

the historical Transference significance often follows change, rather than anteceding it. Individuals sometimes also transfer clearly to the group as a whole. In my opinion this, like everything else, must also be seen on different levels. On a very deep, archaic level, as I have said before, the group represents the mother. On other levels it represents all sorts of things at different times and for different patients, very often a kind of super-ego, a critical and feared authority. It has become clear to me, especially in recent years, that this repetition is the way in which the individual Transference neurosis establishes itself in the group situation. It is a regular occurrence and always contains the key to the very basic and *individual* side of the patient's neurosis, in an exact parallel to the Transference neurosis in a two-personal situation in psychoanalysis. Following Freud, I would be inclined to describe this more adequately as repetition-compulsion.

Coming now to the transference interpretations (with a small t) in the wider and broader sense, these are of course legion and occupy us all the time. Nevertheless, in my own approach, they do not monopolise my, or the group's central interest. We look upon them in the bigger framework of the treatment ('T') situation which, as I have mentioned, comprises not only the immediate session but occurrences in daily life and boundary incidents.

In the following example, the transference reaction in that wider sense concerns the group as a whole.

The group in one particular session cut me out completely. Had I not said anything at all during this session I think they would have taken no notice of me. As it was, I pointed out their behaviour after about one hour of the session, and how it affected me. Various communications confirmed my interpretation, especially also why nobody had looked at me or why at the beginning they had not taken any notice when I entered the room. In the following session the group spent a long time talking of death and in particular parental death, their horror of death and dead bodies and dying people and so forth. It became clear that the last time they had "silenced" me, in a sense killed me. This was not only an expression of their aggression towards me but also of their phobic fear for me and they had suffered a great deal from the fact that I had not joined in, had not shown any signs of life. This time they were not cutting me out or dead, but were falling over each other with communications at such speed and intensity that I had to be very active to make myself heard when I wanted to make a contribution. Then I was listened to with respect. (We shall come back to this topic when discussing interpretations given to the group as a whole, total group interpretations.)

*Interpretations, especially "transference" interpretation as a defence*

A certain type of *linking* interpretation may be considered here from the aspect of unconscious countertransference meaning, of drawing away from the here and now.

Once Miss PA, a schizoid girl, was very closely concerned with not knowing what was in my head and I was hoping to get to grips with some deep-going confusion in her identity when my co-conductress intervened and said "Isn't that the same feeling as you have with your mother?" and thus gave the patient a good alibi to talk about her mother.

In another example, the co-conductor herself was the focus of intense feeling on the part of Mrs A. She at once said to her "Isn't that the same thing you do to your mother?" or "is that why you also do not like to be touched by your mother?"

## ANALYSING

We have had to say quite a bit about interpretation. I wish, therefore, once more to emphasise that interpretation in a more precise sense is only one, if an important one, of the activities of the group analyst. His total activity is analysing. This in turn can be taken in a more exact as well as in a wider sense in which it corresponds to the total process of establishing and maintaining the group-analytic situation and of the translation of meaning from a less conscious form of communication to a conscious verbal one. We have already spoken about these activities and illustrated them by examples.

In this type of therapeutic group, the development of the individual is our ultimate aim. There is no question of aiming at conformity or toeing the line. Even what is normal or not is a question of values which might be shared or not and which should indeed be critically considered even though these values may be generally accepted by the group. The creative nature of the conductor's task has been mentioned. It is important for the therapist to admit that his personal influence is inevitably strong, in spite of all his precautions to minimise this. He then should use it consciously rather than haphazardly or unconsciously, helping the patients to become what they are. The importance of his basic modesty must be stressed as otherwise the temptation for him to feel omnipotent is great. This in turn has to do with his ethical integrity. For this reason alone, if not for many others, the conductor cannot participate in

the same way as other group members do. He ought to bring his own involvements into the open wherever the process of communication makes this desirable. However he need not bring his own personal countertransference reactions into the procedure except when they involve the group and he cannot for some reason deal with them sufficiently by himself alone. In some situations, the best way to deal with these personal reactions, even from the conductor's own point of view, is the open discussion with the group members.

## ORIENTATION

We have now to say more about the group analyst's orientation in this complicated process on which all his interventions must depend. We have pointed out that the interacting psychological processes are seen as taking place in the group matrix while at the same time involving the various individuals in different specific ways and constellations. Just as the individual's mind is a complex of interacting processes (personal matrix), mental processes interact in the concert of the group (group matrix). These processes relate to each other in manifold ways and on a variety of different levels. The group-analytic group has been termed a psyche group. We are altogether concerned with psychological processes. Whereas the conductor has to look upon and expose himself to the total of these interacting processes, the members are concerned only with what they themselves experience, feel, observe, what they wish to express by action, or desire and ultimately try to say in words without reservation and/or to voice their reservations also. The conductor by contrast has to observe what goes on altogether, including himself, although it is only exceptionally necessary for him to communicate his own personal experiences, his private experiences as it were, when the interest of the group demands this. Whereas the members use the group for their own interest, the conductor alone puts the group's interest first and foremost. He is in the service of the group. In this way, the conductor's function is complementary to that of the other members. All events, all observable phenomena are treated as communications whose meaning should become understood and shareable.

There are a variety of configurations as to what is expressed, by whom and to whom. For instance, one member may speak to another or others. Some of them may turn to one, or to a number of others. Any of this may be addressed to the conductor in particular,

Indeed the whole group may address him. The conductor on his part uses the same varieties of communication. All this is the foreground, the figure of a process which in its totality comprises the whole group and on the ground of which meaning becomes defined, interpretation springs to life. It must be hoped that the reference here to the *Gestalt* idea of figure and ground as inseparable is understood; similarly, the fact that one can switch, so that what was ground becomes figure or foreground and what was figure recedes into the background. In my own opinion this is not merely a way of perception but it corresponds to the actual ongoing psychodynamics in the group situation. I believe that Wolfgang Köhler has put forward similar views.

## LOCATION

The conductor's first task is not merely to perceive meaning, but also to place it in the appropriate dynamic setting. I have termed this process *location*. This process of location can best be understood on the basis of *Gestalt* theory in the sense just indicated. Location presupposes the conductor becoming aware of the relevant configuration of the observable phenomena. Thus he can divine the relevant key in which the group speaks at that moment. Only in speaking back to the group in that same key can he hope to be understood relatively well. A simpler way of putting this is that the good conductor, the good therapist, talks back in the language in which things reach him, in the language current amongst the members of the group.

Different interpretations are not contradictory but correspond to particular perspectives, similar to objects being photographed from different points. This location is particularly important when it refers to a *disturbance* in communication, to resistances or defences which prevent a free flow of communications or their reception and thus the sharing of them. We must accept that the language of these interactions is not confined to words, but extends to inflexions of voice; manner of speaking, looking, to expressions, gestures; actions or, in view of their restrictions, intended actions; emotional reactions of all sorts—sympathy, condemnation or contempt, attraction or disgust, love, hatred and indifference.

These primary levels correspond to the *foundation* matrix, based on the biological properties of the species, but also on the culturally firmly embedded values and reactions. These have been developed

and transmitted, especially in the nuclear family, in the social network, class, etc. and have been maintained or modified by the intimate plexus in which the person now moves.

All this is now temporarily replaced by the artificially created, strange but potentially very intimate group network in the "T" situation, more intimate than any other encounter type of therapeutic group. This *dynamic* matrix is in fact the theatre of operation of ongoing change.

### RESONANCE

All participants speak and understand this language, interpret or misinterpret it significantly, each according to his particular "resonance", corresponding to his own psychopathology or his special reaction to the person or to the inference implied at this moment in time. This communicational transaction is instinctive and is regressively activated on different libidinal and aggressive levels at one and the same time, mobilising early ego and super-ego developmental stages as well as corresponding defences and reaction-formations. Transference and repetition-compulsion enter into this primary process, this psychotic-like world of experience and expression, and bring primordial and infantile experience alive into the context of the ongoing therapeutic (T) situation.

The conductor must know this language. He should have learned it from his own experience and that of others and must continue to use it, a never-ending process of learning. He should be ahead of his patients in this, should hear the "voice of the symbol" as M. Grotjahn has recently termed it.† Then he must patiently wait for them to catch up, cautiously helping here and there perhaps, but most concerned with what is in the way, blocking the group's own understanding.

He should always test whether this bloc is not in himself, whether the impediment does not include him, or even emanate from himself. The conductor must always be ready to assume that the group tries to tell him more than he understands, or something different, something else.

†Martin Grotjahn *The Voice of the Symbol* Los Angeles, Mara Books, 1971.

For a more precise understanding of the concepts touched upon here, I must again refer the reader to a theoretical account, but what has been said should at least give an idea of the framework in which the group conductor operates. With this in mind, we can appreciate some of his own operations in more detail.

### THE ANALYTICAL ATTITUDE

Having spoken of the analytical attitude of the conductor, I will attempt, very briefly, to sum up the main points which this implies.

- 1) That he is receiving all communications, that he is non-directive, clarifying, interpretative; using predominantly verbal means leading eventually to insight.
- 2) That the relationship which members of the group form to him and to each other is itself made the object of communication and of analysis.
- 3) That he is non-manipulative in the relationship, as he understands his position as a transference figure. He treats the interpersonal relationships in the spirit of a transference situation, even when Transference aspects in the strict sense of the term are not significant.

It is this analytical attitude which enables the group-analytic conductor to deal correctly with transference reactions themselves and with all other events which happen in the same spirit. I prefer not to call all these reactions *transference* but if doing so to spell the noun at least with a small "t" by distinction to *Transference* in the more correct sense, to be spelt with a capital T.

This analytic attitude promotes ever increasing understanding and correspondingly tolerance and by itself alone furthers the freer development of the individual.

## PART III

### OBSERVATIONS AND MAXIMS

On the whole, the therapist's real contribution can best be defined if we look at the difference between the group left to itself in contrast