15. Representation and mentalization: from the represented group to the group process[*]

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In psychology, the concept of representation means both the process of mentally constructing psychic reality and a series of effects which can be classified together under the general heading of *mentalization*. By mentalization we mean the very activity whereby the human psyche is constituted, that is the transformation of quantities of physiological energy into psychic quantities. It is none the less a good idea to make clear that these qualities are structured by man himself – a talking and highly social animal – and that they are subject to the laws governing speech and the formation of groups.

One part only of the definition of mentalization is in fact given when one speaks of this qualitative transformation which accounts for the physical anaclisis of mentalization. The complement is to be found in its group anaclisis. In this paper I remind the reader of the role of groups in supplying models and functions of mentalization through their social contents, procedures and form.

The concept of social representation remains within the field of psychology when it assumes the task of explaining this double anaclisis. However, it indicates more precisely how the representation is structured and how it functions in inter-personal and group communication and, more widely, within society. But it also takes into account those aspects of the work of mentalization which are strictly psychic. In this study my intention will be to go deeper into these relationships between representation and mentalization. After that I will show both the direct and the indirect effects of the representation of the group upon the group process.

The theoretical frame of reference I am using is principally that of psychoanalysis, and the clinical field in which I work is that of small training or therapy groups. I shall aim to achieve a tie-up, both

[*]Translated by Dr John L. Carr

theoretical and practical, between the process of group formation, how the human psyche is structured and the formation of micro-mentalities (Kaës, 1976, 1980).

1.   Mentalization, absence-work and linking-work

By mentalization I mean, first and foremost, a psychic work, that is work concerned with the *formation and transformation of psychic qualities*: e.g. hallucinations, images, fantasies, dream-thoughts, ideas, secondary thinking.

It is possible to distinguish between two sorts of transformation: (*a*) that which occurs in transitions *between* levels, for example in moving from physiological energies to psychic qualities or from cultural artifacts or aspects of the social structure to their psychic cathexis and reconstructions, and (*b*) that which occurs *within* the same level, for example the intra-psychic level as when one passes from one psychic structure to another. In psychoanalytic theory, the idea of *Durcharbeitung*, translated as 'a complete working through', shows how the process of transformation, which can affect the structure of the psyche, has repercussions on other structures, *through which* the transformation takes place.

The idea of work, by virtue of its etymology, brings us/back to two other terms. In French villages a *travail* is a sling or jack for shoeing horses, a device for holding them up when being shod or administered to by a vet; it is a support or framework. But it is also a process, because, as English has it, it is a journey ('travel'), the business of going across, of traversing. And these two meanings can help us to characterize the psychic work of mentalization; it depends upon a frame or support, but it is also a journey across, a crossing or even a meandering.

Once this dimension of work has been emphasized, what is mentalization? To what is this work directed? It seems to me possible to isolate a single proposition which is common to all the studies undertaken on this matter: *to mentalize is to establish or re-establish a link*. So I shall declare that mentalization is the business of linking. This can be done in three ways: (i) by establishing a transformation-link between an energy-surge and a psychic structure which is closely allied both to this instinctual tension and to its release under conditions in which the energy-surge does not find *direct* satisfaction. Here a new way opens up, by experiencing the absence or loss of the object, which comes to supercede the direct way (ii) by establishing, through the experience of

loss, a link or bond between something that was present and no longer is and something that is absent but represented and (iii) by associating an intra-psychic (i.e. subjective) representation and a code or code-system which is external (i.e. social). This link will confer upon each of them a status and a future in inter- and intra-subjective communication.

W. Bion gives an example of these three aspects of linking in what he calls the *alpha* capability of the mother; it is here a matter of a reaction by the psychic apparatus of the mother, which transforms painful impulses which the child is unable to transform into psychic representations. But the power of this alpha function is not limited to a transforming of the contents to which the mother is sensitive and which she can control; it extends also to the very processes and modes of the transformation itself. And these processes are, to an important extent, linked to local, group and social codes.

Sufficient attention has probably not been paid to the fact that the classification of psychic contents is as important as their transformation and that both depend on structure and group process. They depend, in the first instance, on that group which itself contains the mother, that is the primary group, and on the totality, both in social reality and in fantasy, of the links organized therein between mother, father and child, at the intersection between the sexes and the generations within a given culture and society. The work of mentalization establishes itself (or does not) as the linking-work between psychic representations, in so far as they are representations of absent objects and the classifications of groups which are a medley of procedures and contents, ready-made and potentially usable for creating representations. What I call group-anaclisis provides not only a support but also a form and, even more, an accreditation for an intra-psychic representation and a 're-run' in speech-form which gives it meaning within the context of interpersonal, group and societal relationships. My point of view is, therefore, that the work of mentalization establishes a link between these three orders: between the body and the psyche, and between the structures of the psyche and of the group. The work of mentalization is a psychic work of the intermediate process, the twin extremes of which are probably body and code, presence and absence, fantasy and myth. To make a finer point, I must say a word about what I mean by anaclisis for mentalization.

The multiple anaclisis for mentalization

The concept of anaclisis is central to the problem of psychoanalytic

explanation. But its fortunes in the literature and in clinical practice are quite amazing: dilution, distortion and complete misunderstanding characterize its usage and its history. A critical re-evaluation is called for, the fruitfulness of which becomes clear when we make use of the result in analysis.

Referring back to the elaboration and history of this concept in Freud's work, its scaling down (in customary use) to the single dimension of anaclitism becomes immediately apparent. Now, it is easy to demonstrate that, for Freud, the concept of anaclisis is organized, in accordance with the semantic richness of the German word, around three aspects: (a) support, from an origin or even from the foundation of the structure of the psyche based on the exercise of bodily functions, (b) modelling (in the sense of the German expression *sich lehnen an etwas*, that is to model oneself on, to take something as one's exemplar). Anaclisis is here closely linked with identifications; and (c) the 're-run' or 'return', or a half-openness, or opportunity, in the sense in which two wholes communicate with each other through a space specially arranged for that purpose, which allows for the transition from one order, or one level, to another.

Among the consequences of this conception of anaclisis I should like to point to two: first, besides the bodily anaclisis of impulse and its expression (affect, representation), and besides the cathexis upon the object or object-relation (maternal) two other types of anaclisis appear in the full meaning of the support, of the model and of the 're-run': the dependence of the psyche upon the group, on the one hand, and its dependence on endopsychic structures on the other. One can call this latter self-anaclisis, for example its dependence on certain psychic structures, such as the Ego-ideal or the Ideal Self in the experience of depression, or on certain thought contents, as in anxiety neurosis.

Among the consequences of criticisms of the notion of anaclisis it appears that mentalization cannot occur divorced from its relationship with the body, with the mother, with the group and with the social and cultural structures. To be precise: the multiple anaclisis of psychism (and of mentalization) implies that the relationship between that which is supported and that which supports it is one of mutual support, of mutual modelling and of self-reflection. The father–mother–child relationship, at the point of severance, supplies a good example of this: that which ceases to be anaclitic at that point concerns the object-relationship between the mother, the nursling and the father. That which the child *mentalizes*, starting from the experience of separation (of

severance), is directly related to the nature of the relationship between the mother and the father. That which, at that moment, from the mother's standpoint becomes more complex concerns also her own experience of separation and of the upsurge of her desire. In this perspective it is important to ensure that research is brought to bear on this interstice of anaclisis; this is probably the space within which mind is born, for it is in the vacuum created by absence and discontinuity that the articulation between different levels and different orders – bodily, mental, group and societal – may be achieved on the mental mode of representation (or 're-run').

This notion of multiple anaclisis as a mutual support may explain the articulation between individual mind and group process and structures. We have at our disposal a handy tool for figuring out situations of break-up and of crisis. For them we can give an account of facts of a like nature which we meet in clinical practice: the experience of a *loss of support*, and the search for a new support; that of a *split* experienced as a break-up and as violence in the transition from one source of support to another. From mother to group, from bodily need to fantasy, from fantasy to myth and to speech there is always the solution of continuity.

Since we have shed light upon these notions of mentalization and of anaclisis the moment has come to put them to the test in respect of representation. I shall discuss the values of it in psychoanalytic theory, for this notion offers a notable advantage: it possesses a double aspect, the one made up of *things*, the other of *words*: it is, therefore, with some justification that we can speak of a double anaclisis for representations.

It is known that, in the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, *Vorstellung* denotes the inscription of an object in the memory system: the object is represented through its inscription in the memory system. The distinction which Freud drew in 1915 between the representation of things and the representation of words involved his initial topographical model of the mind. The representation of things results from the very perception of the thing and this representation characterizes the unconscious system: from the point of view of psychic economy it comprises a cathexis of the memory traces which are more or less derived from the thing itself. The representation of the words, for its part, derives from the utilization of the organized systems of speech and language. The thing is thus linked to the word used to express it and is, therefore, linked to the group anaclisis. This type of representation characterizes the preconscious/conscious system. This distinction raises the question as to how the transition between the representation of

things and that of words comes about. Here I do not wish to enter into a theoretical and over-specialized discussion which would bring to the fore the role of the Ego and of the Preconscious in this transition, that is the authorities to which appeals are principally made in the creation of intermediate structures (Kaës, 1980).

Besides psychoanalytic research certain ethnological work is extremely valuable: it helps us to understand how the experiences of the thing, those of its absence and those of its representation come together in a code and a group organization. The anaclisis of the Ego based upon the group and upon the code is not without its structural effect on the work of mentalization and upon the psychic processes which are triggered off within the mentalities that result therefrom. The 'group Ego' of the Dogons does not perceive 'things' in the same way as does the Ego of an Anglo-Saxon. The words used to express it imply reference to a code (which is linguistic and mythical) and to group organization: the studies of M. Leenhart (1947) have shown us how the form of the code structures the perception of the object and how the designation of persons structures interpersonal and intra-psychic relationships. The indications of the name, for example, among the Melanesians, orients us towards a quite different system of relationships obtaining between objects and interpersonal relationships.

Piaget had this intuition regarding the dependence of mental activity upon the group; to be in a group and to group mental activities together go hand in hand: 'without the exchange of thought and co-operation with others, the individual would not succeed in grouping together his activities into a coherent whole' (Piaget and Inhelder, 1967, p. 174); and later: 'The individual achieves logic only by virtue of co-operation' (*ibid.*, p. 176). For the psychoanalyst, mentalization originates and forms within the primary group, first of all, in the group-mother, that is within that which, in the early days, becomes reality for the child as far as the links are concerned which obtain between mother, father and child at the meeting-point of the sexes and of the generations.

2. Psychic and socio-cultural organisers of the representation of the group

In the studies I have undertaken concerning the group as an object both of representations and of cathexis, I was led to make a distinction between two anaclitic systems, by means of which the representation of the group is built up: on the one hand, the psychic system, in which the

group functions as a representative object – the representation of impulsivity – and, on the other, a *socio-cultural* system in which the group figures as a prescribed model for interpersonal relationships and the expression of feelings. Both systems involve specific organizers, that is to say, adjacent schemas which form the composition of the group, in so far as it is an object of representation.

The organizers I call 'psychic' correspond to an unconscious structure which is close to the vivid nucleus of the dream: they comprise the more or less 'scripted' objects of infantile desire: they can be common to several individuals and assume a typical character, in the sense in which Freud and Abraham spoke of typical dreams. They borrow, from everyday experience and from the social models for representing the group, the day-time material necessary for working them out. My studies have led me to single out from these psychic organizers symbolic properties which are well scripted and pro-active and to distinguish from amongst them: the image of the body; original fantasy; family images and complexes; the image of the psyche (with its topographical systems and proceedings). Thus the group is represented as a body or as part of a body – the vocabulary of the group testifies to this: head, member, cell, nucleus – or, starting from a fantasy of the primitive science, or from the image of brotherhood or as an ensemble representing the Ego, the That, the Super-Ego and the Ideal.

I have been able to show that the chief characteristic of these organizers is their being endowed with a *group structure*, that is the power to compose specific combinations out of the relationships between objects directed to an objective in accordance with a more or less coherent dramatic scenario symbolizing alliance-relationships or processes of exclusion, for example.

The *socio-cultural organizers* are the end-product of the transformation of this unconscious nucleus through the social work common to members, initially, or a given socio-cultural ambiance and then, eventually, of several cultures. They function as codes recording, in the same way as a myth does, the different orders of reality: bodily, psychic, social, political, philosophical. They make possible the symbolic elaboration of the unconscious nucleus of the representation and of the communication between members of a society. They thus operate in the transition from the dream to the myth. This is equivalent to saying that the socio-cultural organizers of the representation result from the social elaboration of the experience of different forms of group life. For this reason they are infiltrated by the psychic organizers. The study of the

social representations of the group in its different modalities of expression (myth, ideologies, romances, iconographics and verbal expressions etc.) concerns the transformation of group experience and of intra-psychic group experience in a social system of a more or less coherent representation, established by means of language, and of which one of the major functions is to make intelligible an order of relationship to an object, and to establish, in this connection, an inter-subjective communication.

Such a system defines culture – that is the code common to all members of an organized structure; this code comprises social practices and systems of representations such as rites, myths, ideologies, conceptions of the universe, philosophical doctrines, scientific theories etc. Such a code implies two essential characteristics:

(*a*) It records the representations of various orders of reality: psychic, social, religious, cosmic, physical etc. Thus it permits the establishment of links between the peculiar representations of things which are not yet expressed in words and representations of words which are governed by common sense and socially accepted. It links the unconscious to the 'already known'.

(*b*) Its constituent parts tolerate more or less ample variations as a function of the state of social relationships and of the psychological needs of the different members of this social structure. The study of the contents of representations is, for this very reason, of less interest that that of the processes of their own organization and of their psychic and social make-up.

I should like to venture an illustration of the part played by this second series of organizers of representations. I have studied the group as a heroic symbol in numerous myths, tales, romances and movie representations. The analysis of the heroic saga of the group was carried out in accordance with the two ways of looking at things which I recommend: that of the psychic organizers, and I have pointed out the structuring role of the entreaties of the Ego-Ideal, of the Oedipus Complex, of fantasies of being consumed and of being saved: these internal psychic groups control the arrangement of positions and of the relationships between the protagonists and those of the heroic group as a whole. The hypotheses formulated by Otto Rank (1909) about the myth of the hero's birth find their validation here. Endo-psychic structures have none-the-less a support or a *social anchorage*, as Serge Moscovici (1961) has it, in what I call socio-cultural organizers. In one of Grimms' fairy tales *The seven Swabians*, the socio-cultural organizer is the Celtic

myth of the Grail cycle and, more precisely, the model for the Knights of the Round Table. In fact this reference model puts forward a homosexual organization of the group which is egalitarian and circular, and which takes its direction from the quest for a common phallus. The principle of *organization* (i.e. the socio-cultural organizer) is also a principle of *identification* and of *expression*: it is one of the terms necessary to the work of mentalization.

In our culture the commonest socio-cultural organizers of the representation of the group are the *Judeo-Christian* models (the group of the twelve apostles of Christ and the mystical body, the gathering of God's people (the kibbutz)); *Celtic* models (Knights of the Round Table) and *Greek* models (the Argonauts). Certain more or less subversive variants of these are maintained in a sort of quiescent condition – whether it is a matter of female groups (Bacchantes) or of political groups (plotters; co-religionists) or of sexual utopias (Sade's group in *The 120 days of Sodom*).

3.   The analysis of a representation of the group: the image of the body and the body-group

Amongst the four psychic organizers of the representation of the group, the body image occupies a special place. Organic or cybernetic theories concerning the group have their origin in this common representation of the group, according to which the group is an organism or a part thereof, a cell. This *organism*, an ordered aggregate of individuals maintained within the body-envelope, is endowed with a head (*chef*), members, a bosom and a spirit (*esprit de corps*) dwelling within this body: present-day terminology gives proof of this and so does etymology. D. Anzieu (1964) has traced the origin and evolution of the word 'group', the French use of which is quite recent. It came from the Italian (*groppo, gruppo*) which makes use of it in the technical terminology of fine art to designate several individuals painted or sculpted and forming one subject. Introduced into France towards the middle of the seventeenth century, it remains a studio word – it is also used to denote a collection of elements, a category, a class or a collection of beings or objects. 'Group' means a 'collection of people' only towards the middle of the eighteenth century in France (*groupe*) in Germany (*gruppe*) as well as in England. If one questions the origin of the word, it is possible to discover within it some clarification of its latent meanings. The sense of the first Italian word *groppo* is a *knot*; then it refers to a meeting or a gathering of people.

Linguists find a parallel with the Old Provençal word *grop* (knot) and assume that it comes from the West German word *kruppa* (a rounded mass): the idea of roundness appears to be at the base of 'group' and 'rump' (in French *groupe* and *croupe*). Thus etymology supplies two fields of force that one discovers again in the life of groups: the *knot*, and by metanomic derivation, the *link*, denoting a degree of cohesion, and *roundness* symbolizing the spatial enclosure of which the bodily envelope is the metaphor.

The semantic field of this term implies some notable characteristics: beyond the idea of assembly, of meeting and of collection, we find there the representation of the male and female sex organs: *rounded mass*, rump, roundness, circle and *knot*, which is at the same time one of the metaphors of the circle, the slang term used in France to describe the male seminal glands and, in the language of Racine, it is equivalent to sexual union. This image of the group as a closed cell, knotted in upon itself as a totality, is countered and completed by that of the group as an open and limitless body, fragmented and protoplasmic.

Certain contemporary painters have given to the group as a body an image of the body as a group[1]: a painting by Niki de Saint-Phalle, *L'Accouchement Rose* (1964), depicts an immense mother's body open to reveal its contents: celluloid babies, aeroplanes, wild animals, spiders, octopuses, masks, flowers, a glutinous collection of sea-shells and young animals in a mass of hair and incongruous objects. This representation of the body-group confirms the viewpoints suggested by Melanie Klein regarding infantile fantasies concerning the contents of the mother's body: children–penis or children–excreta which tear each other apart or form a compact and undifferentiated mass.

Another contemporary painter, Jacques van den Bussche, depicts amoeba-like groups, the elements of which fuse into an immense body: a few heads, a few limbs are, like those of the Hydra, appendages which are common to all. The bodies, molten and confused, larva-like and protean, illustrate the primeval organic unity constantly threatened with morcellation or binary fission that only the unity of the picture and the frame holds together within a limited area.

4. To be and to make a body: group embryology

The representation of the group as a body wavers between an attempt to be a body, an initial safeguard against the unthinkable feeling of non-existence and a plan to reconstitute a unity that is constantly threatened
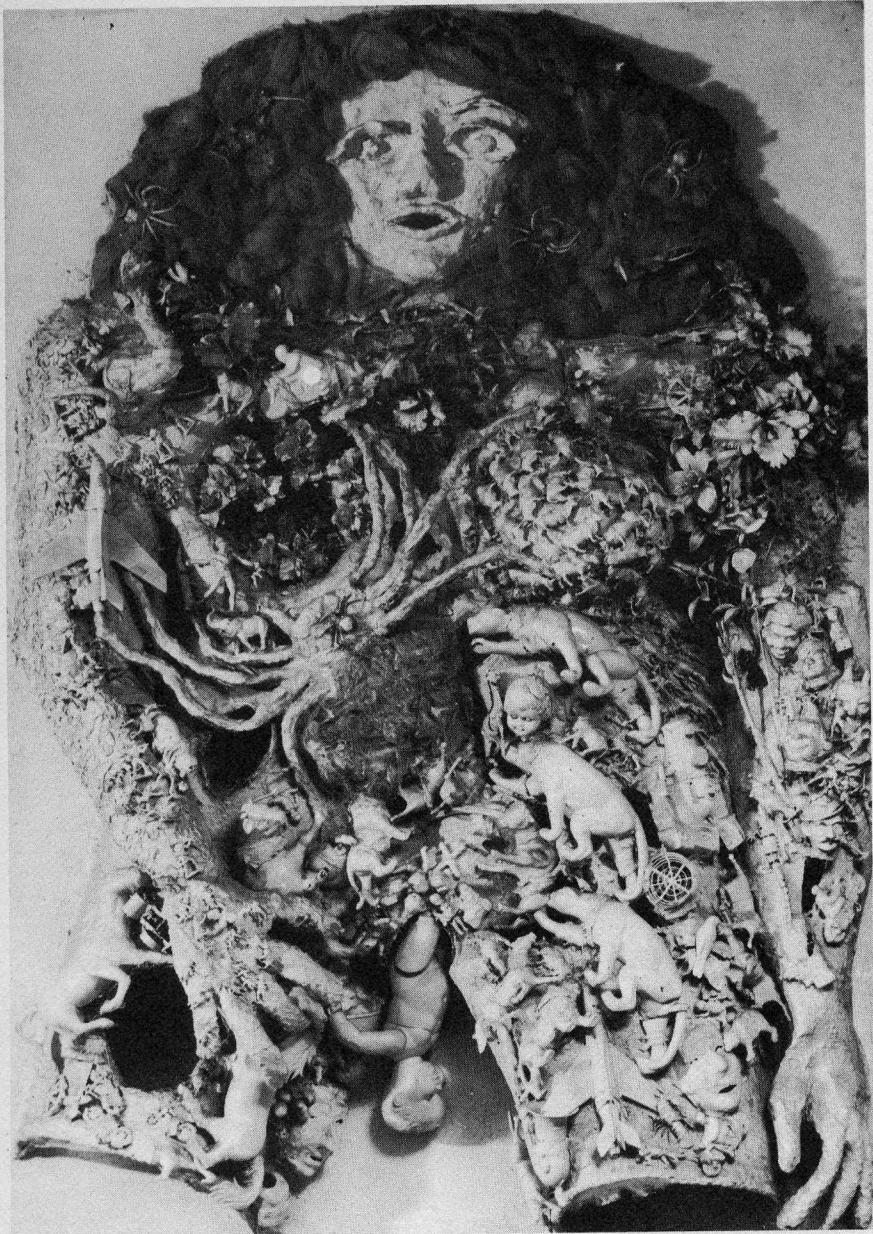
L'Accouchement Rose. Reproduced by kind permission of Niki de Saint-Phalle and the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

by the internal and external dangers that lie concealed within the early stages of psychic existence: to make a body is to give form to a body threatened with fragmentation, in order to give it unity.

To be a body is to incorporate and to be incorporated: it is to achieve an aggregation, internalized and incorporated, of an uncertain early body, whose internal and external boundaries are still in a state of flux and whose differentiations in the structure of space is barely outlined. Some drawings by lads of nine or ten spontaneously provide this symbolization of the group as being-body or making-body: one of them rather humorously shows an army general, whose decorations and the adornments on his uniform, as well as the whole of his chest, are made up of a multitude of soldiers; the word associations which he provides relate to the plan of an imaginary underground city and the life of babies prior to their birth. He does this drawing whilst his mother is expecting a child.

To incorporate and be incorporated depends upon eating and drinking: by way of proof see, for example, the paintings of the Last Supper, those of Civic Guard banquets, photographs of pensioners' meals,[2] the prevalence in advertising of edible objects associated with the group. To be a body within a group is already to make a body over against the anguish of separation and of attack, against the fear of not being given a place within an assembly which must start from feeding, protecting and looking after. Photographs of old-age pensioners represent future 'disembodied' people gathered in a circle or the arc of a circle around a table loaded with food and gifts and joined together by their physical proximity. Such a souvenir print guarantees ultimate incorporation, it provides, as it were, a last sacrament and a relic to leave behind before quitting one's working life.

The analysis of group photographs, of paintings, of advertisements, discloses the fundamental dimension of mirror identification in this attempt at being, at making and remaining a body. One discovers above all that in the struggle against the *psychotic anxieties* of fragmentation, of persecution and of depression the social representation *offers* a remarkable tool: photography and the group-portrait take on functions analogous to those of the *mirror* during those identifications which resolve the anxiety of fragmentation and those tensions which are destructive in fantasy of self and other. To calm this anxiety, photography and the group-portrait convey a visual *Gestalt* with which each member of the group can identify narcissistically at the very moment when the commemoration of the striking triggers off, as a

reaction, the fear of rejection or of becoming remote from the collective ideal. Photography, exactly like the civic portrait in Dutch painting, allows us to counter anxiety about dismemberment by an ideal unity 'a salutary imago' (J. Lacan), in the image of a cohesive group form, the fruitful aspects of which are the extreme conformity of each single person to the group norm and the reflecting surface of unblemished unity.

The visual representation of the group as a body, in which each person is a coordinated part of a unit that is coherent, accredited, idealized, overvalued, is the narcissistic component in identification with the object-group. The present/absent aspect of the image, the possibility of losing and recovering this group-image constitute the very anaclisis of the mentalization of the group as an object and a system of internalised objects.

5. Corporate feeling (*l'esprit de corps*)

This imaginary incarnation which is the basis for the social linkage – to make a body, to be a body within a group, via the group and its mirror-games – calls for a supposed subject of this body which the 'spirit of the group', its 'word', its 'speech', its 'thinking', its 'emotions' must assume: 'the group thinks, says, descries, decides', not yet like a 'we', but initially like a fantastic 'one'.

It is not surprising that one of the conditions for joining the group stated during the discussions is that the group should be an organic whole united together in cohesion and unity, in which each individual takes second place, so that the group can act against individual limitations and weaknesses 'like one man', 'a single mind' opposed to dispersal and internal struggles. These representations confirm certain aspects of the religious image of Whitsuntide – the decisive and unifying answer to chaos and the confusion of Babel: the boy's drawing of the army general would also serve as an illustration of this idea.

To make of the group a body is to give it what it lacks by locating in an *imaginary unity* that which for every subject is recorded as weakness and privation, division and dissociation.

Organicist or cybernetic theories of the group and of society operate on the basis of such a belief, which indicates the status which the object-group is capable of assuming in the unconscious.

The group is a biological totality, or a biological analogy, whose elements are linked by a vital solidarity and by regulatory systems which transcend subjective individualities and which are henceforth

manipulated by the system directing them. The paranoid nature of the most important fears experienced in such organizations stems fairly directly from this representation, like the defence mechanisms most commonly employed against anxieties. Every deviation, or impediment to regulation, every weakness is a threat directed against the bio-groupal unity and its capacity for survival or developments: every dangerous member is expelled, cut off and replaced by another who is better adapted; every loss of an object jeopardizes the whole; every internal quarrel is fatal, as in the fable about the limbs and the stomach.[3] It comes about in Freud's description, in *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*, of the subject of Holopherne who was beheaded by Judith: 'that the "leader" lacks and the "members" lose their head'.

Let us sum up our point of view about the psychic and social components of the representation.

The *psychic organizers* of the representation of the group are the original structures set up in the progressive development of the psyche; in their unvarying structure they owe nothing to any given social model of the group and nothing to such-and-such a system of collective representations, whose elaboration depends upon specific principles and processes. *Group* properties of these organizers define their ability to mobilize (energy, cathexis), to distribute and to permute (both places and relationships) for group members and for intergroup relations.

Since the work of Serge Moscovici (1961) we know that the social character of a representation is defined not only by a quantitative yardstick, as when one considers its diffusion throughout a collectivity, or solely by a production criterion, as when one analyses it as the expression of a particular social structure, but also by a functional criterion, if one tries to grasp its own contribution in shaping behaviour and communication within a social gathering. I have called *social organizers* of the representations models of grouping and of relationships suggested by cultural studies and which function as socio-cultural codes appropriate to a given society: they maintain social functions to the extent that they organize the collective internalization of reference group models which maintain and regulate social and interpersonal exchanges. The point of view which I elaborated in my study of 1968 made me emphasize the function of social representations as a point of reference for the purposes of identification; the validity of this viewpoint was confirmed by the analysis of group representations in advertising, photography and portraiture. Not merely is each and every group founded upon an emblematic representation of its object of

identification, but also the common representation maintains common identifications to the same object, through a shared representation (or idea) which performs a similar function to that of leadership. This within-group trans-narcissistic emblem identifies the frontiers of group belonging and of intergroup relations. The representation is called 'social' in that it guarantees the possibility of communication and exchange. It is a nucleus of identification for members of the group which distinguishes it from the non-group.

The psychic functions of the representation are not therefore separable from its social functions. From this viewpoint social representations constitute one element in a progression towards the symbolization of unconscious psychic representations. Therefore, they provide access to these latter by way of their functions relating to anaclisis and defence. Concerning social representations we could say that they are potentially capable of functioning, either as fetishes or as transitional objects, the range of which (according to Winnicott) defines exactly the ambiance of the culture. They are ready-made objects which leave room for communication, mediation and creativity. In this space a more or less free play is established between the unconscious and the social representations. The highest degree of constraint could be achieved by the invasion of this representational space by ideology which is conducive to symbolic reductionism and the creation of an illusion of a one-way determinism. Social representations, by reason of their collective nature and their status of temporal priority which locates them within cultural experience, constitute a framework, a code and a ready-made content, which is both available and necessary for developing internal psychic reality. Thus social representations constitute, at one and the same time, reference models and fracture points for the symbolization of unconscious representations and, like their psychic equivalents, are subject to cathexes.

6. From representation to group process

I have endeavoured to show how the process and products (mentalities) of mentalization constitute a psychic activity which is subject to a double anaclisis, and how representation is a necessary factor in mentalization, which is defined as work concerned with absence and bonding. From this standpoint, every representation is social, and this includes its individualizing function, to the extent to which it takes shape and becomes mobilized when the bond weakens.

Within the limits of this chapter, I can only sketch out the transition from the representation of the group (its mentalization as absence and bonding organizing intra-psychic group structures, e.g. the 'in-groups') to the group process itself. My thesis is that the group is formed and constructed as a specific entity that begins from the effects of the representation which members mutually bestow on each other in relation to this object-process.

Group clinics have led me to think that the way to construct a group is through the elaboration of a psychic group apparatus, which provides the mutually supporting metaphorical illusion of being an immortal, indivisible, all-powerful body, that is a pure spirit. When the psychic organizers of the participants set sail on the bodily *imago*, the group comprises artificial devices and spare parts which are subject to dismemberment and to death. The metaphor or fantasy concerning the group-body calms the subject's anxiety of excision and the even greater anxiety about his having no place, no existence, within another's desire. Such a fantasy is clearly a denial of what differentiates the group from the personal system, a suture in the anaclitic space of mentalization.

To be a body is to strengthen the weld preventing an internal break which the group seals over: to be a body is to set in motion a process of resistance against the anti-body, the enemy banished to the outside and against whom the coming together again (the reunion) organized under the aegis and guardianship of an Ideal, gives some insurance that each can take his place within such a group-body.

Taken *in toto* my analysis insists upon the specific means of mentalization we call representation, absence-work (the represented) and bonding (the present shared). Dependent upon both the body and the group, and upon already articulated speech, somewhere between fantasy and myth, the double series of the organizers of the representation are, in the fullest meaning of the term, an organization-process of psycho-social relationships and not the reproduction of a mental or social state.

Notes

1. Certain theorists writing about the body have represented it as a group: 'the body', writes G. Groddeck (1923), 'is a society of organs'. Examples are plentiful in painting and the literature of representations of the body as a group. This reversibility of the metaphor sets up a field of forces where one passes from the body to the group and from the group to the body: a tension which might well define the paradoxical space within which are created together the anaclitic support for psychism and the group.

2. These form part of a corporate tradition which has always been honoured in certain professions e.g. those of railway officials, administrators etc. They play a key social psychological role in the elaboration of work, of the group and in the maintenance of social cohesion; the shared meal at the point of retirement is a traditional rite whose aim is to maintain ties of identification, despite the separation.

3. Around 500 BC the Roman Consul Menenius Agrippa quelled a popular revolt by proposing to the people the metaphor of the limbs and the stomach. He explained that just as the members of the body cannot live without the work of the stomach, and vice versa, so members of the social body are united in an organic whole of which they form part. Six centuries later St Paul proposed a similar metaphor in order to reduce internal quarrels within the Christian assemblies by highlighting the unity and solidarity of the members of the body of Christ.