

The Marauding Paths of a Group Training¹

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the connections between the Jungian concept of collective unconscious, the Bionian group dynamics and the *septenary* schema elaborated by the Swiss psychoanalyst C. Baudoin, as a synthesis of the Freudian and Jungian topics. Borrowing (marauding) concepts from the above theories, we propose a theoretical analytical framework for our experience with the ASTRAG group training association in terms of psychoanalytical instances and their relations in the analytical group situation. We describe the history and activity of ASTRAG that we founded in 2005 at Geneva, Switzerland. This association has trained more than 100 people interested in group dynamics over 14 years. One of the main features of this training is that there is no money exchange of any sort. Participation is free and the training staff is made of volunteers who are not remunerated. Participants are accepted with no entry interview. We then conclude with some considerations on the effect of gratuity on the group analytical work.

Keywords

Group Analysis, Group Psychical Apparatus, Collective Unconscious, Archetypes, Psychoanalysis

1. Introduction

In 2005, the authors founded ASTRAG (Association for Therapeutic and Social Group Work, Galli Carminati & Carminati, 2015; ASTRAG, 2018). The aims of this association are to encourage and promote awareness of, as well as provide training in, the therapeutic and social group work to physicians, psychiatrists, mental health workers, social workers and, more generally, those involved or

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simply interested in group dynamics processes. Each year, the association organizes a group training over four weekends. This training is free and open to any public interested in group dynamics. Trainers, lecturers and “frontier person²” all participate gratuitously. This is an unusual and almost “heretical” (on more than one account) setting, mainly because the exchange of money is considered essential in psychoanalytic practice, whether for group or individual therapy. During this rich and abundant experience which has lasted fourteen years and is still ongoing, we have had the opportunity to weave several theoretical and practical links with our psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytical paths.

We publicly presented our group experience for the first time in 2015 at Geneva (Switzerland) in occasion of the 59th Symposium of the International Institute for Psychoanalysis C. Baudouin (Baudouin, 2019), to which our analytical obedience goes (Galli Carminati & Carminati, 2015). This conference forms the basis for the present paper. The ASTRAG experience is at the confluence of two fecund lines of thought and, in some sense, humanitarian and holistic views of Man. On one side we have the classical group-analysis (Bion, 1961; Mullan & Rosenbaum, 1962; Foulkes, 1983; Foulkes, 1990; Yalom, 1995; Kaës, 1999; Garland, 2011; Tubert-Oklander, 2019). On the other side, the links with the theory of gift (Mauss, 1922; James & Allen, 1998) could offer interesting ways to deepen and better understand the mechanisms at work. In a somewhat paradoxical way, we start from a free training experience, strongly influenced by the idea of “donation”, to proceed on a “marauding path”, which is on the contrary led by theft and plunder of ideas and concepts.

This article is indeed conceived as a “marauding path” which is, in fact, the path of the looter who, from a cottage to a farm, from a country house to a hunting lodge, steals—in our case, discreetly and without damage—the treasures of analytical knowledge to enjoy and share concepts and ideas.

2. Brief History of ASTRAG

The ASTRAG Association was established on January 31, 2005 with the aim to raise awareness among people interested in group situations via the direct experience. The underlying reasons for the creation of this Association can be partly explained by a movement of dissent and secession within the TGA (Analytical Group Work) of the Geneva University Hospital by the president and founder of ASTRAG.

A web site (ASTRAG, 2018) was quickly set up, but without providing extensive information on the group experience. The main message that remains conveyed is: “If you want to understand something of the group, you have to experience it”. Five years later we added a “For more explanations” page, but apart this short and elegant explanation, the reader remains with a lot of unanswered questions. We are convinced that there is no explaining of the group experience, it must be tried directly.

²A “frontier person” is a person who, for one weekend, visits in turn all the different groups and participates to the interventions with the staff.

In 2005 the ASTRAG Committee was composed of 4 members, 3 of which were integral part of the training staff. We tried to start group training in 2006, but there were very few registrants and we gave ourselves a year of reflection. In 2007, we decided to adopt a structure with “no money” and “no filter”. The training is free of charge, there is no monetary exchange of any sort and we accept all candidates. One person joined the Committee and he remained there until 2011, working in the staff until 2010. In 2010, a member of the training staff was accepted into the Committee, while continuing to work as a trainer. During 2012, the committee returned to 4 members. In 2013 another staff member was integrated into the Committee.

The premises are offered to us without any compensation by the Lavigny Institute in the Canton of Vaud (Switzerland). In 2012, the Institute asked us to provide training for about ten members of its personnel in two groups, over twice two days. This request, which added a 50% workload to our training, had the positive aspect to increase our experience in group training, but at the price of a work overload. This demand for targeted training of the socio-educational staff of the hosting institution was not repeated. We have received requests for training elsewhere than in Switzerland. This opened a discussion on the possible professionalisation of the training and the introduction of monetary exchanges. This also caused serious tensions within the staff. At the end we decided to decline the requests.

In 2007, we had two small groups for a total of about 15 participants, the staff being composed of four people, with two of them working not only in the small groups but also in the large group and lecturing on group theory. In 2008, 2009 and 2010, we increased to three groups, with a staff of six. In 2011, we arrived at four groups with nine members of the staff, because the person leading the large group and giving the theory lectures to the “1st year” participants did not attend the small groups. 2011 was a period of destabilization for the formation. We had four groups and nine staff, but during the year we had to make changes in the staff of the theory and reflection sessions that were not easy to manage.

In 2012, we returned to three small groups with eight staff, six people for the conduction of the small groups and two for the large group and theory lectures. Also, in 2012, we introduced the requirement for candidates to provide their CV and a letter of motivation (not more than 50 lines), to be admitted, or not, to the formation. We also introduced rules for obtaining the final certificate, which is no longer provided if absences exceed a certain number of hours. An attendance sheet is filled by the group leaders. This control measure is not really in keeping with the free spirit of the training but was considered necessary as a token of commitment from the participants.

As we will see in the following, the absences and the numerous abandonments are indeed an aspect we came to be accustomed to, and probably are part of the spirit and the nature of this training. The staff also suffered from abandonment and resignations, leaving the Committee to face, “at short notice” and not always

in good spirit, the defections, chosen or independent of their will, of some members of the staff.

In 2013, we decided to reduce the number of small groups from three to two per day, with a dozen participants maximum, to retain, even in case of a large number of abandonments, a minimal number of participants. The risk was to have a dynamic too close to the large group (which starts at 12 members) in the small groups. We finally started the year with 9 participants per group and we had a very limited number of withdrawals. In 2014 the training consisted of three groups for a total of thirty people between trainers and participants. From 2015 to 2017 we had four groups, with ten trainers and thirty participants.

As of 2017 the authors left the conduction of the large group while continuing to lecture in the theory sessions and conduct the staff interventions. The leaders of the large group have an exchange with the supervisors before starting the group. In 2018 we expanded to five groups due to the large number of participants and the staff was largely reworked due to the departure of a few staff members for personal and professional reasons. Probably one more subtle reason that caused some of the “historical” member of the staff to leave was that, at its 12th year, ASTRAG was entering a phase of “institutionalisation”, less “transgressive” and less appealing to the more “vagrant” spirits, who often are also those more related to parental loyalties.

Due to the large staff and the limited time for intervention exchanges during the pauses between groups, we changed the order of the groups, placing both small groups, rich of unconscious movements, in the morning, to allow for a more calm and long supervision of the staff during the lunch break. Another general supervision follows the large group at the end of the day. In 2019 we moved back to four groups and 12 staff, a leader and an observer for each small group, a couple for the large group and two persons for supervision and theory lectures.

3. The ASTRAG Setting

The training is based, with some minor modifications, on the model of the training groups in Bilbao (OMIE Foundation in Bilbao) and the TGA of the Geneva University Hospitals. At present there are two small groups of an hour and a half each, the lunch break, a one-hour theory session, a one hour “reflection” session, just before the large group of one hour and a half. The theory is different for “1st year” and for the following ones (2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th) who attend a reading group. As we have seen, the size of the small groups does not exceed nine participants who, together with the leader and the observer, form a group of eleven people, the “theoretical” limit beyond which the dynamic becomes that of a large group. In 2019 we raised the limit at 10 participants since we always have some absences and some people who abandon the training.

Each group has its room, which we try to keep during the four sessions of the year. When possible, we have separate rooms for the “1st year” theory and the

large group, to minimize the confusion of spaces. Small groups are a simulacrum of the family, as the large group is of the society. Couples, partners and members of the same real family are not allowed in the same small group, not to confuse group imagos with reality. The committee tries to avoid putting in the same small group, as far as possible, people who have too close hierarchical or personal links.

The training is conducted over four weekends (Saturday and Sunday) during the year. For the theory, the participants are divided into two groups, those who are in the first year and the others. For the first year, there is an ex-cathedra theoretical course on group analysis, with a large part devoted to Bion's basic assumptions. The other years follow common readings and discussion of various authors who have written on group analysis, such as R. Kaës, M. Botbol, C. Neri, I. Yalom, W. Bion etc.

During the 2nd and 3rd session, we admit a *frontier* person who participates throughout the weekend, and we invite one external speaker to animate a theory session, almost always on Saturday. When there is a conference, everyone participates, irrespectively of the year of training. The frontier person participates in different small groups and in reflection sessions, as well as in the large group. This person introduces "the foreigner who comes from elsewhere".

The structure of a day follows a pattern that aims to allow a fairly thorough work but is also attentive to allow participants to "return home feeling well". The "reflection" session before the large group has two main purposes. It allows people to discuss group situations that they have experienced, or they are planning to experience in a collaborative way applying the theory and practice of ASTRAG to real-life groups. The rule is that only professional or associative situations are permitted and not family situations. A marriage party is often cited as the "limit" between what is allowed and what is forbidden to discuss. The other role of this session is of "cooling" the participants to allow them to arrive at the large group in a state of relative emotional equilibrium after the small groups.

This used to work very well at the beginning of ASTRAG, until 2010. During the last years there has been a degradation of the working conditions and this space is more and more used to expose work related conflicts and situation of severe suffering at the workplace. This tends to transform it into a "third small group" dedicated to work-related emotional distress. This is contrary the rule, but more substantially this negates the objective of reducing the emotional charge before the large group. Moreover, the large group can be experienced as persecutory and a phantasmatic projection of the workplace, which would multiply the occasions for emotional distress. For the moment we are directing the staff to be very strict during the reflection to stay on the professional and rational field, but this helps only to a certain extent, since the participants express a real need to "depose" their work-related suffering. Evidently ASTRAG offers them a "secure space" where to do this that they cannot find elsewhere.

The setting is very important, because the group is a powerful mobilizer of affects, and so we must give time to develop the material that comes to light during the session of the small group. On the other hand, it is necessary to avoid a too great affective “acceleration” that brings the risk of instabilities and, in the extreme, decompensations. The leader of the group is all the time divided between the two needs to “trust the group” and its ability to “self-regulate” in a way that sometimes surprises even more experienced professional, and, at the same time, to ensure that no one is in a situation of danger or excessive suffering. This is important because in group practice, perhaps even more than in individual work, the setting has an “innocent” aspect, people sitting in circles and talking, while the forces involved are deep and powerful, and it is easy to get surprised. The paradox is that while everything could be considered artificial in a talking group, because of its highly “ritualised” setting, the feelings and the emotions remain very real and alive.

The setting of small and large groups is very classic, the circle around which the community meets, reminiscent of the ancestral camp where the fire protected from the dangers of the night, a primitive living mandala. We decided to put nothing in the centre as a transitional object (coffee table or flowerpot) to let emerge the fullness of the group emptiness, place of formation of the group matrix, where the interpersonal bonds are woven. We also believe that it is important not to limit or prevent the “face to face” of bodies, including sexual organs, in the formation of group identity. The setting as announced is quite strict: it is forbidden to get up from the chair, to touch or to share objects (tissues or candies included, and too bad for tears or coughs). It is also forbidden to leave the group (apart for health reasons or pressing physiological needs) and to drink and eat. Rules are “discovered” by participants rather than imparted “ex cathedra”. Frequent transgressions provoke a reminder of the transgressed rule without “disciplinary” consequences. The confrontation with the setting is one of the richest sources of phantasmatic “material” and it is instrumental for the construction of the group identity.

Very early in the evolution of the small group the leader is led to state the rule of confidentiality, without which the group envelope and the necessary relationship of trust would find it difficult to form. At the beginning, one of the most mysterious rules is the restitution, which is the request made to participants to report to the group any conversation between two members about the groups that has occurred outside the group. If the condition of application and function of this rule are initially rather vague, its importance becomes immediately clear in the face of the reaction of the group to the first “leakage” of group material due to a coupling of members outside the session.

The comings and goings between the theory and the experience of the group allow a deep perlaboration and interiorization of concepts that, at first glance, may seem abstract if not esoteric. It is always surprising and fascinating to see how notions acquired with some disbelief or even discomfort during theory, be-

come obvious and clear in small groups. The opposite is also true: situations or feelings experienced with surprise, even anxiety, during small or large groups can become clear and understandable thanks to the theory.

The conduction of small groups is provided by a leader, supported by an observer who cannot speak during the small group. Unlike other formations, we decided to have all the staff participating in the large group with the right to speak. The staff meets during the breaks between groups (half an hour) in a room reserved for them and has lunch there (one hour and half), trying to limit as much as possible the contacts with the participants outside the groups. During these periods there is intervision, which consists of a short “report” of the observer of each group and a common discussion. The objective is to talk about the group, any direct reference to people and even the use of names being strongly discouraged. This rule can obviously be broken when it comes to reporting a potentially dangerous personal situation.

With the years we came to realize that the staff also is a group, moved by the same group dynamics of the participants’ groups. This is in an interesting, and somewhat humbling experience in itself. The difference is of course is that we are a Bion’s “work-group”, with the objective to run ASTRAG. We found, for instance, essential to meet the Thursday before each session for a dinner to review the latest news and to “reinforce” our group identity. Experience has shown us that a respect for the setting on the part of everyone, including, and above all, the members of the staff, is protective of the good course of the training and avoids the development of destabilizing and dangerous situations. After some hesitation, for example, we have decided to formally ban carpooling between staff members and participants to get to the training, even if they know each other. The setting as applied to ASTRAG is standard for group training. Our experience suggests being very cautious with possible changes, because while group work is a more than well-known practice, our deep understanding of its mechanisms is only at the beginning.

4. The Group according to Jung/Freud/Baudouin

The objective of this paper is to interpret our experience with ASTRAG through the classical analytical framework. The lifelong work and ambition of the founder of the Baudouin’s psychoanalytical institute has been to find a synthesis between the work and ideas of S. Freud and C.G. Jung. In this paper we would like to follow very modestly in his footprints and discuss how different psychoanalytic theories could enlighten different aspects of our group analysis experience with ASTRAG. The attention that the Jungian analysis gives to the interpretation of our psyche from the viewpoint of the subject, and the Freudian stance, which privileges the role of the object (the Freudian trauma), provide us with two possible complementary views on our main subject: the analysis of the group psychic apparatus. Indeed, this apparatus, like the individual’s one, not only provides us with a synchronic perspective (the here and now of the group), but has

also a “genetic” or diachronic perspective: the life of the group psychic apparatus does not coincide only with the life of the group *hic et nunc*, but goes beyond the actual time of the group gatherings and has its roots in the ancestral group.

Jung’s theorization of complexes leads us to see our subconscious as a scene where multiple instances confront, and interact with, each other. As Baudouin says with Jung (Baudouin, 1950), these complexes tend to “develop into characters”, multiple within the same person, and we see this happening as well, and indeed being amplified, in the group situation. In this sense, we can think of our entire psychic life as a group experience, a *theatre of the soul* where our complexes are the main actors. The group work itself would then consist in the sharing of these complexes that can be reinforced or repressed by the effects of alliances or denial pacts, which all are basic mechanisms of group dynamics, and partially or globally diffracted onto the leader or the other participants via different projection mechanisms.

Group work is also a place of choice for synchronicity (Jung, 1986; Jung & Pauli, 1958). The effects of synchronicity in group work are frequent and even “mundane”, in the sense that they are part of the group’s daily experience. As Usandivaras (1986) says in his remarkable article on Foulkes, it is quite strange that Jung himself, who claimed that “the dream is dreamt by the collective unconscious and shared by dreamers”, did not consider the group as a field of investigation and experimentation. The very notion of individuation, the ultimate goal of Man’s spiritual evolution according to Jung, is at the base of the group work experience. This experience can be largely described as an oscillation between the consciousness of one’s own individuality, made more acute by the reaction to the integrative tendency of the group, and the emergence of a “superior” group individuality through a transformation effort in which each member of the group participates. This is a transcendental process, which could ultimately be called religious, in the original Latin meaning of *religare*, to be linked again to our common source, the Great Whole from which we come (Powell, 1993). The group experience brings us into contact with the “numinous” sources of mythological creation, a tangible expression of the archetypal *vis formandi*.

We could advance here the hypothesis that the reason why Jung did not focus on group dynamics is akin to the reason why Freud did not want to hear about archetypes and synchronicity, that is, the concern to be accused of nurturing unscientific theories or even wanting to revive witchcraft and esotericism. This hypothesis, which should be confirmed with a bibliographic work, suggests us that Jung did not want to take the step and move to a more “experimental” phase of his ideas on synchronicity and archetypes with groups, for this same reason. If, on the side of “individual” psychoanalysis, the group was treated with a certain “shyness”, the fathers of the group analysis (Bion, 1961; Foulkes, 1973) did not show more daring to connect their discipline with the topics of traditional analysis. And yet the elements for a dialogue were there (Usandivaras, 1986).

We must not forget that we are, with Freud and Jung, at the beginning of the

20th century. Humanity, still lulled by a neopositivist dream, wants to distance itself from the horde and the Romantic irrationality and relegate them to the shadows. And from the shadows, unfortunately, they will emerge in the nefarious splendour of unprecedented wars and totalitarianisms of all kinds. And even at the purely scientific level, the soothing panorama of late 19th century physics will be soon shattered, *coup-sur-coup*, by relativity, quantum mechanics and chaos theory. Group analytic work is, in our opinion, a way of interacting with the raw energy behind the horde, as an individual analyst interacts with the raw energy of the individual's subconscious or shadow. Bion and Foulkes come after the Second World War, times are different, and it is possible to attempt a theorization of the group, with perhaps still a little too much shyness towards the *fathers of psychoanalysis*.

5. The Group Psyche

The founding postulate of group analysis is the existence of a group psychic apparatus that can be analysed with psychoanalytic methods. If we consider Jung's postulate, shared by Baudouin, of the existence of a collective unconscious with its own structure and that is the place of formation of archetypes (Jung, 1920), it may seem obvious that there should be a considerable theoretical contribution to group psychoanalysis from the Jungian doctrine. By the same considerations, we might think that the analysis group could have brought important elements to the Jungian theoretical corpus. In spite of this, the Jungian doxa, for its part, indicates that Jungian group analysis is little more than an oxymoron. Jung used the word "collective" in a very general way, applying it to any collection of individuals that could have a destructive effect on the individuality of people. He wrote, in effect, that "... this is accords with the experience that social and collective influences usually produce only mass intoxication and that only man's action upon man can bring about a real transformation" (Jung, 1964). In his quest for individuation, Man, according to Jung, cannot relate to his peers if he is not first connected to himself, coming out of the condition of being part of a crowd.

The group seems to remain for Jung just the place from where the individual has come. As group analysts, we are very much in agreement that the relation to oneself is the foundation of the relation to one's fellowmen, but we do not think that, as Jung says, "no one can be bound to his fellowmen until that it is connected to itself" (Jung, 1964) because we believe that it is precisely through the relationship with our neighbours that we will more easily continue to pursue our identification process.

Jung, like Freud, also tends to think of all groups in terms of crowd psychology or mass psychology, which has probably been a big obstacle for many Jungians not only to accept the value of group therapy, but also to access the development of new trends in analytic psychology connected to group dynamics. All this is surprising considering the theoretical corpus of Jung. We want to give

here only a few tracks in this direction. The group is the place of election for the emergence of archetypes hypothesized by Jung. According to him, archetypes void of forms are a hereditary tendency of human nature to form “mythological” representations (see **Figure 1**). The setting of the small group (family) and the large group (society) in the analytic group work allow the emergence of these archetypes in a phantasmatic free space, partly stripped of the contingencies of a particular family or society: this seems to be an ideal “laboratory” situation for observing and studying them. The tendency of the group to regress towards ancestral representations is a unique opportunity to retrace the evolution of archetypes and their “emergence” in everyday life. The group itself is most likely an archetype, that of the community of humans and, in more ancestral times, the horde or the flock. The group as the place of infinite projections that Foulkes described in terms of matrix (Foulkes, 1973) is one of the best materializations of the “vis formandi” that Jung attributes to archetypes.

Jung (1946) wrote that the archetypes ... represent the life and essence of a non-individual psyche. Although this psyche is inherent to every individual, it cannot be changed or possessed by him personally. It is the same in the individual as in the crowd and, finally, in everyone. This is the prerequisite of each individual psyche, just as the sea is the carrier of the individual wave. This sentence could be used verbatim to describe the group psychic apparatus. The consequences of this rapprochement are far-reaching. Even the smallest group brings with it, in the primordial level of Foulkes, the matrix of the destiny of all mankind, with the opposite polarities of love and hate, of integration and destruction, of life and death. Foulkes himself has pointed out that all relations of the outer world, or macro-sphere, are in the microsphere of the group (Foulkes, & Anthony, 1965).

In 1964, Foulkes (1964) postulated four levels of group process. The first, which he calls the current level, deals with social reality. The second is the transfer

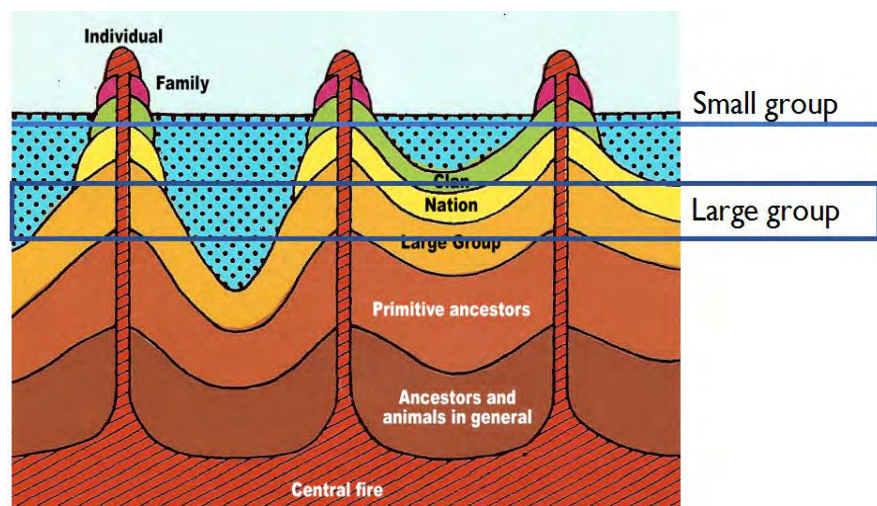


Figure 1. Jung’s schema describing the different layers of subconscious. The blue lines and the group mentions are from the authors (Jung, 1925).

level, corresponding to the development of all objectual transfer relations. The third is described by Foulkes as the projective level, which is the place of partial object projections. Speaking of the fourth, Foulkes refers to the primordial level, which corresponds to Jung's collective unconscious. Foulkes himself expresses this analogy: "This fourth level is the one in which the primordial images appear, according to Freud's concepts and especially those formulated by Jung about the existence of a collective unconscious" (Foulkes, 1964: p. 115). Although this analogy may seem rich and fruitful to us, Foulkes will not deal with the question again in this book or in another.

Each group is a sample of humanity, with its collective unconscious emerging during the group activity in the form of archetypal formations that are unique to it. It is ironic that Jung's archetypes come from the observation of the social groups, and yet he himself never saw the link with the therapeutic group. Foulkes' remark remained for a long time "unnoticed" and inoperative and it was only in the 1980s that the relationship between the fourth level of Foulkes and the Jungian theory began to be explored in the terms of ritual and mythological production applied to the group (Usandivaras, 1986).

In what follows we will discuss the relations between the Jungian concept of collective unconscious, the Bionian group dynamics and the *septenary* model elaborated by C. Baudouin as a synthesis of the Freudian and Jungian psychic structures. After discussing the collective unconscious, we will describe the group psychological apparatus in relation with our experience with ASTRAG and the *septenary* schema elaborated by C. Baudouin. To this end, we will first retrace the construction of Baudouin's *septenary* from Freud's second topics and Jung's structures of the psyche. We will then see how the group psychological apparatus can be described, as the individual's one and his development, by the seven "instances". In the group each of these instances is individually expressed by the group participants following their personal inclination and profile, their roles changing with time and with the group situation.

Let's open here a first stage of our marauding path from the 1st and 2nd Freudian topics, through the Jungian vision of the unconscious to the synthesis of Baudouin. In 1900 in his masterpiece *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud & Strachey (1900) introduces what will then be called the first topic (see **Figure 2**). Although Freud will rework this description, it remains nevertheless fundamental in the history of psychoanalysis, because it introduces the notion of a model of the psychic apparatus as an imaginary and imagined place composed of different psychic *sites* (topoi) depositories of contents and interacting the one with the other.

This model, analogous to the models used in 19th century physics, describes the functioning of our psychic apparatus based on three aspects (points of view):

- 1) Topical. The different elements of the psychic apparatus: Subconscious, pre-conscious and conscious.
- 2) Dynamic. The forces at play between the elements: principle of pleasure (libido) and survival principle, very quickly replaced by the death instinct.

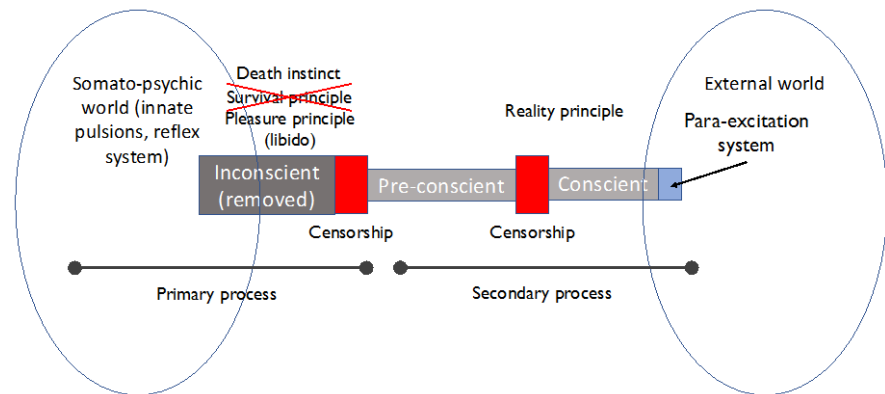


Figure 2. Freudian first topics, 1900.

3) Economic. The purpose or objective of these interactions: keep the tension of the internal energy as low as possible.

From 1920, the first topic was replaced by a new model of the psychic apparatus (Freud, 1920, 1923). In this second model (see **Figure 3**), the topoi of the first model become “attributes” (being more, or less, conscious or unconscious) of three new topoi, the Id, the Ego and the Superego. A fourth “place” or element is introduced, the Self, which sometimes identifies itself with the Ego and sometimes comes to signify the totality of the psychic apparatus. As we will see later, it could also be a linguistic effect of Freudian prose.

We have added the Self to the second Freudian topology although, to tell the truth, Freud has not introduced, at least in a conscious way (if we are allowed this little pun), the Self in the Jungian sense. In his writings, Freud uses the Self (Selbst) and the Ego (Ich) as synonyms, but in the German language the word Selbst indicates the totality of the individual, and this has generated an ambiguity that prefigured the birth of the Jungian Self.

It is interesting here to quote Mills (2011: p. 130): “Freud’s use of the term ‘I’ imports ambiguity when we compare it to a psychoanalytic conception of the Self. In some of Freud’s (1914) intervening works on narcissism, his concept of the ego corresponds to the Self; and in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), he specifically equates das Ich with das Selbst (p. 65). This implies that the Self would not contain other portions of the psyche such as the drives and the region of the repressed. This definition also situates the Self in relation to otherness and is thus no different from our reference to the ego with its conscious and unconscious counterparts. In German, however, the ‘Self’ encompasses the entire human being; but on a very earthly plain, it represents the core from which the ego acts and relates mostly to the conscious aspects of personal identity. While a strong case can be made for the Self as a supraordinate (see Meissner, 2000) encompassing principle—what Freud calls the Soul (Seele)—I believe Freud is justified here in conceptualizing the I, ego, and Self as synonymous constructs. The Self stands in relation to its opposite, namely, the Other, as does subject to object, and hence evokes a firm point of difference. This is precisely why Freud

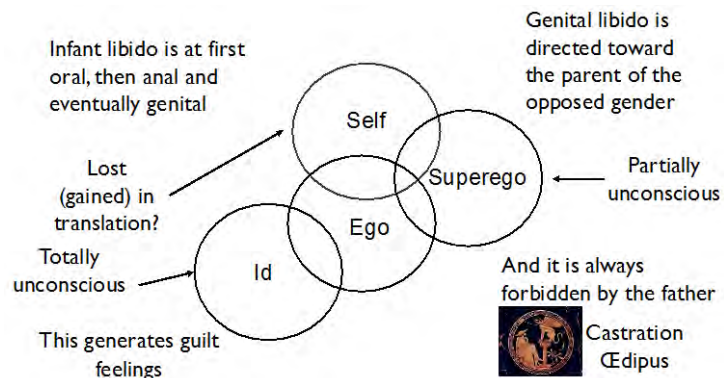


Figure 3. Second Freudian topics, 1923.

insisted on the dialectical presence of otherness: the ‘I’ is not the It.”

Therefore, in **Figure 3** we allowed ourselves a little *Witz* by writing, about the Freudian Self, “Lost (gained) in translation”³, to suggest that a semantic ambiguity in Freud seems to have announced the seminal concept of Self to be developed by Jung. To further complicate the picture for the francophone world, it must be remembered that the first French translation of Freud’s “*Das Ich und das Es*” (1923) was entitled “*Le Moi et le Soi*”, introducing another ambiguity, this time between what will later be called Ça (literally this) and Soi, from which the francophone Freudian semantics will take years to redeem itself.

A discussion of the complex relationship between Freud and Jung is well beyond the scope and ambitions of this article, but we can notice how Jung takes up the concept of topography, accepting also a model of the soul, as he would have preferred to say, based on “places” holding different entities and interacting dynamically with each other.

Jung’s *topoi* (see **Figure 4**) are partially different from Freud’s ones, but they too have the attribute of being unconscious to a lesser or greater extent. We also find the concept of a conscious Ego as the centre of the personality and a Self element as the unifying principle of being. This, in Jung, assumes a primordial importance, being the development of the Self the ultimate goal for the healing of the soul, and of moral evolution. This is the process that Jung calls individuation.

This topical description absolutely does not do justice to Jung’s theoretical edifice, which is much richer and complex (and we could say the same thing about Freud), but, as we have said, this is only a “marauding path” along which we invite our reader, where we pillage the few elements that will be useful later.

In 1950, the Geneva psychoanalyst Charles Baudouin embarked into an ambitious and subtle synthesis between the theories of Freud and Jung (Baudouin, 1950), showing that their complementarity was practical as well as theoretical. Faithful to the concept of topography, he combined the Freudian and Jungian topicals in the structure of Stoker’s Cone (Stocker, 1946) (**Figure 5**) where the

³*Lost (gained) in translation*, with a nod to Sofia Coppola’s movie [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_in_Translation_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_in_Translation_(film)).

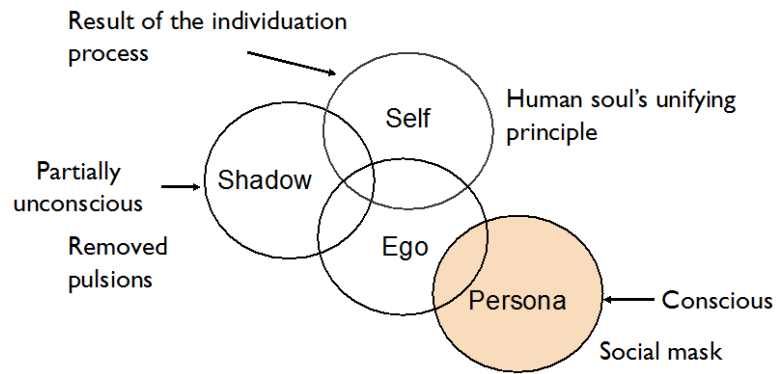


Figure 4. Jungian “Topics”.

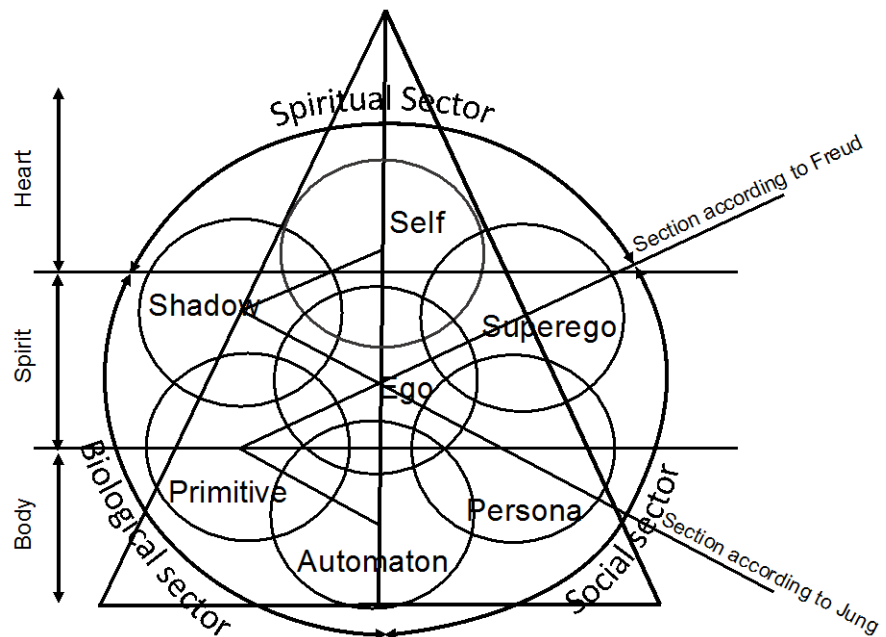


Figure 5. Stoker’s cone according to Baudouin (Stocker, 1946; Baudouin, 1950).

different *topoi* are arranged around a conscious Ego and aspiring to a harmonious functioning in obedience to the Freudian economic principle, orchestrated by a Self, itself the result of a process of Jungian individuation. To this, Baudouin adds an interesting analogy with Pascal’s domains of body, mind and heart, and with the works of other authors, but exploring that would take us too far from our path. In his synthesis, Charles Baudouin introduces a seventh instance, which he calls the *automaton*, derived from the Freudian repetition principle. Faithful to tradition, Baudouin attributes a varying degree of consciousness/unconsciousness to the different *topoi*.

Those who know the work of Jung, might find reason for surprise in the absence of the animus/anima in our discussion about the Jungian topics. And indeed, a quick Google search about Jung shows us a series of representations where the animus/anima is next to the shadow, persona, ego and self. This omission, suggested by Baudouin himself with his “septenary”, invited us to reflect on

this subject. Note that Baudouin was a connoisseur of Jung, so much so that his book about him (Baudouin, 1963) is recommended by the Swiss Jung Institute as an introduction to the life and work of the master. So, the reasons for this omission, which Baudouin does not explain, deserve reflection.

Despite the common iconography of animus/anima as a topos in the Jungian construction, we think that this is incorrect and that Baudouin was right in his selection of topoï among the different elements provided by the Jung. The characteristic of the topoï, as Freud introduced them, is to be “sets” in the almost mathematical, or more precisely topological, sense of the term, containing entities (conscious or unconscious material) with common characteristics. In this sense the topoï have a static nature, while the elements that they contain are subject to the forces of the soul (dynamic principle) pushing them towards the goal of energetic homeostasis (economic principle).

This is certainly not the case of the animus/anima, which is a “transversal” entity that we find in all topoï, but that is not completely contained in any of them. The animus/anima is not a container of elements, but rather a beam of energy that has its origin in the archetypes of Jung’s collective unconscious and that traverses all the topoï, interacting with their elements, but without being completely contained in any of them. It is also a highly dynamic entity, which changes according to the evolution of the psychic apparatus, for example in the process of individuation. In a manner which is specific to the Oedipal dynamics—which introduces the *third element* separating us from the symbiosis with the mother—the animus/anima pair is probably linked to sexual bipolarity and early integration of sexual aspects, both necessarily present and traversing, as we have said, the different stages of the individual through the instances. We will therefore be almost tempted to see in the animus/anima a complex that, as Jung says, may “round off into a personality” and become one of these complexes that, still according to Jung, animate our “theatre of the soul” and appear in our dreams. The harmony between animus/anima and the other complexes is, moreover, one of the fundamental conditions for the psychic equilibrium and for the individuation, and *Jungian triumph*, of the Self.

Baudouin (1956: p. 107) himself will return to the question by describing animus/anima as parts of the superego in the role of the ideal woman for the ideal man and vice versa, a kind of spiritual guide, a Beatrix of the Self, sometimes subject of identification sometimes of projection. But he does not seem himself too convinced confining animus/anima to the moral/ideal instance, for he says: “But rather than resorting to subtle definitions and many references (among which we would again risk to betray the complex thought of Jung), we will rather engage, once again, the reader to refer to the admirable Prometheus of Spitteler [...]” and a little further “[...] but this is only one of its aspects and its rich irradiations do not fit well with any rigorous qualification. If the notion is not absolutely clear, we are at least sure that it is an important conceptual acquisition.” And so, now that this point is clarified (at least as much as this ap-

plies to Jungian psychology), we can make use of the theoretical booty we have accumulated so far to venture further into the group world.

6. The Septenary of Baudouin, the Cone of Stocker and the Group

We are ready now to consider relations between our experience of the group in ASTRAG and the Stoker's Cone as introduced by Baudouin (1950). We arrive here at the second stage of our marauding path between the Cone of Stocker with its three sectors, biological, social and spiritual and the instances of the septenary of Baudouin. In the Cone, the base is composed by the biological sector and needs, expressed by the instances of the automaton and the primitive. It is then time for the social persona to emerge, introducing the social sector and its needs, balanced by the shadow coming from a mechanism of repression like in Freud's 1st topic. Whatever is inappropriate or embarrassing for the dawning social persona is, according to Baudouin, pushed into the shadow. The superego already belongs to the sector of the spiritual needs, together with the Self. The three levels that Baudouin borrows from Pascal, body, mind and heart, are traversed by the development of the individual, almost according to a psychological phylogenesis.

We note that, following to the Freudian *section* (see Figure 4), the primitive (Freud's Id) is opposed by the superego; according to the Jungian section it is the persona who is opposed by the shadow. The issue here, which we will return to later, is that the repression of the primary process and that of the secondary one (we are here in Freud's first topic) arise at two different stages of development, between unconscious and preconscious the first, and between preconscious and consciousness the latter, being the persona the boundary with the outside world. But the superego develops in early infancy, while the persona appears later and is the result of the confrontation of the individual with the social world. More on this point later. Following the hypothesis of the existence of a group psychic apparatus, we may attempt to describe it with the help of Baudouin's septenary and Stoker's Cone (Figure 6).

The automaton is the body of the participants in the group in the physical setting of the group. It is very present in the group work. Fatigue, expressions of boredom and drowsiness, or different physical postures are all expressions of psychophysical states that cannot be conveyed by speech.

The primitive, is the place of the group psychic apparatus from which arise the needs of satisfaction or pleasure. It is the site of the individual pleasure with or against the pleasure of the group. Sitting in a circle can be a serious limitation of movement and frustrate the body of the participants: this suffering is felt by the primitive that rebels against these limitations.

The persona. Sitting face to face exposes the person of each participants to the others. The persona is also the image that the group has or want to convey of itself. The need for a positive image is very present in the group illusion phase

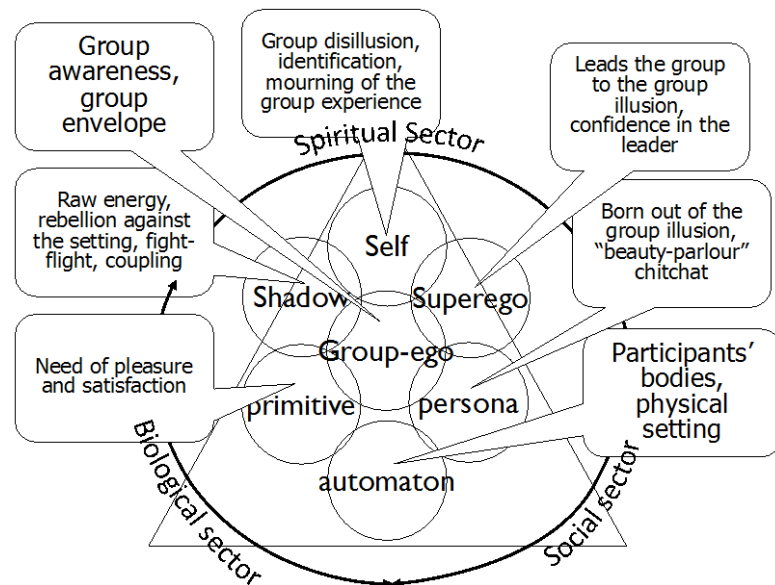


Figure 6. The Stoker's Cone and group dynamics in Baudouin's septenary.

and it leads to “beauty-parlor chitchat” so frequent during groups. A group that “goes around in circles” can be a manifestation of the persona, or of a “good disciple” attitude towards the leader-observer couple. It is also the image that the small group tries to give of itself in the large group.

The superego governs the conduct of the group in the group illusion phase. It is also the origin of the imperative felt by the group to “go faster” and “go down deep”. The superego also invites the group to “follow the leader”. It is the inability of the leader to guide the group towards salvation which is at the root of the group frustration and disillusion. This in turn brings to the emergence of Bion's basic principles that are usually masked by the work-group activity.

The shadow is the depository of the raw energy of the group and of all the urges of infringements of the rules and of the (phantasmatic) murder of the leader. It emerges at the beginning as a centrifugal force, when the group must “mould itself” into the group setting. It is also at the origin of the opposite, centripetal fight-flight attitude, when the group convenes to “make its laws” and compensate the deficiencies of the leader. It is also where the “incestuous” coupling/mating fantasies are born to fulfil the group messianic destiny.

The self emerges after the group disillusion and the mourning of the good and selfless leader. It brings the group to accept its reality and prepares the mourning of the training experience, when the group will separate forever.

The **group-ego** is the emergence of the consciousness of the group as an entity. It can lead to flight reactions caused by the anxiety of loss of identity of the participants, but it is also at the origin of the group illusion. The formation of the **group-ego** is clearly observed in the first small groups. It contains group representations, projections and the group transfer toward the leader.

Baudouin's instances can be seen in a group:

- individually, as the participant experience them in the group at the given

moment, they are all present, but the participant expresses more one or the other, as it was said, at any given moment;

- as an expression of the group psychological apparatus, the participants of the group express more strongly one or the other instance, according to the profile of the individual and the group situation at any given moment.

The group dynamic plays with these distributions of the instances, because, at the level of the single participant, the group causes the dominant instance to change, constantly generating a new distribution of the instances at the level of the group. The dominance of one or the other instance in the participant is influenced by the group and redistributed to another participant. This corresponds well to levels 2 and 3 of Foulkes, reinterpreted according to the Cone of Stocker. Indeed, in the group work we see the emergence of the different “instances” of Baudouin’s septenary, with a sequence that does not really respect, or only partially, a chronological succession but is characterized by their concomitant presences.

7. Who Comes First ... the “Social” Persona or the “Spiritual” Superego?

The last stage of our marauding path takes us on a journey from the concept of the septenary according to Baudouin to a proposal of ours for a slightly different septenary. According to a writing by Freud, “We will also admit this general schema of a psychic apparatus for the more evolved animals, psychically similar to man. It is necessary to suppose a superego in all the cases where there has been, as in the man, a more or less long period of dependence in childhood. We cannot avoid assuming a separation of the self and the id. Animal psychology has not yet tackled the interesting task that is offered here.” (Freud, 1923).

The fact that the development of the infant, of the man or of an animal, is long and requires a contact with the father and the group, seems to determine, according to Freud’s suggestion, the separation of the ego and the id (first topic) and the appearance/need of the Œdipus complex (second topic). While this is very schematic, we want to suggest that the superego appears at an early stage of development, much deeper and earlier than the impact of the social medium, that will inevitably arrive later, and to which responds the formation of the persona.

We noted before that the Freudian *section* puts the primitive in opposition to the superego and the Jungian *section* puts the persona in opposition to the shadow. By following the different stages of the process of individuation, however, the persona would arrive too early (being on the boundary with the outside world). Indeed, the superego, connected with the paternal role of separating “third element” between the infant and the mother, appears earlier in the development of the individual. The superego is the true arena of the Œdipal conflict, very present in early childhood, the persona being, in our opinion, a late comer linked to the confrontation of the individual with the external world, expressing the individual process to conform more or less willingly to social demands.

As we said before, during the group work, we are confronted with the emergence of the different “characters” of Baudouin’s septenary, whose presence is concomitant. We will now revisit them following this hypothesis of ours, noting that, in the case of the group, their appearance does not follow real chronological steps. The call of basic needs is always present: hunger, need to go to the toilet, thirst, back pain—chairs are always less comfortable than we had hoped for—cough, want to sleep, tingling. Everyone experiences, some more vividly than others, in one group or the other, the role of the automaton pressing heavily or painfully in his own body. These feelings often pass from one participant to another, positive sensations being also possible, with a new well-being, and a healthy energetic feeling. The primitive is looking for pleasure; it is the one who wants to have fun and is frustrated by the imparted limitations. The participant is tired of sitting, he would be so much happier on a walk, or skiing, or at the birthday party he gave up to waste time at ASTRAG. He launches into seduction, wriggles and squirms, quickly repossessed by the frustration dictated by the rule of abstinence. Here too, the role of the primitive moves from one participant to another in the same group all along the training.

The superego is often faced with conflicts of loyalty between the leader of the group and the parental imagos. While we usually adopt a “practical” distance from the parents during our daily life, depending also on the of the participants’ individuality, the parental imagos in the group can cause us to fall back into our early Œdipal childhood. Indeed, the introduction of the *third element*, be it father/laws/totem, separates us forever from the symbiosis with the mother, of which our dreams of enchanted places, shrines, churches, flower gardens bring back the elusive memory all along our life. According to us, this moment of development is probably much less sexed than in the Freudian theory: be the baby a boy or a girl, the symbiosis with the mother is really a fundamental moment and a *third element* is indispensable for the separation. The fact that the baby use confrontation or seduction to cope with this third element depends his gender but also strongly on his character, more comfortable with the confrontation or the avoidance, the rebellion or the flight.

To illustrate our point, we therefore, at the risk of being repetitive, reproduce the triangular diagram of Stocker and Baudouin’s instances, with the reversal of the persona with the superego (**Figure 7**). We could say that the upper corner of Stocker’s triangle, the spiritual sector, is probably more related to our persona and that our social attitude strongly depends on how in the early stage of our development, we integrated in our superego, the third element/laws/totem.

8. Persona and Superego in the Group

In the group, the leader is, *par excellence*, the imago of the father who dangles in front of the participants, as his supposed omnipotence will disappoint us, again, in his inability to free us from death. The stronger the loyalty to the parental imagos, the more and more quickly we find the flaws of the leader of the group.

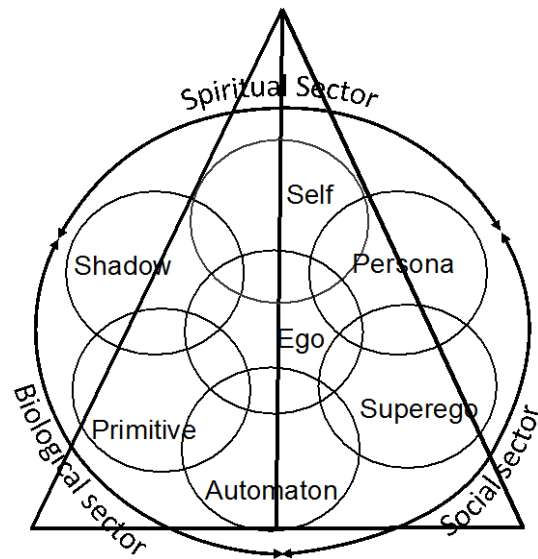


Figure 7. Our proposal for the Baudouin's septenary and Stoker's cone.

Those who attack the setting more vehemently are usually very devoted individuals with a strong obedience to authority. Participants who seek to find a compromise and show a more accommodating attitude are instead people who have at least partially renounced their fidelity to the parental imago and who also put a much greater reliance on the solidarity among individuals. The disappointment that every human situation invariably brings, and specifically the ASTRAG training, is collected by the shadow, secret, silent, painful, great source of migraines and colic. Often the shadow disturbs the automaton with unpleasant feelings, as if the internal conflict had to pass through the somatization if cannot be symbolized.

The social role, the fact of being someone for the others, or at least to be convinced of it, gives a certain stability to the individual. In a way, the individual follows his evolution from the baby, to the small child, to the child of school age, to the adolescent to the adult who, through studies and profession, takes roots in society. Nothing is easy because the social role certainly reassures us but also bounds us to a specific reality that may be hard to change. We are freed from this link to a specific role, sometimes against our will, sometimes with relief, but always with surprise, at the moment of our retirement. Late maturity and old age push us towards the self.

The self opens us up to a space of reflection, we could say a contemplative space, spiritual in the immanent sense, which is the point of contact between interior and exterior where conflict, frustrations and wounds are felt. "When we have no choice, we are free", so freedom identifies with the constraint of an accepted finitude. The ego lives through the exchanges that the instances have between them and within the group situation. Especially in an analytic group training, the ego is confronted from the outset and inescapably with the deep layers of the psyche, not only its own but also those of the collective uncon-

scious.

As we said, the instances do not emerge in a fixed sequence in a group, but they coexist. Our experience with this emergence of instances in the group has suggested us to terminate the series of small groups, with a “reflection group” each day, just before the large group. This tradition, which we took from the OMIE Foundation training in Bilbao (Fundación OMIE, 2018) and the TGA of Geneva (TGA, 2018), suggests that, after contact with the unconscious, the social persona allows a “stabilization” and a certain appeasement of the participants. The confrontation with the social space therefore seems to us to arise first in the context of the family with the introduction of the third element in the oedipal context, and only afterwards in the broader context of the extended family, clan, community, society. The child is certainly influenced by the social context and the collective unconscious. However, the first source of frustration is the presence of the separating *third element*. This yanks him from the state of completeness of the child-mother dyad and forces him to begin, or better, to continue his path of individuation beyond the automaton and the primitive.

We have an interesting “experimental hint” of this at the first group of each session. The participants—especially the newcomers—look first at the leader-father for guidance, to receive the rule-lesson of the session and form the idea of what is expected-permitted. Faced with the “analytical silence” of the leader that follows the by now standard “Bonjour!”, the looks wander from one participant to the other, creating the social persona.

9. The “Free Lunch”

One of the most original features of ASTRAG is the fact that there is no money exchange. The premises are offered free of charge, there is no fee for the participants and staff and speakers are not remunerated nor reimbursed. This is clearly a highly unusual setting, and during the years we have been able to analyse its effects on the analytical work. While in a dual setting a “free analysis” would probably not be possible, and in any case not advisable, our experience tells us that it is possible in a group setting. The intimacy of the transfer-counter-transfer mechanism in a personal analysis requires the exchange of money to “exorcise” the emotional phantasms evoked by such a situation. As in the mother-child dyad it is the father/law who is the third element and introduces the rule of the law regulating their intimacy, so in the psychoanalytic dyad the rule of abstinence is mediated by the exchange of the money that is issued by the state/law and bears its symbols.

The other important role of the money in the analytical relationship is that it extinguishes the debt of the patient toward the caretaker. The burden of an eternal gratitude could be crushing, as it can be the sentiment of impotence in front of a saviour who can decide to save or damn you. If this can be “bought” as a service, some power returns to the patient, who can preserve his narcissism from the feeling of total helplessness. This is also why all people have developed the

belief that the gods can be “controlled” with sacrifices, or good deeds and prayers. The alternative would simply be unbearable.

In a group setting the transfer-counter-transfer is no less intense, but it is diffracted onto several actors, so it becomes possible to establish an exchange which is not sanctioned by an external authority. It has also to be said that ASTRAG’s objective is not therapeutic, but pedagogical and formative. Despite this, over the years we have received numerous testimonies of its therapeutic effects, but still this is not its stated objective. The underlying philosophy is akin to the one of Wikipedia or of the open source software initiative. Those who know share they knowledge with those who want to learn, and by sharing it, this knowledge is put to the test, increased and refined. The process is still asymmetric, but those who teach gain knowledge from the activity of teaching, creating a win-win situation and a virtuous cycle where there is no need or place for commercial exchanges.

The effect on the psychoanalytical relationship is complex and we are continuously learning about it. The engagement of the participant is toward the group and toward ASTRAG rather than connected with the money they have paid. Since nothing has been paid, there is no external token of this engagement, which is entirely personal and inside ASTRAG itself. This directly questions the value of the training. On one side what costs nothing is perhaps worth nothing. Or is it? The need to find a value and a reference scale stirs sentiments of confusion and of persecution. Why the ASTRAG staff is doing all this for no visible reason? Are they trying to pry secrets out of people? Is this a sect? These questions are regularly evoked and elaborated both during the groups and during the theory lessons.

On the other side, what is obtained gratuitously can never be repaid. The debt is eternal and source of eternal anxiety. However, in the group setting, this also is diffracted. There are many saviours and not a single one, so the sentiments of dependence are toward the group and not towards the single individuals. We are probably genetically programmed to accept the dependence from the group, in exchange of “playing our part”, so the “gift”, when it comes from the whole group, is acceptable. One of the features of ASTRAG is that there is a certain “attrition” and a part of the participants leaves the training during the year (approximately 15%). We believe that this is due to the ambiguous “loyalty” relations in a free training. At the opposite extreme, other individuals show an extreme “fidelity”, and after the five years of training that are the maximum allowed, ask to enter the staff.

10. Conclusion

ASTRAG is a rather “classic” group training, except that it is free. Since 13 years it has trained about a hundred people from very different horizons and not all belonging to the therapeutic field. The group analytic experience, although much has been written and thought about the group, remains to this day, relatively distant from an integration into the corpus of the “classical” psychoana-

lytic vision. It seems to us that the group, being the privileged place of the collective, opens itself to a vast project where a synthesis between psychoanalysis and group analysis seems necessary to make progress. Baudouin's work linking Freudian topics and the Jungian vision around the collective unconscious theorized the instances of the septenary as the synthesis of these two visions of the psyche. The step towards group therapy was not done by Baudouin, nor by Jung and Freud, but Jung's reference to the collective unconscious, the Freudian Oedipal dynamics and Baudouin's instances offer powerful elements for a further theorization of group dynamics.

We have thought a lot about the risk connected with a group experience with an almost "unfiltered" admission and without the protective mediation of money. The group experience necessarily puts us in contact with deep, primitive and cognitively unreachable layers of our own and collective unconscious. It is for this reason that we opted (volens aut nolens, but the destiny has been of a great wisdom) for a very reliable staff, tightly knit and with good analytical bases. This leads to a new dynamic that challenges all classical aspects of training and the relationship between staff and participants.

The group situation unceremoniously puts us in direct contact with archetypal content. Several elements emerge during this group experience: the need of the totem-leader, proper to the Oedipal dynamic and the emergence of frustration in the face of the leader's helplessness to free us from Mother Nature, so powerful and inevitably mortiferous. These accompany the participants along the path through the instances, from the wise "living for life's sake" automaton to the differently wise fully individuated self, all necessary present for the group's survival. All these elements are presented to the participants and the staff in their full force in the group experience, and even more intensely in a training group, behind the soothing but deceptive rationalizing aspect of "attending a course". We think that group analysis, with its aspect of amplification of individual dynamics, is a valuable laboratory for advancing, also, in the field of so-called classical psychoanalysis, with the perspective of a very rich reciprocal fertilisation still laying in front of us.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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