

GROUP ANACLSIS OF INDIVIDUAL MENTAL STRUCTURES: A FEW THEORETICAL  
CONSEQUENCES CONCERNING THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

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I would like to defend and develop this thesis: whatever his own specific practice may be (therapy group, group analysis, family therapy), the group analyst proposes a frame and maintains whatever disposition is necessary to make a certain type of psychic work possible, starting out from an original experience, which is different from the classic treatment. This experience is the emergence, disengagement and rearrangement of certain psychic structures and processes, which, owing to the inherent properties of the group, reveal themselves to be genetically and structurally supported by it. What I mean is that these formations and processes rely on the primal group for a support and a model; they ensure the passage and taking-over between the endo-psychic (individual) order and that of the linking and collective works. According to this view, the group situation may be considered a connecting-point between individual psychic structures and general or anonymous ones.

I found I had to forge three notions to try to convey what seems to me to be the specific nature of group psycho-analytical work: multiple anaclisis (Fr. étayage) of mental structures, group psychic apparatus and transitional analysis.

1. Multiple anaclisis and twofold support of mental structures

My hypothesis could be summed up like this: alongside the anaclisis of drive on bio-physiological body functions exists that of the psychic structures, that is, of the object and the systems of object relation, and therefore of process, on the group and on institutions, and first and foremost, on its most immediate and significant representatives and forms: the family and the mother. To say,

for instance, that the child has a place in its parents' or grandparents' fantasies is to acknowledge what I name group anaclisis of formations like identifications, imagos, family complexes and narcissism.

The German term Anlehnung has been translated as "étayage" in the French versions of Freud's work. The German word means support (apoyo, appoggio, apoio), in Anlehnung an frequently used by Freud), and lastly, a slit, a narrow opening. A comparative study of the last two meanings shows that they indicate both the procedure of "looking for support" and the idea that, through a passing movement, the support may shape what it backs up. There is here - and the French term "étayage", like those of other romance languages (estay, estaie, stare), indicates precisely this - a fundamental dimension of being (etre), conceived as the building and permanence of Self.

It seems to me that three periods can be distinguished in the use of the concept of Anlehnung in Freud's writings. The first is in Drei Abhandlungen zur sexualtheorie (1905). Anlehnung ensures the passage from the biological to the psychic level in the original version of the first drive theory, and it calls forth a foundation rather than a support for mental structures in the bodily functions. The second period appears in 1910, though it began in 1895 with the notion of protective shield (Reischutz), and develops in the theory of the choice of the love object through anaclisis on the primal object (Anlehnungs-typus der Objektwahl). Here, Anlehnung is coextensive with the primal link, and with the narcissistic axis of depression and the oneness vs. splitting question.

The third period explores the same theme as the one before; on the basis of reflections on religion, culture and society, it articulates the relation between the loss of the love object (liebesverlust), distress (Hilflosigkeit), the formations of the Ideal and collective formations. The third movement seems to me to contain the premises of my hypothesis on group anaclisis. In a passage of Die Zukunft einer Illusion, Freud establishes that the relation between Hilflosigkeit and Anlehnung is one of dependence, putting forward the idea that help and protection are sought for and found by the common projection on collective creations (art, institution, religion). On the one hand, there is a resurgence of the fundamental intuition of Massenpsychologie und Ich-analyse (1921), that identification defines the libidinal nature of the link with other people and institutions, and on the other, a foreshadowing of Winnicott's conception of culture (D.W. Winnicott, 1967).

These three periods each throw light of varying intensity on the three components of the Anlehnung notion: support, model, passage. The three components may be said to be always present, however, from 1855 onwards, as regards the protective shield (or contact barrier), because this implies the actively protective role of the mother, her

relation to the child's body and her psychic activity. Bion describes the alpha function as a protective shield, an elaborative and containing renewal.

The notion of narrow opening indicates this boundary and renewal, opposing any idea of confusion between the supporter and the supported, or of absorption. The concept of anaclisis includes the idea that the supporting elements are both separate and open on one of their sides. This seems to me to be what Bion describes in the alpha function of the mother (1964, 1967): the externalization of the contents by matching them partially to the new container. I have called one of these matchings Appareil psychique groupal (Group psychic apparatus) (Kaës, R., 1976)

These reflections lead straight on to the vital question of psychic causality. In Freud's writings, the relation of the ego to the body is not a direct, unequivocal one, but one of derivation or renewal. Similarly, the relation between mental structures and maternal environment, between mental structures and the socio-political, between mental structures and the group, is not one of specular reproduction (Spiegelung) which would abolish the categories themselves (psychosis could be described in this way), but a relation of transforming renewal. The psychoanalytical explanation aims at what happens within the psychic apparatus while the bodily functions necessary to life are carried out, during neurobiological development, during contact with the mother, the father and society, and during their functions, but not directly because of any of these various things.

The hypothesis of a multiple anaclisis of mental structures (on the body, the mother, collective formations and in particular the group, and on the Self as a whole or on certain psychic formations) implies that interdependence within an anaclitic network should be taken into consideration. Mental structures then appear as movements of anaclisis and de-anaclisis (étayage et déétayage), opening and closing, building and destruction, crisis and creation, all of which imply relatively fixed structures. Structures of this kind are supplied by the individual layout of fundamental anaclisis supports peculiar to one person or to a set of people (a group, for instance).

The Freudian model of the anaclitic type of object choice, and that of the protective (and contact) barrier suggests a representation of the process of multiple anaclisis, that is, the transformation and renewal of the supported by the supporter in an intermediary anaclitic area resembling a flooding-chamber. The yawning-space is then twofold, for, in addition to the contact and protection area between mental structures and its support, it involves narrow contacts among the supports themselves. These are not identical in nature, and mental structures do not look to the body, the mother and the group for the same support, although a system of equivalence, metaphor and metonymy obviously exists.

The fundamental characteristic of all anaclisis is not only to belong to an anaclitic network, but also to undergo "mutual support"; by this I mean that what is being supported can also act as a support for the supporter. The mother-baby-father relation, the relation of two people in love, or that between teacher and pupil, can all be described in this way. The quality of anaclisis in "mutual support" depends on the existence of an intermediary anaclitic area. This psychic area is that of the anaclitic contract, or reciprocity of the pleasure and the benefits arising from mutual support. A base similar to that of pleasure of anaclisis can also be found (or re-discovered) easily in the pleasure of clutching or that of being one of a group (or bunch). It should be stated that the pleasure found in "mutual support" anaclisis is just as much one of complementarity as one of antagonism (support provided by the adversary). One example of an anaclitic contract is the relation between the leader and his group. The narcissistic and social aspects of this contract are obvious.

From this it may be deduced that a serious psychic disturbance occurs when the anaclisis necessary to the formation of the mental structures is irretrievably lost, and the supports which are indispensable to life cannot be reconstituted by artificial substitutes, or when the supports fail (de-anaclisis), or when the anaclitic area is abolished, producing a sort of closing up of the support and the psychic formation. Family group analysis has furnished remarkable cases of these disturbances, and of their pathological effects. The psychotic family could be distinguished by the absence or closing up of supporting areas. The interplay of de-anaclisis and re-anaclisis is present in all crisis or change, and is a dimension in transitionality. From this point of view, de-anaclisis is a prior condition for any creative reorganization; the work itself is the result of a process of re-anaclisis and renewal.

The mutual supports of the anaclitic network, which shift, change and are created anew, define the specific tension of the bio-psycho-sociological interdependence of mental structures. The object of group analysis seems to me to be this tension and this dynamic, economic and topographical interaction.

One consequence of mutual support group anaclisis is that group anaclisis lends a structure to mental structures, whose formations are sometimes structured like "inside" groups. This idea came to me in 1966-67, during research into representations of the group as an object of cathexis for mental structures. According to this hypothesis, the representations are organized by a certain number of unconscious psychic structures with remarkable properties: the body image, the psyche imago, imagos and family complexes, identification networks and primal fantasies. I noticed two things: first, that to formulate a representation, these formations look to social representations, to a previous social utterance, for support; and secondly,

that these group formations as I call them, for reasons I shall explain later, are organizers which are particularly activated in the group process itself, with relations of competition, camouflage and mutual support among themselves.

I have used the term "group" to qualify these psychic structures for at least two reasons: the first concerns their formal properties. These formations constitute sets, with discreet and differentiated components connected to each other by a law or a principle governing the composition, each set maintaining its identity and coherence in spite of modifications affecting it from within and without; they play an important part in formative or therapeutic processes carried out by means of the group. What I call psyche imago, family complexes and imagos, primal fantasy, identification networks, seem to correspond to this formal property.

The second reason for considering these psychic structures as group formations concerns their origin in group anaclisis. I have shown elsewhere that the series of mother-group and body-group symbolic equations can be defended in classic psycho-analytic experience, as well as in ethnological and ethological experience. The equivalences are fully confirmed by the observation of training and therapeutic analytic groups, and by the analysis of relations between family structure and psychosis.

Lastly, the third and most important reason is that group formations of mental structures have an organizing function in the group process: they contribute to the building and orientation of group behaviour. I have based much of my group analysis on the existence of this property. The type and mode of the mobilized group formation confers its own specific character, for the individuals composing it, on each concrete group, for a certain time, or more permanently. In my work on Group Psychic Apparatus (1976), I analyzed, in numerous cases, how the construction of the group area questions the symbolic functions and the body image (particularly the skin image), which processes of assignment of place and organization of object relations are mobilized in the group process by primal fantasies, and how the group structure of the internal topographic agencies is projected, distorted to organize groups.

By proposing to consider multiple anaclisis and group formations of mental structures, I have tried to forge two concepts making it possible to connect the intrapsychic on the one hand, and the group and the institution on the other; now any connection admits elements separated by a void and reunited by an intermediary space.

## 2. Group Psychic Apparatus.

How can the passage be made from inside groups (of internal psychic reality) to outside groups (of external social reality)?

The "Group Psychic Apparatus" concept suggests an answer to this question: it constitutes an intermediary area between the inside and the outside space. This area may possess some of the characteristics of transitional space or fetish. If it is a transitional cathexis, the group psychic apparatus is an area of illusion, a place for cultural experience, an arrangement which may possibly create relations between the inside and the outside groups. If it is a fetish area, it is a closed, repetitive area. I gave the sub-title of group constructions to my book on Group Psychic Apparatus, no doubt because I wanted to indicate my own effort in analysis and reconstruction. But above all, I wanted in this way to qualify what happens in groups: when the members of the group have constructed the group, it is no longer only a collection of individuals, but also a real group, with specific phenomena, different from individual phenomena. And there may be several ways of constructing this group.

As I see it, a group exists as such from the moment when a group psychic organizer begins to function by resonance or by opposition: a primal fantasy, a corporal, psychic or family imago begins to function and unite all the members. They need not be sensitive to the same aspect; as often as not, they are mobilized by complementary or antithetical aspects of a dominant organizer who is possibly in conflict with other organizers, and this is what makes the group the particular group it is.

The view I suggest, close to that of Bion, Ezriel and Foulkes, is that common (and individual) action only exists if there has been a mobilization of a "complex", an imago or an unconscious fantasy common to most of the people present. I have tried to describe the organization and functioning of a group psychic apparatus constructed by the members of the group out of certain properties of their individual psychic apparatus by displacing and combining the group psychic formations of each one. The purpose of the group psychic apparatus is to provide a projection surface for the individual psychic apparatus, giving form, limits and containing and exerting control at the same time. My thesis is that the group psychic apparatus is given twofold support by each individual psychic apparatus, and in particular by the group formations of mental structures and by the social groups connected with society as a whole.

The group psychic apparatus assumes that some psychic structures are identical in structure to the construction and process of groups, although the first is not reduced to the second, and vice versa. This is the paradoxical and "utopian" status of group psychic apparatus. It is not constructed once and for all: it can be undone and rebuilt in another way, on a different organizational basis.

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