally, considerable energy is expended in achieving the negative entropy of group structure, and this expenditure is experienced as a type of 'sacrifice,' so that there is always a loss, a death, and a resurrection of the self associated with participating in a group.

Within this view of the group as a 'level of organization,' its differences from the persons who compose it consist in its 'field properties' and 'exchange processes,' its structure and its use and containment of ideas and communications. These facets can be 'detected' in three ways: (1) by listening with 'hovering attention' to persons acting and verbalizing in concert, a process which yields an awareness of common unconscious themes and variations; (2) by

noting invariant structure, which requires distinguishing between the temporal and non-temporal, the diachronic and synchronic, the vertical and horizontal, and which gives a sense of the architecture and the 'constants' of group life (this implies attunement to configurations and patterns); and (3) by observing the 'effects' of the group field on individuals who enter it.

Such a formulation of the group system leads to an awareness of phenomenological 'events' and configurations: a group's existence but not its essence. The essence of a person is his identity, his unconscious, his self. Does a group or community also have an essence, a fundamental integrating principle? Such an essentialist position is a major step away not only from the Helmholtzian 'physicalism' to which Freud early ascribed, but from systems theory itself. It postulates the transpersonal dimension. The study of the group as a 'thing in itself is very difficult and even the great philosophers (Plato, Hobbes, Marx, for example) had difficulty succeeding at such a task.

The psychoanalyst approaches the essence of the group from three vantage points: (1) its universal impact on those who participate in it (including the group regression, the mourning process, the identity shift, etc.); (2) the myth which exemplifies it to the members, for Freud the Oedipus myth and the theme of parricide; and (3) the supraordinate entity from which the individual emerges (for Freud as a mythic hero), that is, the primordial psychological matrix through which knowledge is acquired and in which images are embedded, presupposing that ontogenetically and phylogenetically knowledge and symbol are products of the group. There are systems of thought which do not assume an individual mind or identity, a quality which Neumann (1949, pp. 5–38) has termed 'uroboric', a primal unity which is self-born, self-created.

The foregoing discussion suggests that, to establish a phenomenology and developmental lines for the group-as-a-whole, one should look to several features. First, there are *perceptual gestalts* which emerge as the group boundary, space, and object. These gestalts can be operationalized *via* the use of Lewinian field theory (cf. Agazarian and Peters, 1981, Part I) and include such factors as leadership, cohesion or unity, role differentiation and structure, subgroups, and so on. Second, there can be found features of mentation which emerge distinctly in group systems of organization and whose meaning derives from the group process: *patterns of culture.* Finally, there is the *essence of the group* as a

dynamic fact for all who participate in it. Taken together, these form a group system which emerges from and informs the membership and their communications. The Grid γ system (appendix 1) suggests several group-qua-group developmental lines.

Review and example: group systems and their relationship

To summarize the three systems, the intrapsychic system (Ψ) contains the phantasies, defense mechanisms, structures, and response dispositions that constitute the personality, including an inner space of phantasy objects and aspects of self and ego identity.

Interactively (the Δ system), these intrapsychic relationships are extended via communication into a group space. For example, the selfobject's need for mirroring expresses itself as a sociometric closeness to an object in which differences between self and other are negated, so that the life space of the group becomes dedifferentiated and the mirroring process produces a virtual image of the grandiose self in the leadership and in the group identity.

The group-*qua*-group system (γ) consists of the resultant roles, myths, and so on which form aspects of coordinated group activity. For instance, 'bad' internal objects may be externalized as scapegoating, subgrouping (representing affectively toned ideologies in a polarized way), or in an overall group climate which places the 'bad' outside the group boundary and the 'good' inside, creating an atmosphere of enchantment and euphoria.

The intrapsychic system and group-as-a-whole are intercalated by the interactive system, consisting of perception, communication, ego functions and ego boundary, interactive defenses (for example, projective identification), etc. Through these intermediary mechanisms, the group system can be transformed by the personality systems and vice-versa. Perception, communication, and interactions perform input-output functions between the individual and the group. They act as a *boundary system* which can be relatively open or closed to change in the group or person and a *linking system* which invokes a particular template for relating the personal to the group 'map.'

To illustrate how the three systems interrelate, a sensitivity training group of college instructors identified itself as

different from the faculty to which they belonged. They thought of themselves as pioneers and risk-takers. Conservative faculty who attempted to participate in the first group meeting quickly excluded themselves by choice, indicating their anxiety about participating in exercises which involved relaxation, vulnerability, yielding one's status and role to an atmosphere of equality and self-disclosure, and physical contact. This self-selection further distinguished and isolated the remaining group, which also met in a house a considerable distance from the campus.

After several meetings, the separation of the group from its institutional environs and its sense of being 'on a journey' led to a mourning process in which associations were to relatives, friends, and places from the distant past. The group climate varied from sadness to euphoria. Suddenly, one member became the focus of mourning, undergoing grief for a parent, an event which surprised everyone. During her grieving, which lasted a full session and on which the group's attention was riveted, some group members critically attacked her, while others nurtured and consoled her. She moved physically into the center of the group circle, and the leader and some members joined her at times.

Following this phase of mourning, the group began to criticize the leadership for evoking such strong emotion. One leader who had an especially seductive and challenging style was almost forced to withdraw, but a subgroup of the more daring members supported his remaining in the group. A compromise was reached in which he played a less active role and group authority was consigned to another consultant. The group proceeded to its assigned termination date by working through feelings about the group, debriefing, and consolidating personal gains and growth.

Following the termination of the group, the members formed an anxious clique, remaining apart from the other faculty for a period of several weeks. The member who was the focus of the mourning process, however, quickly sought nurturance from non-participating faculty, which she received in large doses. Gradually, the group members reintegrated with the rest of the faculty.

The focal conflict in this sensitivity training group was over separation and individuation from the institutional context. The dilemma centered around the development of a new group identity and the risking of personal identity in the group context. The working through of depressive anxiety by mourning process became centered in and exemplified by one individual with personal dynamics especially congruent with the group focal conflict. Intermittent avoidance of the depressive element and the revival of persecutory anxiety was expressed in an initiation ritual of membership self-selection through exposure to the group norms, scapegoating the 'sick' or needy individual, and a subsequent attack on the leader.

Such a dilemma of separation from the 'mother group' (the institution) was not expressed in a univocal way, but utilized the group-as-a-whole system and its subsystems as 'voices' or containers in which various aspects of the conflict were, in effect, exposed and revealed. The group identity, its norms and member selection, its roles and rituals, its physical space, were responsive to the thematic content and the free associations of the members as the group progressed. The group created a boundary and a physical location which differentiated it from its institutional context. Internal norms and values placed a pressure on the membership to yield their personal identity to that of the group, to establish new object ties, and to risk new behaviors and self-disclosure. The roles of mourner, scapegoat, seducer, and fight/flight leader were evoked to exemplify the inner experience and patterns of defense of the collective.

The group system thus became a container for the projective identification of mental content, and this mental content was itself aroused by the activity of beginning the group and placing a boundary around it. The physical space and locations became a visible representation of group relations.

The interactive system for this group linked the content of mourning with the movement of the group dynamic as follows. The use of externalization by projecting unwanted, disavowed aspects of self and identity, creating a predominance of flight/flight mentality, was evident in the exclusionary, scapegoating, and confrontational activity of this group. In addition, the group came to function as an enveloping and idealized selfobject for the members. The membership considered themselves exceptional (grandiose) and had overidealized the leadership at first. Their collective fantasy life

revolved around reaction formations and symbiotic wishes: sunny beaches, pleasant forests, etc. Mirroring activity, such as imitation, and a pervasive 'just born' feeling of wonder at the humanness and resemblances among each other were present. The selfobject and projective types of transference matrices connected the unconscious dynamic of mourning to the group evolution by establishing the group as a transference object of a maternal nature and a vehicle for disavowing uncomfortable aspects of the self.

To summarize the relationship between the three systems of this particular group, the focal point of separation and mourning activated transference reactions and boundary forming activity which involved controlling, scapegoating communications. In turn, changes in the group dynamics took place: the roles of a seducer and a fight/flight leader evolved; a voice for the group mourning process appeared, and myths and fantasies of symbiotic oneness, mirroring, journeying, and 'basking' in nature evolved.

The interactive system is thus the link between the unconscious conflicts of the members and the group field dynamics. In place of a group mystique, the hypothesis of an interactive system encourages a search for the specific communications and transference externalizations which result in a 'state change' in the group system. At the same time, the reverse feedback loop is continuously in operation: the group roles and themes in the above group shifted the focal conflict from mourning itself to a related tension: the acceptance and internalization of group norms. In other words, there is a continuous tension and interchange among the three dynamic systems, and there are regulatory boundaries between them.

The spatial metaphor is especially helpful in delineating the form of the group-qua-group. It is as if the 'idea' for the group 'sculpture' is contained in the unconscious conflicts and phantasies of the members. The sculptor's tools are communications and interactive patterns, and the clay is the group 'universe' which is suspended in a spatial context.

The unconscious sources of the schema for group relations are internalized object relations and ego functions. In these respects, the group is a receptacle, object, and transference manifestation; and it is a 'metacommunication,' a message about how messages shall be sent and received, a communications 'medium.' Yet there is an aspect of group structure and evolution which further

determines its space and form and gives the group a quasi-independent status from the collective of persons who compose it.

To conclude, the thrust of the work thus far has been to move from a linking paradigm in psychology to a framework for investigating the dynamics of systems in the group. The policy has been to avoid premature conclusions about 'groups in general' while developing guidelines for the psychoanalysis of group events utilizing the elements of boundary, space, and object and formulations about their fate and evolution. Advocated for this task is the use of General Systems Theory and an increased emphasis on informational self-regulation within and among systems as more suitable for group analysis than homeostatic mechanisms as such. The search for fixed, immutable 'laws' of group relations has been considered here less fruitful than an examination of the types of interactive processes used by group members to build bridges between their deep, inner experiences and the group reality. The role of symbol, metaphor, and myth as regulatory mechanisms cannot be overemphasized in this respect.

The next step will be to delineate the developmental point of view by a focus upon lines and levels of development and their use in group assessment and interpretation.

Chapter 7
Developmental group psychology

The paradigm shift that has been discussed thus far is from that of individual social units encountering group 'forces' to that of complementary interacting systems which exhibit a unity and a continuous interchange among them. The interplay of subjective and objective modes of awareness establishes in the group an inner reality of internalized object relations, and a group reality of roles, climates, channels of communication, organization structures, and cultural institutions.

Development occurs in each of these components. Although the development of individuals and that of groups are by no means consistently parallel, they are interrelated and interdependent. A group cannot change without changing the persons who compose it, and an individual cannot grow without impacting upon others his role, social interactions, groups of choice, and even, under particular conditions, creative and/or messianic impact on groups and cultures themselves.

Psychoanalysis is an historical psychology, while group psychology focuses on current transactions. Foulkes and Anthony (1973, pp. 41f) characterized the relationship between the two as a 'transposition' in which 'vertical,' historical/developmental features are manifest in 'horizontal' ongoing group activity. Thus, for example, the Oedipus Complex, reconstructed psychoanalytically as a repetition of a developmental phase, becomes played out in a group as a set of roles and attitudes in which the leader is a paternal figure and themes of incest, hostility, and guilt pervade the group climate. The Oedipus myth itself contains both vertical and horizontal dimensions, the vertical history expressed in the journey from childhood abandonment by his royal parents to acts of murder and incest committed in ignorance, to his shameful exposure, and so on, and the horizontal social matrix depicted in Oedipus' heroic

role in the social structure of Thebes and the trust invested in him by the community. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1979, pp. 213–18) has analyzed this myth in terms of its 'diachronic' and 'synchronic' patterns, the former having to do with the time dimension, and the latter with the non-temporal relationship among the thematic parts of the myth. Thus, both Foulkes and Anthony and Levi-Strauss have recognized the complementary relation between the historical/developmental and the transactional/ structural aspects of group life. The present view would add that the connection between the vertical and horizontal lies partly in the rich vocabulary of self and object representations, which both unfold chronologically and are 'displayed' interpersonally in the *cinema vérité* of group interaction.

In addition to horizontal/vertical transposition, the movement from infancy to adulthood is repeated in group phase development. To paraphrase a notion of embryology, 'groupogeny recapitulates ontogeny:' the development of the group recapitulates that of the individual. Bennis and Shepard (1956), for example, depicted group phases as evolving from dependency on the leader to interdependence and consensual validation. Groups do not exactly repeat the developmental process, but often exhibit a trend towards differentiation and emotional maturity.

Psychoanalytic group psychology is a developmental psychology in two senses: an investigation of the developmental changes of people who participate in groups, and a study of the developmental configurations and modifications of the groups themselves. Psychoanalysis becomes a conceptual tool for uncovering (1) the interplay of those developmental processes which every human being brings with him as a 'record' of his past interactions, from infancy to adulthood, and (2) the changes in group interactions and group-qua-group dynamics in terms of their developmental features, that is, for example, the degree of individuation and object constancy which constitute the behavioral norms for a particular group at a particular time.

The investigation of developmental processes, long utilized in psychoanalysis, is applicable as well in the field of group dynamics. Two exemplary studies are Bennis' (1961) investigation of depressive anxiety in a group dynamics class and Kauff's (1977) documentation of the separation-individuation process *vis- à-vis* termination issues in a psychotherapy group. These authors hypothesized a correlation of the dynamics of loss and the working

through of issues around separation respectively, to ongoing group processes. Such 'limited domain' findings can provide the basis for applying a construct from psychoanalysis in the group training or treatment situation. Careful synthesis of such studies is more likely to lead to valid theories than over-reliance on formulations based on a few observations and generalized to all groups.

In order to accomplish such a goal of synthesis, it is necessary to consider further what is meant by development in the group context. The evolution of the group is a different order of process from the development of the person; yet the group-as-a-whole can be connected to developmental psychology.

First, group-specific features can act as containers for the developmental process. Group roles, rituals, and mythology can be infantilized or mature, concrete or abstract, and so on. Second, the organization of a group bears a degree of isomorphism to the internal workings of the mind. A crowd, for example, has fewer structural possibilities than a community, just as early object relations are less fully structured than later ones. That this is no mere analogy, but a profound interrelationship, is shown by Levi-Strauss' finding that cultural myths have universal meanings in terms of social structure. The content of myth is written in the language of the unconscious, but the collective use of the myth is to exemplify and reinforce social organization. The myth has an inherent 'knowledge' of social regulation. According to Levi-Strauss (1963, pp. 31–54; Homeir, 1983), the structure of the mind and the structure of culture are similar with respect both to themes and the way in which the parts are organized to form a whole (cf. chapter 10, this work).

Thus, a 'primitive' tribe, for example, is in no wise unsocialized or unstructured. Its structure is internally consistent, intelligible and intelligent, and relevant to its own adaptation (Maturana's principle of autopoiesis). However, within each culture will be found specialized structures particularly adapted to each phase of the life cycle and further structures to mark and ritualize their occurrence. Furthermore, childhood represents a training ground for group participation and a group may raise any number of childhood conflicts to the status of group norm. One is reminded in this respect of Benedict's thesis (1934) that cultural is 'personality writ large'. Benedict identified three types of social organization reflecting the predominant personality configuration of the constituent members: Apollonian, Dionysian, and Paranoid.

Similarly, Gorer (1943) and LaBarre (1945) studied the compulsive and ritualistic aspects of Japanese culture and hypothesized that they could be accounted for in terms of early and severe toilet training practices.

Developmental psychology can therefore be extended to groups in the sense in which group systems derive from, parallel, or operate in service of the developmental heritage of its membership.

Group developmental levels

The notion of developmental levels began for the authors with an awareness that groups regressed not to just the primitive basic assumptions, but either to a position of symbiotic oneness with a maternal entity or to an Oedipal conflict with the leadership. This defined two levels of groups and implied two distinct developmental models of the group mentality. These were accounted for in Bion's theory of the 'psychotic-like' group cultures in which the group represented a maternal entity and Freud's point of view regarding the totemic overthrow of the leader.

The contradiction between Freud and Bion can be resolved by assuming that groups work through both positions in a development progression. The all-encompassing theory would then be what was stated in the very first introductory chapter of this work: the process of symbiosis/separation-individuation, a movement from oneness to separateness punctuated by Mahler's rapprochement subphase and the Oedipal Complex.

Such a point of view has the value of integrating Freud's two mechanisms of group formation, one representing a projective identification within the group symbiosis, and the other the inter-member Oedipal-type identification with the leader. R.Shapiro (1978) has spoken, for example, of distinct primitive and Oedipal group formations. Gibbard and Hartmann (1973, p. 317) found empirical confirmation that 'group development entails both oedipal and preoedipal issues and that no single paradigm can account for the development of an experiential group.' The inclusion of the 'work group' in this model leads to a 'three-level' schema for group (Ashbach and Schermer, 1978).

A detailed examination of group processs suggested, however, that there was more variation than could be accounted for by a three-tiered group. Foulkes (1964, p. 115) had noted a 'primordial level' of 'collective images' which he distinguished from primitive

part-object relations *per se*. Slater (1966) and Friedemann (1974) similarly observed a group level prior to the ego boundary between self and object versus one in which the self related to a separate object albeit a primitive one. In other words, within the regresson to part object, basic assumption features, two distinct states could be discerned: (1) a primordial 'uroboric' oneness, a state of primary narcissism, fusion, or a dreamlike condition, and (2) a state of primitive part-object relations with permeable ego boundaries. Wernicke (1906) referred to the primary narcissistic state as the somatopsyche and the earliest external object relations as the autopsyche. Erickson (1950) spoke of the autocosmos and microsphere as the earliest 'unweiser' of the infant (see Foulkes, 1964, pp. 114–16) for a discussion.

These perspectives suggest that the regressed group can be further differentiated into two levels, which are called here primordial and primitive. Similarly, an examination was made of 'whole object' developments in group, and the authors found it useful to distinguish between phenomena such as the transitional object which represented a degree of object constancy in the depressive position and the subsequent emergence of sexual and competitive themes which signaled the surfacing of triangular Oedipal issues, thereby establishing two 'individuated' sublevels: transitional and Oedipal.

With regard to the work group, it proved consistent with the subdivisions in the earlier levels to distinguish between a task orientation and, utilizing Maslow's (1954) formulations, the attainment of 'peak experiences,' enhanced self-awareness, and self-actualization. Although psychoanalysis itself has not traditionally made such a distinction, it could open new areas of fruitful investigation for it to do so. Anyone who has worked extensively with groups knows that there are occasions when the group goes beyond its assigned task to heroic altruism, heightened empathy, and spontaneous creativity. Such groups are sometimes called consciousness-raising or self-awareness groups. The two levels of work group are thus called task-oriented and self-actualizing.

The value of this six-level schema of groups became apparent by the order it brought to the diverse developmental lines of both individual and group behavior. Not that every developmental process has the same set of phases, but they do have similar 'markers' in terms of critical periods and foci of development. For example, within the phases before the infant develops an integrated

image of mother as a separate object, many authors noted a growth from primary narcissism (or primary love) to a full symbiotic attachment. Bick (1968) and Meltzer (1975), for instance, postulated a neo-natal stage called 'adhesive identification' in which a 'contact boundary' is established, that is an early form of ego boundary resulting from contact between mother and infant. Mahler had earlier noted the pre-symbiotic phase which she called normal autism. In other words, there are two levels of early, pre-separation development: pre-symbiotic and symbiotic ('primordial' and 'primitive' as they are termed here). The six-level schema for groups thus correlates well with both individual and group developmental psychology.

Phenomenology of the six group levels

Although group levels are condensations of several levels of development, the regression will sometimes bring into focus each of them in a clear, equillibrated pattern. The following description of these levels is a subjective one from which the reader can perhaps obtain a beginning awareness of the global regression/ progression of the group to and from these six reference points. In this depiction, an attempt is made to give the *range* of phenomena in each level. (The levels overlap with, but are different from the development of the group-as-object (chapter 5), and the phases of group evolution (chapter 9). Note that for simplicity, the groups are assumed to be homogeneous. In reality, a group may be very advanced in some respects, while fixated in others.

Level I:
The primordial group

Early in group formation, and especially in large groups, there is a mass effort to be 'born' as a group. The group is at times silent, and the members may report internal confusion, inability to feel or think, a dreamlike withdrawal coexisting paradoxically with an intense involvement in something undefined that could vaguely be called a group, but only in the sense of this existential event, this flooding of 'outsideness.'

Within this global experience, time and space are suspended: movement is minimal, the world outside the group is forgotten and absent. Occasionally someone who cannot bear the tension will

speak in a forced manner. These communications are utterances with fearful and aggressive thrusts whose function is to make contact with something outside, to establish nearness out of immeasurable distance. The members seem to be paralyzed and in a state of suspended animation. Primitive anxieties are experienced: fears of annihilation, destruction, total abandonment, and starvation (Jaques, 1955: Menzies, 1967). Two themes are conveyed in speech: a wish for contact/protection and a wish to kill.

Gradually, into this collective sense of vastness, danger, and personal insignificance some few thoughts and fantasies emerge and are shared, in a further attempt at contact, which is now the prevailing theme. The members look at each other as if awakening from an hypnotic drowsiness. At about this point, very global concepts about a 'group' are attempted. These are imagistic: the group as a space, as an intensity, as a vision, as beautiful or ugly, as a blur of persons. The reporting of these images continues until there is a 'breathlessness,' climax, and then tension release. Here the group is like expanding and contracting alveoli, as if the respiration and all the muscle groups of the members are linked and coordinated to form an organism. This is the first cohesive group object: omnipotence. The present authors have observed such group formations primarily in the large group context.

Level II:
The primitive group

Gradually, individual 'selves' risk 'coming out of' the mass. One or two daring members surface and begin to 'exist.' The group settles in to a rational discussion of issues, but the conversation has an 'as if' quality—the content is thin and it feels as if something else is going on. After a time, it becomes clear that the agenda of each member is self-preservation. There is mistrust and defensiveness. Members who take risks or question what the group is doing find themselves isolated, ignored, or attacked. The members are distracted and in a state of pseudo-comfort. They perceive each other in over-generalized stereotypic ways, and this is particularly true of their relation with the leader, who is idealized (yet subtly devalued) and made to appear as a flawed genius (or as one Tavistock leader put it, a 'tarnished Buddha'). Paranoid projections may predominate as members disavow responsibility for feelings, thoughts, and actions.

A role structure begins to emerge: scapegoats, on the one hand, and members to whom a great deal of power and pseudoleadership is attributed, on the other (they are considered leaders, but virtually no attention is paid to their ideas). There are also couples who are elevated to special status. To them are attributed a fusion and linkage rather than separateness: they are treated as an entity. The group selects these pairings without any attention to their real qualities, on the basis of some superficial similarity or proximity. The pair seems to have no sense of why they are placed together by the rest of the group.

The members feel alone: no one is sure of their position. Those taking risks or asking questions are quickly contained or attacked. The control of aggression becomes a group focal conflict. Praise, flattery, manipulation, and intimidation are the interpersonal techniques of control.

The thought and language of the group is manifested in an 'embodied' form. A group 'dance' may evolve where the movement of chairs, of members, or physical elements in the group space are substituted for thought and reflection. Devaluation, and a fragmented sense of interpersonal relations protects the group from seeing its actual situation. Couples are used to express sexualized fusions, and to deny the substantial pre-genital condition of the group and its concerns. Level II group formations are common in group therapy of borderline patients, in group relations conferences, and in disturbed family units.

Level III:
the transitional group

The group as a whole gradually becomes less fragmented, and each member begins to experience the group world in a more personalized way and with intense emotion. One may feel persecuted and martyred, another loved and adored, another restless and agitated. A process of mourning is noticed in some members, but the group as a whole avoids grieving by aggressivized or pseudo-sexual thrusts at each other or by magical re-fusion and loss of distinctiveness.

The transitional group consists in the integration of part into whole objects and the evolution of a space for comforting objects which facilitate separation from the maternal group and enable the gradual interposition of symbols and representations between the

self and its 'symbolic equation' of concrete phantasies, emotions, and experiences. The creation of such a 'space between' the members, making for a degree of separateness, postponement of gratification, and cognition about experience, establishes choices, options and creativity.

At this level, the membership has something like free will, and initiative and imagination. It *creates* a world it can explore and imagine about. This world consists of such entities as 'the group' itself, which now has a definite identity as a prized transitional object and alternatively as 'mother of separation.'

Simultaneously with increasing mastery of inner and outer environments, which establishes feelings of euphoria and enhanced self-esteem as the 'grandiose self is mirrored in these successes (Mahler's 'practicing' subphase), there emerges in the relationship with the leader an awareness of his separateness, unavailability, failures of mirroring, and abandonment. Level III is therefore characterized by a mourning process which begins to move the group toward maturity through the acceptance of limits, loss, and separateness. Such a process constitutes a step toward a re-establishment of ego-functioning and the internalization of a new set of object relations reflecting group membership and culture. However, the members often deny the loss and revert back to victimization, envy, and projection. This paradoxical and regressive amalgam of paranoid-schizoid and depressive dynamics entails the repeated attack of the love object followed by guilt and reparation.

The members' oscillation between the status quo of the leadership and independent initiative of their own leads to a profound conflict between dependency needs and the thrust toward freedom, autonomy, and the exploration of the environment beyond the narrow confines of 'establishment conformity.' The dependent members want to stay within the security of the status quo, and the counterdependents strive towards the adventurous and the unknown.

Finally, the group begins to evolve an 'extended family' configuration. To quote Fairbairn (1952, p. 42), 'The abandonment of infantile dependence involves an abandonment of relationships based upon primary identification in favor of relationships with differentiated objects.'

Level IV:
the Oedipal level

In group life, the Oedipal pattern is the repetition of the nuclear family pattern: a male and a female parent with 'siblings.' There is an emergence of stable relationships and role definition, and a clearcut 'generational' boundary and hierarchy, a two-tiered authority structure of leaders and followers.

At times, the Oedipal pattern can reverse itself, which in the group is manifest in a variety of bisexual themes, condensations of male and female figures in one object.

In the Level IV Group, the superego, with its knowledge of 'sin' (incest), establishes the potential for a moral order, of a group ethos and rules of conduct. In addition, the quality of the object relations matures into a desire for the object itself, a movement beyond both narcissism and depressive concern to a wish to love and be loved by the object on account of its distinct qualities. Hence, issues of closeness, intimacy, and triadic interpersonal alignments emerge fully.

The emotionality of most small groups (up to ten persons) fluctuates between Levels III and IV.

Level V:
the task-oriented group

The ability to set aside personal preoccupations and to perform group-assigned responsibilities is gradually achieved through the 'renunciation' of the incestuous impulse and its sublimation through the ego ideal into achievements which facilitate personal identity and interdependence. The primary mode of decision-making is by consensual validation of experience, with role assignments based on expertise and skill regarding group and organizational tasks. The incestuous quality of the Oedipal group is supplanted by objectively perceived similarities and differences.

At this level of integration, formal hypothesis testing is used to solve problems. Empathy is brought into play as a tool for mutual understanding (instead of fantasies of merger and rescue). Cooperation subsumes competition, the latter working in service of the group goals. The everpresent danger in the task-oriented group is, on account of its emphasis on logic, work, and cooperation, the repression of fantasy and the emotional life.

Level VI:
the self-actualizing group

Maslow (1954) formulated the concept of self-actualization to characterize the traits of individuals who evidenced a high degree of achievement and emotional well-being in their lives. Such persons were able to move beyond survival and security needs and invest themselves in the fulfillment of their potential, emphasizing being rather than doing, and frequently attained a heightened awareness which Maslow termed a 'peak experience'. During these peak experiences, a sense of wonder and oneness prevails, perceptions are intensified, meaning and purpose is attained, and imagination and creativity are facilitated. The Level VI group is able to nurture these peak experiences.

A feature of the Level VI group matrix is the sense of community. Here, belonging and participation goes beyond role, social class, and other exclusionary features to a humanism, acceptance, and altruism which can be hypothesized to represent a set of object relations which have dynamic features related to the depressive position and the capacity.

Developmental lines

The above depiction of group levels assumes a degree of uniformity among clusters of objects, roles, structures, etc. Often, however, development follows an uneven course and its structures and functions evolve at different rates. The assumption of developmental lines in the group context is necessitated by such variation in the components of the group regression suggesting that the various subsystems may not always respond uniformly to group forces. Freud (1900, pp. 533–50) noted that in dreams (and by extension other mental phenomena), several types of regresson could occur. Regression in the libido, the cause of symptom formation in Freud's earlier theories, influenced the content and cathexis of memories as well as the resistance of the patient. However, regression could occur in the thought process itself (regression to primary process thinking), in the object choice, and so on. Kris (1952) added the valuable formulation of 'regresson in service of ego', an adaptive process which serves the interests of problem-solving, intimacy, and ego development. The quality of the regression and the specification

of the developmental features affected by it became important considerations in the assessment of the personality and groups.

Freud (1921, pp. 129–33) further noted that in groups the ego ideal underwent a regression, dedifferentiation, and projection. Bion (1959) noted collective regression in other areas of mental functioning, specifically in the object relation, in personal identity (the collusive anonymity of the membership), and in the thought process (the use of primitive defenses to disavow portions of reality). Thus, while the personality shows a certain consistency in its response to group conditions (which constitutes its 'valence'), the group process evokes any number of 'mental' functions for integrating individual action into group action. This capacity of the group system derives from the initial yielding of the ego ideal to the group and leadership, so that the individual is primed for participation. Once this group formative process has taken hold, it is as if there is a further and more extensive regressive process which, like a psychological 'electrophoresis,' cascades downwards and stops at various points where opposing forces of progression, fixation, and resistance limit the regression in particular lines of development. One can observe group formations which induce primary process thinking and loss of reality testing, others which evoke fragmentation and confusion in the self, and still others where oral cravings or dependency needs come to the fore, etc. This variation cannot be explained by individual valences since the whole group is affected. The group relations conference, which incorporates several different types of events, is particularly useful in observing how the same members can move from situation to situation and show field-induced changes in ego and superego function. The apparent uniformity of the regression in groups must in part be maintained by the consistency of group conditions, for as soon as the field shifts, variations become quite evident, induced by the fluctua tions in the here-and-now situation, most notably in the group boundaries.

Thus, the regressive features of any group event need to be documented in terms of specific emotions, interactions, and group cultures. The developmental lines concept facilitates such documentation by providing a schema for organizing the variety of dynamic entities to be investigated.

Such considerations support the analysis of groups in terms of developmental lines as a necessary addition to the understanding of groups as a global regressive state. This is not to deny either a group

formative regression nor a phase specific uniformity in the developmental process, both of which will be taken up in the next chapter as part of the process of group evolution. The case for the global group dynamic has been made again and again and has become by now a well-established paradigm. Bion, Ezriel, Whitaker and Lieberman, and Bennis and Shepard all emphasized uniformity and implicit consensus in the group dynamic. By postulating developmental lines, the present authors opt for examining each group event for its developmental *diversity* as well as consistency. The expectation is that some group configurations will possess a uniformity of development upon which global theories are predicated, but that in many instances qualities of object relations, self-cohesion, and functional entities will vary developmentally according to the equillibrating patterns of the individual members, subgroups and interaction, and group-*qua*-group.

Exemplification of grid systems, levels, and lines

The concept of systems, levels, and lines of development emerges from an awareness that points of view within group psychology are conditional upon a range of circumstances and variables, some of which are vaguely stated or as yet unknown. A more thorough and flexible framework can be approached by regarding the group as a set of developmental regressions and progressions in various systems and subsystems of the group matrix. That developmental processes could undergo hierarchy shifts from system to system is implicit in some group theories, and by making this notion explicit, it becomes possible to reconsider both developmental and group psychology within a frame of reference based in General Systems Theory. What emerges is a way of observing and formulating hypotheses about groups in terms of developmental and dynamic constructs. The Grid itself is thus an open system of thought which nonetheless has certain 'ideologs' and parameters which guide the processes of observation and interpretation of group processes.

An illustration of the use of the Grid will now be provided to suggest how it is a conceptual tool and framework for group analysis.

Illustration: The paranoid episode of mental health workers

To review a previously cited vignette (chapter 3), a group of mental health workers developed a delusion that the video technician was providing the department head with tapes of sessions. This delusion was provoked by an awareness of the termination of the group, and a mourning process followed which suggested that the persecutory ideation was a regressive defense against the aggression directed towards the therapist for abandoning them. By reviewing this clinical vignette, it is possible to establish its developmental profile and that of its termination sequelae. By considering the delusion and the separation/loss process as two distinct events, one arrives at two pictures which show how the group changed from one set of transactions to the other. (Please refer to the vignette and its discussion.)

Figure 7.1 shows a partial Grid constructed from the vignette. Note first that the lines of development suggest something about the observer, namely that he focused on the collective ideation and affects of the membership and the group-*qua*-group configurations more than the interaction process. He notes little about roles, communication styles, and group boundary conditions. The Grid has utility in pointing up selective biases in observing and recording group behavior. The observer's vertex is always a partial view of a larger whole.

A similar approach was taken by Ahlin (1986), who proposed a 'Matrix Representation Grid' with several five-point scales of group-as-a-whole features such as fusion versus differentiation.

The Grid 'profile' reflects the fact that the membership regressed from a focal point of separation-individuation attendant upon an awareness of object loss (the depressive position) to a constellation of persecutory defenses, affects, and phantasies. As a consequence, a group climate of fight/flight emerged from an erstwhile dependency assumption. The focus on a single person as the target of identification and aggression suggests that the group formation was that of the 'primal horde' discussed by Freud. But upon the process of mourning, the configuration more nearly resembled that of the nuclear family: there was clearly a sense of the leader and video technician being good parents and the members related to each other in a manner characteristic of ambivalent sibling relationships.
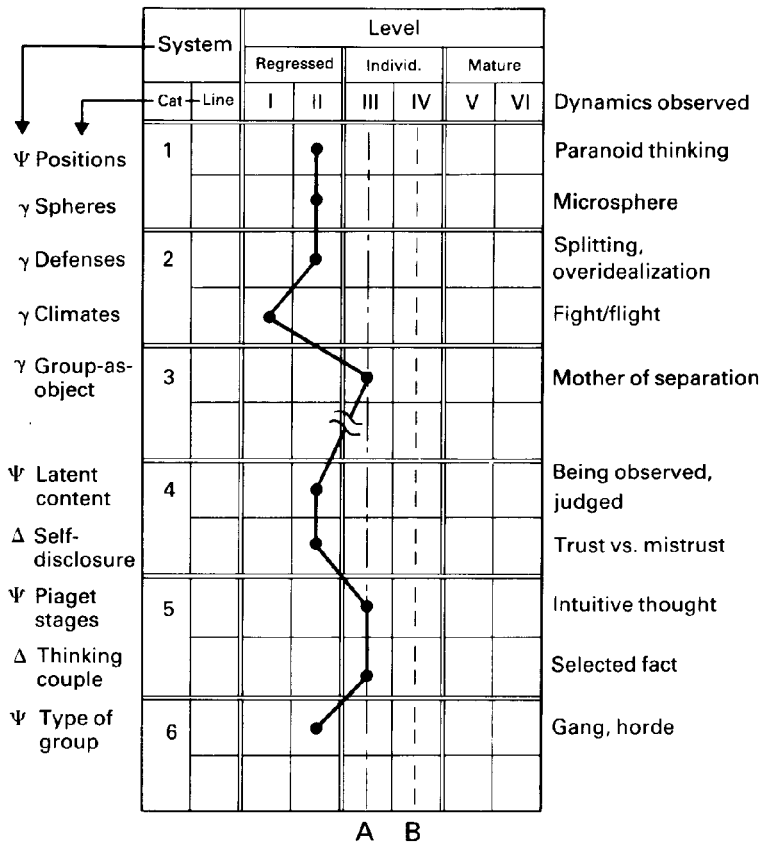
Figure 7.1 The 'paranoid episode of mental health workers' expressed as a Grid Profile. The three systems are included on one plane here. Systems and developmental line are to the left. Dynamics are to the right. The group regressed from level A and progressed to B later

The cognitive processes of the membership-at-large showed the use of Piaget's 'intuitive thought' and 'concrete operations' during the paranoid episode. That is, the group members at times equated their inner representation with actual personages and used concretistic thinking (symbolic equation) in equating the termination process with the transferential distortion that the leader was distancing himself and abandoning them. However, the members generally responded to his interpretations with good reality testing, which implied both that as individuals they were able

to spring back readily from regression and perhaps, also, they had evolved a communications matrix which facilitated reality testing as a group process: they had learned as a collective to validate their mental states with each other through examination of the 'selected fact' and were therefore not enmeshed in primitive basic assumptions and irreality.

An examination of the object relations and group configuration lines of development during the mourning phase suggests a transference towards the leader. While the video technician functioned as a primitive object for projection and introjection and also as a comforting transitional object, the leader as an object of group transference became the 'mother of separation.' At the same time a 'father imago' was present in the department chairman. The dialectic between these two object representations established a triangular Oedipal theme which was manifest also in the sibship attitudes of the members towards each other. As termination approached, sexual themes emerged from repression.

Overall, the group was in the process of working out Oedipal type conflicts when one member raised the issue of the termination of the group. Another verbalized a persecutory fantasy about the videotapes. The group responded to this with a contagion effect and immediately treated the anxiety-provoking fantasy as real. This contagion was the crucial group event: the fact that it evoked a collective response rather than an idiosyncratic association of a few represents a hierarchy shift from individual to group-*qua*-group and suggests that the group was receptive to the idea. The group container, in effect, was not ready to contain the more difficult Oedipal content, was not yet prepared to examine its tragic motifs and its sexuality. Instead, it received the fantasy as a projectory identificatory 'feeding' and it conformed itself to the projection by moving into a primitive basic assumption state. The 'location' of the developmental process of part-object anxieties shifted from an individual's fantasy to the group culture.

Part 4

Special topics

The only value of universal characters is that they help us, by reasoning, to know new truths about individual things.

William James

Chapter 8
The 'four-fold way' of group transference

Transference, a concept central to the work of the psychoanalyst, is differently manifest in the dyadic and group contexts. The psychoanalyst who wishes to apply his method to groups needs to learn how transference operates there. The group psychologist needs to grasp how transference is itself a group dynamic.

The theory of transference has undergone an evolution that alters its meaning and its relationships to group psychology. Langs (1976a, pp. 13–72) proposed that transference operates in an interpersonal field which includes the treatment setting, the analyst's countertransference, and the nontransference interaction. Transference occurs in a social matrix. It is not just a repetition of infantile desires, but also a social process. Freud himself was aware of this duality, and in an early essay on transference (1912, p. 7) he went so far as to suggest that it occurs *vis-à-vis* institutional settings: it is evoked in groups or organizations and can affect the person's group identity.

Transference is a universal phenomenon (Bird, 1972) which is put to special use in psychoanalysis, where it forms a motivation for treatment (the 'positive' transference) and, eventually and invariably, a resistance to uncovering infantile material and to growth, change, and the undoing of symptoms. In the psychoanalytic dyad, special measures are taken to keep the transference uncontaminated by what the analyst says and does, so that the implications for the patient may be fully understood and interpreted as part of his inner dynamics and psychopathology. In the group setting, the consultant may remain similarly neutral, but the membership are far from neutral screens for each other and instead engage in mutual transactions which become intercalated into group tensions and conflicts which are fantasy laden but

nevertheless consequential. An actual interplay of inner objects and roles has now been set up.

Can this group interaction be analyzed and interpreted, and if so would it represent a psycho-analysis, a group analysis, or both? The problem of transference in groups is at the root of many technical and theoretical issues, for example whether to address interpretations to the individual members or to the group-as-a-whole (cf. Kauff, 1979; Kibel and Stein, 1981), whether transference is an appropriate concept for unconscious group processes or whether instead a group level construct such as 'transposition' (Foulkes and Anthony, 1957) is necessary, and whether group interactions facilitate or contaminate efforts to analyze individual transference manifestations (Wolf and Schwartz, 1962; H.Durkin, 1964).

First approaches to understanding group transference were provided by Bion (1959), Ezriel (1952), and Whitaker and Lieberman (1964). Despite their differences, the essential principle they held in common is this: group-*qua*-group transference emerges from the evoked associations and perceptual cues among the members. Through resonance and the verbal associations which are triggered, a focal experience develops which is shared by all the members. Bion articulated three basic assumptions or group mentalities, attitudinal climates with components of unconscious phantasy: Dependency, Pairing, and Fight/Flight.

Ezriel (1950) held that group transference is a manifestation in contemporary interpersonal relations of a shared set of early object relations and their attendant anxieties: a 'common group tension.' For Ezriel, the group therapist is the central figure in this transference. Unlike Bion, Ezriel did not attribute the common transference to the condition of participating in a group but rather more to a resonance among the life histories and object relations of the membership. Whitaker and Lieberman (1964) similarly emphasized the role of free association in the emerging 'group focal conflict'. Ezriel based his model on object relations theory and especially Rickman's (1950) emphasis on transference into the ongoing situation, while Whitaker and Lieberman (pp. 143–4) used French's (1952) notion of an evoked 'focal conflict' in the ego as a derivative expression of a deeper 'nuclear conflict.'

A significant component of group transference is thus an integration of individual transference manifestations directed at a person (or several persons) and expressing a shared conflict or

anxiety, a condensation of individual transference reactions pulled together by preconscious similarities in the associations of the members.

Bion added an important dimension when he stated that there was present a specific regression and transference *to the group situation itself*. He insisted that the archaic dimension had to be understood in terms of the group-qua-group. Group transference is of the primitive part-object variety for all participants and has specific characteristics of its own. The transference container is not only the members and leader but also the group-as-a-whole and has universal features which result from the process of grouping itself.

Bion's views raise the question of the polysystemic relationship between individual transferences and group-as-a-whole transference evoked in a massive regression which includes the characteristic group mentalities that Freud had earlier recognized as de-individuation and the loss of particular ego and superego functions. Bion and Freud agreed that such transference may be understood in terms of early attachments and identifications and yet has special qualities attributable to the group situation. That is, the group-qua-group transference is a 'normal' phenomenon of group life. The personalized, anamnesic or, in some cases psychopathological, aspects represent individual 'valences' to a group-wide transference situation. (Freud states:'…hypnosis and group formation…are an inherited deposit from the phylogenesis of the human species…. *Neurosis* stands outside this series,' 1921, p. 75).

A parallel in individual psychoanalysis to group transference is what Stone (1961) referred to as the 'primordial transference' and Langs (1976c, pp. 516–18) called 'matrix transference.'

The primordial and matrix transferences are primitive and omnipresent background expressions, revived situationally and contextually, in contrast with higher level transference reactions representing specific childhood figures. According to Stone (1967, pp. 8 and 9),

> The primordial transference…would be literally and essentially derived from the effort to master the series of crucial separations from the mother…. The striving, in short, is to establish at least symbolic bodily reunion with the mother. Furthermore, the striving is to substitute this relationship for

the kaleidoscopic system of relationships which have, in good part and inevitably replaced it.

Similarly, the group-as-a-whole transference regressively substitutes the group container-*qua*-maternal-entity for individuated object relations.

Matrix transference underlies the psychoanalytic relationship as a symbiotic base and a magical fusion. Individual transferences, and particularly those of the Oedipal Complex are evoked in the context of an omnipresent matrix of human attachment including the early object relation to the mother and the 'facilitating environment' or surround. The primordial transference and group transference overlap and parallel one another insofar as both represent *a response to the situation of human contact itself*: they are social systems phenomena.

A factor which differentiates transferences in groups from that in the psychoanalytic dyad is the multiplicity of interaction. The psychoanalyst as has been said, preserves the transference as an imaginary relationship that has no parallel in the analyst's actual behavior. H.Durkin (1964; 1974, pp. 11–14) emphasized that, in groups, interactions develop where transferences collide, meet, and fuse to form a chemistry having irreducible properties.

There are three important differences between the psychoanalytic dyad and the group situation. First, the group induces its own regression, different from and more primitive than that of 'the couch.' Second, the members can react spontaneously to one another or in a manner which reflects roles, customs, rituals, and status requirements. Third, the boundary conditions and architecture of the group form communication channels which direct transference along particular lines and influence its conscious and preconscious themes.

Transference in the psychoanalytic dyad is an iatrogenic condition utilized for the specific purpose of demonstrating to the patient his own thought processes and the sources of his inner conflicts. In social life, object relations, as was pointed out earlier, are reciprocal and occur in a group and cultural context. In groups, while information about historical antecedents and individual dynamics is partially lost, the systemic and transsystemic aspects of transference become more readily apparent. In fact, *the psychoanalytic dyad itself is a precipitate of the group and is only a portion of the process of repetition in which the patient is involved*

in his family, peer groups, and culture. In the group, one has an opportunity to observe the realistic or distorted ways in which the membership establishes boundaries, relates to one another, responds to thematic content and stressful situations, and so on. Dyadic transference is a precipitate or subgroup of multiple internal and external objects into the one-to-one relationship.

The view of transference which makes its 'horizontal,' here-and-now transposition into the group-as-a-whole appear perplexing is the one that is expectable in the dyadic relationship of psychoanalysis: a single object choice, repeating that of a parental attachment. If however, one thinks of transference of a constellation of multiple inner objects (part-objects, or family members, for example) as well as a contextual object (Winnicott's (1965) 'facilitating environment' or Grotstein's (1979c, pp. 122–7) 'background object of primary identifiation'), then the group 'container' becomes a natural location for its expression. Kaes (1982a) has shown that Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* included a view of the mental apparatus consisting of 'multiple identifications.' Such a view of the psyche as the seat of multiple egos and objects espoused as well by Grotstein (1979c, pp. 163–9) is highly suitable for an understanding of group transference.

This multipersonal, multiobject process is evident in the treatment of borderline patients whose use of splitting as a defense mechanism require great efforts to bring the 'sick' or 'all-bad' object relations into the consulting room (where they can be integrated with the whole personality) instead of the patient continuing to act out with significant others. The borderline patient has displaced and externalized his split objects into persons, institutions, and culture and so exemplifies the concept of an 'internal group.'

A further point about transference in groups is the difference between displacement and what can be called 'externalizing transferences.' In displacement, an early childhood memory, phantasy, or image is reexperienced with respect to a current significant other, but ego functions and self representations remain intact and within the boundaries of the self. For example, the patient may experience the analyst as demanding or over-controlling in the same way that he experienced a parent.

Externalizing transferences derive from earlier stages of mentation before structures and selfobject differentiation have fully developed. The patient may (1) project aspects of his own self into the analyst, (2) have fantasies of merger with him, or (3) try to have

the analyst take over functions of self regulation such as impulse control or the restoration of self esteem. The first instance is a projective identification, the second a narcissistic transference, and the third a function-inducing transference or what Wangh (1962) has called 'evocation of a proxy.' In these and similar transference manifestations, ego boundary disturbances and projective/introjetive mechanisms predominate, and the here-and-now resolution of these mechanisms must be given necessary priority over historical reconstruction. In externalizing transferences, the object is experienced as somewhat within the ego boundary, and the self is partly contained in the outer object.

Accordingly, externalizing transferences add a third dimension to transference phenomena. Rather than displacement onto a screen, they represent the evocation and positioning of complex emotionality and phantasy states within the recipient of the transference. References in the group to being on the hot seat, feeling flooded, or shut out in the cold, for example, reflect the sensory and spatial qualities of such externalizing transferences, and the quality of interpenetration.

In group communication and interactions, externalizing transferences predominate over transference displacements. The reason for this is that the participants in the interaction respond more readily than a neutral therapist or consultant to the projection and treat it as real. The externalizing process is thus at first reinforced and escalated. Normally, the externalization is then attenuated by reality testing, but in psychopathology, and also in group regression, it escalates in intensity and may become the predominant mode of interpersonal relations. It is thus common in groups to observe interactions in which transferences are reciprocal, externalized, and with a considerable degree of merger of identities.

To review the evolution of transferences in groups, there is at first a *group-as-a-whole transference* in which the group becomes a contextual container, a 'background object of primary identification.' *Individual transference reactions* are evoked as a defense against the group merger and as a result of adaptive individuation. Focal themes or *collective transferences* occur as a group resonance effect, and at the same time *interactive transference systems* develop in the reciprocal communications among the membership. Such a 'fourfold way' of transference recurs intersystemically throughout the life of the group, whose

evolution and dynamics must be understood in terms of the complementary and interrelated nature of group transferences, which, unlike the psychoanalytic dyad, cannot be regarded as a unilateral or time-linear process.

The diversity of group theories and approaches results partly from a differential focus on one or another of these transference patterns. Bion's basic assumption theory, and his mode of group psychotherapy as well, emphasize group-*qua*-group transference. Wolf and Schwartz approach psychotherapy with the aim of resolving individual transference reactions in the group context. The perspectives of Ezriel and of Whitaker and Lieberman, though different in many respects, tend towards the clarification and interpretation of collective transferences. Psychoanalytic family therapists (Shapiro, E., 1978) emphasize interactions, externalizations, and the family system of roles and identifications. Future integration of group and family approaches with psychoanalysis may require a totalistic and multiple systems perspective on transference. The group psychotherapist will certainly get more 'mileage' out of the treatment process if he is sensitive and responsive to the shifts in boundary conditions that accompany the flux of transference in groups.

Chapter 9
Group evolution

Along with group transference, and as part of a group field or system orientation, the development of the group has received considerable attention (see, for example, Saravay, 1978; Tuckman, 1965; Hill and Gruner, 1973, for summaries of pertinent literature), but unfortunately without a formal consistency and common vocabulary. Nonetheless, there is agreement regarding basic trends in small- to mid-sized psychotherapy, training, and study groups, exemplified, for instance, by movement from a group which is dependent upon the leader to one which is cohesive and stable by virtue of a common task and a shared interest in its interpersonal relations. Such groups have identifiable beginning, middle, and termination phases, and this trajectory survives may 'traumas:' the arrivals and departures of members, time intervals and disruptions, and absence or change of leadership. Thus, groups evolve in a predictable way, although in these studies there is enough variation that the details of phases and dynamics cannot be stated with certainty, and each group's evolution may show a different course from other groups.

Although the evolution of groups cannot be equated with the development of the individual, some parallels are striking. Groups move from a state of regressed dependency to an interpersonal maturity and objectivity which enables the members to carry out important tasks and achieve a level of self and social awareness not present in the early phases, when behavior is primitivized in both over-dependent and aggressivized ways.

As the group evolves, characteristic themes, fantasies, conflicts, and roles emerge in a phasic sequence discernible especially in the latent content. For example, while some groups express their cohesion ideologically as utopian goals and ideals (Gibbard and Hartman, 1973), others exhibit cohesion as a denial of the negative

and the preservation of an illusory harmony (Bennis and Shepard, 1956, pp. 429–30). The latent content of such a cohesive phase is the merger of the group with the ego ideal and often a collective repression of guilt following an attack on the leadership.

Groups develop around 'central figures' (Redl, 1942) who contain the group's projections and provide a quasi-leadership function that is based on transference distortions, resistances, and acting out. Many groups produce a hero-seducer (Gibbard, 1974, pp. 254–61) who challenges the group boundaries and a scapegoat, who, by being attacked, contains the disavowed fear and vulnerability of the other members. Again, the general features of content and role structure are clear, but descriptions of details vary considerably and there is little consensus among workers concerning the systemic sources of these developments.

Processes of group development therefore consist in an overlay of multiple dynamics which form lines of development that are to be understood both separately and in conjunction with each other. Day (1967, p. 444) expresses this nicely:

> The overlapping of similar primitive feelings highlights the dramatic, even bizarre, intensity of the reactions. It is similar to Japanese block printing, which is done in stages. As each color is applied independently, one can make out only in part, or not at all, what the final picture will be, but, in the end, one can almost see what each layer of color contributed. Similarly, group phenomena may illuminate the process of getting closer emotionally in a way not visible in individual therapy.

Group development: selective review and critique

Group evolution is a compromise between a repetition compulsion in which the membership reenacts the same fantasies, paradoxes, and pitfalls as has been done from time immemorial, complemented by a motivation towards change which is both a response to survival pressures and motives to expand, risk the new, resolve inner and outer conflict, and form communities wherever humans happen to be together and share a common purpose. In principle, two complementary theories are necessary: one to explain group illusion, acting out, and regressive tendencies; and another to account for the interpersonal self-actualizing potentials which take place. It is true but insufficient to say that such a polarity is the result of the

struggle between the life and death instincts or manifestations of negative and positive entropy. What especially needs to be accounted for is the group's failure to provide a healthy identity for all those who belong to it, creating a frustration which so often drives the deviant or the creative individual into a terrifying state of apartness.

These issues may be reformulated as three basic questions. What is the motivating force of groups? What developmental changes occur in the group system? How does the infrastructure of the group matrix develop? Groups would remain forever enmeshed in primitivity were there not powerful motivational mechanisms to counter the group regression. These questions will now be considered from the vantage point of group development as a process of separation and individuation.

What is the motivation behind group development?

For Bennis and Shepard (1956), the basis of group evolution is a relationship to the leader which propels the group to revolt against him. Each stage of development mobilizes and prepares the group towards that end, and, following the overthrow, motives akin to guilt and reparation impel the membership to internalize his values, deny the murderous act and come closer to each other. Bennis and Shepard, citing Freud's 'Totem and Taboo' (1913), specify that the leader is the symbolic father murdered by the male siblings in the primal horde, a manifestation of the Oedipal Complex. However, they present sparse evidence that strikingly Oedipal themes emerge at the point of the revolt, although other authors (Slater, 1966; Saravay, 1978) do so. By contrast, the present position is that the group revolt has a major component of the pre-Oedipal phases of separation and entry into the depressive position, leading ideally towards object constancy, individuation, and intimacy. A detailed study of fantasies and defense mechanisms prior to and following the revolt would clarify this issue. The present authors' experience has been that concerns of sexuality and intimacy surface intensely only *after* the leadership issue has been resolved. Prior to the revolt, group themes center around the management of intra-group aggression, and subgroups are formed around 'top dogs' and 'underdogs', initiators and followers, rather than male and female. Further, the pre-revolt group climate does not appear to be one of

pairing, but of an intensified fight group in which power may incidentally be embodied in sexual conquest.

The hypothesis that group development is motivated by the authority problem is thus capable of different formulations of its underlying dynamics. The present view, in contradistinction to the totemic thesis, is that the group revolt comes into being as an effort to resolve the intermember and group-wide problem of overidentification and fusion implicit in the group regression. As the group experiences a degree of autonomy and differentiation, it attacks the leader as a representative of a rejecting yet overprotective maternal entity. In this process, it moves simultaneously towards cohesion and individuation.

The placement of the authority issue at the center of group development can nonetheless obscure the powerful influence of the group matrix itself upon the ego states and interpersonal relations of the membership. The pressures of the beginning group include (a) separation from the more secure institutional and societal context by the creation of a group boundary, (b) ambiguity in interpersonal relations and a lack of information about how to be included, provoking a problem of trust, and (c) disorientation induced by the largeness of the group in comparison to oneself and the 'spatial' shifts in perception and of the inner world that ensue. Among the very intense affects produced by this situation are helplessness, abandonment, and loss (Turquet, 1975). These painful emotions provide a strong incentive to restore a more normalized and externalized state of affairs, which often means over-reliance upon a leader.

The inner problem of the group can be conceptualized in a variety of ways. Friedemann (1974, pp. 27–31), for example, regarded it as the problem of consciousness itself, the awakening of the ego to the external group world. This is an extreme hypothesis which is congruent with Level I of the Grid. It implies that the members are in a state of narcolepsy and the problem of the group is that of attention to the group world. Perhaps this intriguing hypothesis is better understood componentially as a marked dulling of perception and a partial withdrawal of object cathexis. The members have to learn to invest in each other as external objects, and do so initially at a level comparable to the infant's primal awareness of his mother. Friedemann suggested that the structure which emerges from individual 'awakenings' is a 'group ego' (p. 30).

Scheidlinger (1968) considered the beginning group to be engaged in 'a variety of complex identifications, object ties, and transferences' (1980, p. 279). In this perspective, an ego boundary and a functional ego are present, but the definition of what is inside and outside it is not always available. That is, the members must establish their individual and group identity. Roles evolve out of such a striving for definition and identity in the group.

The group situational view does more to explain why primitive anxieties, defenses, and object relations are evoked in group life than does the leader transference exclusively. The latter is a derivative and displacement of the primordial regressive transference to the group as a whole. The members seize upon the leader to alleviate the difficulty of group participation and continue to use him as a container and a proxy for what are truly group systemic problems.

Schutz (1958) and Saravay (1978) both regarded psychosexual development as the force behind sequential changes in the group process. For Schutz, the shift from oral to anal to phallic drive derivatives propels a progression in the interpersonal relations of the membership from inclusion to control and affection. For Saravay, libidinal maturation facilitates the restoration of psychic structures lost in the initial group regression. These structures are recouped through resolution of oral dependency, anal retentiveness, and phallic/Oedipal concerns.

While there are strong reasons why structural (ego and superego) regression should take place in group formation, there is no reason why libidinal regression as such ought to take place. What mature in a group are the object relations and ego functions such as reality testing, boundarying and decision making. If, secondarily, a development from oral to genital preoccupations occurs, that can be understood as an increasing ability of object and ego systems and the group matrix to assimilate them.

Overall, the motivational hypothesis which best fits the object relations/self paradigm is that of anxiety related to a structural regression induced by the group field properties. The regression is in the boundaries of interpersonal relations and communication and the group formation itself. Structural regression is expressed interpersonally in the evocation of primitivized object relations and defense mechanisms, of narcissistic preoccupations of the self, and of conflicts over identity. With the revival of anxiety and other painful affects, the motive force for coping activity in the group would

be the regulation of these affects. Because this regulation is most durably accomplished by the restorative work of the ego and the achievement of mature interpersonal relations and boundary conditions, these affect states constitute a non-teleological psychoanalytic explanation of the upward developmental progression in group life.

What changes occur in the group system over the course of time?

Even among 'group-as-a-whole' field theorists, little argument for other than a quantitative increase in the 'capacity' of the system or a shifting emotionality is provided. Lewin regards the field as differentiating and integrating, and Foulkes sees an evolving communications network which shapes the responses of the persons within it. Bion, Ezriel, and Whitaker and Lieberman discuss collective themes and processes but not structure.

The progressive maturation of object relations and reality testing in the development of the training or therapy group does, however, suggest that some modification in the group structure must occur. Anthropomorphically, it can be said that the group has acquired more 'ego' and 'superego,' as reflected in its increasing ability to carry out its task requirements and its more flexible norms and cultural 'traditions.'

A group-systemic change that is regularly stated in the literature on the small study and training group is a marked and often rapid increase in its cohesiveness. Cohesion is a multidimensional construct, including in its definition the members' attraction to the group as well as the structural integrity of the group: the degree of interdependence among the members and other component subsystems.

The tri-systemic paradigm of the Grid provides a way of grasping cohesion *as a systems transformation whereby functions previously performed by individuals are assimilated into the group structure itself.* For example, in the early stages of the group, the projective identifications of a particularly difficult or needy member may be contained by one other person, usually an especially self-confident member, or a consultant. Such a process occurs in the Ken Kesey novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The protagonist, McMurphy organizes the inchoate frustrations of the patient group into a cohesive striving for autonomy. In time, the group may act as

'a team' to contain and interpret the projective identifications, exploring what is evoked in each of them, producing a 'rainbow effect' like the prism dispersion of white light. Then they may utilize the respective roles to provide 'safer' boundaries and emotional support for the sick member. Kernberg (1976, pp. 241–75) describes such a process in the hospital treatment of borderline patients, and Haugsjerd (1983) describes a supervision group in a hospital setting which utilized the multiple countertransferences of the therapists to develop more complete interpretations of patients' dynamics. Haugsjerd is aware of the need for the supervision group to evolve and reflect upon its own internal dynamics. These techniques of course involve intergroup boundaries as well as the interaction of the therapist group itself. The containing 'team' is the staff, but a similar process can occur among the patients themselves.

In this model, the attainment of a cohesive group is more than enhanced mutual attraction. The 'parts' of the group: the membership and their internal object relations, the role structure, the boundary conditions, are woven into a closely knit and coordinated organizational frame. The structural integrity of this frame contains and modulates the emotional life and task performance of the membership in a different way than in the group formative phases. There is a definite group 'space' that has been established and the members function within its domain and explore its purpose and dimensions, whereas previously they had been 'island universes' (a phase coined by Aldous Huxley) who merged in the process of creating it, unconsciously through the vehicle of projective identifications and consciously through a consideration of the group task, power structure, and boundary conditions.

If this development proceeds normally (rather than through pathological identifications which can lead to cohesive groups which are yet caught up in the paranoid-schizoid position: authoritarian groups, some cults, or stymied therapy groups which persist in a state of overdependency on the therapist), the object relations (in the group as a whole and not necessarily all the members) undergo a change from the primitive part-object relations of the early phases to a predominantly 'mature' constellation of whole object transferences (Anthony, 1967).

The shift from primitive to higher level transference changes the condition of intergroup boundaries in a qualitative way. Whereas previously the boundaries of interpersonal relations were drawn by

internal part-objects (to maintain the defensive operations of splitting and projective/introjective identification), the cohesive boundaries are now between persons (as total intrapsychic systems) so that social attribution becomes more accurate and individuals can 'own' their reactions (correctly assign them to their own experience and motivation) rather than being caught up in group 'forces' which were in fact collective projections and disavowals.

Thus, two major changes occur in the development of the group system: the achievement of an organization in which the parts are highly interdependent and interwoven with the whole (reflected subjectively in the 'group identity'), and the modification of group and interpersonal boundaries in such a way that the depressive position and object constancy are greatly enhanced. These two changes occur 'in tandem' and in many groups are closely related to the resolution of the authority problem in the 'group revolt' phase. The significance of the revolt for the group as system is that the membership has thereby internalized a set of identifications and norms which make external leadership less necessary. In Piagetian terms, the consultant role is 'assimilated' into the group schema and the leader then himself becomes a participant observer who must 'accommodate' to the group.

To summarize, the evolution of the group field or system has several features in the small to mid-sized study or therapy group. These include (a) an increase in interpersonal attraction, organization, and interdependence (group cohesion), (b) a restructuralization of member egos and boundaries sufficient to promote significant movement into the depressive position and object constancy, (c) the reorganization of interpersonal relations and transference, with a reduction in primitive splitting and projective identification, and (d) the internalization and redistribution of leadership functions.

What is the infrastructure of the group at each stage of its development?

The group infrastructure is represented in communications which, along with roles and interpersonal patterns, form a dynamic web in the group 'cosmos' and are in flux relative to the more stable structural features. There do appear to be gradual and phasic changes of a stable nature in this system. One such shift is from dependent interpersonal relations to aggressivized power/

dominance struggles as the group works out issues of control. Bennis and Shepard (1956, pp. 421–4) report that this is accompanied by subgroupings of followers and leaders, dependents and counterdependents. In any event, an early change occurs from dependent object relations (especially *vis-à-vis* the leader) to power and control struggles. The aggressivized features precede and presage the revolt against the leadership. Viewed from the standpoint of its 'etiology' and antecedents, aggression in the group represents the negative sector of split object relations (including narcissistic rage) and a social process of establishing a pecking order and subgroupings.

Following the revolt phase, two reliable phases occur. The first is the stage of cohesion characterized by exaggerated positive effects and group unity, and following that a stage which is described differently by different authors. Some (Hartman and Gibbard (1974), Saravay (1978), for instance) emphasize pairing (bisexuality and messianic themes) and Oedipal sexuality, while others stress individuation (Day, 1967), consensual validation (Bennis and Shepard) and the working through of higher level transferences and resistances (Anthony, 1967; Friedemann, 1974). In other words, group cohesion is at first reinforced by a denial of elements which threaten it, and as this denial is worked out (to some extent as a process of mourning the loss of the leader and other group objects), higher level themes emerge, reflecting the individuation of the membership.

Finally, some authors (e.g. Anthony, 1967) report a phase of an extended task group where transference distortions are minimized and the group pursues problems from the standpoint of current reality and the potential for growth and change.

An object relations theory of group development

This section provides a theory of phases of evolution rooted in object relations principles, especially the concept of projective identification.

The hypothesized motive force is the group system itself as a collective attempt to establish boundary, space, and object for the containment of projective identifications. The temporary suspension of the ego boundary induced by the group regression necessitates a substitute 'auxiliary' container in the external world. The group container and object then undergo a progressive integration *via*

identifications, mirroring, and individuation. The group creates this containment process in its communications, so that the group matrix is not *sui generis* but reflects the members' internal states.

As has been said, group regression is a distinctive phase development. Termination is considered here to be a group phase as well, despite the fact that some groups are open ended. The death of the group is always being approached at a pre-conscious level. For example, when a member terminates or is absent for an extended period, the collective often becomes concerned about whether it has failed in some way and whether it can continue to survive as a going concern.

To an extent, group phases parallel the levels of the Grid (cf. chapter 7, this work) and the evolution of the group object (chapter 5). However, the development of the group is by no means a consistently upward pattern. The following seven-phase sequence depicts the evolution of groups in terms of the dynamics of projective identification, the object relation, and the process of structuralization. The phases include:

1 Group formation;
2 Projective identification of a group object;
3 Boundary differentiation and aggressivized object relations;
4 Rapprochement revolt;
5 Cohesive group relations;
6 Resolution of the Oedipal conflict and the establishment of community;
7 Termination vs. self-perpetuation.

Phase 1.
Group formation

The experience of participation in a newly forming group of strangers includes a universal hope (reminiscent of the pairing assumption) that the group will meet deep needs and actualize potentials and ideals, combined with the evocation of multi-level anxieties ranging from fears of being absorbed, annihilated, and enmeshed in a process outside of one's control to guilt and shame concerning one's 'secret' desires and troubles (Ganzarain, 1974, pp. 61–62). The entry into group is a profoundly ambivalent one of hope and fear. The defense against the pain of this ambivalence combined with the difficulty of establishing a comfortable structure

and a secure set of interpersonal relationships, induces a conceptual and emotional void which is managed intrapsychically through regression so that still further anxieties associated with infantile development are aroused, kindling the regressive thrust.

The problem of the void is the hidden dimension of group formation and is still more primitive than Bion's 'maternal breast' group. The void, unlike the breast or part-object, is the *absence* of information, direction, connectedness, comfort, and trust which attends a situation where structure is minimal and no one knows what to expect or what has gone before.

A number of defensive maneuvers are instituted as a protection against the awareness of this void. The members strive to preserve their inner objects by withdrawing into them in schizoid fashion, as described by Fairbairn. They 'wall off and preserve themselves by remaining anonymous and 'blending in' (Winnicott's false self), and they seek ego adaptation through information-seeking and through dyadic or subgrouping relationships which bypass the ambiguity and largeness of the group-as-a-whole.

There is a sector of this experience, however small, where these adaptive strategies fail, inducing in the group *its most primordial condition of psychological emptiness* which has to be filled in order to preserve any sense of existence at all. This latter is accomplished through the process of establishing boundary, space, and object depicted in chapter 5. The members evacuate a portion of their mental functioning into a phantasied group container, an imaginary group mind which has the potential to 'hold' various objects put into it by projective identification. Taken together, the projected objects have the qualities of a primitive maternal entity. In this way, a primitive group system is formed by a hierarchy shift of boundaries and functions from individuals to the group-*qua*-group 'mind.'

Group role structures are not present in the initial regression, but fleeting valences and role types do emerge in response to the regressive force and the acutely ambivalent state. Some members will propel the regression in search of euphoric and symbiotic experiences. Others, who desire more structure, will fight the regressive norms and attempt to establish order and authority. Still others will form a 'flight group,' using primitive denial and imagination to invoke a 'Camelot' view of everyone's outstanding qualities. Finally, there are those who will retreat into themselves, isolaters and fantasizers.

Phase 2.
Projective identification of a group object

The effect of the formative first phase is to initiate a rudimentary group system whose function is to receive the projective identifications of the members. Mental functions are now fantastically believed to inhere in this group system, while the members themselves have disavowed their own abilities to think and feel.

The group object provides the stage and scenario for a dependency phase, with a shared phantasy of the group as a maternal object, a leader whose function is to omnipotently guide and 'cure' the members, and a set of coordinated roles which play out themes of dependency and counterdependency.

Dynamically, Phase 2 is characterized by the paranoid-shizoid and secondary narcissistic patterns of development, i.e. by splitting and disavowal of 'bad' parts of self and object, and by an omnipotent selfobject 'leader' who serves as a reparative mythological figure in the face of the Phase 1 'catastrophic anxieties.' The members wish magically to function above the nothingness of total engulfment and below the sphere of the painful and individuated conflict between personal and group identity. They seek a position of mental equilibrium in which the group and leader serve 'caretaking functions' and negative elements are projected outside the symbiotic orbit of the group.

The group object which is collectively established serves as an 'environment mother,' and 'background object of primary identification,' a surround which has protective and supportive qualities and expectations associated with it. Being in such a group affords relief from the 'cold, cruel world of earth people,' as one member put it.

Phase 2 thus represents a Grid Level II preindividuated symbiotic state with the 'bad object' projected outside the group boundary. The situation resembles the mother/infant dyad at the point of the development of 'stranger anxiety:' persons other than members are feared while what is inside the symbiotic orbit is comforting (Colman, 1975). The group projectively identifies all its goodness and power into the leader in hopes he will take care of them. Such a projection is, however, the great flaw and instability of the dependent relationship to him. Resultant feelings of depletion and of envy in the membership stimulate beginning efforts to 'get

back' what has been projectively identified into the leader. The members act as if they were enamored of and dependent on the leader when, in fact, they are beginning to experience him as a rival who has 'stolen' the power with which they have magically invested him.

Role structures at this point in the group's evolution are based upon only the most rudimentary distinction between self and object. Thus, for example, there is a 'dual of the leader' (Bion, 1959, pp. 105–6) and 'central figures' (Redl, 1942) who complement the leader in expertise and authority. 'Sickest' members and dependents (Bennis and Shepard, 1956, p. 418) represent the depleted self in contrast to the projected 'strength' of leader representatives. Therefore, the constellation of object relations and roles of Phase II follows a schema or paradigm of a small, needy infant in a merged relation with an omnipotent parent. The psychoanalytic models of group roles are therefore the selfobject idealizing transference and the omnipotent projective identification of the goodness and power of the feeding infant.

Phase 3.
Boundary differentiation and aggressivized object relations

Phase 3 encompasses interpersonal aggression: scapegoating-victimization, 'counterdependency,' and subgroupings based on power and status. The dynamics of this phase rest upon boundary differentiation and the management in interpersonal relations of the incursion of the negative half of the split into the group process.

The dependency phase proves unstable for two reasons. First, badness (aggression, fear, pain) was disavowed and projected outside the group boundary. Second, the members have been interacting almost exclusively with the leader. The illusion of merger begins to break down when they begin to relate as siblings to each another, for as they do so they define boundaries between them.

As a consequence of these developments, objects of negative quality move into the group matrix. Their 'location' is still vague, however, because pain and aggression are unacceptable to the membership and they externalize these qualities into each other, the leader, and subgroups. In essence, the group evinces a 'borderline' ego functioning, operating transitionally between the paranoid-

schizoid and depressive positions (cf. Brown, 1982), a combination of Level II and Level III phenomena where the group 'problem' becomes how to cope with negative elements of which it is aware but which it cannot fully integrate. Further, the members are 'exploring' each other in a primitive way which involves phantasies of 'entering into' each other, 'stealing' contents, and placing part objects into different 'pieces' (persons) and 'positions' (dynamic situations) in the group interaction.

The role structure of Phase 3 is built around a powerful, seductive counterdependent member, who stimulates the group's aggression and sexuality, and a representative scapegoat into whom the badness is projected and whom the group tries to eject in order to expel whatever is noxious or devalued. Force is idealized and weakness or helplessness attacked, in keeping with the theme of control. Other members appear in the roles of limit-setters and mediators, quite possibly on account of their negative valence for aggression. This is the type of group described at the denouement of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

In this phase a role structure based upon unconscious phantasies of body parts emerges. Symbolically, the 'head,' 'brain,' 'gut,' 'penis,' etc. of the 'body politic' become translated into roles which have the respective functions of leadership, thinking, feeling, attacking/seducing. This anatomical pattern is in keeping with the need to have an 'intuitive' representational schema (cf. Boden's 1980 discussion of Piaget's stages of cognitive development) through which the organization of intergroup functions and communication can take place. The 'group mind' is divided into parts, and each part is contained in a role as well as in a part object or erogenous zone. The latter can be said to be the body/mind equipment of the group. Developmentally, this phase parallels the oral biting libidinal phase (Saravay, 1978, pp. 440–91), with its aggressivized phantasies of penetrating, controlling, exploring, and so on. Thus, the victim role is like a baby sibling, and the hostility directed at him is based on envy of his dependency status. In addition, the scapegoat often manifests the narcissistic vulnerability which is intolerable to the membership at large. Wong (1979) noted how such a member may be expelled from the therapy group.

Phase 4.
Rapprochement revolt

To review what has happened thus far, an initial massive externalization of mental functions and structures has been reassimilated into the group interaction itself. First, a primitive symbiotic maternal object was established and within this frame, a set of narcissistic identifications was created. The reintrojection of projective identifications then occurred in Phase 3 with the incursion of the 'bad' aggressivized features into the group, but although the group showed some movement into the depressive position, the membership could not contain their own hostility and vulnerability, which were placed into other members as roles. Splitting became the predominant mode of object relations. Through aggression, the group did achieve some differentiation from the maternal group object, but remained partially in a'symbiotic-narcissistic' bond with her.

The thrust of separation now becomes expressed towards the consultant who, as a representative of both the group itself (*via* the narcissistic idealizing transference) and of the institutional/ cultural context (*via* his organizational role), becomes a figure of ambivalence for the membership. The leader is transferentially the 'mother of separation,' and the group begins to act out a passive to active reversal: the helpless awareness of separateness produces the dramatic action of a revolt against him.

The positive 'favored' elements of the projective identification are increasingly embodied in Phase 4 in a 'cause' espoused by the group which opposes the leadership and allows the weaker and theretofore victimized members to be incorporated in the group goals: they are brought along, as it were, to occupy a position as prophets, commentators, thinkers, etc. Following on the dependency theme of the 'dual of the leader,' a member-leader often emerges as a strong central figure whose qualities, however, differ from those of the consultant, a messianic (pairing group) leader in contrast to the 'doctoring' role of the consultant. This 'revolt leader' is highly identified with the consultant and is not merely opposed to him. The group configuration for the first time has a clearcut purpose: to eject or otherwise establish independence from the consultant. The negative portion of the split object relation becomes increasingly focused upon the consultant.

This classic revolt phase has the earmarks of the overthrow of the father by the sons in the totemistic culture. The mythic paradigm in that case would be the slaying of Laius by his son, Oedipus, and incest the unconscious motive for the revolt. The present viewpoint, however, is that the Oedipal theme is only the topmost layer of the revolt. The more important functions of the group revolt are that it establishes the separateness of the members from the leadership and allows for individuation and object constancy in the group. A later phase (6 in this schema) better parallels, in this view, the Oedipal myth.

The appropriate developmental model for the group revolt is Mahler's 'rapprochement crisis,' the affect-laden separation from the symbiotic mother.

The implications of the revolt, if successfully carried out and at the same time tolerated and correctly interpreted by the consultant, are far-reaching in terms of both intrapsychic and group structure. It enables the group to carry out agendas to individuate, mourn the loss of past objects, and achieve object constancy (which means that members perceive each other as whole and complete persons, as separate seats of motivation). Many therapy and training groups unfortunately come to an end not long after this point (partly because of a high incidence of 'cures' which result from overturning the leader!) when, in fact, an opportunity to work out a whole new (object constant) spectrum of interpersonal relations has only just begun. It is erroneous to think that transference and other psychodynamic features of group life have been resolved once the group has experienced its leadership crisis. Paradoxically, it is not the leader leaving the group, but his remaining there, which facilitates group maturation, which further supports the hypothesis of a rapprochement phase.

Phase 5.
Cohesive group relations

There are two components to this phase, and some regard them as distinct subphases, but the present experience suggests they are interrelated and overlapping. Following the aggressive resolution of the authority problem, the increased cohesion of the group is marked at first by a euphoria and idealization of the group as if to deny the horrific nature of what has taken place and also to reinforce the group's unity. This affective state is followed by a

'disenchantment,' a mourning process and a period of disillusionment.

Phase 5 has the quality of a family of siblings with a departed parent. One is reminded of A.Freud and Dann's (1951) study of displaced children in which the young peer group took over some of the nurturing and caretaking functions from the parents they had lost. The group members, having ejected the consultant, internalize his functions of observing, criticizing, interpreting. At first, the freedom implied in self-regulation is exciting and pleasurable, but the inevitable frustrations lead to dysphoria and disillusionment.

The cohesive phase shows the importance of the ego ideal in group formation. The ideal, placed in the leader, becomes the basis through which the group maintains its solidarity. As Kohut emphasized, the ego ideal is a narcissistic structure which develops from the selfobject. It would appear that, following the euphoric idealization of the group, a disillusionment sets in which promotes an increasing degree of reality testing, transmuting internalizations, and interdependence among the membership. Thus, the propensity to narcissistic injury is high. Certainly, one of these moments is when the post-revolt utopian dream for the group begins to fade, and the members must accept a realistic picture of themselves and their dream.

Phase 6.
Resolution of the Oedipal conflict and the
establishment of community

Oedipal strivings and the resolution of the Oedipal Complex are different events. The former represent a wish for union with the opposite sex parent and emerge as part of the separation-individuation process when genital 'libido' intensifies in the fourth or fifth year of childhood. Erickson, Kohut, and others have shown to what degree such wishes are interwoven with the total personality and the culture: they are not purely sexual wishes but constellations of ego identity, narcissism and object relations as well. Oedipal desires are present in all phases of group development: they penetrate all human interaction, including the most primitive regressions.

The *resolution* of the Oedipal Complex, as Freud (1924) noted, occurs only when the superego has become a distinct structure, i.e. when the individual has acquired a conscience which operates in the

absence of the parenting figures. With this achievement, Loewald (1979, 1982) notes, the person can participate in the 'moral order,' the laws of the social system in which he lives. Therefore, with the 'overthrow' of the leader, the group version of the Oedipal Complex has in effect begun but is not resolved until the members have evolved a micro-social system with its own inner laws and 'conscience.'

The group's Oedipal strivings began with the pairing assumption as a recapitulation of primal scene reproductive phantasies. They were further propelled by the introjection of leadership qualities in the group revolt. Yet it is only by working through intimacy and sexuality in the depressive position that superego formation is completed. By putting the spectrum of incestuous wishes at the service of the community, group members achieve the sublimation which makes the work group a stable and secure institution.

A community has emergent properties compared with a 'merely' cohesive group. It has stable values, a set of objective criteria for membership, and a self-defined purpose. Virtually every community has an implicit theory of knowledge, symbolized by Oedipus' confrontation with the Sphinx. By solving the riddle, Oedipus restored order to Thebes.

Most therapy and training groups never form a community because they serve a temporary *ad hoc* function. The group psychologist is in the unfortunate position of having very few observations of communities that form under controlled conditions. Studies of the large group and of therapeutic communities may partially fill this gap. De Mare (1972, p. 189) points out a quality of such groups: *koinonia*, from the Greek, a sense of oneness and participation in family life. The group is then borne out of the family matrix to achieve a status of its own in which family patterns form but a subsystem. Oedipus has left Thebes.

Phase 7.
Termination vs. self perpetuation

Termination of the group is equated in the unconscious with death. Perhaps the recent medical and psychological interest in death and dying will remove some of the fears and shadows about this universal event and facilitate greater interest in the psychological and social 'death' of groups.

From its inception, the group is faced at every moment with the choice of continuing or ending. The individual life is paramount, and the group survives so long as it serves individuals. At the same time, the cohesive bond of the ego ideal may become so strong that the individual can be called upon to sacrifice himself for the life of the group. Here exists a paradox of great significance for group dynamics, showing to what extent the ego ideal is projected into the group identity and object: the group life may come to represent and lend immortality to the personal life.

When a group has a termination date, a stage of working through is invariably initiated well in advance of that time. This stage is often formalized as a 'debriefing period', and the task of the group is to summarize the learning experience and bind emotional loose ends, facilitating re-entry into daily life and the social group. In the Tavistock conference, the subsidiary groups perform this debriefing session in a plenary session which brings everyone together, emphasizing the aspect of reunion and the feeling that a community has evolved, however brief its duration. Death and community become interwoven in the mourning ritual.

In analytic group psychotherapy, the termination of members or of the group-as-a-whole initiates a mourning process which frequently surfaces a variety of childhood memories and provokes a series of transference reactions. Separation from the therapist is more intense than the parting of the members from each other. The members, through denial, regard their mutual separation as a temporary vicissitude: they will meet on the highways and byways of life, but the therapist becomes a love object separation from whom is felt to be permanent. This transference reaction to separation shows how the early parental bond persists throughout life.

If sufficient time and depth is allowed for termination, its working through consists in a recapitulation of separation-individuation with a resurfacing of the split parent image and the ambitendency characteristic of the rapprochement subphase (Kauff, 1977). The struggle between life and death, perpetuation and ending, is represented in the good and bad maternal images.

Termination means facing in a confrontive way issues that have surfaced but not been resolved during the earlier group phases. Time pressure shifts the self review process into an awareness of acute contingency. There is an opportunity for the group to move into the self-actualizing level, for the members in their acute aloneness to realize their unique potential and their need for love and for

awareness. The 'sleep' of the formative group regression becomes at the end an awakening to the higher self or to what Erickson has termed identity. Technically, sufficient time for termination must be allowed, and the therapist or trainer must be alert and responsive. He must be willing for the first time to undergo the total experience with the members: distance and neutrality must yield to the human experience, trusting that the members have achieved sufficient maturity to tolerate their 'doctor' becoming a person.

Conclusions

The purpose here has been to arrive at a reformulation of the phases of group evolution based upon projective identification and the separation-individuation process. An attempt has been made to be faithful to the common elements in the observational base of numerous researchers. The sequence depicted in the seven phase schema is rarely followed in smooth order. Instead, there are setbacks, reversals, and overlaps in the phase sequence and the best one can do is to try to extract the invariants, the consistency behind the diversity of group phase development.

The basic hypothesized event is that of a projective identification, disavowal, and externalization of mental processes occurring in the group regression. The evolution of the group represents a gradual reinternalization of structure, process, and content which establishes the group as a cohesive entity. As re-internalization begins, the negative and disavowal elements become increasingly focused in a projective identification into the leader. The revolt against him initiates mourning and separation-individuation processes which eventuate in increased cohesion and a maturation of group boundaries and transference manifestations. At a certain point, growth and autonomy push the group out of and beyond the family matrix.

A tacit assumption of the theory is the human hunger for information which Melanie Klein (1975, p. 87) called the 'epistomophilic instinct', without which the group would be forever embedded in the primitive basic assumptions. Man in groups seeks information and contact, and it is this search which forces him to examine and reassimilate his wishful projective identifications. This point of view is consistent with the work of those (e.g. Bales and Strodtbeck, 1971) who emphasize the task dimension of groups. Only by bringing the group emotionality into contact with the

problem-solving process can the emotionality of the group and its unconscious motivation mature into new forms. In psychoanalysis, the insights of Fairbairn regarding the object-seeking propensity of the infant and of Hartmann concerning the adaptive ego functions are especially pertinent. It is here that the bridge between instinct and culture is located.

Chapter 10
On myth, symbol and fantasy formation

An integral part of the analysis of group is an examination of the ways in which the collective imagery and shared imaginative productions of the group provide a linking and transforming medium between the intrapsychic and the socio-cultural contexts. Such an investigation assumes a relationship among the group's: 1) 'language structures' (myth, symbol and fantasy); 2) 'action structures' (phases, roles, customs and norms), and 3) task and maintenance functions. 'Myth' is a paradigmatic construct through which a variety of group events can be understood. Myth bridges the gap between the 'privacy of the self' (Masud-Khan, 1974) and the cohesion of the group, establishing and regulating the internal and external environments.

Mythology, potential space and object

In his development of the transitional object and related phenomena (cf. this work pp. 59–63) Winnicott introduced the concept of a 'potential space' to help explain the meaning and function of the context or frame created out of the mother-child interaction. He hypothesized a continuity between this earliest relationship and the development of art, religion, science and creative activities in general. He indicated (1974, p. 118): 'The place where cultural experience is located is in the *potential space* between the individual and the environment (originally the object).'

The potential space is the container for the co-mingling of external reality and phantasy. The manifestations of unconscious phantasy can be seen in group level derivatives such as fantasies, rumors, daydreams, stories, dreams and myth. The creation and utilization of the potential space allows the demands of inner and outer, narcissism and object relatedness, consciousness and

unconsciousness to be synthesized by means of an interactive process based upon play.

The relationship between this intermediate area of experience and the function of the group can be seen in the quotation from Gibbard, Hartman and Mann (1974, p. 271): 'We can regard group and fantasy activity—as well as daydreaming and creative and adaptive fantasy —as just this type of intermediate phenomena…such activity can be regarded as adaptive if not crucial to group process and structure.' Thus, the group *is* the potential space between member and external object.

Just as the child may create and substitute an object or experience for the missing mother, so must the group members create a surrogate object or experience for the missing group leader, or at a more unconscious or phantasy level, for the group-Mother. The child accomplishes this through its creative playing and elaborations of its transitional object and experiences. The group members must accomplish this through the development of a'language', similarly created through the play-like activity of group interaction which contains, regulates and shares the emotional and task concerns of the individual members. This is another variation of what Piaget (1962) termed 'ludic activity.' Therefore we can say that the mediating experience or substrate that allows this process to occur is the creation of the group-*qua*-group existing as a potential space and transitional object for the members. Figure 10.1 shows a schematic comparison of the concept at both the individual and group levels.

Myth is both a manifestation of the potential space and a product of the transitional activities within that space. Its role and function is to serve as a narrative that interweaves the personal elements of isolated individual experience into a comprehensive and pleasing group synthesis. The development of myth is evidence of the utilization of the group, by its members, as potential space and signals that the group-qua-group formation process has occurred.

Further, myth, as a 'membrane of consciousness' (Bion, 1977a), serves as a notational system and memory device for the 'holding' of the group history in a place apart from any one member. Myth is thus a special realization of the group language as well as a storage device for insuring the continuity of the group entity. (In primitive culture mythology was the location of law, ritual, and tradition.) Just as for Winnicott the transitional object must have a

Winnicotts' depiction:
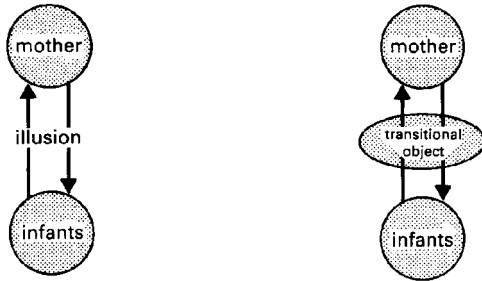
Representation of the group-as-a-whole as transitional element:
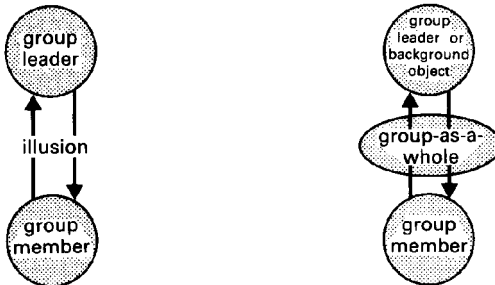
Figure 10.1 Comparison of the development of transitional phenomena at the level of individual and group

permanence beyond the 'conceiving' of the child, so the 'group' must be semi-independent of the individuals who are its author. Through its myths, and related activities, the group entity becomes a semi-autonomous system that is *of* all the members but not *in* any one of them. We may understand it as a transpersonal element. Its existence, based upon language, affective and action elements, is the organizing center of the social experience. Figure 10.2 shows a schematic representation of the transitional-potential situation for the person, group and culture.

Functions of fantasy and mythology in the three systems

Myth can be hypothesized to be represented and contained across the three systems: (1) intrapsychic (Psi); (2) interactive (Delta); and (3) group-*qua*-group (Gamma).

1 The myth is equated with the dream, a view articulated by Abraham (1909/1955, p. 208): '...myth is a surviving fragment of the psychic life of the infancy of the race whilst the dream is the

Level 1: Individual Level (Ψ)

Inner (impulse) ←—o—→ Transitional object ←—o—→ Objective
('me')   Mother
                          (defined, limited, sensual,
                          palpable, ongoing.)
— —
Level 2: Group Level (Δ)

Individual ←—o—→ Group-as-a-whole ←—o—→ Leader
(member)   (myth and fantasy)
— —
Level 3: Society and Culture (γ)

Group ←—o—→ Ideology ←—o—→ Culture/Nation
                (macro-mythic system)
— —
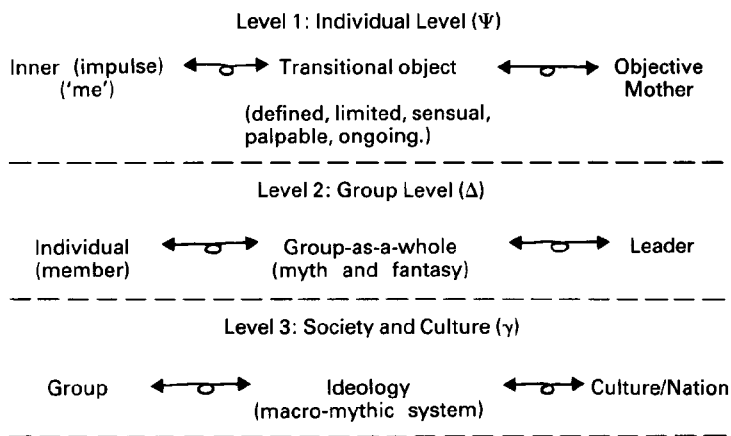
Figure 10.2 Transitional phenomena continuum of transformation

myth of the individual.' Abraham established the same dynamics
and elements to be present in both phenomena: wish-fulfillment,
displacement, secondary elaboration, symbolism and censorship.
Bion (1977a), in category C of his Grid, hypothesized the equation of:
Dream Thoughts=Dreams=Myths= elements which represent the
more complex containment of images and impressions derived from
the images (alpha elements). Bruner (1968, p. 277) drew a
connection between myth and dream, with his assertion that both
are a process of transformation in which inner impulse and instinct
are '…transduced into image and symbol, where an internal plight
is converted into a story plot.' Thus, dream and its social
elaboration, myth, are forms of an externalization process which '…
makes possible the containment of terror and impulse by the
decorum of art and symbolism' (ibid).

Depth motivational concerns of the person are central elements of
the myth. Huxley's comments on the isolated nature of the human
condition point to the issue (1959, p. 13):

By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer
and enjoy in solitude. Sensations, feelings, insight, fantasies—
all of these are private and, except through symbols and at
second hand, incommunicable. We can pool information
about experiences, but never the experiences themselves.

> From family to nation, every human group is a society of island universes.

The yearning to break through such existential isolation into a refusion of communal sharing and common experience seems to be one driving force for the creation of myths.

2 As interaction and communication, the myth can be seen as a language structure, a common pool of images and symbols which allow members to deal with their common existential issues through a public and externalized experience. For Cassirer (1953), language, myth, art and science are all seen to be variations of ideational forms, and communications media for the exchange of inner and outer. Freud (1921) equates the development of myth with the birth of individuality, and he hypothesizes (p. 136):

> …some individual…may have been moved to free himself from the group and take over the father's part. He who did this was the first epic poet; and the advance was achieved in his imagination. The myth, then, is the step by which the individual emerges from group psychology.

Discounting Freud's anthropological reconstructions, one may yet agree that the development of language (by the poet-infant) is the liberating event which frees the individual from the claustrophobic realm of the pre-verbal, inner-object dominated, symbiotic web.

3 For the group-qua-group, the myth is the cohesive medium for the maintenance of the group's identity (a substitute formation for the lost body of the mother), and a central image generator (a network of symbols and rules) allowing individual members to participate in and individuate from the collective. Accordingly, regulatory functions (of both ego and superego systems) are established in the group system (i.e. the 'group' as a commonly held object representation) by a process of hierarchy shifts and symbolic realizations. Custom and ritual serve as channels which guide the membership in how to act, what to 'see,' and the practical means to accomplish goals. The system of 'taboo' and 'reward' implicit in myth helps maintain the moral superstructure which allows for the orchestration of individual impulse and collective concerns into a harmonious cultural pattern.

Mythic themes

Myth, as it evolves in a cultural or societal context is similar to, yet different from, the myths of the therapy or training group. Malinowski (1926/1971) said that myth is a 'sacred story [which]... expreses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man.' That is, myth at the level of primitive culture is the 'carrier' of several cultural functions at one and the same time. As cultures evolve and differentiate, various subsystems are established to contain individual elements for law and belief. In the therapy or training group 'myth' is understood as a form of functional fantasy, a kind of working hypothesis or rough explanation of how the group's conflict came to be. Thus, group myth has a more limited scope in that it is used for the relief of tension by supplying comforting narratives.

For Eliade (1960), the essence of cultural myth is its use as an explanation for the catastrophes of life: the suffering, frustration and necessity which confront both archaic and modern man. Accordingly, myth sees Ancient Man (the noble savage) as living in the Great Time (*in illo tempore*, i.e. the Holy Era of the Beginning), during which a terrible disaster or calamity befell our initial ancestor ('the Fall', which is to say the initial separation). In the Western tradition, Adam was initially at peace with God, Eden was located close to Heaven, and Adam spoke the language of animals. His sin of 'pride' led to the 'Fall' into profane time, i.e. into the 'historical moment of the present.' This situation is considered a curse or punishment because it leads to inescapable mortality and death. As Eliade states (p. 36): 'Myth is based upon...a secret desire to withdraw from that implacable becoming that leads toward death.' Rank (1929/1973) held that all symbolism and myth, as well as cultural sublimation, were a relentless attempt, '...to replace by durable substitutes the primal goal (of *in utero* union) from which, in the meaning of so-called development, it becomes ever further removed.' (p. 99).

Myth as an explanation for the 'catastrophe' of separation and loss applies regardless of the point of the separation: from the womb, the breast or the symbiotic orbit. The sequelae attendant to such separation are the manifold tragedies which flow as, '...the plagues and sorrows of mankind emanated from Pandora's Box' (Hamilton, 1940, p. 70).

The mythic co-participation in the 'reason' behind the catastrophe (i.e. the remembrance of primordial events) provides a powerful *affective process* which both consoles the 'believer' and makes him contemporary with the events of Sacred Time. The essence of the consolation resides in the reestablishment of primitive narcissism, grandiosity and omnipotence. Through the ritual, ceremony and custom of the myth, modern man becomes a'god' and either defends against or sublimates the narcissistic rage (Kohut, 1971) and depressive realization of separation and vulnerability. The celebrant is elevated from the role of 'passive victim' to that of 'active deity.'

The magico-religious quality of the myth points to very primitive layers of mental and emotional functioning. The use of magic, through gestures, words, sounds and thoughts (hallucinatory omnipotence) indicates a regression to early stages of mental development (cf. Ferenczi, 1913/1956). The belief in magic can be seen in mythic images of flying, reincarnation, descent to other worlds, transformation into other forms. Though based upon magic, cultural myth is, as Eliade states (ibid, p. 16), '…assumed by the man in as much as he is a whole being; it is not addressed to his intelligence or his imagination only'—not entertainments but sacred definitions of the basis of reality.

Thus, myth at the level of the culture is a device which enables the collective to transform primitive anxiety into gratifying and ordered narratives concerning the origins, fate, and obligated paths and actions involved in the pursuit of the ultimate points of existence. Myth, at this level, is, as Thompson indicates (1981, p. 6), '…not simply a description, but a performance of the very reality it seeks to describe.'

Some correspondences between mythology and the levels of the Group Analytic Grid are as follows (see appendix, p. 3):

Mythic formulation in the group 'microcosm'

The definition of myth, as established for cultural and societal contexts, must undergo a transformation when applied at the level of therapy and training groups. As Hopper and Weyman (1975, p. 177) point out, 'Whereas all groups are social systems, not all social systems are groups.' Further they state that, 'A group is concerned with solving only a limited number of fundamental problems.' And

ultimately, '…the limitation of its aims makes a group a relatively transitory system, no matter how long it has been established. Permanance requires institutionalization.' Therefore, without long-range cultural continuity and with the minimal activation of basic needs (e.g. feeding, reproduction, protection against external enemy), the study and therapy group utilize myth and associated fantasy elements in a specialized fashion. The problem was articulated by Slater (1966, p. 121):

> …(training groups) construct myths which serve to deny the frightening responsibility and aloneness which this state of affairs confers upon them. The most common, the most pervasive, the most elaborated of these myths is the notion that the entire group experience is some kind of complicated scientific experiment.

While this fantasy is a type of explanation about the plight of membership, and the reason for their suffering, it does not attain the status of cultural myth, i.e. it is not sacred, does not unite the group member with Sacred Time, nor does it proscribe a course of behavior. It actually is more of a 'working hypothesis,' an illusion, than a sacred story. Yet it does constitute a 'reason' for the anxiety situation in the group, and therefore reduces anxiety by unifying subject (member) with object (leader). Thus, myth, in the training or therapy group is best described by Bruner (1968, p. 276):

> …an esthetic device for bringing the imaginary but powerful world of preternatural forces into a manageable collaboration with the objective, i.e. experienced, facts of life in such a way as to excite a sense of reality amenable to both the unconscious passions and the conscious mind.

Such a definition has the advantage of including group processes related to myth, but which do not achieve the full structure and process qualities associated with cultural mythology. If a group member states, for example, that he feels like he's 'on the Titanic,' such a statement is a cultural reference indicating the qualities of arrogance, blind faith, and the portending of disaster. It is a fantasy not a myth. Correspondingly, a category is needed for those elements which are not fully differentiated imaginative formulations.

The term 'mythic formulation' is used to describe such temporary myths, fantasies, rumors, and affective allusions.

Dunphy's definition of myth is a related conceptualization of myth as '…an overarching symbol system which unifies small-group interaction by pooling individual fantasies' (1974, p. 316). Myth understood as a network of pooled fantasies is not cultural myth but the group's utilization of a mythic formulation.

Myth and depressive anxiety—Whether as fully formulated myth, with behavioral and value aspects, or as mythic formulations, serving a synthesizing function, these imaginative creations are manifestations of the transitional experience and as such are designed to control the individual's experience of mourning and are therefore aimed at limiting or controlling depressive anxiety. Myth regulates and integrates the boundary between the personal and the collective so that persecutory anxiety is contained and depressive anxiety is held in check through the soothing quality of the 'story.' The myth may be understood as the replacement for the soothing song, word or touch of the missing group-Mother. As a creation of the group, the myth must not be challenged or questioned. Such intrusions are experienced as persecutory attacks (generally from the primitive super-ego) and evoke an intense form of resistance aimed at protecting the illusory nature of the group-object Narcissistic deflation and rage follow the perforation of the collective dream creation of the group members. Leader or therapist's interpretations are felt, unconsciously, to be transgressions against the 'sacred' nature of the binding and sustaining group-object.

Myth and symbol

The development of myth is contingent upon the group's ability to find and utilize symbols. Segal (1981, p. 52) noted that the symbol implies a three-term relation: the ego, the object, and the symbol object. The symbol generates further experience and objects. It opens the self to the unconscious dimensions 'stored' within the symbol. The Christian crucifix represents and evokes a system of object relations having to do with one's relationship to the deity, the ultimate point of existence, and a moral code of action and thought. Affectively, the believer can realize the joy of divine love, the sign of guilt, and the bliss of forgiveness through a contemplation of, and interaction with, the symbol.

At the level of the group, the symbol acts as a 'lens' through which unconscious phantasy may be focused into the functioning and consciousness of the group container. The nature of phantasy material can range from the most primitive, from salvation and sacrifice symbols, to those having to do with separation-individuation and sexuality. In one group relations conference, the membership presented the leaders with a list of their 'demands.' This list became an ongoing symbol of a heroic act of differentiation and a transitional object which they kept in their presence to remind them of their strength and courage. At the end of the conference, membership constructed a myth concerning the heroic act and gave a central place to the icon of the 'list.' Thus, myth, symbol and artifact (the list) can be seen to form a network of objects and phantasies which is utilized by the group to define itself, relate itself to its needs, and control the psychotic anxieties associated with regression to very primitive levels of dependency and need.

There are two levels of symbol: the true symbol where there is adequate separation between ego and symbol, and the pre-symbol or *symbolic equation* (Segal, 1981) where ego and symbol-object are yet in a state of non-differentiation. Transitional objects are precisely those pre-symbolic (Grolnick, Barkin, Muensterberger, 1978, p. 251) objects, symbolic equations which provide an interpenetration of ego and object. Such concretistic symbols occur in a matrix of non-differentiation which is essential to the group at various times in its functioning so that a network of myth can be built up. As Hamilton conjectured (1940, p. 13): 'When the stories [myths] were being shaped…little distinction had as yet been made between the real and the unreal. The imagination was vividly alive and not checked by reason…'

This limitation of reality testing is precisely the condition of the symbiotic orbit. As Dunphy states (1974, p. 304): '…loss of individual identity contributes in some way to a sense of group identity, and the common extension of personality boundaries leads to greater coordination of the emotions and actions of the individual members of the group.'

The appearance of symbolic equations (of concretistic thought) indicates that the group may be engaging in a primitive process of co-mingling inner and outer objects and affects in a workable system of belief. This would be considered a necessary step in the development of a group. The appearance of such pre-symbols in a

functioning group marks the regression of such a group away from more mature levels of ego functioning to more regressed conditions of pre-symbolic experience. Following Little's formulations (1981) we might say that the group is resorting to psychotic transference to protect itself against the unbearable anxiety of separation, loss and autonomy. Why such a massive regression is occurring would naturally be of interest to the group therapist or leader.

In group situations such as these, thought has regressed to a de-dimensionalized 'flat' variety, and as Bion (1979) indicates '… thoughts are things, and the mind is a muscle.' The phantasy elements located within the members must be 'put' somewhere, and the available locations are the psyches of the other members. In this one-dimensional affect state, group members become no more than objects of unrecognized phantasy to one another. Real identities are lost, and the nature of each person, as emotionally real and live is cancelled by the web of unchecked phantasies now projected out onto the other.

In one group, a male member berated the group and accused them of 'being stuck.' He said it was the group's job to 'get moving' and stop being the 'helpless shitty mess' that he saw it as. His position gained support for a time, and action plans were drawn up, all to no avail. Upon reflection, the group consultant interpreted that it sounded as if the instigating member was perceiving the group as an 'obstructed bowel,' most likely his own, and it seemed as though the group was trying to free itself from its own withholding constipation. In such a manner, primitive libidinized elements become the content of the social experience. The myth of Jonah and the whale constitutes a mythic elaboration of such a condition. The group, as Jonah, is stuck in its painful ambivalence between separating from the mother-leader and remaining within the symbiotic orbit, the whale symbolizing the re-engulfing mother of rapprochement, who comes to 'consume' the wicked child who seeks the evil of separation. At the same time the group is restored in the secure union with the symbiotic mother.

Bion's (1979) formulation of myth as a 'membrane of consciousness' views myth as a photographic film, or negative, capable of receiving and storing (holding) images and information. It enables the group to contain experience that would be otherwise overwhelming and become lost to the group in the flux of collective living. Group events and processes are thus stored and encoded in a disguised or condensed form, as in the dream, facilitating the

compression of conscious and unconscious elements. The knowledge contained in the membrane include limits and boundary conditions of the group. What can and can't be done or said are conveyed in the most powerful way possible by the mythic narrative. (The type of 'knowledge' imparted by myth is a particularly 'embodied' type, and closer to the biblical 'to know' in the sense of carnal possession. Thus, the 'knowing' of the myth is *sensual,* and is interested in conveying the experience of participation, rather than the sense of 'mere' observation.)

The membrane of consciousness spans the time of the group and is the first archive for the life of the collective. The longer the existence of the group, the more multi-dimensional the myth, which becomes increasingly a container for not only actual external (historic) events but as important for inner object systems and their accompanying emotions. By recording the temporal history of the group, the myth acts as a representation of past, present and future. The unconscious elements are displaced into the past and are managed at a comfortable distance from the immediacy of the group's future dilemmas.

Myth and the 'translocation of experience' into group roles and structures

As observed earlier, dream symbols translate id impulses into conscious images, and group symbols translate object relations into collective content and patterns. The symbol and its mythic elaboration have great power to externalize subjective experience and inner object relations into group thought and action. The raw material used in the expression of symbol and myth are the constituent elements of the psyche: inner objects, phantasies, self and object representations; self elements (values and meanings, ambitions and ideals); narcissistic features of the grandiose self and idealized parental imago; and the psychobiological domain of instincts and ego adaptation. The mechanisms of defense are likewise elements available for transport to the group context through externalizing and identification processes.

In addition, the group realization of symbol and myth brings about not only the representations of such inner states but the states themselves, realized through processes akin to symbolic equation (acting out). In role formation, parts of the ego and internal objects are projected into a person and then identified with him. The

'mother' of the group contains those caring and giving aspects of the self. The 'hero' contains the penis, the brain, the courage, the idealized self-representation. The 'secretary' or observer of the group contains the brain, eyes, or memory. *All such realizations occur through projective identification.* The role structuralizes the inner dynamic and places it in an outer reality where it has distance from and continuity with the vagaries of the personal unconscious and the id.

The spatial dimension of inner objects and systems is frequently seen evoked in the fantasy and mythical themes the group creates. The fantasy of a 'cozy nest,' with the group close, and warm and sheltered in a dimly lighted room is often created by the group when it changes the seating arrangements, turns up the temperature in the room, lowers the lights. Likewise, fears of the group turning into a 'swamp,' a 'living hell,' or a 'torture chamber' also predominate at especially terrifying times in the group's history, and at such times imagination and projective identification give the group a most horrifying sense of claustrophobia and suffocation. One member said to her group therapist: There's no room in you for what I want to feel.' The group container or field is thus the medium for the realization for both the solemn and joyful 'geographies' of human fear and personal intimacy. It is thus the context for what Bachelard (1964) has termed 'The Poetics of Space.'

Accompanying these spatial experiences are the sensory elements of temperature, light, color and shape, all of which can reach group consciousness through its myths and symbols.

Acting out and the creation of a symbolic group representation: a vignette

The following example illustrates several of the above processes of symbolization and translocation of experience:

In a four-day Tavistock style Group Conference, the membership had become especially frustrated with the aloof and indirect interaction style of the consultants and staff. As the conference moved into its Inter-Group phase (where total membership subdivides into smaller group and functions as an organization), a membership pair (male and female) did not join any of the Inter-Groups, but rather set up their own dyadic interaction in a small, unattended room. In the course of the

exercise they were discovered and this fact was soon communicated to all subgroups, including the staff group.

The entire institution (45 members, including staff) did not quite know what to do with this pair. They were outside the boundary of the event and could not be responded to by staff, and the rest of the membership was quite perplexed by their special 'status.' The impression was that the other members felt threatened by this pair, though no efforts were made to reassimilate them into other groups. They were simply called 'the pair' and were left alone.

When the Inter-Groups reassembled into the large group setting, the membershp slowly began to explore this strange state of affairs. Feelings of envy, jealousy, abandonment, and bitterness were among the primary emotional responses. Interpretations and associations began to shape a picture of this pair as a 'replacement' for the missing consultant pair: the male and female codirectors of the conference. It became clear that since the codirectors would not behave as good 'mommies and daddies' do, this pair was 'created' (by projective identification) to perform that function. Further associations from the membership pointed to the basic assumption: the purpose of the conference was the recreation of the parental pair.

From an object relations perspective, the 'ad-hoc' pair represented the unconscious projective identification, by the group as a whole, of a symbolic representation within the group matrix of the missing codirectors. Primal scene elements were evident in the creation, for once created no one could deal with their impulses. No one wanted to watch. They were doing something behind closed doors but no one really knew what.

The anxieties associated with separation-individuation had been channelled in and through the pair as transitional object. As a symbolic equation, the inner objects and ego elements were projected into them, and thus the group could not deal with them for they would have to deal with their desire and curiosity. The pair voiced no consciousness of any of the dynamics ascribed to them, and felt only that they were trying to 'get the job done.'

Myth as a primitive state

An important component of myth is the ritual and ceremony used to achieve certain altered states of consciousness necessary for individuals to reach a condition of ego regression or permeability which allows for self-object merger and the accompanying magic and hallucinatory conditions. Thus, song, dance, the consumption of substances which alter consciousness, music, trance conditions, costumes, sensory deprivation or enhancement were all crucial elements in the 'celebration' of myth, and in the reliving of the mysteries contained therein.

For the training and therapy group such altered states of consciousness are likewise brought about, but generally not in as dramatic or primitive form as with the cultural productions. The withdrawal from familiar surroundings, the prolonged silences, the magico-religious quality of the yearnings and needs which are re-stimulated, the mythical stance of the leader all interact to make possible the surfacing of regressed states of ego functioning and the externalization of inner object relations. According to Kernberg (1980, p. 217):

> ...some of the strikingly regressive features of small groups, large groups, and mobs may be better understood in the light of our present knowledge of the internalized object relations that predate object constancy and the consolidation of the ego, superego and id.

Before the creation or application of the transitional space and of myth, e.g. during times of regression or decompensative panic, the group becomes a container for inchoate, unsymbolized beta elements, from the experiential inner worlds of its members. Thought and action in such a group context are incompletely separated, and correspondingly the gestural language of the group becomes more a medium of expression than its verbal form. The actual consciousness, inner object situation, is frequently acted-in through the group by a kind of 'dance' or ceremony. The group's communication is similar to the infant's 'body-talk' communications. Sighing, yawning, peculiarities in looking about the group may indicate that the members are in search of a 'tension dispelling adult' (Kohut, 1971) to help them manage this overwhelming state of affairs.

The anxieties associated with primitive states in the group concern the collapse of the self, through a regression to pre-genital and pre-object-constant ego states where symbolic equations predominate and where the group members cease to experience themselves as separate entities and become focused (through selfobject, primary identification dynamics) with the group object.

Defensive measures in such regressed settings become ever more primitive, as the description of splitting, projective identification and denial imply. These pathogenic mechanisms become, as Tolpin (1971, p. 336) points out, '…expedient substitutes for maternal buffering….' The group uses its primitive defenses to 'create' what it needs. This can be seen in the evocation of a 'talkative scapegoat' or an hysterical member. It is not uncommon for various members to feel ill, faint, or nauseous at critical times in the emotional struggles of the group. Relief from such conflict is realized through the vulnerable member whose personal psychophysiological valence makes them prone to express their feelings and phantasies that way.

The intrusion of these regressive conditions is an example of the wish for and the compulsion to re-experience the 'pure states' associated with the Sacred Time of the Myth. It is worth considering that such conditions of 'pure' experience, however presented or disguised, account for much of the narcissistic appeal that mythic narratives and group experience possess. States of pure pleasure and pain; conditions of absolute love or total hate and revenge, provide the membership with an 'experience' that cannot be tolerated or achieved in almost any other waking state or relationship. Certainly in no dyadic relationship is one able to sustain the grandiosity and intensity that are the hallmark of the group mirroring experience. Only in the context of infancy, psychoanalytic regression, or personal 'heroic' action are group members elsewhere able to achieve participation in such states. Further, they revive the wish for reunification with such archaic, yet sublime, realities, and ultimately offer the hope or dream that such conditions can be repeated or sustained. For instance, the messianic ideal is drawn precisely from this level of experience.

Being 'owned' by no one, these deep elements become difficult to integrate and synthesize into the group identity. They may bring about splitting and projective processes into subgroups or out-groups, or into scapegoats. Without a sponsor, the free-floating ideas or emotions present themselves as haunting presences, the ghosts of the unconscious. Projective identification is the most

common means for 'exporting' such elements outside the boundary of the all-good inner object system.

Reality testing in the group is based upon the transitional experience and, as such, 'reality' is 'never examined or questioned.' Ordinarily a process of placing oneself separate from the object to be tested, reality testing in the group is governed by the interhuman relations of the members. What is real is what is shared, and the experience of differentiation and separation is considered not reality, but an attack on group reality, i.e. on the shared state of 'narcissistic pluralism' (Fornari, 1974, p. 146).

> In one group, members indicated that they did not want to know what any one did for a living on the 'outside.' After several sessions a male member asked a female what her occupation was. When she hesitated, he said: 'It's all right , you can trust me. What do you do for a living?' The other members attacked him and accused him of engaging in cocktail-party chatter, going against the group norm, and being shallow. He continued to press the issue until the female member said: 'You're pushing me, don't push me. The group said no to that and I'm going to go along with their decision.'
>
> It seemed clear that the group's anonymous and total collusion against individual differences proved too weighty and claustrophobic for the male member. His ego could not bear up under the loss of identity functions ('cocktail-party chatter') and was prompted by fears of engulfment to act against the norm. The group's subsequent battle with him had to do with issues of personal visibility and the announcement and worship of the self.

Ultimately, more individuated members begin to act as ego-nuclei (Glover, 1930) and slowly the group-as-a-whole begins to differentiate from the undifferentiated matrix. Such sensory deprivation, as implied in the above example, suggests the extent to which interactive stimuli are constituent of the individual's sense of the personal self.

Myth and group development

The foregoing discussions have focused on the function of myth as a 'container' for the intrapsychic elements of the self as they are transformed in and through the transitional space and object.

By examining the predominant myth in the group, one can begin to infer the nature of the inner objects, self representations, and the prevailing unconscious phantasy systems expressed in the content of myths. If the group fantasies reflect a fragmented and split-off part-object situation, one would expect the myth in the group to depict a time of great chaos, of non-synthesis and threat from the lack of cohesion.

Such a situation could be depicted through a mythic formulation such as 'fantasies' of the 'Great Depression' or of the 'Sinking of the Titanic.' If the group becomes mired in persecutory anxiety it may use mythic images of 'demons' or 'demonic possession' to explain its dire circumstances.

Regardless of mythic themes, the birth and evolution of the group must be understood to follow along lines of the self from conditions of intense need and oceanic oneness to a position where myth and scientific theory are brought together in a new context of reason and belief.

From the standpoint of the individual, the developmental path of the self is demarcated by a set of catastrophes and crises which are the 'pivotal events' in the life of the person. The most dramatic catastrophe is the act of birth which destroys the interuterine 'heaven' and plunges each of us (The Fall) into the realm of 'decadent time,' i.e. suffering and death.

Subsequent childhood-based crises of the life cycle include the depressive position, rapprochement, and the Oedipal situation.

The group must struggle with its hunger for the bliss of oneness with the leader, both as an external figure and as a selfobject who represents the power and independence lost by each group member in the process of becoming 'just one' of the many. The frustration of this yearning must lead to the crisis of first separation, a basis for the flight/fight group.

The group attempts to flee from what Bion (1967) has termed the 'obstructive object,' which cannot or will not contain the projections and needs of the membership. The totemic Oedipal event marks the reintrojection by the members of energies and fantasies that had previously been obstructed. Such crucial events as the

group revolt are frequently pointed to as the 'time when we became a group,' or '…when we started to gel.'

The classic function of myth is to explain and contextualize such catastrophes at the level of the culture. In the pairing assumption, the catastrophe of separation and abandonment is managed by the creation of a surrogate pair (either heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual) who will produce the messianic object or idea which, according to its magico-religious properties, will restore 'Sacred Time' to the 'body' of the group.

As noted in the Group Analytic Grid, the group begins at the level of primordial non-differentiation (Level I), and moves through increasing consolidation of the self, facilitated by the transitional experience (Grid Level III); and on to the establishment of central structures and ego systems, with the resolution of the conflict of the Oedipal period (Grid Level IV). The establishment of object constancy and the tripartite structures occurs as the group separates from the leader/therapist as the central object of experience and moves on to member-member interactions and focus (cf. chapter 9).

By way of explicating the contents of mythic theme in their developmental context, the group-qua-group (Gamma) system incorporates the following myths (among others) at its varying developmental levels (cf. appendix, 1, p. 3). The group leader or therapist will generally recognize the mythic themes emerging 'between the lines' of the group interaction. Rather than a clear naming of the myth, there is the sense that the group is acting 'as if' a particular mythic formulation is active in the group-*qua*-group system. This 'as if' experience is precisely how Bion defined basic assumption behavior of the group. Thus, the detection and interpretation of group myths is accomplished by tracking and naming such symbolic or symptomatic activities of the group-as-a-whole.

Regressed

I *Primordial: Eden, The Great Mother, The Fall*

These myths speak to the dream of unification, where self and object are undifferentiated, where the dual-unity of the symbiotic pair is celebrated and sustained ('God's in his heaven and all's right with the world.'). The 'Fall' introduces the beginning of the end of oceanic

oneness. It is caused by 'pride' and the 'search for knowledge.' The break-up of the idealized selfobject context is experienced by the infant as caused by its own 'greedy' needs to take more, or 'know' more than is necessary (the epistemophilic instinct).

II *Primitive: Genesis, Narcissus and Babel*

The self is formed and is 'complete unto itself.' It exists within the circle of its perfection, and is content to exercise its powers in naming its world. Everything is created out of this newly formed self. The dawning awareness of others, and their needs and special languages threatens this selfobject unity, with destruction and disorientation.

Individuated

III *Transitional: Pygmalion and Galatea, Odysseus, Jonah*

Myths from the transitional stage reflect the ambivalence of separation and individuation. Pygmalion hated women but was obsessed with the woman of his creation. Venus ultimately made her alive so that his hatred vanished, and through the reparative effects of his sorrow and gratitude (the depressive position) he was able to love. Odysseus is the classic instance of the mythic 'journey of transformation.' As the child separates from the omnipotent, symbiotic mother, during rapprochement, he must travel through many 'strange lands' (dreams, stories, imagination) where good and bad objects abound, and where reality testing is a function of the affective condition of the seeker. Finally, after encountering these 'worlds' the infant/hero returns home to be united with his loving and faithful wife and does away with the Oedipal rivals who have encroached upon his world during his journey. Such myths point to the painful tribulations of the object world during rapprochement and reflect the painful realizations attendant to achieving the depressive position. Jonah, as has already been alluded to, is the fear/wish dilemma confronting the separating child. The re-engulfing whale-mother wishes to take the beloved 'sinner' back into her body (Rank related this to a re-awakening of intrauterine phantasies and desires).

IV *Oedipal: The Sphinx, Oedipus, and Prometheus*

Here, the full possession of the self gives rise to conflicts of ongoing, existential concern. Power, intimacy, sexuality, independence, the nature of knowledge and of destiny are all themes and issues contained within this mythic level. The projection outward of harsh superego elements, based upon paranoidschizoid dynamics, is represented, for example, in Zeus as the hateful and murderous rival who will destroy the hero before he allows him to participate in the bounty of mother earth (fire) or the actual body of the mother. Incest, conflict, and the inevitability of accepting the incomprehensible departure from the body of the mother are central themes. Self knowledge now becomes the mysterious beast to be encountered and mastered, rather than the fantastic world of creatures outside the self.

Mature

V, VI: *Task oriented and self-actualizing:*

Here it would be expected that myth would combine with science to provide the advanced stages of self-development and cultural progress in a synthesized fashion where mankind might 'cele brate' the 'mysteries of existence.' The resistances to entering such a 'millennium' at times seem intractable on a societal plane at least. The single-minded pursuit of power and control over nature and one's fellow man (which would seem to be an activation of both the transitional and Oedipal levels of mythic activity) has caused the separation of myth from science. The reassimilation of the split-off aspects of the cultural self (the function of entering the depressive situation) is fought. Primitive splitting and projective identification reinforce the stalemate of cultural progress and international peace. The great debate on nuclear arms seems to represent a denial of destructive realities, of the fantastic and mythical nature of the arms race, and of the cold war. Benedict (1934) pointed out that certain primitive societies engaged in the ceremonial destruction of goods and wealth. Both as a means of controlling envious and rivalrous impulses (the act of potlatch) and as attempts to placate some fierce and maniacal god. The systematic destruction of the resources of the world societies seems to be a total recapitulation of this mythic process. Instead of destroying the village virgin, or best animal or crop, we have at hand the destruction of all reality in a terrifying regression to pre-object-constant narcissistic dynamics.

The co-extensive fantasy of the self and the world now threatens mankind with its apocalyptic vision of the self. It is this basic sense of helplessness of humankind, before the realities of suffering, separation, and death, that mythology most eloquently addresses, precisely the issues that modern man must face if he is not to blow up the world in a maniacal flight from the depressive realities of life. Thus, the small and large groups convened for self study and therapy provide a microcosm and laboratory for the investigation of destructive resistances and group illusions, for both of which myth is the eternal mirror and narrator.

Myth, structure, and boundaries

The function of myth has been defined here as the containing and linking of intrapsychic (personal) issues and dynamics, especially related to depth unconscious phantasies, in and through the transitional medium of the group. While implicit in the discussion thus far, the structural and boundary elements of myth and phantasy require further elaboration.

With cultural myth, there is a complete development of roles, structures, and boundaries that members of the tribe or culture are to observe. At the level of the group such elements are more implicit than explicit. For instance, the fantasy or mythic formulation about the group feeling like 'one happy family' describes both the nature of the collective experience and the affective tone in the group. The Promethean myth is implicit in particular roles (hero, god) and style of group interactions (antagonism, theft, revenge and punishment). The nature of inner object systems are expressed (especially the affective qualities of paranoia, deprivation and aggression) in the employment of such a confrontive, challenging mythic figure. Boundaries limiting what the group is entitled to and what it must fight for are likewise 'encoded' in the myth and its celebration. Rieff 's discussion of the function of myth points out its structuralizing and boundary functions (1966, p. 11):

> Every culture must establish itself as a system of moralizing demands, images that mark the trail of each man's memory; thus to distinguish right actions from wrong the inner ordinances are set, by which men are guided in their conduct so as to assure a mutual security of contact.

It is precisely the boundary function of myth that provides for 'mutual security of contact,' and at the level of the group membership will employ such stories to enforce the content and structure they wish to achieve. Gossip, in this light, is a normative function which allows for the realization of inner boundaries in the collective. A group member might say: 'Did you see how carried away Fred got when he saw Ginger crying? He actually went over and hugged her!' Physical contact is not allowed, and the experience of physical consolation may awaken depth unconscious anxieties around abandonment and generate sufficient envy that the group will be flooded by inner object elements.

Esterson (1970), in a study of family systems, noted that the members of the family consider the 'other' (either group or person) to be a 'critically evaluating entity,' i.e. a harsh superego. Thus, internal structures are projectively identified, at a 'safe' and controlling distance, and become external, social elements which comprise the focus, content, and goals of the family group. In such families, living a 'proper existence' becomes central, and thus a familial norm of propriety is seen to derive from the projective identification of unconscious phantasy elements of its central members. The use of subgroups, out groups, and scapegoats as structural containers provides the group with most of its boundary and structural elements.

In one therapy group, the membership agreed to set time aside at the end of each group session to make sure that everyone was 'taken care of.' They did this for several sessions until a withdrawn member became enraged at the probing and intrusiveness of the group's 'caring.' Interpretations and associations led the group to an awareness of a phantasy constellation in which they saw the leader as empty, withholding and abandoning. They felt, quite unconsciously, that if they did not feed and care for each member, then destructive conditions would occur in the group, and no one would be present to take charge of such catastrophes. Thus, the 'care taking' function (role) was seen as a defense against a primitive phantasy of abandonment and starvation.

Similarly, when groups refuse to 'feed' from the leader, such an 'anorexic' response may be understood as a group-wide recreation of a 'starving mother' as a means (structure) to manage the primitive anxieties associated with asking leadership to meet the group's needs.

The creation or realization of roles through and in the myth or mythic formulation allows for a gradual transformation of the group from leader-centered to member-centered. The withdrawal of cathexis from the leader and the recathexis of the group-*qua*-group with libidinal and ego autonomous energies allows for the enhancement and sublimation of the transitional experience and with it a space for the realization of creativity and autonomy within membership. The boundaries shift, and instead of an 'audience' the group becomes a problem solving gestalt, capable of frustration tolerance, thought and work. The acceptance of the group life in all its complexity indicates the group members' increased capacity to tolerate anxiety and thus points to the possibility of a new integration of fantasy and reality, of internal and external world. The myth and its elaborations provide the linking medium for such integration and are the conduits for the restoration and transformation of the self.

Chapter 11
Group psychotherapy:
some aspects of object relations, multiple systems, and countertransference

Group psychotherapy began as a separate development from psychoanalysis. Originating in the clinical experience that spontaneously occurring and organized patient groups could build morale and reduce anxiety, the treatment of patients in groups, whether for physical illness, mental disorder, or cultural/spiritual malaise, evoked the image of a powerful and curative moral and social force: 'by the crowd have ye been broken, by the crowd shall ye be healed.' Nowadays, with the great emphasis on explanatory constructs it is easy to forget that group therapy preceded its theories and was based on hygienic principles of effective communication, education, and emotional support.

In object relations terms, it can be said that these early therapy groups provided nurturing and limits-introjects of 'good' maternal and paternal objects, and the mutual use of the members as empathic selfobjects for each other, to facilitate reflective processes of the self. These fundamental curative properties of groups have been known since Greek antiquity. The quasimagical 'force' inherent in the group process will be recognized to be a projective identification and reinforcement of the inner striving towards health. In addition to this effect of care and positive regard, group treatment maximized the process of verbal feedback and mirroring: if one explores a common problem with one's peers, one is likely to hear what is true to one's plight and one's real self.

Supportive group and milieu treatment utilizes transference and basic assumption dependency in a quasi-maternal manner, emphasizes the group system as a community of peers while minimizing the transference to the leader as such, and evokes here-and-now communication processes and constructive action, rather than unconscious phantasy. In other words, it maximizes the use of the work group.

The psychotherapeutic application of mature group activity together with adaptive aspects of transference remains even today the basis of much group treatment ideology. The Foulkesian school, for example, emphasizes a period of the working out of non-transferential and community 'problems in living,' represented here in Level V and VI phenomena and in Phases 6 and 7 of group evolution. Agazarian and Wheelan (1984) demonstrated how basic assumption states could be coordinated with work groups to provide motivation, thematic material, and group cohesion for therapeutic purposes. Such approaches represent an exploitation rather than an analysis of transference in the group and therefore come under the rubric of education and supportive psychotherapy, to be contrasted with the systematic resolution of transference and resistance which may be considered the *sine qua non* of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. However, it is difficult to conceive how even the most rigorous group psychoanalysis would be devoid of supportive measures. In principle this element is no different from the psychoanalyst functioning as a 'holding environment' for his patient. Further, it should be realized that supportive group processes are derivatives and sublimations of early object relations, that is, they are dynamic processes.

The integration of psychoanalytic technique with group psychotherapy developed gradually, peaking in enthusiasm during and after World War II, when group therapy found extensive use in the armed forces of the Allied countries, most notably Great Britain and the United States. Instead of a single technical approach to group treatment, however, several different emphases evolved, creating a variety, eclecticism, and confusion which have lasted to the present.

Some psychotherapists, for example Wolf and Schwartz (1962), regarded the group situation primarily as a way of conducting multiple individual psychoanalysis. While identifications among the members were implicitly useful in this model, the curative process consisted in the uncovering and analysis of individual resistances and transference reactions. In this way, a boundary was placed around each group member which allowed him to 'learn from' others but not to interact intensively. The interactions were understood as resistances and were felt to divert attention from the intrapsychic 'vertical' process of depth analysis, following the closed systems model of psychoanalysis in which psychopathology was caused by a self-contained and repressed childhood conflict. (In

fairness to Wolf and Schwartz several colleagues have suggested to the authors that the group system is an important feature of their work.)

A second approach (cf. Durkin, H., 1964, 1974) evolved as therapists found these very resistances and interferences of great interest and allowed them to occur, analyzing the interactions as characterological expression of problematic interpersonal relations. The therapy group became a metaphorical *as if* 'playing field' in which the members spontaneously created roles, rules, and libidinized or aggressivized actions which could be understood as defenses against the requirements of self disclosure and intimacy inherent in group life. The theory of technique was based on the principle that learning to interrelate alleviated inner pathology by establishing positive feedback loops to the facilitating environment and undoing pathological defenses, roles, and identifications.

The third tactic was to regard the entire group as resistive, sick, or uneducated about group life and to focus upon the obstacles inherent in the group-*qua*-group to establishing a total milieu which facilitated insight in the individual members. The ideas of Bion and of Lewin contributed to this approach to treatment. Ezriel (1950) embodied such a viewpoint more specifically in terms of a 'common groups tension,' a group-wide transference attitude. (See Kauff, 1979, for a discussion of these three methods.)

The reader will recognize that such tactical methods, of which there have been numerous variations, emphasize respectively the Ψ, Δ, and γ systems of the Grid: the tactics intensify respectively (a) the boundary around the individual, (b) the interacting persons and subgroups, or (c) the entire group matrix. *It is not just that what is analyzed is different, but what occurs is differently bounded.* Strictly adhered to, each approach produces its own dynamics. The patient will experience in one group setting events which would hardly take place in the others. For example, in the transposition of individual therapy to the group, the patient is unlikely to witness an extended verbal argument among members, which would be considered by the therapist a resistance to the analytic process. On the other hand, the participant in an interpersonal type of group might observe or participate in such aggression, and work out better modes of interaction, but is unlikely to disclose or hear extensive elaborations of related childhood memories or of group fantasies.

One of the most significant changes in group psychotherapy approaches over the last three decades has been the gradual

integration of the individual, interactive, and group-qua-group approaches. To a great degree, this change reflects the increasing eclecticism of therapists who have been exposed to each others' methods and found them useful. Psychoanalytic group psychotherapy today focuses upon unconscious defenses, resistances, and object relations at whichever system and level they become salient as the group evolves. Such an integration represents and is made possible by the knowledge of group process in terms of systems and field models. That is, the therapist can recognize and address the shifts in group boundaries which occur naturally in group evolution and utilize whichever system and location is salient to facilitate effective therapeutic work in the activated system. This approach ought not to be an eclectic 'smorgasbord' of techniques, but optimally a careful attention to and propitious use of the actual totality of events and 'event structures' which occur in group.

The current interest in multiple systems is reflected both in the approach to groups and in the theory of psychopathology. The etiology of mental illness is no longer seen as a matter of pure phantasy *or* reality, but implicates multiple facets of the person's life history. Kohut (1977, p. 76), for example, stressed the profound role of the parent figure in the formation of narcissistic structure: 'If the mother rejects this self just as it begins to assert itself as a center of creative-productive initiative…then the child's self will be depleted…'

The boundary shifts and systems changes which occur in the group process allow for a therapy which utilizes the group experience, interactions, and evolution as a total 'apparatus' that impinges in its multiple vertices upon the patient's illness, so that the pathological entity is treated under varying conditions and in its several systemic expressions.

The integration of individivual-in-group, interactive, and group-as-a-whole strategies of psychotherapy is best accomplished *via* a systems analysis of the group, especially in its unconscious dynamics and defense mechanisms, and it is this systems analysis which goes beyond the debate as to which of the three methods is 'best' and provides a conceptual basis for addressing the several complementary dimensions (internal, interpersonal, group, and cultural) of the pathological developments which the patients bring into the group situation.

The multiple systems emphasis, combined with the awareness of primitive object relations, and narcissism in both the individual and

the group matrix, is ripe for a new philosophy of group treatment which can hardly be articulated as yet, but about which Wong (1983), Pines (1983) and Kauff (1983) have made some beginning suggestions in a conjoint symposium. Pines, like the present authors, emphasized the separation-individuation process and its component subsystems as they are worked out in the group process. He saw the need for a psychology of the social forces in man as they impinge upon and emerge from the developmental process, symbolized by the social self or mutuality as an extension and complement of the ego. These social forces raise two pressing questions for the conduct of group psychotherapy: (1) how do these forces create the pathological outcomes seen in the consulting room?, and (2) how can they be used to treat inner disorder?

The social model which Pines is looking for needs to be polysystemic so that the group therapist can see the relationship, for example, between the intrapsychic affects (whose difficulty of management plays a powerful role in narcissistic and borderline character disorders) and group relations, the latter of which the group therapist is in an especially advantageous position to influence and interpret. Ultimately, the descriptive problem for a theory of group technique is the Cartesian mind/body dualism and the complementarity principle stated at the beginning of this monograph. That is, one sees in the group a pattern of communication and interaction which is closely related to the inner conflict and deficits of each of the members and which constitutes both their psychopathology and their 'membership card' for the group. One must then influence the by now encapsulated and fixated conflict through the vehicle of the group process, recalling that the inner conflict is 'mental' while the group process is social and physical. Thus the 'change agent' is the principle of 'conversion' between the inner pathological formations (which are reactivated when the right social medium is found) and the dyadic, subgroup, and group-wide configurations which sustain or change the inner states and conditions. These are boundary phenomena.

Wong (1983) saw his own approach to treatment focusing increasingly on group dynamic phenomena, and he suggested a close tie between the group-qua-group emphasis and object relations theory, citing Bion, Ezriel, and Sutherland as prime movers in this process. However, a disillusionment with the group-as-a-whole approach to treatment has set in recently (cf. Malan *et al*, 1976; Kibel and Stein, 1981) as evidence accumulates that an *exclusive*

focus on group-wide events and transference does not give especially good treatment outcomes. Thus, the search for an effective strategy of psychoanalytic group psychotherapy must continue.

A formulation of a group analytic 'cure'

The closest the present authors can come to a therapeutic rationale for multiple self and object relations systems treatment is the incompleteness of the patients' inner world and functional systems, especially in their early origins, which requires them to reach out towards and create a social interaction which will sustain their deficient inner feedback loops. Selfobject and projective types of transferences are instances of an incomplete self and object world seeking and using the external object and relationship *to fulfill a psychic function*. The incompleteness and functional deficit characteristic of the severe patholgoies as well as of group regressions and phases (suggesting a natural conjoining of the two) is the 'place where we live' and where we hurt. The philosopher Unamuno said, 'We die of cold, not of darkness.' In the pre-individuation disorders, insufficient or overly intrusive human contact during critical phases of development is frequently the source of the disturbance. It is at this place, and perhaps only here, that the social interaction of the group can cut deeply to the psychic life and emotional concerns of the disturbed individual. The nodal point person opens out into the group communications matrix at points of incompleteness, pain, and failed or unavailable parenting (while at the same time the patient defensively claims narcissistic self-sufficiency for himself). This is where the boundary between self and group becomes permeable and accessible to change.

If individual psychoanalysis is the method *par excellence* for uncovering repressed memories and the working through of a 'transference neurosis,' then where deeper, pre-individuated layers of disturbance are evoked, the psychoanalyst still must use himself as a facilitating, holding, and containing environment. Social influence and analytical accessibility converge in the particular mutually facilitative way that is characteristic of a harmony of group method and psychoanalytic method. On the plane of the group interaction, the balance of forces is more towards the social and less the uncovering mode, but if a group contains an 'analytic introject' (the ability to observe and introspect about experience) and an 'analytic object' (an event which links the surface with the

depth), then the social process interacting with profound inner tension states which require an outer object for completion becomes the vehicle of deep inner change, achieved in groups in the here-and-now 'horizontal' transaction perhaps more than the 'vertical' process of recalling the emotionally significant past.

In this way, the severe character disorders provide their own conceptual base for group therapy. The incompleteness of the primitive object relations and the anxieties of the self typical of these dysfunctional personality states parallel and converge with the boundary diffusion and regression of the early group matrix and phases so that the group system interpenetrates with the personal dilemmas of the members in such a way that group and individual transference meet. Nonetheless, the therapeutic 'cross-over' between individual and group is not easily achieved. The members cannot simply become 'victims' of the group regression but must acquire the ability to feel, introspect about, and internalize the group experience as a powerful shift in their own self and object representations, their inner and personal world. Internalization through active mastery is what gives the group experience 'meaning,' and is achieved through observing, mirroring, and working through in the interactive/interpersonal plane. The crossover between inner and outer, between the individual members' incompleteness and strivings expressed in their mutual transferences, and the outer interplay of group dynamic forces which 're-present' them, is a conceptual basis of group psychotherapeutic technique utilizing a combined systems and object relations approach.

The group system as a therapeutic tool

The organismic/environmental failures of the character disordered patient, conceptualized most broadly as a 'basic fault' (Balint, 1968) in pre-Oedipal development, eventuates diagnostically in borderline and narcissistic disorders as well as in some types of clinical depression, impulse acting-out, perversions, and chemical addictive syndromes, all of which have pre-individuation features. Object relations theory and self psychology define treatment principles and goals for these patients in a way which is compatible with the multiple systems philosophy of group and family therapy and moves between the semi-isolated rigors of couch analysis and the 'battlefield simulation' of group interactions. Several

therapeutic concepts and mechanisms which derive from the theoretical premises of this monograph provide exemplifications of how the group system may impact favorably upon the disturbed, deficient, or distorted elements of the internal systems of the membership. What follows is a discussion of five potential mechanisms whereby the group system may become a therapeutic tool for the resolution of primitive mental disturbances.

1
The repeated group wide oscillation in the here-and-now between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position

In the paranoid-schizoid basic assumptions and primitive externalizing transferences, the opening up of emotional wounds and conflicts recurs, permitting the patient/members to observe and experience their powerful impact and the particular distortions and incompleteness in their own personalities. In the depressive position, consolidation of inner objects can take place, with a gradual and insightful mourning of the loss of old and damaging childhood objects and wishful fixations. Oedipal conflicts can then be worked through in the context of a better inner and outer environment. Both object relations theorists and self psychologists have stressed the therapeutic failures that have resulted from a premature and excessive focus on Oedipal conflicts of impulse versus prohibition in the context of a poorly developed self system. The proper treatment strategy is to work out the relationship between the self and the primary maternal object before resolving triangular and intra-familial transference. *This progression will take place naturally if the therapist follows the normal evolution of the group matrix in which the resolution of primitive externalizations precedes that of whole object transference and resistance.*

2
The maturing of the narcissistic sector of the personality

Although object relations and the development of the self cannot be so easily dichotomized as Kohut believed, it is therapeutically useful to examine mirroring and idealizing transferences in terms of fixations in which the real needs of the self for nurturance and

reflection are split off from the conscious personality and its interactions, resulting in self depletion and compensatory grandiosity and impulsivity. Such transferences develop as a matter of course in group psychotherapy, where self cohesion is endangered by the requirements of grouping and loss of identity and where the therapist comes to substitute as a selfobject for the narcissistic loss of entitlement of being one among many. Further, the 'audience' function of the group acts not only resistively as a sadistic superego element, but also as a mirroring for the self, through the facilitation of a healthy type of exhibitionism and via the awareness of commonality among the members, which strengthens the relationship between the inner, 'true self and the social/interpersonal identity. Finally, the group becomes a place to reflect upon the deeper aspects of ambitions and ideals, particularly in group phases which involve competition and status (phases 3 and 4, chapter 9) and ideals (phases 5 and 6). Ambitions and ideals represent social expressions of the 'bipolar self' (Kohut, 1977, pp. 171–219): the mirroring selfobject (for grandiosity, exhibitionism, etc.) and the idealized parent imago (for admiration and role modeling), so that the analysis of these complementary expressions of social identity provides the group therapist with a lever for working through the damaged narcissistic sector. Most often, such transference will be expressed with respect to the therapist as central figure, but the group can also become overestimated and idealized, as in Bennis and Shepard's 'Enchantment' subphase. There will thus be many opportunities for working through feelings of narcissistic depletion and entitlement, although the full narcissistic transference seldom evolves (and probably ought not to evolve) in group treatment.

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3

The evocation and resolution of pathological
interpersonal relations in the group matrix

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Overly hostile, poorly resolved, symbiotic, or inadequately expressed interpersonal bonds and interactions in group result partly from mutual transference distortions, partly from resistances to change, and partly from deficits of learning which may be the outcome of chronically disturbed family relations in which there is little opportunity to acquire socially appropriate behavior. Most generally, these distorted interactions are best understood as mutual

projective identifications and a flight from the depressive concerns of the self with respect to its object. That is, group members are assigning to and depositing in each other unresolved and painful stimulation and introjects, while at the same time absorbing the harmful introjects of the others. In the group situation, it is expectable that everyone—and not just the actors-out of the conflict —will be implicated in the process due to the field properties of such transactions, namely that the pathological interaction both creates and reflects a disturbance in the entire social system.

It is in such transactions that the 'classical' psychoanalyst finds a hopeless enmeshment of personalities against which he raises the clarion call of contamination and the necessity for a neutral analyst as the only appropriate measure of the transference: individual psychotherapy *in* the group. As noted earlier (chapter 2) Langs (1976a) recognized the ubiquity of mutual projections in even the best conducted psychoanalysis. He proposed a methodology for clarifying and resolving these interative projective identifications. Such a method operates on the communication process and the therapeutic frame and contract. One may perhaps adapt Langs' methodology to the group context in the following way:

Observing a distorted interaction in the group, the therapist first examines his own countertransference and attempts to see what effect his responses may have had on the therapeutic frame which he then translates into issues for the group. Clarifying the 'frame' of therapy enables the group to work out its unconscious responses to these events. Secondly, the therapist and group focus specifically on the details of the interaction, with each member beginning to clarify his own role in the process of projective identification. The members then explore their personal fantasies and historical object relations with respect to the interaction, and, finally, the membership explores the group-*qua*group significance of the experience, linking it to the group's history and evolution.

> In an outpatient men's therapy group, the focal conflict became individuation versus enmeshment and symbiosis. It was as if each member had an overprotective, intrusive significant other who prevented him from establishing self esteem and phallic potency. The members complained vociferously and repeatedly about their family's inability to let them grow up, but then began to attack each other in a very critical way. The therapist noticed that he was

experiencing a countertransference difficulty, since he was beginning to join the group in the orgy of criticism. He then said to the group that some of their devaluation of each other may have come from the judgemental qualities of their parents and teachers. He said that perhaps he, too, had been judgemental, and that the group ought to step back and look at what they were doing to each other.

One member then volunteered that on that very day, he had to decide whether to take care of his ailing grandmother or do some personal chores of an important nature. His mother insisted that he do the former, even though others might have done so. The patient's role as family caretaker was well established, and he once again submitted to his mother's demand. Other members came up with similar examples of struggles to individuate.

The membership then focused on group-qua-group issues. Someone inquired why the group was exclusively male. The therapist said that 'coed' (male/female) groups had been tried on the unit and failed. The members said they were hurt and felt mistrusted by being segregated from the women, suggesting a narcissistic injury and a repetition of parental mistrust of their motives. Following this discussion, the group morale and cohesion increased, and group attendance also improved.

This working through procedure, which of course must be repeated throughout the life of the group, facilitates the gradual decontamination of the forces which provoked the mutual projective identifications, removing much of the threat of victimization and exposure of individuals and clarifying the realistic perceptions of the group members as distinct from their distorted ones. The transference elements which then remain will be relatively uncontaminated repetitions and variations of past experience, and the overall group analysis will have personal meaning to each of the members and encourage the group to try new behaviors. Facilitating this process, which brings out themes and variations in the various systems and locations of the group makes the Foulkesian term 'conductor' (Foulkes, 1964, pp. 54ff) a very apt and well-deserved one for the therapist, since he must coordinate and integrate diverse persons and processes into a coherent whole in the same way that the orchestra director creates a unified 'instrument' out of a large group of musicians.

4

The evolution of a transitional space and object in group therapy

With the notable exception of Foulkes' concept of a communications matrix which evolves from simpler to more complex forms, surprisingly little has been said on how to exploit the obvious: that the members become increasingly familiar with each other (and therefore have greater access to each others' inner phantasy life and patterns of responding) and that *a transitional object is being constructed in the group through its accumulated interactions*. The awareness that 'one never steps in the same group twice' makes more crucial the timing of interventions. Groups have a historicity that is more intense than the psychoanalytic dyad, and opportunities for change which exist early in group formation may not come up again, while, conversely, later developments may allow for therapeutic work not possible in the earlier stages.

James (1980b) noted that a transitional object evolves in the therapy group in the 'space between' the members, specifically in their communication process. This space and object have a definite form, comparable perhaps to that of a novel which results from the combining of words and sentences. This form and its inner content are then 'treatable' in a way which applies to the total experience of the members in the group process. The creation of the narrative form occurs through the 'squiggle game' process of group association and represents a fantasy production which nonetheless is part of the group reality (cf. chapter 10). As previously mentioned it is a type of object which develops into a symbolic and mythic system which then pervades the group as a cultural medium.

As the transitional space, object and narrative evolve, defects in the ability of some members to utilize them as a medium of security and self expression may emerge. Certain patients, for instance, may not be able to derive comfort from any object but the therapist. They cannot utilize an intermediate non-human object (nor a transpersonal one) to maintain object constancy and self esteem. Others may concretize the object, experiencing de-animation and de-realization due to a failure to hold the object at a safe emotional distance. Those who need to disavow responsibility for their impulses and actions may attribute the need for the transitional object to everyone but themselves (an inability to have a 'not-me possession').

For example, in one group, the members agreed after several weeks' discussion to change the fee structure. A patient nevertheless insisted that the therapist had autocratically forced the decision, effectively denying that the membership, including himself, had conceded the new financial reality. He was self deceived because could not put the group validation process between himself and the therapist and reacted instead in a paranoid and accusatory way. The analysis of each member's relationship to an object such as money helps him or her subsequently to utilize their transitional space/object for emotional support, imaginative productions, and group decision-making. For example, the above patient eventually learned to use the fee as a structure which provided a sense of dependable consistency and autonomy.

A.Green (1978), influenced by the work of Winnicott, used the phrase, 'the object in the setting' to refer to what evolves in the mutual communication between patient and analyst. Bion developed the concept of the 'psychoanalytic object,' by which he meant those aspects of experience and action which have to do with psychic reality and are therefore evocative, deep, and in process of change (Grinberg, Sor, and de Bianchedi (1977, p. 105). In group psychotherapy, the transitional object becomes such an 'analytic object' when, through the work of group association and interpretation, it moves closer to the deeper layers of the group transference and thus, by a further interpretation, underlies and clarifies the unconscious meaning of the group's activity and verbalizations. The analytic object in the group may be its mythology, a patient's dream, a transference figure such as the therapist, or the group-as-a-whole. In a way, the work of group psychotherapy consists in locating these 'objects' and deciphering their significance. When a therapy group is able to make and gain insight into its own analytic objects, it has much less need for a therapist to be present as an interpreter: it has introjected his interpretative functions to effectively decipher its own analyzable productions. Therapy becomes 'psychotherapy *by* the group.'

5
Holding, containing, and mirroring functions

It was noted earlier that group therapy, in contrast to psychoanalysis, has always been considered a supportive psychological medium similar to the family unit. It holds the patient and fosters his development by providing him with a secure base. One is reminded of the way in which dolphins will raise a sick one to the surface for air. In a well-functioning therapy group, this helping function occurs spontaneously and without much assistance from the therapist. All the members grow in self esteem and mastery as a result of the adequate performance of this cooperative human act. Object relations theory and self psychology do not change these functions; rather they allow the alert therapist to utilize them more effectively. The goal is for the group to perform these helping functions in a way which facilitates rather than interferes with insight into the unconscious. The group should not become overly preoccupied with 'rescuing' its membership nor change the therapy contract from its stance of self study. At the same time, a remark attributed to Freud concerning the rule of abstinence in psychoanalysis, 'For fear of giving too much, we may give too little,' is especially pertinent to group treatment. A therapist who is too opaque and distant can seriously interfere with the group process and its curative value.

The following is a tentative formulation of the holding and mirroring functions in group psychotherapy.

The most fundamental 'holding' done by a group is a high degree of responsiveness and 'in-tunedness' among the membership, a mutual empathy and 'trial identification' that is initially an introjection of these qualities in the therapist and increasingly relies on the inner states of the members themselves. Such responsiveness creates a grown-up version of what Brazelton and Als (1979, pp. 356, 367) called a 'cybernetic envelope' in the mother/infant dyad. The group equivalent of this feedback envelope is the interactive matrix, consisting in a series of synchronous intermember behaviors which are able to contain mutual projective identifications. The result is the development of a 'tolerance' among the members for each other's painful, ego dystonic, and disavowed features.

Within such a systems envelope, the real self of each member is fueled, integrated, and validated by the empathic responses of the others: the group mirroring process. Dissonant and conflicted

elements in the self system of each member begin to appear as 'figure' within the 'ground' of this reciprocity envelope, much as mother and infant may respond with difficulty to changes and abnormalities in each other. This is how each member's deeper pathology emerges as a group systemic pattern. The processes which are not easily mirrored stand out in the group matrix and, ideally, cause the latter to 'stretch' to accommodate the pathological elements conceptually and emotionally, forming a maternal 'net' for the sicker projections and ego defects.

If the group and therapist allow it, the reciprocity envelope and containing function will become increasingly flexible and playful, i.e. the unmetabolized projective identifications of the members (parts of themselves which they cannot yet tolerate) will become contained in the transitional space of role structure, mythological group fantasy, rituals, and a variety of group projects. The result is a powerful network of experiences which transform and reintegrate individual difficulties in the group context. One of the technical exploitations of this process is psychodrama (Moreno, 1953, 1954), which includes strategically placing group members in roles of parts of the self and object worlds of the protagonist, for example, his 'alter ego.'

To summarize, this section has discussed some of the ways in which psychoanalytic group psychotherapy treats incompleteness and developmental failure in patients who have problems of separation and individuation from the primary maternal object. A 'goodness of fit' exists between the group regression and the primitive transferences of such patients. The skilled psychotherapist can exploit a variety of systems and subsystems to bring together the group-qua-group process with the inner emotional worlds of each patient's core personality and psychopathology.

The role of the psychotherapist(s)

Both object relations and group theory contain formulations about the role of the therapist in the treatment process (which may vary among authors, are subject to interpretation, and may be self contradictory in some respects). In the following discussion it is assumed that the group therapist follows the rules of the psychoanalytic method. He maintains a position of evenly hovering attention, abstains from physical contact with group members, eschews outside relationships with them, and communicates openly,

not covertly, and only with words and gestures (not actions). He provides a minimum of structure for the group. The variation in the therapist's position *vis-à-vis* the group and its members occurs within these guidelines. Those who utilize non-psychoanalytic interventions and approaches have a greater flexibility of action (they can hug, attack, manipulate, share their own difficulties with patients, meet with them outside the group, and so on) which allows them more directly to create changes in systems boundaries and activity. Strategic approaches to treatment often utilize paradox and 'forced choice' to modify interpersonal systems (Haley, 1963). Although psychoanalytic technique is more restrictive, the therapist may still influence self and social systems through the nature of his interpretations, his focus on defense and resistance or unconscious phantasy, his emotional availability during times of regression and conflict, his tone of voice and cognitive style, etc. His goal always is to facilitate insight and freedom of choice, so that he does not make interventions which interfere with these internalizations. Bion, for example, stated that the mind needs truth as much as the body needs food. It should be added that truth, like food, has to be gradually digested: there is no substitute for tact and proper timing of interventions.

The use of two or more cotherapists is a current trend in group and family therapy and establishes the therapists as a subgroup. As such, cotherapists at times adopt roles which reflect countertransference difficulties between them. For instance, instead of remaining neutral observers, one of the cotherapists may adopt a 'maternal' nurturing stance and the other that of 'paternal' authority, simulating a parental couple. For a period of time, this familial pattern may facilitate emotional support and the transference of family dynamics into the group. However, it may eventuate in collusive resistances, and the best role structure of cotherapists is to offer their knowledge, holding, intuition, and skill as multiple vertices from which to view the group and its members. The proper role division is of functions, so that when one therapist is facilitating, the other may observe and experience, etc.

One recent development in group psychotherapy has been that the therapist has come increasingly to exercise dual roles as a psychotherapist and group facilitator. The latter role emerged from Tavistock conferences and T-group experiences which enabled many therapists to learn how to clarify intra- and inter-group conflict and promote the optimal development of the group matrix

and the intensity of the members' personal growth experiences within it. Group relations training ideally helps the therapist to manage and 'de-bug' the group systems when they are overly conflicted or fixated in the basic assumptions and the early stages of group evolution. To what extent the individual patient benefits from these group facilitating interventions has never been clear. There may be a 'spin-off effect' in which the improved group relations correct or modify pathological internalized object relations. Perhaps group facilitation serves as well to establish a group milieu which supports therapy technique and objectives, but in this process the therapist may change roles in a way that subtly avoids the basic work of understanding the patient's unconscious, the origins of his difficulties, and the contemporary sources of symptoms and psychic pain.

Countertransference issues in group psychotherapy of borderline and narcissistic personality disorders

When the patient's intrapsychic conflicts are relatively well contained by a healthy ego, the therapist's untoward or unconscious reactions to him are usually attributable to a conflict in the therapist. The latter then needs to work out his inner difficulty in order that the therapy may proceed satisfactorily. With patients who have a more primitive personality configuration, however, disruptive elements in their personality may, through a variety of forms of externalization, 'attack' the adaptive ego of the therapist, who is apt, therefore, to experience a degree of emotional distress virtually as a matter of course. Being the continual object of hostility, as may occur in the treatment of some borderline patients, or becoming for the narcissistic personality an extension of the self who serves only the patient's self-aggrandizement and showmanship, are disturbing experiences. Winnicott (1949), as noted in chapter 3, termed such reactions 'objective countertransference.' Kernberg (1975, p. 49) used the phrase 'totalistic countertransference' to refer to the sum total of the therapist's reactions to the patient, including both the conflicted and ego-adaptive components. Some authors (e.g. Glover, 1955; Wurmser, 1984) prefer the conventional and more limited definition of countertransference that includes only unconscious conflictual reactions of the therapist, with the realistic

responses included under the heading of the interpersonal relationship.

In group treatment, especially of the aforementioned character disorders, the primitive transferences of patients combine with the more basic assumptions and other group-*qua*-group transference and also the subtle but powerful boundary and social significance of treating people in groups to provoke enormous countertransferential pressures. Some countertransference is, in fact, masked by its being socially approved by the group or the institutional context. For example, if basic assumption dependency is operative in group, the therapist may join the assumption by allowing the group to be over-reliant on him for suggestions and nurturance. The group therapist, not incidentally, must notice when he becomes complacent as well as conflicted.

The following model for monitoring countertransference is proposed for group work with character disordered individuals. (In the present opinion, the role of the supervisor is to point out countertransference difficulties to the therapist but not to resolve them, which ought to be done through the self analysis or prophylactic psychotherapy of the therapist.)

In general, the therapist should first distinguish whether the primary *sources* of his reactions are in the group or in himself (the realistic versus the inner conflict dimension). For example, if the patient is chronically disruptive by becoming hostile and provocative in the group, then the therapist's annoyance results primarily from an outside stimulus, but if the group is productively exploring its hostilities, then the therapist's distress has an unconscious source in himself. There are many events going on concurrently in a group session, and it is easy to misattribute the causes of one's reactions. The following vignette illustrates:

A female counselor in training was coleading an outpatient group of addicted patients. One of the patients, a manipulative and seductive male, made some remarks about how attractive and expensive her jewelry looked. The counselor properly contained her anxiety until after the group, when she approached her supervisor to discuss the matter. Her initial reaction was a fear of robbery and sexual assault (a partially realistic and partly internal countertransference to a patient putting pressure on her). Pursuing the problem further, however, showed that the group-as-a-whole had

reacted to the genuinely nurturing qualities of the counselor with a renewed hope and trust. The counselor conversely feared that she was being *too* nurturing. Thus she was reacting to (a) her newness at the task and (b) the dependency needs of the entire group. In supervision, she was able to learn the immediate causes of her anxious feelings, and by interpreting the situation to the group as a 'need/fear dilemma' of nurturance (rather than Oedipal seduction and aggression), she prevented a severe narcissistic injury to the patient and facilitated the movement of the group towards insight into their problems centered around maternal introjections.

Character disordered individuals frequently express depen dency problems through aggression and sexuality. The experience by the therapist of several profoundly needy patients at once may be overwhelming. Quickly repressed, the induced emotions may resurface as a tendency towards stereotyping and scapegoating patients.

Hannah (1984) showed how institutional features and treatment urgencies of the in-patient setting may collide with therapist countertransference reactions, leading to poorly timed and improper interventions which are rationalized as confrontive and supportive techniques.

The sorting out of countertransference can do more to facilitate group process and the successful group treatment of difficult cases than virtually any other activity of the therapist. This is true on account of his being at the vertex of so many 'containment' problems of the group: in addition to his psychotherapy duties, the group therapist is in effect the manager of a small department within an organization. As the polysystemic countertransference is worked through, hidden assumptions and agendas of the therapist become clear to him, and he becomes as a result a better observer and healer.

Summary and future directions

The perspective offered here requires considerable future work to explore its significance for particular types of pathology and strategies of group psychotherapy, providing an agenda for group psychotherapy and research: *to discover the ways in which multiple systems in the group context*, systems which go far beyond the

notion of climate or emotionality to a structural and organizational view of every level in the 'systems hierarchy', *can become therapeutic 'levers' to modify pathological narcissism and object relations*. One must agree with Foulkes that the therapist must go beyond interpretation of individual pathology to become a 'conductor' of the group.

Following the theoretical model propounded in parts 2 and 3 of this work, the therapist must learn to think *interactively* and *systemically* about the problems which each patient brings into the group and about the ongoing processes of the group. At the same time, the lessons of the failures of group-as-a-whole interpretations (Kibel and Stein, 1981) serve as a reminder that each patient has an *inner world* where he imagines, suffers, defends, and adapts to what is going on around him. That world must be deeply and comprehensibly mirrored to him by the group in order for him to grow and change. It is hoped that the Group Analytic Grid and similar multiple systems approaches will serve as a basis for increasing the boundary 'openness' of the therapist to the development of individual and group systems and increase the depth and range of his interpretations and interventions.

One of the truly magnificent features of the unstructured group situation is its phasic and predictable evolution from an undifferentiated and primitive state to a mature group. A worthy challenge for group psychotherapy is to document and systematize the ways in which group phases and boundary conditions, which have already been investigated extensively by group dynamicists (cf. chapter 9), contribute to the therapeutic potential of the group situation. The theory of treatment and the theory of group development represent an important area of convergence in future work.

Chapter 12
Self-object differentiation:
'act by act' analysis of a large group interaction

It has been the position of this work that the depth, subtlety and sophistication of object relations and self-psychology models of group yield a clearer theoretical and clinical picture of group dynamics and development. The implication for research is likewise the same: the utilization of these theoretical frames should provide a basis for new research hypotheses and methodological approaches. This chapter reports, in an abbreviated version, the dissertation research, findings and discussion of one of the authors (cf. Ashbach, C.J. 'Self-social matrix-Ashbach group version investigation of object relations in a Tavistock conference large group'. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1986).

Context and purpose

The application of object-relations theory to the study of groups and social systems has found a receptive and enthusiastic audience with those who have made large groups, and institutions their focus. Building upon the work of Bion (1959), Jaques (1955), Turquet (1969) and most importantly Rice (1965) have utilized object-relations theory, and particularly the viewpoint of Melaine Klein, as the primary theoretical orientation for their work. The development of the Tavistock Working Conference by A.K.Rice (1965) led to a format and structured setting in which individual, small and large groups, as well as institutional dynamics might be illuminated and studied within a single conference setting.

   It is worth noting that the first psychoanalytic investigation of group dynamics, involved large groups and object relations. Freud's work 'Group psychology and the analysis of the ego' (1921) was actually entitled, in German, *Massen psychologie*

und ich Analyse, that is, Mass psychology and the analysis of the ego. In that work Freud postulated the existence of a gradient within the ego, i.e., the ego-ideal (the superego), as necessary to explain the dynamics of group life and by implication, the activities of large groups. Specifically, he hypothesized the existence of inner-object relations (interactions between the ego and the ego-ideal) as being of fundamental importance and explained more about social dynamics than classic instinct discharge theory could.

Contemporary utilization of object-relations theory and large groups can be seen in the work of Fornari (1975) and his analysis of the war phenomena. His hypothesis attempts to explain the existence of international conflict, and the threat of thermonuclear destruction to the mechanism of projective identification and the externalization of primitive dynamics concerning object loss and guilt. Specifically he states that the condition of international conflict can be understood to arise as a result of the 'paranoid elaboration of mourning', a projective identification into the enemy of the fear of the destructive impulse toward the love object. Thus, the powerful forces of ambivalence toward the love object, in this situation the mother-country, are split, assigned to the out-group, and then massively defended against.

Closer to the focus of the structured large group, the work of Kreeger (1975) has examined such a structured setting from therapeutic, training and political perspectives. His work identified some common dynamics of large groups which include: tendencies toward regressive experience; prevelance of primitive anxieties and defense mechanisms, especially those having to do with splitting and projective processes; the power of the large group by which is meant the amplification of emotion and the intensification of experience; altered states of consciousness attendant to the mobilization of such primitive dynamics and mechanisms, and the unusual demands placed on leadership in such groups. Such leadership demands take the form of primitive forms of idealization and devaluation in the transference, as well as corresponding conditions of primitive countertransference. The necessity of more forceful and direct intervention and the experiences of loneliness were also mentioned.

All such investigations of large groups and collectives have relied on anecdotal, impressionistic or clinical evidence and methods. The verification of theoretical positions or research hypotheses requires some form of quantification, ideally in somewhat controlled conditions. Considering these concerns about large group research

the present study had as its primary goal the application of just such an observational instrument to the study of a Tavistock Model Working Conference large group event for the purposes of: (1) establishing the reliability of an object relations based instrument for the study of large groups. (2) The study sought to clarify the general levels of object relations manifested in such a large group setting. The literature (Rice, Main, Turquet) suggests that primitive object-relations (Levels I, II, and III of the Grid) typify the large group. The application of the instrument allowed for an empirically based test of such a hypothesis. (3) The outcomes of the study provided profiles of the subgroups comprising conference membership. For research purposes the male members, female members and consultants were considered as subgroups. It should be pointed out that no such formal subgroups existed in the actual Conference large-group design. However, the classification of such subgroups allowed for comparisons to be made within and among the various aspects of the large group.

Characteristics of the Tavistock Working Conference

The Tavistock model Working Conference, based upon the design and development of A.K.Rice, focuses on providing participants with opportunities to 'learn about leadership.' (ibid., p. 18). The design and structures of the overall Conference offer members the opportunities to experience the interpersonal and inter-group dimensions and dynamics of institutional life. Small study groups of six to eight members deal with interpersonal issues. Slightly larger inter-groups (of eight to ten members) deal with dynamics occurring between clearly defined institutional subgroups. The large group allows for a setting where from 25 to 100 members come together to experience dynamics of membership in a group where 'face to face relationships are no longer possible.' (ibid., p. 13).

The role of the consultant in the large group is to facilitate the task of learning about the large group as he/she sees fit. Following the description of consultant role in Malan, Balfour, Hood, Shooter (1975), the consultant to the large group adopts a stance similar to that taken by the analyst in individual therapy. Thus, the consultant '…aims to maintain the same emotional distance from the turmoil and conflicts of the patients (here, group members), for the same reasons that apply in psychoanalysis' (p. 304). Such a stance and

technique involve the consultant waiting for the development and articulation of a common group theme, which expresses a dynamic (wish, anxiety or defense) that members hold in unison, and the consultant then '…seeks to make use of interpretations to bring this unconscious feeling into the open' (ibid.).

This technical stance places the group before the individual, methodologically and interpretively and following Bion's (1959) and other's formulations already presented in this work (cf. chapters 2 and 5) constitutes the group-as-a-whole as an emotional-dynamic object (the 'fictive body' of Fornari, cf. this work, chapter 5). Thus the group-qua-group is the 'one' to whom the consultant addresses his/her interventions. The focus in the large group as in individual therapy, is transference interpretation of the unconscious and/or distorted relations with the consultant.

Following Malan et al., we can point out (ibid., p. 1304):

> Insofar as there is such a thing as a 'Tavistock approach,' it probably differs from the 'American approach' in a greater emphasis on the *group* than on the *individual*; and it probably differs from the approach taught by Foulkes in a greater emphasis on therapeutic work through the group transference to the *therapist* (with special reference to negative feelings) rather than through the supportive and therapeutic function of the group situation itself.

The particular Working Conference which provided the basis for the research was a four-day, non residential Conference offered by the Center for Psycho-educational Processes, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa. Four large group events were held, one on each day of the conference. Each was hours in duration. The task of the large group is to enable members to experience dynamics and issues unique to membership in such a group.

A single large group event was video-taped and subjected to an act-by-act analysis utilizing three raters viewing the video-tapes. The membership of the researched large group was comprised of 38 members: 27 females, 7 males and 4 consultants (two male and two female). In addition there were two, non-participant staff observers and one video-operator in the group room during the large-group event.

Conference members chose to attend in response to a mailing. Therefore they self-selected. They were found to be from the
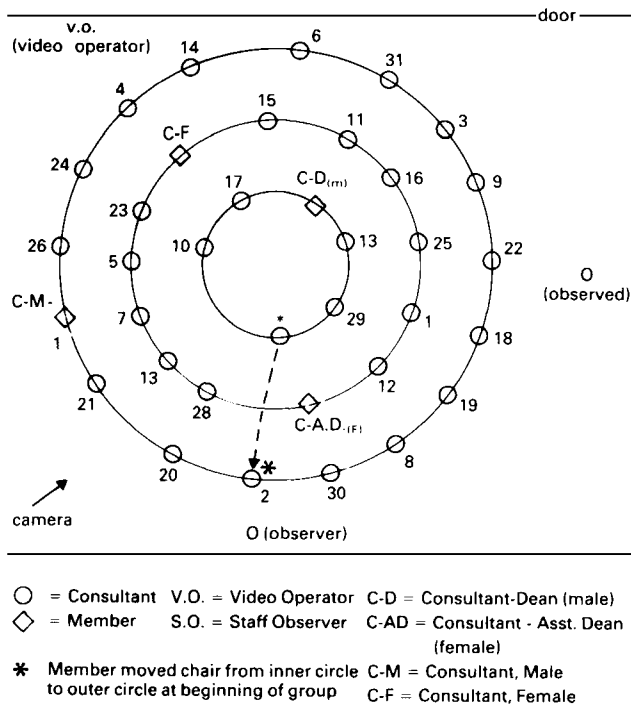
Figure 12.1 Seating arrangement for the large group

helping, education and human service professions. Twenty-three participants, however, had enrolled in the Conference as part of a University course of group and social process. The Dean of the Conference was the instructor in that course. Members generally were from a 'normal' graduate level population. They ranged in age from 22 to 64 years, with a mean age of 33.1 years.

The physical setting in which the group occurred was a university classroom. The seating arrangement for the large group event is depicted in Figure 12.1. Video equipment was visible to all participants, and members signed forms indicating their knowledge of, and permission for, the research aspect of the Conference.

The instrument

The *Self/Social Matrix* (Carrilio, 1978) was a measure originally created as a means of quantifiably assessing patients, in individual psychotherapy, and was developed as an instrument which utilized both object-relations and self-psychology perspectives. The instrument related internal, developmental and structural conditions and aspects, of self and object, and correlated these to external behavioral referents. Raters were used to listen to audio tapes of patient-therapist interactions with the goal of locating the patient along a five-point scale of self and object differentiation. Both *process* (interactional mechanisms and defenses) and *content* (themes, fantasies, etc.) were included in the assessment process. (Cf. this work chapters 3, 4 and 5 on the varying conceptions of self and object and the interplay between them.)

Point '1' (on the Self/Social Differentiation Scale) is the position of 'least differentiation' where self and object are undifferentiated, and where a condition of fusion exists. Such a position would be manifested in the individual through psychotic behavior or ideation. Point '1' activity in a group would be shown in behavior or ideation that was unusually chaotic, panicky, or where extremes of emotion, such as catatonic furor, were manifested. A group at this position does not remain a group, *per se*, for very long. Fight/flight behavior, or the collapse of function seem to be the consequence of regression to such states. We might speculate that a certain minimum level of object relationship is necessary for a group to function.

The progressive differentiation of self from object with subsequent integration of the differentiated aspects is described by movement up the scale. Point '5' being the highest scale point, termed 'differentiated' and manifesting a patient or group capable of coordinating self and object, inner and outer in a manner which balances both demands appropriately. Task and emotionality receive proper emphasis. Unconscious processes exist but are recognized and utilized in a creative fashion for the ultimate ends of work and love. This point is termed 'optimal functioning'.

The original instrument had to be adapted for use in the large group context. Such adaptations involved the simplication of the number of scales, from two to one, and the change of the unit of measure from a subjectively determined 'segment' to an 'act-by-act' analysis. The use of such rater determined segments was judged to

be too great a threat to instrument reliabilty. Correspondingly, act-by-act procedures developed by Mann (1968) and utilized by Gibbard and Hartman (1974) were adapted for this instrument. While based upon object-relations and self-psychological perspectives, each act or event in the group is capable of being judged by operationally defined criteria, and thereby provides, according to Gibbard and Hartman (ibid., p. 156) '…a method that combines psychological depth with the reliability and explicitness of systematic observation'. The adapted instrument was termed the *Self/Social Matrix-Ashbach Group Version*, or *Self/Social Matrix-AGV*.

The overall assessment is that of Self/Social Differentiation. To aid in reaching that total assessment three sub-scales are utilized, and these are: *attribution*, *distance*, and *appropriateness*. Following Carrilio's description (ibid., p. 71) the subscales are defined as follows:

> …differentiation will be measured on three dimensions: attribution, distance, and appropriateness… Attribution refers to the articulation of responsibility for events, and the recognition of the consequences of one's acts. Distance refers to the closeness or isolation which a person can tolerate, and it describes levels of inclusiveness or exclusiveness of others. Appropriateness refers to the coordination between thoughts and feelings and the degree to which thoughts and feelings are coordinated with reality.

The continuum described above for the overall scale of Self/Social Differentiation, where point 1 is least differentiated and point 5 is most differentiated applies, likewise, to the subscales. Raters thus subjected every verbalization and every significant non-verbal behavior, in the entire large-group event, to a judgment involving these criteria. The Self/Social Differentiation scale is related to the Grid levels, though differences exist, and is included there (see Appendix 1) under Interactive (Delta) system, Category 2. Figure 12.2 shows a schematic outline of the levels and the five content categories utilized to formulate a score for each act occurring in the group.

Theoretically, the three subscales can be seen to embody the following elements: *attribution* is a measure of self and object

Self/Social Differentiation	Behavior	Ideation/ fantasy	Anxiety/ emotion	Defenses	Narcissism
Differentiated 5					
Considerably differentiated 4					
Moderately differentiated 3					
Weakly differentiated 2					
Poorly differentiated 1					

Sub-scales:

Attribution
Distance
Appropriateness

Figure 12.2 Schematic representation of Self/Social Matrix categories of content analysis

differentiation as manifested in the ability of the self to discern the origin of an act. Poor attribution indicates a lack of self and object separation, either due to fusion or projective/introjective processes. *Distance* indicates the closeness or separation that the self can sustain in its interaction with the object. This variable emphasizes the spatial dimension and experiential element associated with interaction between interpersonal figures, on the one hand, and between inner objects, on the other. This variable can be understood as being similar to the terms over-personal and counter-personal (Bennis and Shepard, 1956) which manifest disturbances in group member ability to effectively regulate 'space' between self and other.

Appropriateness is a measure of how, and how well, the self manages the relationship between it and the environment, both the other and the non-human context. The regulation of emotional and behavioral responses to environmental stimuli is at question here, and accordingly the focus is on the quality of ego functioning.

To illuminate the use of the subscales, consider a situation in which a group member makes the following statement: 'When you don't smile you ruin the entire group for me.' (This particular statement was made by a member to a large-group consultant.) Following the subscale scheme, we see poor attribution. The self sees the object (consultant) as being the location of the

responsibility for the self experience. Distance is not a manifest aspect of the interaction, but the closeness necessary to see and 'feel' a smile is implicit, it is not well regulated. Appropriateness seems to be the subscale with the poorest manifestation of self and object differentiation. The speaker is requiring the other to take responsibility for feelings resulting from the interaction and to behave in a way that will insure 'desired' feelings. This 'act' would probably be rated a 2.0 or 2.5 depending upon the context of the group, and the preceding events which provided the establishing frame of reference. Thus, the assessment of any act in a group is related to the emotional field or gestalt of the group at the particular moment the act is being scored.

It is not hard to imagine some of the difficulties involved in scoring acts in a large group using this scheme. The question as to whether the member's angry tone was or was not appropriate requires knowledge of the group context and an awareness of interactions that 'framed' the specific act being scored. The assessment of the metaphorical quality of statements, versus their literal sense likewise taxes the rater. Many distinctions required a clinical response from the raters, as well as extensive re-viewing of prior group events to which the specific act under consideration may have referred.

In addition there were a great number of acts to be scored, some 618 in the researched large group. However, the use of multiple raters, their extensive training with video-tapes of similar large groups; the use of pre-test measures to assure a minimum level of accuracy, enable acceptable levels of interscorer agreement to be reached. Concordance, a non-parametric measure of rater agreement was .763 for the three raters. The use of this scoring system is therefore warranted by such a level of interscorer reliability.

Data analysis

Having determined instrument reliability for the study of self and object differentiation in a Tavistock-model Working Conference large-group event, the next tasks were to specify the outcomes of the subgroups on the Self/Social Differentiation measure and specify the profiles of the subgroups, establishing where appropriate significance in the patterns of variance.

Table 12.1 Means, standard deviations and number of acts of subgroups*
on self/social differentiation scale

Group	Mean	SD	N	Difference Between
Male members	2.83	.34	282	
Female members	2.96	.23	274	.13
Membership average	2.90			
Male consultants	2.43	.34	43	
Female consultants	2.54	.37	29	.11
Consultants average	2.48			
Membership – consultants				.42
Group-as-a-whole	2.69			

Note: Scores range 1 through 5 on scale.
*For the sake of this comparison the consultant subgroup has been divided
by sex. For all other comparisons the consultants are considered as one,
homogeneous group.

Table 12.2 Analysis of variance of self/social differentiation means of sub-
groups

Source	df	SS	Mean sqs	F
Between groups	3	13.929	4.643	50.316*
Within groups	624	57.579	.092	
	627	71.508		

* p .0001.

The entire large group was subdivided into three subgroups: male
members, female members and consultants. The means for the level
of Self/Social Differentiation achieved by each subgroup is
presented in Table 12.1.

The question of reliability was raised. Because of the substantial
inequality in cell sizes (males, N=7; females, N=27, consultants, N=4),
a regular ANOVA was not possible so, to establish significance, and
beyond that the reliability of the instrument, further statistical
analysis was indicated. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA, using *a priori*
orthogonal contrast was used to determine within and between
group variance. This technique adjusted for the unequal cell sizes
with weighted assessments of the Self/Social Differentiation scores,
for each subgroup, in each of the 30 segments of the large group.
Table 12.2 reports the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA, with
sources of variation and corresponding f-ration.

Table 12.3 *A priori* contrast coefficients for subgroup distributions

Contrast	t-Value of 2 tailed	df	p
Members vs consultants	10.74	624	p. 001
Males vs females	−3.08	624	p. 002

Table 12.4 Kruskal-Wallis analysis of within group variance of differentiation scores

Source	Chi-square	Significance
Consultants	33.89	p .09
Male members	46.76	p .02*
Female members	55.23	p .002*
Members (both sexes)	40.75	p .072
Group-as-a-whole	72.00	p .0001*

* Significantly varying segments.

Statistically significant differences were found to exist between the subgroups of the large-group event, and were highly significant (F=50.316, p<.0001).

To locate specific differences between subgroups, a contrast coefficient matrix was established to test for the differences between the total membership and consultants (as contrast 1), and between the male member subgroup and the female member subgroup (as contrast 2). Table 12.3 shows those results.

The differences of the means of the subgroups on the Self/ Social Differentiation scale, though very small in actual difference, are highly significant. The adjustment for the unequal cell sizes indicated that the Self/Social Matrix-A instrument is quite reliable and able to detect significant differences among sub-groups of a large group.

The question of within group variance was addressed through the use of a Kruskal-Wallis one-way ANOVA. The test measured the shift, in the Differentiation of each subgroup, during the entire 30 segments of the large group event.

The test measured the shift of differentiation scores, segment by segment, in relation to a median point. Significance of this measure indicates the instrument's sensitivity to shifts within subgroups. Table 12.4 reveals those findings.

Table 12.5 Levels of self/social differentiation, diagnostic categories and cut-off scores by level

Level	Description	Cut-off scores
5	Optimal functioning/no disorder	4.2 – 5.0
4	Non-neurotic/conflicted	3.51 – 4.1
3	Neurotic	2.91 – 3.5
2	Borderline	2.31 – 2.9
1	Psychotic	1.0 – 2.3

The analysis shows that the male members, female members, and the group-as-a-whole had substantial and significant variances over the life of the group. The consultant group did not, and this seems to be in agreement with the similarity of role intervention style and dynamic perspective taken by the consultants in addressing the large group.

A series of Wilcoxon tests of signed ranks was then performed on the means of the subgroups to establish the locations, or points, where statistically significant changes in Self/Social Differentiation occurred. These tests revealed that significant segments occurred as follows: for the consultants segments 22 & 23. For the female members segments 1 & 2, 3 & 4, and 13 & 14. For the male members segments 4 & 5, 8 & 9, 10 & 11, 19 & 20, 20 & 21, and 21 & 22. An inspection of the transcript revealed three pairs of segments that seemed to have an inherent meaning and pointed to detectable changes in the overall group experience. These were segments: 4 & 5, 13 & 14, and 21 & 22. The meaning of these shifts is discussed in the *History of the Group* which follows.

Having determined the data produced by the application of the Self/Social Matrix-A instrument to the study of Tavistock model large group event, it is worth our while to reflect on the implications of the data. To help make such reflections more experience near and meaningful, a table of findings taken from the original research (ibid., p. 103) establishing the instrument has been supplied in Table 12.5.

In reviewing the means achieved by the subgroups on the Self/Social Matrix-A (and presented in Table 12.1) the female subgroup had the highest level of Self/Social Differentiation with a mean score of 2.96. This places that group slightly below the midpoint of the scale, point 3: Moderately Differentiated. The female members of the

large group clearly had the capacity to test reality and could distinguish self and other and coordinate them with a substantial degree of appropriateness. Where the impact of conflict and anxiety is most evident is in the rigid and stereotyped manner in which the female members communicate. Their responses tend to move away from the 'here and now' reality and rely more on role expectations or pre-set agendas.

When stuck with the group's silence, two female members paired and began speaking about the task of the group in a rote fashion, taken directly from the description of the Conference. The here and now context of silence, resistance and fear was passed over in favor of trying to get 'on task', whatever that really was. Constrictions in the range and variety of responses and experiences were noticeable.

The male member subgroup achieved a mean differentiation score of 2.83. Again, though small in actual terms, the difference between the female group and the consultant group was quite significant. The male subgroup was operating in the Weakly Differentiated level. Comparing their score to the Diagnostic Table 12.5 the male members are acting like borderline patients do in individual psychotherapy. There is self and object differentiation, but the focus on the differentiation tends toward extremes, either in emphasis on self or object, or in the more regressed experience of merging the two. Articulation tends to be global and stereotyped, and self or other may be 'objectified' with a loss of who may be the agent in the interaction. This is seen in such statements, by a male, as, '…the men suffer greatly in this group'.

The issues of self-definition, and self-boundary maintenance became more an issue in a group, such as the male subgroup. 'What' the group is trying to accomplish (task behavior) is subverted by 'who' the subgroup members feel they are in the overall context of the large group. In Bion's terms basic assumption behavior subverts task in favor of an over-riding protomental need: dependency, sexuality or fight/flight.

Concerning the mean Differentiation score of the consultant group it needs to be re-stated that the score assessed for the consultants' interventions and interpretations reflected their role and stance as speaking to the group-as-a-whole as if it were a single, psychological object. The average was then to be seen as the dynamic point, or level, the consultants were speaking *to*. The consultant subgroup average was 2.48, and this mean score was significantly below both the means of the male and female member

subgroups. Such a score places the consultants as focusing their material, following the cut-off scores in Table 12.5, at 'borderline' material, that was, however, at the psychotic core, instead of the neurotic border, in the case of the males, or at the neurotic level, in the case of the female subgroup.

The average score for the 'group-as-a-whole' is the average of the means of all subgroups. This score was 2.69 and places the group-as-a-whole in the mid-range of the borderline category, and *above* the Self/Social Differentiation level of the consultant subgroup! Thus, the consultants were intervening at a level below the average level of the group.

Figure 12.3 (a, b, and c) gives depictions of general descriptive trends of the Self/Social Differentiation findings. These *Box and Whisker* (Tukey, 1975) plots can be viewed as a method of tracing, graphically, dispersons in Self/Social Differentiation, in each subgroup for the entire 90 minutes of the large group. The figures should be interpreted in the following ways:

1 The size of the box delimits the middle 50 percent of the object-relating responses during a single segment. That is, those which occurred within the 25th (lower limit) to the 75th (upper limit) percentile of the scale for all responses for that particular segment. Therefore, the size of the box permits one to evaluate the typical amount of dispersion in object-relating.
2 The horizontal line represents the median level of objectrelating for all subjects within a segment. It indicates the mid-point of object-relating and establishes the centre of the scale for the segment.
3 The whiskers, i.e., the vertical lines, describe the entire range of differentiation. The point delimiting the ends of the whiskers give the highest and lowest Self/Social Differentiation responses scored during a single segment.

By comparing medians over time, one can see how the average level of differentiation shifted. By comparing the relative depth of the boxes one can evaluate the comparative degree of clustering which occurred around the median, i.e. whether relatively greater or fewer numbers of responses approximated the average level of differentiation. This becomes clearer when one notes that during the 90 minutes of large group, the depth of the box may expand away from the median or shrink completely into it. Thus, 50
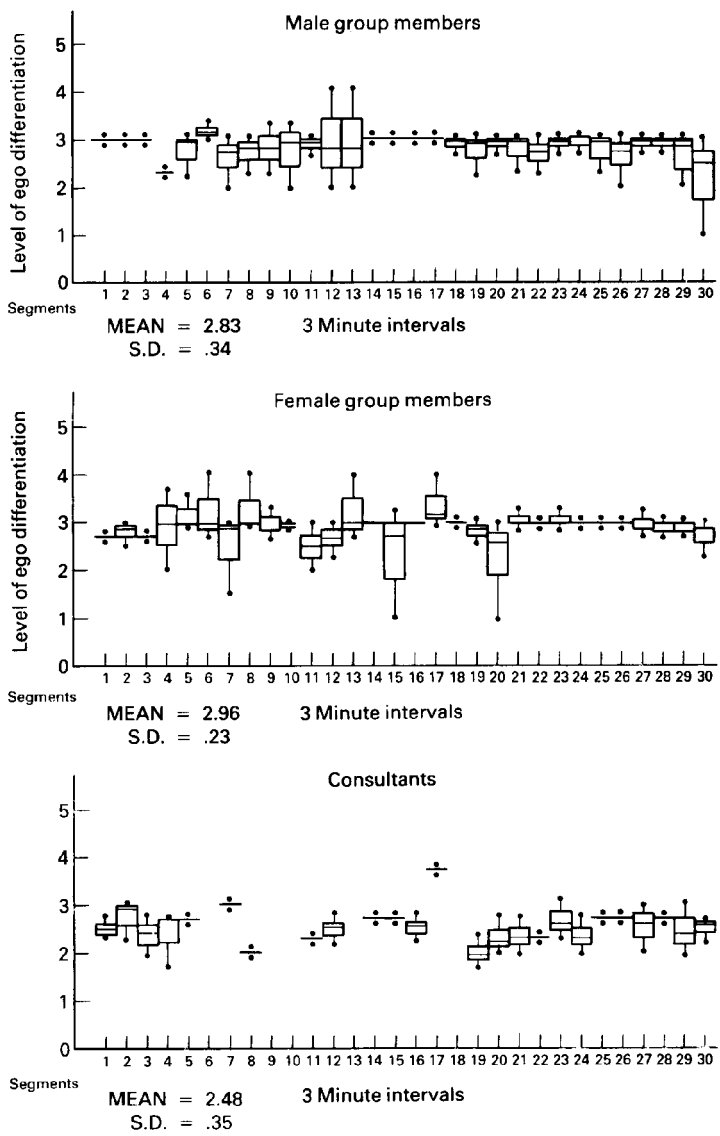
Figure 12.3

percent of the group may respond in a way that is completely consistent with average, or is very variable. By comparing the

lengths of the whiskers one can estimate how the degree of Self/ Social Differentiation shifted during the entire large group event.

An examination of the plots points to greater variation in the level of differentiation for the female subgroup, than for either the male or consultant subgroups. Though significantly different, the amount of variation between the female and male subgroups is small. The number of acts scored for the female subgroups was 274. The number of acts scored for the male subgroups was 282! The male members of the large group spoke four times more often than the female members, on average. This may indicate the expression of the male members' anxiety through a defensive use of group interactions. The consultants were scored with 69 acts. The consultant profile showed a much greater density and compression in their box and whisker plots. This would seem to be consistent with a consultant stance and role that addressed similar dynamics, generally very deep or primitive, in a similar style, impersonally, in a metaphorically elaborated fashion. The question might be asked if the consultants had showed more variation in their focus would the group have followed suit?

The size of the female subgroup, with 27 members, seems to suggest that a greater number made it easier for members to share in the process of revelation, exploration and insight which lead to a greater range of differentiation responses. Role differentiation is more likely in a subgroup where enough members are available to share the 'work' of the group.

History of the group

An inspection of the box and whisker plots and a reading of the transcript of the large-group interactions suggested a division of the group into four different phases, or periods of common focus. These were: phase 1 (segments 1 through 4), phase 2 (5 through 13), phase 3 (14 through 21) and phase 4 (22 through 30).

In the first phase the passivity and dependence of the membership seemed most pronounced. They waited for the consultants to take charge and direct the experience in wished for ways. To a substantial extent this occurred for the consultants were very active, and their statements comprised 30 per cent of the group acts in this first phase.

Phase 1 ended with more and more periods of silence, one almost a minute and a half in duration. In phase 2, the group members

seemed to realize that the consultants were not going to lead as they wanted, and in response to this realization the members, especially the males, resorted to interacting in a most quarrelsome and disputatious manner. Pairs were used (both homosexual and heterosexual) to express the frustrations, needs and dynamics besetting and afflicting the membership. The consultants seemed to disappear as real, emotional figures. At one point they were silent for almost ten minutes.

The group seemed to create its own objects within itself. As Freud pointed out in 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), a key element in understanding depression is the identification of the ego with the missing object. He said, 'The shadow of the object falls across the ego.' In the large group it might be said that the 'shadow' of the consultants fell across the group and this occurred as the group introjected the missing consultant objects, and constituted them within the membership. The fighting, reproachfulness and bickering in the group throughout this second phase seems to resemble the narcissistic relations that the depressive has with his/herself.

An over-personal male continually searched the group for a warm, caring and knowable object, generally a woman. Others attacked this vulnerable and exposed individual (for expressing the group's secret self, i.e. needy, confused, angry, whiny, and helpless). He became the scapegoat-container for the group-as-a-whole's 'naked vulnerability'. On the other hand a haughty, narcissistic male continually offered himself as the wise, knowing, grandiose self that some of the membership thought they must be in order to survive.

Member-to-member interactions were erratic, competitive and abrupt. Members seemed not to be able to tolerate the existence of each other while they were waiting for the missing object of the consultant(s) to materialize. Self and object differentiation was especially problematic during this phase.

The third phase began with a female member correctly identifying the dynamic of the missing object (the Dean of the Conference) as central to the group's problem. This upset the group and there ensued a period of hypomanic joking and laughter. Consultant interventions during this time focused on the sexual and aggressive emotional loadings of the unconscious group dynamics. At the end of the third phase, the same female member identified the complaining of the narcissistic male as reflecting his need for mothering, and caretaking. The group became agitated, and as phase 4 began there ensued another series of squabbling and

bickering within pairs as a way of containing the agitation and anxiety associated with seeing the needy and exposed group-self.

Other female members continued to explore the idea of the missing object and this led to more individuated and differentiated responses. As this occurred more anger and depression was consciously articulated and experienced especially by the females. The group at this point was moving toward the end of the event, and the narcissistic male attempted to devalue the experience by saying all this 'mommy and daddy stuff is just so much shit.'

Interview data

In order to gain more impressionistic material from the Conference participants, an interview process was done. One week after the end of the Working Conference seven members were chosen, at random, from those members attending the University course offered in conjunction with the Conference. The members, six females and one male, were interviewed by the Conference researcher. These interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. To the goal of obtaining more emotionally ladened material, some questions probed for more affective or regressive material. Selected excerpts of those interviews are reported below.

Researcher (R):   In thinking about the large group experience, do any associations in literature, film, drama, etc., come to mind?

Member (M), No.1 (female): Jews and the Holocaust. That was a newspaper headline today. I wondered if anything like that could happen here.

R: What thoughts do you have about the consultants?

M No. 2 (female): I thought the consultants' interventions were specifically designed to get the members to do something. They weren't non-affective, or observations, on what was going on but attempts to get the group to do something, or go in a direction.

R: Associations to the movement in the large group?

M No. 2:	When everyone was madly moving around, I thought of a giant chess game, with people moving in certain positions, or even without moving, lining themselves up in certain positions.
R:	Any other associations for things you wished you said?
M No. 2:	Yeah, I felt a couple people were using the conference for their own, kinda, therapeutic session, and I felt embarrassed for them. I felt anxious when they spoke, but I felt that the group was taking care of them, and that the staff would come in and intervene when the tension got too intense.
R:	Tell me about your thoughts or feelings.
M No. 3 (female):	I was very, very anxious for the first couple of days, but by the third day I felt that there wasn't a larger prize 'to get on board for'. I almost went *nuts* trying to create my own 'pay-off'.
R:	Literary associations?
M No. 3:	Ah, David Copperfield. I thought of this afterwards. When he was going to meet the board of the orphanage, they were like pieces of wood. I thought the consultants, ah, something like Nazism. It was like, 'Here we're going to work out the final solution, the Holocaust.' When one consultant sat on her hands, I thought 'now she has her weapons out of sight.'
R:	Any fears about your health or safety?
M No. 3:	Well, I thought if I didn't go crazy maybe I'd get some psychosomatic thing, and maybe have a heart-attack.

R: Any associations, dramatic, literary, fairy tales?

M No. 4 (female):   I thought about *Ben-Hur*, and the chariot race and the challenges, and the sparring back and forth. It's interesting that you should ask about that, 'cause I had that thought at one point in the large group.

Also, I thought about Rapunsel. Ya know, '*Rapunsel* let down your hair.' It'd be like letting it out and thereby reaching a point that's further away from you and finally you get to the ground or get a path back up to you. I also thought of witches and the cauldron, 'Bubble, bubble....'

R: If you could 'paint the group a color,' what'd it be?

M No. 5 (male):   Red, I guess. It's my favorite color, and maybe it signifies violence. There was violence in the group, I guess, but not 'red' violence, a softer color maybe, perhaps an orange.

R: How old did you feel in the group?

M No. 5:   I felt like a teenager, 15 maybe.

R: How real were people to you.

M No. 5:   I thought some were 'put-ons', not showing their real personalities, just putting something out there. I felt others were talking and throwing somebody's feelings out there, not necessarily theirs.

R: You said you observed non-vebal behavior?

M No. 5:   Yes. At one point, not in the large group, a girl (sic) said to me: 'What are you a Christ figure?' I was hanging on the coat hooks, stretched out, and with my beard and everything, I thought maybe she was right.

Key themes in the vignettes presented here include:

1 Fears of *destruction and sadistic attack*. This is seen in the references to the 'holocaust' and 'nazism'.
2 Associations to *martyrdom, slavery, and battle*. The *Ben-Hur* reference points to the conflicted nature of the 'oppressed'. The crucifixion and Christ image.
3 *Abandonment*. The David Copperfield image, the orphanage, the isolation of Rapunsel.
4 *Anger*. The color 'red'.
5 *Psychological problems*. The reference to people using the conference for 'therapy'.
6 Regressive trends. Feeling '15', younger.

Discussion

The research established the reliability of the instrument, the *Self/ Social Matrix-AGV*, for the study of object-relations of the large group, with a concordance value (a non-parametric measure of inter-rater agreement) of .763. Further, the instrument was able to generate statistically significant means and profiles of the subgroups constituting the large group event. Scores for the subgroups (on a five point scale) were: females 2.96, males 2.84, group-as-a-whole 2. 69, and consultants 2.48. All mean differences were significant. In addition to this data, a qualitative analysis of the large group suggested the existence of four phases of group interaction.

The role of the consultants

In order to place the research results in a broader context one needs to include the impact of the role and style of the consultants of the Tavistock model large group event. The consultants established a neutral and at times impersonal stance with regards to their interventions. As has been stated they regarded the group-*qua*-group, not the individual members, to be the dynamic object which they were addressing, and with whom they had formed an object relationship. This emphasis, and the Sphinx-like attitude implied in the highly metaphorical and abstract interpretive style, led to a bias toward member-leader interactions, and the frustration of a direct object-tie with the consultants. This added to the regressive forces already at work within the large group. Kibel and Stein (1981) have

commented on a similar dynamic in their discussion of the impact of group-as-a-whole interventions (p. 421): 'Relationships and interactions within the group receed from a level of mature object choice to a series of regressive identifications with a narcissistically invested, idealized leader.'

Main (1975) has previously cautioned against 'Nobel Prize' type interventions from consultants because they establish a model of omnipotent grandiosity as a norm for communicating and relating. Such conditions associated with the style, role and attitude of consultants seemed to increase the already intense conditions of dependency and helplessness in the membership.

The dynamic focus of consultants interventions next recommends itself for consideration. The mean score for Differentiation for the consultant subgroup was 2.48 and indicated an emphasis on primitive* dynamics, in the weakly differentiated (borderline) range. This seemed to be in keeping with the literature (Kreeger) which stated that primitive dynamics characterize large group functioning. The subgroup averages for the members were significantly high: 2.96 for the females, and 2.84 for the males. How are we to resolve this discrepancy?

A careful reading of the transcript indicated that many consultant interventions focused on primitive themes in the members: splitting, intense aggression, injury, the wish for a messiah, the fear of bleeding to death were some of the interventions of the consultants. This was an emphasis on the Intrapsychic (or Psi) System (of the Group Analytic Grid) as it was hypothesized to occur in the container of the group. However, from the qualitative analysis already presented in the 'History of the Group' section, it seems that the more pressing dynamics appeared to occur in the Interactive (Delta) System where self and object were in communication, and in the Group (Gamma) System where displacements from the leadership into the group through identifications and symbolic realizations caused the group to function in an unusually conflicted and chaotic fashion.

For thought to occur in the large group (activity in Interactive System) the consultants must act as a container for the inchoate and confused impulses and communications of the members. In this particular large group it seemed that membership internal ized the consultants inside the group, and then created them through projective identification in the 'pairs' that were so much a focus of the group's activity. The members were unable to think, in the

sense of 'linking' container and contained together because they had fused both elements within the group system. They translocated the container (consultants) and made them the contained. Thus, member-member interactions as they occurred throughout much of the group might be seen to be a disguised form of member-leader interaction.

As the group was presented with interventions they could not adequately accommodate them. Members became overwhelmed, and this was manifested by depressive silences and withdrawal, hypomanic laughter and mockery as well as a kind of crude imitation of the consultants through style and tone of response. This last dynamic was especially prevalent with one narcissistically defended male.

The well known and time tested formula (Fenichel, 1945, p. 25) of working from the 'surface' to the 'depth' starting with defense and resistances and then moving toward phantasy and idrelated material seems especially appropriate in the large group setting. By attempting to deal with depth dynamics directly the consultants seemed to have forced group members to adopt a type of *false self*, or *as* if style of relating as a defense against the more chaotic anxieties addressed and stirred up by the interpretations.

The more primitive dynamics hypothesized by the literature and cited by other researchers were present, but the aggressive pursuit of them caused a defensive withdrawal to a safe and controllable middle point by the large-group members.

Implications

Reflecting on the results from the vantage point of the paradigm presented in this work, we can see that the group's efforts toward separation and individuation were arrested due to the aborted attempts, on the part of the members, to establish object-relations with the consultants. Kohut's (1971) observations about the necessity of establishing selfobjects and the maintenance of narcissistic structures is pertinent here. The group, in order to prevent a condition of narcissistic depletion due to its weak and

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* For purposes of the research 'primitive' is defined by scores ranging from 1.0 to 2.6 on the *Self/Social Matrix-AGV*. These have been drawn from the original research.

vulnerable position, attempted to create a shared grandiose self, primarily through a narcissistic male member.

The group would be seen to be hovering at the boundary between pre-Oedipal and Oedipal dynamics. The consultants' focus was continually that of pre-Oedipal part-object dynamics. The assumption concerning the self of the membership, on the part of the consultants, was that there was sufficient differentiation and integration to handle such a level of emphasis. This did not seem to be the case.

The concept of the 'dual track' (Grotstein, 1981) wherein the object-related and intergrated self (which seeks clarification of conflicted impulses), and the narcissistic and pre-Oedipal self (which seeks soothing, mirroring and relief from fragmentation anxieties) was not utilized.

The affect deprivation that members reported, both directly and indirectly, seemed to be another verification of Kohut's views on the self. The members could not establish selfobject transferences with the consultants, and the failure to achieve this more basic form of 'unity' resulted in the splintered group that fell continually back into bickering and fighting.

The group was not able to find, develop or utilize myth or ritual in its process. The consultants' attempted to introduce myth and allegory as a means of synthesizing the experience of the membership but this had the unhappy effect of scaring and agitating members, as well as leading to feelings of helplessness and inferiority (shame response).

The self-object group of 'selfgroup' could not be formed (in the psyches of the members as a new structure) and was correspondingly unavailable as an element of emotional constancy, and group stability. Being 'uncontained' and 'unmerged' the group lacked a basis from which to view its own experience.

The self psychological attitudes (Kohut, 1985) of mirroring, empathic introspection of self and object, and the establishment of selfobject relating might have yielded a more cohesive, less antagonistic and ultimately more understandable context in which the large group may be known.

Conclusion

Some final considerations about the instrument and method are appropriate at this point. First, the use of the instrument requires a

great amount of effort, analysis and rigor. Its use for clinical or training purposes seems to be restricted by the complex decisions that must be made about each 'act' occurring in the large group. It can only be used *post hoc* by means of video-tape. The adaptation of the instrument to utilize a subjectively determined 'segment' based upon theme analysis, may be more to the point. The use of multiple judges would still insure reliability. Validity would be demonstrated by the instrument's explanatory power. Thus, a combination of this instrument with 'focal conflict theory' (Stock and Lieberman, 1962) seems to be indicated.

Second, the instrument provides a *process analysis* of the interactions in the large group. The addition of a qualitative analysis adds the vital dimension of *content analysis*, which helps to bring into focus the forces and dynamics which have caused the alterations in the self and object as they are manifested in the group. The use of such focal conflict analysis has already been done, in large groups, by Whiteley (1975) in his work with large groups in a hospital setting.

The relationship between the container and the contained is crucial for understanding thought, self and object and the patterns of communication in the large group. The use of projective identification to create the missing elements of the group, both messiah and scapegoat, can not be overstressed. The ability to symbolically represent the experience of the group is related to the group's ability to separate elements in consciousness and place them in the spatio-temporal field of experience. The condensed, concretistic dimension of much of large-group experience can be understood as a fusional condition where container and contained are coexstensive.

Finally, future research must consider the role of 'silence as communication' (Khan, 1963). The silences that occurred in the group were the medium for the communication of needs, wishes and desires as well as a vehicle for attempts at coercion and control. The instrument should be amended to include the scoring of silences, as well as the examination of the processes occurring within the silences in order to gain greater insight into group-as-a-whole processes.

Appendix
The Group Analytic Grid ©

INTRAPSYCHIC SYSTEM (ψ)

CATEGORY	LINE	(A) REGRESSED		(B) INDIVIDUATED		(C) MATURE	
		I PRIMORDIAL	II PRIMITIVE	III TRANSITIONAL	IV OEDIPAL	V TASK-ORIENTED	VI SELF-ACTUALIZING
1. COMPREHENSIVE VIEWS OF OBJECT RELATIONS AND THE SELF	**Kleinian 'positions'**	'Adhesive identification'	Paranoid-schizoid	Depressive			
	Development of the self	Omnipotent, boundaryless self	Selfobject for mirroring; Grandiose self	Idealized selfobject	Cohesive self and ego ideal	Fulfillment of ambitions and ideals	Peak experience attainment
2. AFFECTS/DEFENSES	**Predominant affects**	Annihilation anxiety	Persecutory anxiety; Stranger anxiety; Envy	Separation anxiety; Precursors of guilt; Jealousy; ambivalence	Castration anxiety; Guilt	Moral anxiety	Fear of the unknown
	Primary defenses	'Psychotic-like': Denial of reality; Distortion; Fusion	'Borderline': Projective identification; Splitting; Idealization; Devaluation	'Immature': Denial in fantasy; Isolation of affect; Reaction formation	'Neurotic': Repression	'Mature': Spontaneity; Humor; altruism	'Creativity': Sublimation; Regression in service of ego
3. IDENTIFICATION AND EXTERNALIZATION	**Function of the object**	Evacuation; Relief; Contact; Unity	Mirroring; Source of supply; Continuity	Possession; Control; Comfort	Desire; Identification	Achievement	Wisdom; Transcendence; Being

(Left margin, read vertically: GROUP ANALYTIC GRID)

Vertical table title (left margin): GROUP ANALYTIC GRID

	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. PHANTASY — **Individual latent content**	Womb and birth fantasies; Space awareness: Agoraphobia; Claustrophobia	Entering, exploring, attacking, stealing from, being nurtured by, being attacked by an object	Separating, controlling, and making; Excreting and making babies	Seducing, Observing primal scene; Symbols of phallus and vagina		
5. COGNITIVE MASTERY — **Piaget's stages**	Sensori-motor 1	Sensori-motor 2	Representational or intuitive thought	Concrete operations	Formal operations	
Bion's Grid: rows	Beta elements	Alpha elements	Dream/myth	Concept	Scientific/Deductive System	Algebraic Calculus
6. BOUNDARY AND STRUCTURE — **Kernberg: Psychic Structure**	Ego-id undifferentiated matrix	Selfobject-affect units; Split self and object representations	Ego: organized around introjects and identifications	Tripartite structures: id, ego, superego	Identity	
Member roles	Isolaters; Fantasizers	Overdependents; Counterdependents; Rescuers; Victimizers; Scapegoats	Impersonals; Overpersonals; revolt leaders	Seducers; Messianic heroes	Leaders; Followers; Thinkers; Intuiters	Gurus; Mystics; Creators/orginators

GROUP ANALYTIC GRID

INTERACTIVE SYSTEM (Δ)		(A) REGRESSED		(B) INDIVIDUATED		(C) MATURE	
CATEGORY	LINE	I PRIMORDIAL	II PRIMITIVE	III TRANSITIONAL	IV OEDIPAL	V TASK-ORIENTED	VI SELF-ACTUALIZING
1. COMPREHENSIVE VIEWS OF OBJECT RELATIONS AND THE SELF	Mahler's Separation Individuation subphases	Normal autism Stimulus barrier	Symbiosis (Hatching) Differentiation	Practicing (Refueling) Rapprochement	Separation and on the way towards object constancy		
			mother/infant dual unity				
2. AFFECTS/DEFENSES	Interpersonal concerns: Schutz' FIRO		Inclusion	Control	Affection		
	Langs' communication styles	Type C: Detached, amorphous, deceptive non-communication	Type B: Search for gratification, holding and containment		Type A: Symbolic, 'as if' expression of conflict and drive derivatives		
3. IDENTIFICATION AND EXTERNALIZATION	Mode of externalization or identification	Evacuation Fusion	Projective identification	Evocation of a proxy	Displacement		
	What is externalized?	Mind, thought and feeling process	Part-object; selfobject	Ego and superego functions	Memory; imago of parent or sibling		

GROUP ANALYTIC GRID

	Awakening / Joining with others / Primary bonds	Feedback / Trust	Competing / Representing	Repression / Identification / Confession	Validation of experience / Transmission of culture	Expression of higher self and identity
4. PHANTASY — Functions of self-disclosure of inner life						
Conflicts and obstacles to self-disclosure	Fear of ego dissolution	Conflict over 'realization' (word = deed)	Shame	Guilt	Personal needs vs. group needs	
5. COGNITIVE MASTERY — Medium of communication	Coordinated movement: 'Kinesic synchronicity'	Pre-verbal mutual projections and primitive identifications 'p r o t o m e n t a l'	Transitional space and objects	Symbols	Cultural institutions	
Bion's 'Thinking Couple'	Beta elements: 'Things in themselves'	Preconception × Realization = conception / Container/contained	Apparatus for thinking thoughts / PS-D / Selected fact			
6. BOUNDARY AND STRUCTURE — Cirillio/ Ashbach: Differentiation scale	1	2	3	4	5	
Role modeling mechanisms	Passive receptor of a label	Projective/introjective identification 'Possession' Magic	Imitation and play	Initiation and 'ordainment' rituals	Training	Identity / Conscious realization

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GROUP-*QUA*-GROUP (γ)

CATEGORY	LINE	(A) REGRESSED		(B) INDIVIDUATED		(C) MATURE	
		I PRIMORDIAL	II PRIMITIVE	III TRANSITIONAL	IV OEDIPAL	V TASK-ORIENTED	VI SELF-ACTUALIZING
1. COMPREHENSIVE VIEWS OF OBJECT RELATIONS AND THE SELF	Group levels and spheres (adapted from Foulkes)	Autocosmos Collective images Parts of body	Microsphere Primitive objects Parts of self	Macrosphere Whole objects	Group = family	Group=community	
		Somatopsyche (body) Primordial level	Autopsyche (self) Projective level	Allopsyche (outer world) Transference level	Transference level	Current level	
2. AFFECTS/ DEFENSES	Group climates/ assumptions	Fight	Fight/flight Dependency	(higher level: competition)	Pairing	Work	
3. IDENTIFICATION AND EXTERNAL-IZATION	Group-as-object(s)	Void Anaclitic object (Kaes)	Breast Background object of primary identification Fictive body *Etayage* (Kaes)	Mother of separation Transitional object	Parents and siblings	'Real' (non-transference) persons in inter-dependent whole	
	Counter-transference to the group-as-a-whole	Fusion, fragmentation, distancing	Conflicts over dependency and aggression	Separation anxiety of setting limits and allowing individuation	Conflicted feelings in the areas of intimacy and sexuality	Wishes to impede the group task	Fears of own change, growth, and yielding control

GROUP ANALYTIC GRID

G R O U P		Examples of group myths	Uroboros Eden	Sphinx Babel Narcissus Genesis	Jonah Pygmalion and Galatea 'The Fall'	Oedipus Prometheus Messiah		Multiple vertices (Truth = emergent combination of views)
	4. PHANTASY							
		Group themes	Oblivion	Birth utopia good vs evil	Separation bisexual	Sacrifice and mourning		
A N A L Y T I C	5. COGNITIVE MASTERY	Group 'truth value'	Autistic validation, omnipotent thought, no distinction between true and false	Truth contagion (Truth = shared ideation power)	Illusion (Truth = intuition comforting belief and experience)	Authority (Truth = obedience to tradition and partial views)	Consensual validation (Truth = logical organization of facts)	
G R I D	6. BOUNDARY AND STRUCTURE	Boundary conditions and group type	Uroboric oneness: for containment: Crowd	Beginning boundaries for containment: Gang, horde	Regulatory boundaries for limits and constancy: tribal network, extended family	Status and generational boundaries: nuclear family	Superego boundaries for 'moral order' and achievement: society	Life project boundaries for creativity and freedom: community
		Group role structure and typology	Merging and grouping roles	'Inclusion' roles	Structuring roles	Sexualized and family roles	Facilitating roles: a) Task-oriented	b) Maintenance-oriented

p e c k i n g   o r d e r

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