

The Learning Group: Dynamics, Concepts and Issues  
A Post-Foulkesian Group-Analytic Ethnography  
of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Training

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### **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning

Signed:

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William Bernard Fahie Farrell.

Date:

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### **Ethics Approval**

This study was granted ethics approval 02/157 at the meeting of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee held on 11 November 2002, initially for a period of two years. This approval was subsequently extended at the meeting of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee held on 17 January 2005. The documents relating to ethical approval and consent to participate are included in Appendix One.

## Abstract

This is a study of the final semester of a clinical training course in psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

This study explores the contribution of the classroom group to promoting the process of learning, in other words, its role as a learning group. The author took part in the group as a participant observer, but was also one of the two teaching staff responsible for the semester. Hence, the study is an exemplification of practice, from the inside outwards.

Within the inter-disciplinary tradition of psychoanalytic anthropology, the study demonstrates the novel methodology of post-Foulkesian group-analytic ethnography.

The study makes use of an understanding of the unconscious mind, one which emphasises associative processes. This perspective enables a focus on metonymy, a figure of speech where a concept or object is replaced by an associated concept or object. In the study, metonymy is used to facilitate both the elaboration of the methodology and methods of the study (by exploiting the associations between disciplines and processes that are contiguous), as well as the processes of analysis and interpretation of the data.

Data was collected through participant observation (both at the time of the teaching and learning and in reflective consideration later), by audiotape recording the semester, and from analytic consideration of allied experiences.

The study includes both a narrative account of the whole semester as well as analyses of a series of 'sticky moments', episodes that are dense with layered meanings. These sticky moments include: a difficult beginning; an eruption of emotion in an hiatus; the dramatic appearance of a powerful symbol; phenomena transferred to, enacted in and managed in an allied reflective space; and disconnection from reality at an ending. These are understood respectively as being, amongst other things, illustrations: of *timelessness*, and of containment, essential to the work of the group; of how an individual can come unconsciously through a form of *symbolisation* to be the focus of and conveyor of experience for the group; of *condensation* of an array of meanings into a single instance; of how *displacement* offers potential for resolution, and, finally, of how an *absence of mutual contradiction* can allow the unconscious to remain so, at a cost.

From these accounts, a series of concepts, dynamics and issues are identified. These elements are then linked to form a group-analytically aware model in order to inform and to understand this type of teaching and learning. This model has twin foci, the content of the learning, and the context and process of that learning.

The study aims to contribute in the following ways: to understanding of the processes of teaching and learning; to the development of research methodology for reflective practitioner research, particularly for use by clinicians but available to others; to clinical psychotherapy training; and to the promotion of professional development in related fields.

## Preface

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In this preface, I want to assist you, the reader, to engage with my thesis, ‘The Learning Group – Dynamics, Concepts and Issues: a group-analytic ethnography of psychoanalytic psychotherapy training’. The thesis is an account of practitioner research, a qualitative inquiry into aspects of my own work as a trainer of psychotherapists. A central feature of the research is this ‘inside-outness’, starting from one’s own practice experience and seeking to elaborate and exemplify that, rather than looking in on the practice experience of another from a theoretically positioned methodological perspective. I should also make clear that although the work touches on anthropology, my own home academic discipline is psychology, whilst this research is carried out within the practice discipline of psychotherapy.

One of my aims in this preface is to highlight two important features of the thesis, *focus* and *metonymy*. Another aim is to account for my choices about presentational style, in relation to *position*, *person*, and *tense*. Details of these aims follow.

### ***Two important features of the thesis – focus and metonymy***

Focus first. Dictionary definitions of focus typically refer to *a point of convergence*, as, for example, in rays of light being drawn to a focus. My own use of focus refers more to the convergence of *attention* at a particular point or level.

In any situation, there is a range of possibilities for the focus of attention. For example, in this study, when I was carrying out the original professional work that I am now studying, the training of psychotherapists, my focus at the time was principally on my

role as a trainer,<sup>1</sup> I was concerned with the accomplishment of a task, the delivery (together with a colleague) of a programme of training. In changing my role, to another present at the time but more so in hindsight, that of researcher, I am focussing instead on studying an aspect of how the training accomplished its goals. I am particularly interested in the contribution of the classroom group to that accomplishment.

This leads to consideration of the methodology and the methods of the research. Because I have two inter-connected roles between which I must move at various times, those of trainer and researcher, respectively participant and participant/observer, an obvious research method is that of participant observation. Writing on group work, Barnes, Ernst and Hyde (1999) have noted how practice in that field draws on both infant observation from psychoanalysis, but more particularly on participant observation from anthropology. Indeed, a number of theorists and researchers whose ideas are central to this project have a background in both of these disciplines, psychoanalysis and anthropology (Devereux, 1967; Ewing, 1987; Kracke, 1987; Williams, 1997).

In the previous paragraph, I have made a move from what I need to do, to a method which enables my task, and from that method to a methodology and then to a disciplinary home which provides a philosophical basis for the method and the study. I will trace this path in the opposite direction in the three following chapters, when I give a full account of the philosophical underpinnings, methodology and method of the study. I will also return to the question of focus throughout the thesis, since it is a central part of how I transform and analyse the data. For example, in the Synchronic

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<sup>1</sup> At various points in the thesis, I use the terms 'trainer', 'tutor' and 'teacher'. 'Tutor' is the name given to the role by the agency, probably because of its long involvement in training in the clinic and outside of the academy, and its association with the tradition of clinical tutoring in health professions. 'Trainer' similarly emphasises the more pragmatic and less scholarly aspects of the work. 'Teacher' I would see as an umbrella term covering a range of aspects of contribution to learning and professional development, with a leaning towards the academic and didactic, although this is moderated by the post-modern emphasis on teaching *and learning*.

Analyses (Chapters Five to Nine), I have chosen a series of incidents, which I have characterised as Sticky Moments,<sup>2</sup> on which to concentrate or *focus* my attention. Within each of these Chapters, I *focus* at various points on different levels of communication within the group. These range from the current or everyday level, down through more primitive and less conscious levels of communication, to a primordial level where individuality barely exists. In describing these levels of consciousness, I am introducing Matte-Blanco's (1975, 1988) notion of bi-logic, in particular as a way of theorising surprising events in the group. I say more about this in Chapter Two Part One, but this theorisation is also reflected in the next feature of the study that I want to highlight.

My second feature is that of *metonymy*. Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one term is replaced by another, when something is referred to by a word which describes a quality or feature of that thing. Examples of metonymy include the use of 'hand' to refer to a crew member at sea, or 'The White House' to refer to the Presidency of the United States of America. Metonymy is like metaphor, in that, in both, one term is substituted for another, and metaphor is also important in the field of the study. However, metonymy is also unlike metaphor, in that in metaphor the substitution is based on *similarity*, whereas in metonymy it is based on *contiguity*. The President *does* live in the White House, and a crew member's hand is joined to their body. An example of metaphor is, (said, say, of a politician) 'in supporting this legislation, he has shot

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<sup>2</sup> The notion of 'Sticky Moments' is discussed in Chapters Two Part Two and Three, as an aspect of both the methodology and methods of group-analytic ethnography. It is taken from the title of a television game show co-devised and hosted by the British comedian Julian Clary, and broadcast on UK Channel 4 between 1989 and 1990 (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sticky\\_Moments\\_with\\_Julian\\_Clary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sticky_Moments_with_Julian_Clary)). Clary's work was based on the art of *double entendre*, and hence made much use of phrases such as sticky moments. Such a phrase was common in the discourse of characters in British inter-War adventure or detective fiction, and used to signify moments of heightened arousal leading to perspiration. In Clary's hands, a supposedly innocent description of experience and activity comes to stand for a sexual experience. I chose the term as a short-hand device to indicate moments dense with layers of meaning, which are I argue are particularly amenable to group-analytically oriented investigation.



himself in the foot'. Supporting legislation is in this context is *like* shooting oneself in the foot, but there is no *contiguity* between them.

The particular importance of the phenomenon of metonymy for this study is that it is a familiar example of how bi-logic can manifest, and impact. It includes the possibility of a part representing a whole. The understanding of metonymy to be developed in the thesis supports the privileging of associative processes. For example, on the previous page, the focus slides. It moves from a clinical method (group psychotherapy based in part on participant observation) to a method for enabling teaching and learning (a form of group facilitation) to a research method (participant observation of that teaching and learning from the role of tutor and group facilitator). These fields are all contiguous with each other, and one can be in more than one (and hence have more than one focus) at the same time.

Metonymy is important within psychoanalysis.<sup>3</sup> Amongst Freud's clinical methods in psychoanalysis (Freud, 1913/1958), free association is arguably one of the most important, allowing a flow of thoughts, feelings, images and sensations from the analysand without the burden of a need for rational and coherent links between the elements. In free association, as well as in Freud's method of interpretation (Freud, 1900/1953), metonymy plays a key part (this is discussed in Chapter Two Part Two). Furthermore, many parapraxes (or mis-performances), which include slips of the tongue or pen, can be thought of as unconsciously determined moves towards contiguities and hence significant examples of metonymy.

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<sup>3</sup> Here I am using psychoanalysis in the broadest sense, which includes its roles as an intellectual framework, as a theory of human development, and as a range of clinical methods for the treatment of problems of behaviour and experience.

The purpose of the class that I am studying is,

... to develop the participants' practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. This is accomplished by the further promotion of students' understanding of the language and concepts of psychoanalytic psychotherapy ... and in particular by the development of their ability to apply this knowledge and understanding directly in practice.

(extracted from course material)

The application of knowledge in practice requires that students can think about clinical material presented by their patients, and that on the basis of that thinking (together with the sum of their theoretical and experiential knowledge) they can craft responses, which can take a range of forms. These responses may include interpretations. By taking part in a group including two tutors who altogether attempt a version of this same task, students have a direct experience of a form of the task for which they are being prepared. At the same time, they still have the safety of the remove to a teaching setting and the physical absence of the patient whose treatment is the focus of the group's work. The group can thus be seen as a parallel to the associated clinical setting.

The change of focus from a clinical setting to a training setting can be carried even further, to a research setting. Within the research, much of the knowledge and many of the methods for collecting and transforming data are used as if they were still employed within the original clinical context.

Regarding this last point, in addition to similarity based on contiguity, between theory used to inform and consider clinical practice and theory used to inform and consider research, there is also an important difference. It may be that aspects of theory previously thought to be fundamentally opposed may in fact not be so. In clinical practice, this is challenging, because coherence of theory is important for outcome. This is very much true in cases where a therapeutic milieu is informed by a particular theory.

Here, differences between staff members (which may both result from and contribute to incoherence) can lead to poor outcomes for patients (Bateman, 2000). The concern is less, say, in the case of an individual clinician in private practice, but there is still an imperative to maintain theoretical consistency. In research, particularly if this is at a remove from practice, differing and apparently contradictory theoretical clinical perspectives may provide different lenses, which can lead to a fuller or deeper picture. This awareness will be revisited when the philosophical underpinnings of the research and the methodology are outlined.

Putting *focus* and *metonymy* together, my aim is to give a theoretical basis for understanding them and what they imply, and then to join them to form an investigatory structure, capable of both shifting and holding attention.

### ***Position, person and tense***

I want to offer some clarification about my use of position, voice and tense in this study.

I am using *position* to refer to where I (or any of the other participants) may stand in the research and in the processes around it. I occupy a particular range of positions. In relation to the teaching and learning which is the focus of the study, I am positioned as the researcher, in the stance of participant observer. I am also positioned as one of the two tutors (the title for staff members adopted by the agency providing the training) of the semester being studied. Connected to my position as tutor, I'm the coordinator for the course of which the semester is a part, and I'm head of training for the agency. As the semester takes place, I'm also the clinical supervisor of one of the students in the

group, which was acknowledged to the group at the start of the course but which is not formally acknowledged during this semester. I have many different positions.

Regarding *person*, I am using this to refer to the grammatical situation of the narrator. I am of course aware of the academic convention of writing in the third person singular, usually as ‘the researcher’ or ‘the author’. For much of the study, for example when reviewing literature or elaborating philosophy or methodology, this is unproblematic. However, in other parts of the study, that is, in relation to the data, the accounts of the events of the semester, I am also a participant as I have just outlined. At times in these parts of the study, I wish to argue that it is appropriate that I use the first person singular. Hence, at times I will change person from third to first person and back. At other times, I may be writing of my experience as a group member, and then I wish to argue that I may need to write as ‘we’ and ‘us’, using the first person plural to denote that I am writing on behalf of the group. My role as tutor may also require this when I am writing on behalf of my colleague and myself as tutors, separate from our involvement with the students (for example, during the consulting breaks in the middle of sessions).

The argument for the use of the convention of writing in the third person is broadly that it contributes to achieving the major research aim of objectivity. However, in qualitative research, particularly where the focus of study is the professional work of the researcher, and in participant observation, where the foci of attention include the subjective and intersubjective experience of the researcher, it can be hard to justify the privileging of distance from this experience. Sufficient and variable distance is needed to allow a range of reflections on subjective and intersubjective experience, but making this distance permanently equal to that required to permit objectivity may lessen,

obscure or miss altogether the knowledge that may be contained in that experience. It is hard to better the argument of Wolcott (1990, p. 19),

The more critical the observer's role and subjective assessment, the more critical to have that acknowledged in the reporting.

My choice in response to this view is to move at times between persons, but to undertake to limit, to signal and to give reasons for these moves. Examples will arise when I get to some of the 'sticky moments' in the course of the semester that are discussed in the synchronic analyses (in Chapters Five to Nine). In these, I may write as 'I' when I am describing my direct experience in the situation under study. I may take the position of 'the researcher' or 'the observer' when I wish to withdraw to some extent from direct involvement with my own experience. I may write from an impersonal and universal perspective when I want to maximise the distance between those directly involved (including myself) and the reader, and to imply that more general propositions are being articulated.

Finally, regarding grammatical *tense*, a number of writers have considered the use of the 'ethnographic present', the convention of reporting observations as though they continue to happen currently (Agar, 1996; Van Maanen, 1988). This use of the present tense can, at worst, leave 'subjects' or 'respondents' trapped in a continuation of their interaction and unable to move on. At the same time, it can also convey vividly how it feels to be present and participating, even if only as a bystander. This last feature, vivid experience of participation, is particularly important for the establishment, maintenance and enhancement of trustworthiness of the data. To conclude this consideration of position, person and tense, I will change tense from time to time. However, this will happen only when I have previously signalled my intention, and usually the change will be intended to facilitate the achievement of trustworthiness.

## ***Conclusion***

In this Preface, I have introduced some features of my work that are important to what I am hoping to achieve, as well as something of how I plan to achieve it. I have also attempted to avoid some of the irritation for the reader that might arise from unconventional practices. The chapters of the thesis follow next.

# Part One

## Introduction, Methodology and Methods

# **Chapter One**

## **An introduction to the study**

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### ***Introduction***

In this chapter, I will introduce this study and its importance to me. I will then give an account of the gaps in knowledge that I am exploring, and an overview of how I will perform that exploration in the rest of the thesis.

In the subsequent chapters of Part One of the Thesis, I will first give an account, in Chapter Two Part One – Literature Review, of what has been contributed in this area by others, and in Chapter Two Part Two – Methodology, of the conceptual framing of the study. Next, there is an account of the methods employed in the study in Chapter Three, ‘Research methods and their use’. I then go on in the six Chapters of Part Two to explore my data. Finally, my conclusions are formed and expressed in the three chapters of Part Three.

### ***Why is this study important to me?***

I’ll<sup>1</sup> start by briefly introducing myself. I’m a psychologist. Whilst I mostly practice psychotherapy, I also supervise and train psychotherapists and psychologists, and act as a consultant to individuals, groups and organisations. I’m male, white, in my late fifties, and I’ve been doing this sort of work for over thirty years. I want to explore an aspect of my practice, with twin aims, both for what I can find, but also in order to learn how to do this exploration of practice.

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<sup>1</sup> As signalled in the Preface, I’m writing as I would speak here, in order to be as authentic as possible.



I've had a broad and long-standing interest in groups<sup>2</sup> as part of my work. As well as studying psychology and training in psychotherapy, on the way I also trained as a social worker. From all these disciplines I became highly aware of the importance of the social context of behaviour and experience alongside the more personal aspects. Looking more personally at my own life, I experienced very early loss when my father died before my second birthday. I've always found intimacy difficult, although I have been more able to attach to groups,<sup>3</sup> and I think that's partly because I can trust them more than dyadic and other relationships with few members (such as trios and quartets). I was at boarding school from when I was 8 until I was 18, and learned to survive and even thrive in a group environment.

My own basic training in psychotherapy both took place in a small group of eight students (which represents an almost ideal group size for a small group), with an experiential group throughout the course, and the curriculum including work with more than one person (that is, couples, families and groups) in addition to the more traditional focus on psychotherapy with individuals. Because of the experiential group with my fellow students in which I was required to engage as part of the training, I had the chance to experience again how much groups can offer in times of difficulty.

I've trained, practised and taught in group analysis, an approach to group psychotherapy developed by the psychoanalyst S H Foulkes (1971, 1975). I will say more about group analysis in Chapter Two Part Two, but this approach particularly privileges the network or matrix of connection between people, the 'meeting of minds' (Behr & Hearst, 2005),

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<sup>2</sup> By *groups*, in relation to my work, I mean groups of people who are associated in some way, including as members of couples, families, extended family or *whanau* (the Maori term for extended kinship); as members of social and work groups and organizations; as members of clinical or developmental groups, and as members of educational groups.

<sup>3</sup> Here I'm using Foulkes' notion that a group consists of five or more people.

which can then form another kind of mind. Foulkes defined group analysis as therapy by the group of the group including the conductor (1975, Page 3), and the reciprocity that his definition captures has always been very inspiring to me. When I've been particularly vulnerable in group psychotherapy, I've been helped to bear that experience by the knowledge that I can be a part of making that strength available to others at other times.

I took this appreciation of groups into my work as a teacher of psychotherapists. In running psychotherapy and counselling courses, which I would see as aimed at developing the capacity within each student to be intentional in their practice, it has always seemed to me important to enable psychotherapists and others engaged in training to learn (including particularly learning about themselves) from each other as much as possible.

This brings me to the course that I am studying in this thesis. At the time of beginning the study I had not long migrated with my family from the United Kingdom to New Zealand. I think that as a psychological defence against the magnitude of that experience (one deployed on many previous occasions) I had adopted the role of ethnographer. Although I had yet to articulate the methodology that I have come to use, post-Foulkesian group-analytic ethnography, I was disposed towards a form of participant observation, getting involved in things (as was required by my migrant life) whilst keeping out (as was required by my professional role as a psychotherapist, by my identity as an outsider, and by the need to maintain my sanity).

I was offered the opportunity to run the course that I am studying, and to develop it as required by the needs of the various stakeholders. A major priority was that I wanted to

form the staff into more of a team. Previously, it seemed to me as if the content of each term of teaching (at that time, there were six terms over two years) had been regarded as the property of the incumbent staff member, and somehow the students had to find coherence in between the enthusiasms of these individual teachers. I also re-formed the course from six terms into four semesters, which mirrored changes in the local university system at that time.

These are issues relating to the structure of the course. The content of the course has also been an important focus for me. When I assumed responsibility with my colleague for what had become the semester that integrates theory and practice, I could readily contribute to refocusing the case discussion forum in a way that invites the evocation of unconscious processes and exploration of them. This had been a focus of my work over twenty years, and did feel like something that would make a major contribution to the learning of our students (and indeed it certainly appeared to). My colleague and I have refined this method of conducting the case discussion forum since then, by applying our experience with subsequent intakes. However, I found myself at the time wanting to look more deeply at the experience that we had in a particular run of this semester, and to think about how I could apply what I might learn.

What had happened for me by now was that a number of my passions (for groups, for training and for research) had begun to intersect simultaneously. This project is a chance to look below the surface and behind the scenes in a group that is structured to help its members integrate theory and practice in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Having introduced myself, I need to look at the territory in which I find myself, the gaps in knowledge.

### ***The gaps that the thesis aims to fill***

This thesis aims to fill *two* gaps, the gap in existing knowledge about learning groups, but also a gap in research practice that seeks to explore learning group and related phenomena.

The aim here is to sketch those gaps, both in existing knowledge as well as in research practice, and to form questions for the study to address. This dual focus is reflected in the heading above, what are the *gaps*, plural. The end of the Chapter will be represented by two questions. One question is about professional learning. The other question is about ways of investigating professional learning. These dual foci will be held throughout this investigation. At times they will be more separate, at others inseparable, but the maintenance of both of these is a distinctive feature of the research.

It seems important to start from a consideration of existing practice at each of the two foci (*learning group* and *research*), and then to follow with an assessment of where there are important unanswered questions. The learning group focus is considered first.

### ***A gap in the understanding of professional learning that results from the use of the group context of that learning.***

Where I want to end up is with a question about what is *not* known in the practice of training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. I will seek to reach this by considering both what is known, as well as the limitations of current knowledge, beginning with existing practice. I want to point out that I'll be including a lot of detail of the training being studied, but this is of value for background later in the study.

### ***Existing practice***

‘Existing practice’ refers to the method of teaching that my colleague and I had evolved over the course of three years working together as well as with other members of our team and in previous training settings. It is important to acknowledge that this evolution was built on our collective inheritance from many other colleagues in the form of largely implicit practice wisdom, so credit is due to many of them.

### ***The semester***

The teaching under study is the fourth and final semester of a two-year part-time course. At the time of writing, this course is now part of a post-graduate diploma course in the school of psychotherapy at a local university, but at the time of the study it was not formally accredited. It had been developed and run annually for fifteen years in a centre for family counselling and psychotherapy. The Centre<sup>4</sup> is a well-established non-governmental agency which specialises in the clinical practice of psychotherapy from a psychoanalytic perspective. It has a range of international contacts in the fields of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, including in North America, Europe and Australia. The Centre has had a reputation as something of an oasis in its home city for the promotion of this theoretical orientation in what can otherwise be something of a desert, or even a hostile wilderness.

The course has always had a local reputation as a useful resource for experienced mental health professionals (including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, and social workers) wishing to extend their capacity as psychotherapists, as well as for

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<sup>4</sup> In the thesis, I refer to the institution as ‘The Centre’. Unfortunately, this institution was forced to close for financial reasons in March 2009, although a related institute has taken over responsibility for the course as partner to the university.

experienced counsellors in the process of becoming psychotherapists. At the time of the study, there was also a growing number of students on the course who had completed some formal psychotherapy training (notably in the same university that came to accredit the course), but often from a different theoretical orientation to that of the course. For example, the group under study, which has nine members, consists of one doctor, one psychologist, one social worker, two nurses, and four psychotherapists. All of the four psychotherapists are graduates of the local programme, which at the time had only recently begun to teach psychodynamic psychotherapy, and then as an option.

Until the start of the intake under study (i.e. since the beginning of the previous year), the course had consisted of a two-hour taught session each week. Each year of the course ran over three ten week terms, which had recently been reformed into two fifteen week semesters. This intake was the first to have a one hour 'reflective group experience' added to their two hour programme. This was intended to be a space for students to reflect, with facilitation by a conductor not otherwise involved in their teaching or assessment, on the experience of the learning on the course.

The reflective group was introduced following recognition amongst the staff that learning this approach to psychotherapy involves a process of personal transformation, and hence the students had need of a vehicle to enable them to more effectively make a personal integration of the learning on the course with themselves. Some of this awareness had come from a range of staff experience elsewhere, as well as from the recognition that the two-hour model could, by itself, make only a modest impact on the practice of course graduates.

The introduction of the reflective group had a major impact on the course. In the past, students had arrived in a hurry, often at the last minute from a busy clinical day, and left as hurriedly after the course was over. The additional time on site, without any additional formal agenda, left open a potential space, and given the availability of facilitation from an experienced group conductor and practising psychotherapist, the reflective group represented an opportunity that could potentially range from an aid to cognitive learning to something profoundly therapeutic and personally transformational. In addition, the presence of the reflective group effectively created the learning group (minus the teaching staff) as an entity that existed outside of the teaching sessions (albeit in a particular incarnation). Arguably, this served to adumbrate or outline the perspective on the learning group from the ‘group’ vertex.

This intake had been taught a semester on basic psychoanalytic concepts (such as the unconscious, resistance, defences, transference, counter-transference, assessment for psychotherapy, formulation and the process of psychotherapy). This was followed by a semester of teaching on models of psychosocial development and psychopathology, and by another (at the start of the second year) on major discourses in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, including the work of Freud and Klein, self-psychology and intersubjectivity (Kohut & Wolf, 1978; Stolorow, Brandschaft, & Attwood, 1987), as well as object-relations theory (Fairbairn, 1952; Guntrip, 1971; Klein, 1940, 1946).

### ***Components of the course***

In this context, the aim of the semester is to help the students to integrate their learning up to this point on the course. This begs the question, what is that learning? Taken as components, these include theoretical learning (taking place from reading and discussion, and from both didactic and experiential learning), clinical learning (taking

place in the discussion of case material illustrative of theoretical concepts, in the supervised clinical practice required by the course, in clinical seminars and in supervision), and personal learning (taking place in personal psychotherapy, and at other times when opportunities for this present themselves, as in the reflective group or in the course of the learning group under study).

There is some cross-over between these components of learning. For example, theoretical teaching raises the issue of clinical application, which strays into clinical learning. Many of the blocks to clinical learning, that are, for example, identified in supervision or case discussion, are personal in origin, so at least personal lacunae or blind spots for future attention can be broadly identified during clinical learning. On occasions, personal therapy or even the reflective group experience can illuminate theoretical understanding or promote clinical skill in otherwise unexpected ways. The most profound experiences can have impacts in all three areas. The significance of this point is to emphasise the need to be aware of a range of dynamics and processes when considering the impact of a change.

There is a set of attitudinal predispositions that characterise the position of the staff in relation to this work, and which can be seen as comprising another key component of the course. As senior members of agency staff, the tutors were experienced practitioners, and needed very little further authorisation in terms of what and how they taught. They were clear that the task was to elicit an integrated clinical and personal competence within each student, rather than to impart wisdom for the students to take in. Their view was that the students had quite enough reading material, and rather than yet more new ideas, the students needed to assimilate into their practice the concepts and capabilities that they had already encountered in their practice outside the course



and in their learning within it. To an extent, this was reflected in the very minimal reading required as part of the semester. Students were given only three items, in contrast to earlier semesters, including on this occasion classic papers by Casement (1985) and Searles (1955) on making use of experience in the clinical or supervisory situation, and by Guntrip (1975) on the personal experience of undergoing psychoanalyses with two iconic but different analysts.

Other parts of the attitudinal disposition include the awareness of the need to create an ambience where what Haley (1963) has termed “dead serious play”, and all that this entails, can take place. Haley is, I believe, attempting to capture the paradox whereby some of the most serious of human dilemmas and issues require a creative response. This involves differentiating the work of the semester from didactic teaching, from student-led presentations, from supervision, from personal therapy and from group psychotherapy. In relation to the work of the semester, the staff had in mind the established notion in educational psychology (Smith, 1984) that groups of children learning with or without play had similar outcomes, but that those children who had learned more in the context of play were able to generalise their learning more flexibly as well as more readily. Hence they wanted to do what they could to maximise the outcomes for their students by the way they constructed the context of their experience. A lot of the requirements for this to happen seem to involve absences rather than presences, such as the absence (or reduction) of anxiety about performance or criticism, rather than the presence of any explicit facilitatory resource.

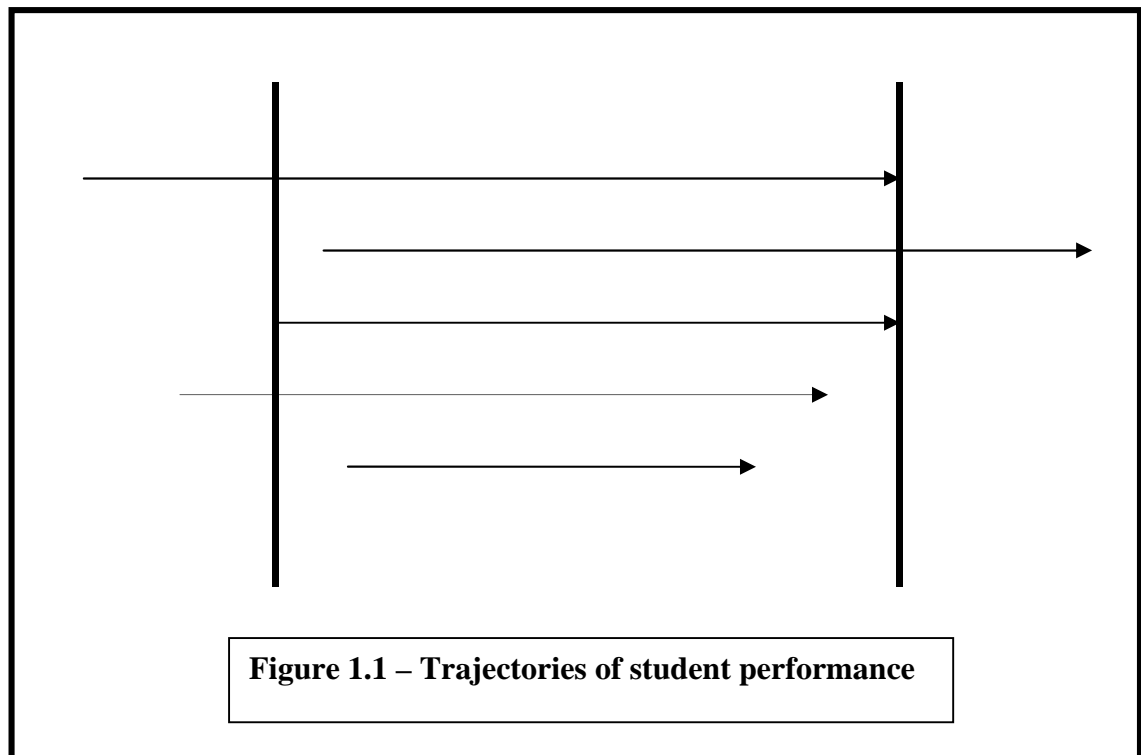
It remains to elaborate the process of the semester, and to sketch some of the planned or rather hoped-for outcomes as well as some of the issues that arose.

### ***The process of the semester***

In accordance with the aim of enabling play, some thought was given to setting up the semester. Tutors came routinely to attend the beginning of the penultimate session of the previous semester (taught by another team of two colleagues), in order to form a relationship with the students, to remind them that they would need to bring tape recordings of their clinical work to the following semester, and to prepare them to meet this requirement. The first session of the semester itself, some four weeks after the tutors and students first met, was spent in orientation to the teaching method, by the tutors elaborating each student's *learning edges* (points of challenge for them in the application of what they have been learning in their clinical practice), and their *questions* with which they personally had been left by the previous teaching. The tutors felt a need to balance the power relationship between tutor and student. They also wanted to acknowledge the impact in the group of members bringing such a clear demonstration of their work for the first time, and hence to share in the vulnerability by bringing their own work first.

### ***What the semester is aimed to accomplish***

The course went through a process of formalisation during the time of this delivery, and amongst other roles, the researcher had lead responsibility for this process as Course Director and also Head of Training. This process resulted in the articulation of 'Learning Outcomes' as well as 'Standards of Practice for Psychotherapy', together with other course documents. Fundamentally, though, the aim of the course was (and remains following the formalisation) to enable students to progress in their development as psychoanalytic psychotherapists. One way of viewing this is to imagine the following figure:



The diagram is intended to illustrate how students must usually all be at least at the vertical line on the left, which represents the course pre-requirements (that students be qualified and experienced to a certain level in a mental health discipline, which could include psychotherapy). It also illustrates how they must also progress to an extent that they are deemed to have reached the position represented by the line on the right.

The horizontal lines represent a range of trajectories. The top line represents a student who comes from some way back, but who just makes it to the line of course expectation. The second stands for a student who is well ahead of basic requirements when the course starts, and who continues to hold that degree of accomplishment throughout, so that they end up well in advance of the minimum outcome expected to enable successful graduation. The third line stands for the model (and probably modal) student, who is roughly where they might be expected to be at start and finish. The fourth line represents the case of a student who, like the first student starts from a long

way back, but who, unlike the first student, who fails to progress sufficiently to reach the 'pass' line. The fifth line represents a student who is initially very promising, starting ahead of their peers, but who seems rapidly to reach a plateau to their learning and who fails to complete the intended process, perhaps withdrawing before the end. These are illustrations only, but it is to be hoped that they convey some of the complexity of the task of managing a group of quite mixed competence and ability.

This captures important aspects of the particular training. The backgrounds of the students are quite various, and the level of their development as psychotherapists is equally various, ranging from mental health clinicians with no formal training in exploratory therapy to psychotherapists with considerable pre- and post-training clinical experience of psychotherapy (but possibly lacking in experience in the range of work in mental health).

There are other gradients, such as that from those who have had no personal psychotherapy, through to those who have had considerable amounts of therapy and may well continue to be in therapy. There are a range of such gradients, and they may well come to be important at particular moments in the course. Interestingly, these are some of the dimensions that may at points in time be relatively fore-grounded or back-grounded in the experience of members of the group. Here I am thinking of times when sub-groups (say, 'clinicians' or 'psychotherapists') may come to occupy centre stage in the discussion or to be seated together, apparently without conscious intention.

### ***Selection, composition and exclusions***

The course was traditionally advertised fairly widely in the local professional community. Many applications would come via recommendations, for example from

clinical supervisors or from colleagues who had done the course in the past. Typically, more applications than potential places would be received, but some people would be offered a place and decline (usually having found another course more suited to their needs). Hence it was unusual to have the maximum group size (of, say, 14), with most groups consisting of 8 to 10 people. Occasionally, as noted elsewhere, students would withdraw after one year, leaving second-year groups typically smaller than first-year groups – in the case of the group under study, two people (David and Ursula, mentioned in Chapter Four) had done that.

Selection of applicants for a place on the course depended on a half-hour interview with two staff members. The aim of this was for staff to meet with each applicant, and to explore with them in person their interest in the course, their previous training, their current practice and supervisory arrangements, their history of personal therapy, their capacity to learn in a group setting such as that created on the course, and their response to a supervisory comment made in relation to a clinical vignette invited from them.

Applicants were not told at the time whether they had been selected, with this being decided by the staff following discussion after each interview. Applicants were told they would hear within two or three days of the interview. If there was doubt or concern, the staff would wait until the next day, or until the next chance they had to meet again to explore this doubt or concern further, and were encouraged to elaborate any hunches or discomfort that came to them, no matter how apparently irrational these might be.

The decision process followed a form of triage, namely ‘yes’, ‘not now’, and ‘no’. To reject an applicant outright (‘no’) was rare, and would usually reflect doubt or concern about their capacity to benefit from the training, even with additional time or experience. ‘Not now’ would usually reflect the fact that an applicant had not yet had

the chance to begin to form as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist. It might be that they were seen as needing to carry out more practice, to get into a supervisory arrangement with a supervisor working in a way that is compatible with the course or to engage in some personal psychotherapy.

Exclusions might be because of personal unsuitability, or because of the current situation of an applicant. People will occasionally apply for training as a result of being pitched unawares into near-impossible work situations. What appears to be required in such cases is for a concern to be addressed in an applicant's work setting, leaving the applicant free to try to learn to be a psychotherapist without the burden of being something of a saviour.

### ***Adult education – therapeutic modelling and dynamic administration***

Consideration of these issues represents a move back towards general principles rather than the specifics of the practice in this instance. It was extremely important to the staff and the programme as a whole that this course was clearly located in a culture of adult learning, in which the core task was for learners to learn, and for each individual to take the lead responsibility for that, as well as to contribute to the learning of others. At the same time, because of the nature of the professional field in which the teaching and learning takes place, aspects of the culture of psychoanalytic psychotherapy (and indeed, at times, of psychotherapy in general) need also to be conveyed as part of the integrity of the training. Put simply, this involves values such as privileging an attention to unconscious processes and a considered exploration of those both alone and together with others. These two cultures together give considerable shape to the processes of the course.

The intersection of the cultures is there in the research, between the psychoanalytic culture and the anthropological culture. Here it is too in the theory behind the teaching.

Adult education probably needs little further elaboration. The culture of psychoanalytic psychotherapy needs more. A key emphasis of the approach is expressed in the notion of the setting for therapy, which includes all interactions prior to meeting (including patients reading advertising or receiving recommendations from friends or family members). As well as the details of the physical setting and the contractual arrangement (often negotiated only provisionally prior to the first meeting), the setting includes the range of contributions by the therapist of aspects of their own self, including all of their understanding and experience, and their approach to the patient that is the expression of these aspects. This emphasis in a clinical setting is paralleled in the learning group in the way that the students are regarded throughout their contact with the educational setting of the agency. Put another way, the two cultures, of psychotherapy and of education, can be seen side by side, and aspects of one that influence practice (the attitude of a therapist towards a patient) can be seen in the other (in the attitudes of teaching staff towards students).

As the theory that underpins individual psychoanalytic psychotherapy shapes the milieu, so too can the theory that underlies group psychotherapy. This reflects a central theme of the thesis – that the group lens has been missing in the consideration of training, in psychotherapy in particular but in all manner of other fields as well. There are particularly important group-analytic notions such as the matrix and dynamic administration, but more important than these is the orientation that is central to the approach, that the individual is not an isolated entity but represents a nodal point in a network of infinite interconnections between themselves and other individuals and

groups. As a whole, this is the matrix, with the underlying existence of what is (the foundation matrix) being the setting for the interactive web that is created in each circumstance (the dynamic matrix) (Powell, 1989).

A key responsibility of the conductor in group analytic work is what is known as dynamic administration, which can be seen as the counterpart of the setting in individual psychotherapy. In group-analytic psychotherapy, the person of the therapist is profoundly important as it is in individual psychotherapy, but it does not have the same prominence that it does there. This is because of the additional contributions of the members of the group and the group-as-a-whole. These require that the therapist or conductor thinks and acts as appropriate on a continuing basis through the life of the group, about what is necessary to maintain and develop the group as a resource for all members to use.

### ***Vicissitudes of this practice***

Foci for considering these include before, during and after the course.

Sometimes one makes errors of selection, and people are selected who are in some way unsuited to either of the complementary roles of psychoanalytic psychotherapist and course member. Often this will be because of personal difficulties that become expressed as problems of learning. At other times, individuals who it was almost certainly correct to include can become unwell as part of the process of learning, and for a time at least may be unable to learn. These situations need to be managed, and this is a complex task.



A key issue in the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and also in the training of psychoanalytic psychotherapists, is that of the balance between support and confrontation. Following Freud's injunction to avoid intervention until the transference is established (1913/1958), broadly speaking one might well avoid action or response whilst one is unclear how to proceed.

In terms of outcomes, a group of these are subsumed under the overlapping concepts of reflective capacity, mindfulness, mentation, and empathy (Fonagy, 2001; Holmes, 1997).

Beginnings, progression, endings and graduations are all important rituals for staff and students, as they punctuate the process of learning and give it shape. In a way, these are captured by Augé's (2004) notion of the powerful role of oblivion in social life, whereby memories are crafted by oblivion as the outlines of the shore are crafted by the sea. Augé sees the three figures of oblivion as The Return, Suspense, and New Beginnings, with their respective emblematic rituals of Possession, Interregnum, and Initiation.

One important notion that I believe merits inclusion is that of necessary disruption. I first heard this expressed by Peter Lomas in his role of external examiner, and later found some of the same notions in his writing (Lomas, 1987) as well as that of others. What he said was that he thought it important that it was clear when graduating a psychoanalytic psychotherapy student that they had gone through some form of personal process of transformation, which quite likely would not have been comfortable. As a result of this, they were changed in some way that was detectable but which could only really be assessed by expert interviewer judgement.

## ***So where is the gap in the understanding of professional learning?***

Clearly, quite a lot was known prior to the events of the semester under study.

Inevitably, some awareness that is currently available will have emerged from the study.

Other realisations will have resulted of the passage of time and the chance to reflect, and yet more will have arisen from subsequent experience at teaching the material in

question. The clearest that I can put it is that *the gap, in the context of the study, is a*

*lack of clearly articulated awareness of how the learning group operates, how it might*

*contribute to the primary task of the semester, how it might be stopped from hindering*

*the primary task of the semester, and how the answering of these questions might have*

*application outside of the fairly specialised field in question.*

### ***The gap in relation to the learning group is ...***

... the gap is a lack of a clearly articulated awareness of how the learning group operates, how it might contribute to the primary task of the teaching and learning, how it might be stopped from hindering the primary task of the teaching and learning, and how the answering of these questions might have application outside of the fairly specialised field in question.

**Table 1.1 – The gap in relation to the learning group**

Next, I will consider the gap that exists in ways of investigating.

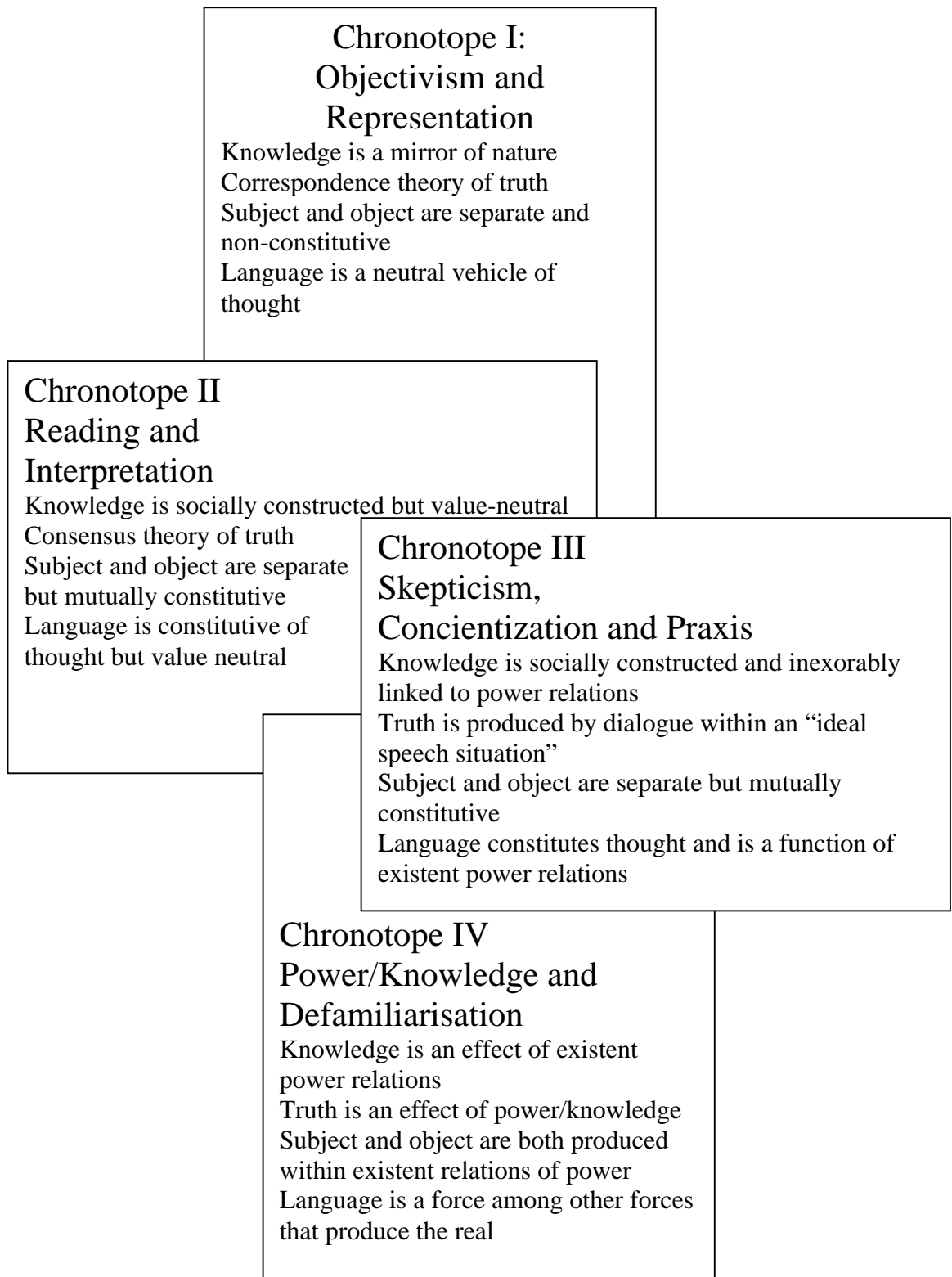
### ***A gap in ways of investigating***

In considering this gap, it is useful to consider ways in which the wide and growing range of qualitative approaches to investigation have been arrayed in relation to each other.

In what appears an elegant approach to this task, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis cast qualitative research as an *interdisciplinary meta-discourse*, and offer an array of the components that ground and inform that meta-discourse (2005, p. 28) (see Figure 1.2, on Page 21 below). They base their array on a notion borrowed from Bakhtin (1981), which they report that Bakhtin in turn apparently borrowed from Einstein, that of *chronotopes*. Kamberelis and Dimitriades define chronotopes of qualitative enquiry as indexing, “durable historic realities that constitute what is common, natural, and expected by collectives of social scientists who conduct particular kinds of qualitative research” (2005, p. 25).

What is important about this array is that it creates a background for locating methodologies, and allows the possibility that a particular methodology can be located in the overlap of chronotopes, effectively potentially representing more than one indexation. An example here would be Grounded Theory, which could be seen as consistent with both Chronotope I, Objectivism and Representation and Chronotope II, Reading and Interpretation. In the light of this understanding, the critical questions about a particular methodological approach focus less on the ‘brand’ of the approach and more on the details that make it particular.

Furthermore, the array provides a framework against which to consider ‘novel’ approaches to investigation.



**Figure 1.2 - Predominant Chronotopes of  
Qualitative Enquiry**  
Reproduced from Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, (2005, p. 28)

Consideration of psychoanalysis and group analysis against this framework reveals some interesting notions. One is that the joint field has no apparent home in any one chronotope. At the same time, the joint field has elements of many of the chronotopes. This leads to the possibility that psychoanalytically informed investigation belongs not within qualitative enquiry but rather within another meta-discourse altogether. This in turn leads to the notion that a research method of any kind will be a poor substitute for experience in the world under study.

Another thought around this gap is that this is an example of creating methodology out of clinical method. This is highly consonant with a post-post-modern acknowledgement of the importance of different means of representation. At the same time, the direction of this creation, from clinic to research setting, runs directly counter to the recent history of psychological and psychosocial intervention. In this history, the pressure for standardised, evidence-based practice has led to demands for provision of forms of this, and hostility to approaches that derive from reflective clinical experience.

The gap is that there isn't a method that is satisfactory for the investigation of some aspects of training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, particularly the role of the learning group. The question then becomes, *can a method be constructed that values and privileges the philosophical world-view underlying psychoanalytic and group-analytic psychotherapy, and which can fruitfully yet critically investigate aspects of those practices themselves?* Below, I repeat table 1.1 displaying the first gap, and then display this current and second one next to that in table 1.2.

***The gap in relation to the learning group is ...***

*... that there is a lack of a clearly articulated awareness of how the learning group operates, how it might contribute to the primary task of the teaching and learning, how it might be stopped from hindering the primary task of the teaching and learning, and how the answering of these questions might have application outside of the fairly specialised field in question.*

**Table 1.1 – The gap in knowledge in relation to the learning group**

***The gap in ways of investigating is ...***

*... that there isn't a method that is satisfactory for the investigation of some aspects of training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, particularly the role of the learning group. The question then becomes, can a method be constructed that values and privileges the philosophical world-view underlying psychoanalytic and group-analytic psychotherapy, and which can fruitfully yet critically investigate aspects of those practices?*

**Table 1.2 – The gap in ways of investigating**

## ***Conclusion***

The two gaps and the questions that they lead to have been spelled out. Next, in Chapter Two Part One, it is important to examine the theoretical and philosophical context of these gaps, in order to understand them as well as how they can be addressed.

## Chapter Two Part One

### Literature review

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In this chapter, I will look at what has been written on, or closely related to, my topic before, and at how does my analysis of this writing inform my research questions and foci?<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Why is the study important to others?***

In this section that follows, I am asking, where else has there been a concern with the phenomena under investigation, that is, the phenomena of the learning group?

By way of answer, I want to argue that this topic is of considerable importance in terms of contributing to the understanding of learning in groups in general, and of such groups used in the training of psychotherapists in particular. This understanding has very wide application, to very many fields. Regarding extrapolation, as spelled out in the Preface, a key feature of this study is the notion that frameworks used for understanding experience can be moved flexibly between contexts. It is part of the argument of the thesis that the same is true of the findings, so that they will be applicable in the wide range of contexts where the understanding of learning groups is a concern.

The research is important within the field of psychoanalytic anthropology. The intersection of psychoanalysis and anthropology has been a rich source of ideas and

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter and the one that follows, and indeed throughout the thesis, I will be pursuing answers to each of the two questions, substantive and methodological, that I posed in Chapter One. At any point, I will retain this interest in both how the learning group works, and how it (and related phenomena) can be investigated. Although one or other of the questions may be more to the fore at any particular point in time, I will still keep the other in mind.



discoveries for over a century (Devereux, 1951; Freud, 1900/1953; Mimica, 2007; Roheim, 1925; Schwartz, White, & Lutz, 1992; Spain, 1992), and has been said more recently (LeVine & Sharma, 1997) to be more alive than it has ever been. Mimica's collection (2007) is among the latest products of this source. Given developments in both fields, and in the wider intellectual context of the social sciences, the time seems right to try and extend what is possible in terms of synergy between the fields.

The topic is important within the fields of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and group therapy, and in training for those fields. Psychotherapeutic clinical work in itself essentially constitutes a form of research, especially when conducted under supervision or with access to consultation, (Farrell, 1996; Kvale, 1986; Tuckett, 1994). However, beyond basic training, engagement in research by practitioners is not extensive. Nor has the field engaged much of the attention of non-clinical researchers, despite some fine examples of this (e.g. Schön, 1983). Research about training, and in group work, is even more limited (Carter, 2002), not least because of problems of access and complexity.

The construction of psychoanalytic clinical work as research links to what may well be a significant turn in psychosocial research. Although an overwhelming case for the use of qualitative approaches in this area has long been made, it can be argued that aspects of previous paradigms still persist. A critical perspective on qualitative methodologies suggests that many positivist features have survived, together with pressures to eschew interpretation, for example in feminist and critical theory methodologies. A key concern that leads to unease with interpretation is the wish to avoid disempowerment, but much is missing from accounts that can appear overcome with this concern. There is a considerable potential psychoanalytic contribution to research methodology that awaits

realisation. This potential contribution has remained just that, partly because of its invisibility in the face of previous and powerful paradigms. Although it faces major challenges, this contribution can enable forms of exploration that are significantly different compared to non-psychoanalytic methodologies.

This project draws on a range of related fields, as it is deliberately located where they intersect. The study is an anthropological perspective on aspects of the practice of training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. This training takes place in a group context. This research is, therefore, built on knowledge in psychoanalytic anthropology; psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy; group psychotherapy and group work; and psychotherapy training.

***What has been understood previously, about how to investigate, and about how clinical practice, and therefore training for it, work? A review of previous literature and research***

I will now proceed to review the literature in each of the fields that I outlined above.

Taking psychoanalytic anthropology first, Spain notes that,

The first scholarly works in psychoanalytic anthropology – i.e. the first attempts to use psychoanalysis in the study of culture and the first attempts to use ethnographic data and anthropological theory to foster the development of psychoanalytic theory – were not undertaken by an anthropologist. They were carried out by a psychoanalyst who used his knowledge of myth and other forms of expressive culture (e.g. sexual beliefs and behaviour, jokes, folktales, beliefs about the dead) to inform nascent theoretical developments in psychoanalysis: he also used that newly developed theory in his study of culture. The person who did this was Sigmund Freud (see in this regard, his ‘The Psychopathology of Everyday Life’ (1901/1960); ‘Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality’ (1905b/1960); ‘Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious’ (1905a/1960); and, of course, ‘Totem and Taboo’ (1913/1950)). (1992, p.4)

Spain highlights something of the multidirectional flow of ideas between

psychoanalysis and anthropology. Notable successors to Freud include Roheim (1925),

Devereux (1951), LaBarre (1970), all combining psychoanalytic training (and except for LaBarre, practice) with extensive experience of anthropological fieldwork.

LeVine and Sharma (1997) provide a critical review of more recent publications in this field, updating Paul's (1989) comprehensive review of the broader field of psychological anthropology. They note a resurgence of interest in the field since the late 1960's, with a recent upsurge in the rate of publication. Levine and Sharma conclude:

This upsurge was associated with a growing number of anthropologists in training at psychoanalytic institutes; ... American anthropologists with psychoanalytic interests conducted field research during this period in Japan, Africa, New Guinea, the Indian subcontinent, and among the indigenous peoples of the Americas from the Arctic to the Amazon, and several Asian scholars - Takeo Doi (1990), Sudhir Kakar (1990), and Gananath Obeyesekere (1990) - made an important impact on the field. As we approach the end of the century, psychoanalytic anthropology is more of an established presence in the discipline of anthropology than it has ever been. (p. 48)

Kracke and Herdt (1987), in their introduction to a special issue of the journal 'Ethos' on 'Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Anthropology', note four threads in then recent literature. These include: studies that focus on a single individual; those that focus on a symbol or aspect of culture and use it to make comparisons across cultures; those that use the experience of the ethnographer to understand the topic of study; and those that use this experience to understand the process of fieldwork itself. My interest is principally in the last two threads, both making extensive use of the ethnographer's experience.

To illustrate, a key example of the fourth thread is a study by Kracke (1987) on encounter with other cultures, in which he notes how the perception of culture shock has changed. From the start of modern ethnography, generally located in Malinowski's 1922 study of the Trobriand Islanders, there was a tradition of treating culture shock as an occupational nuisance rather like malaria, with the equivalent of quinine tablets

being the wisdom that one should learn the language, form relationships with key informants, and get over it. However, there have subsequently been developments in attitude, which represent a striking parallel to developments in psychoanalysis which I will describe below. Interestingly, after a major turn in theoretical perspective in anthropology from realism towards intersubjectivity had begun in the late 1960's, Malinowski's diary was eventually published, forty-five years after his fieldwork (Malinowski, 1967). Kracke argues that, ironically, this may be one of the most important books in the history of anthropology.

Kracke uses psychoanalytic ideas to apply a regression-and-resocialisation model to the extended process of encounter with another culture, as experienced consciously and unconsciously by the ethnographer, and makes full use of his dreams and free associations to elaborate the process of this encounter. This model captures both the loss of the familiar as well as the engagement with the new, in terms that are very recognisable from psychoanalytic theories of development. Kracke is critical of the limitations of previous models of culture shock, including culture-shock-as-psychiatric-illness, which seems very limited and negative; and culture-shock-as-mourning, which is more positive but which still privileges the role of the 'lost' host culture and neglects the many positive gains from attachment to the culture under study. He includes particularly his coming and going, and his eventual departure from the field, which, like many other aspects of his experience, can be well understood in terms of knowledge of psychoanalysis and group analysis (in this case, knowledge of breaks and endings in therapy).

Kracke also makes original use of transference. He notes aspects of his experience of encounter with his hosts, for example, their constant demand for gifts, which were

clearly coloured by his own unconscious. All fieldworkers find the issue of gifts difficult: he personally had strong associations to his difficult relationship with his demanding younger sister. He argues that despite their personal and subjective nature, these experiences are nonetheless extremely valuable in terms of highlighting issues in the culture that are of interest and importance, almost like rough edges on which personal sensitivities get caught. Also, the process of introspection, as in clinical psychoanalytic work, may reveal much that is valuable in terms of further understanding once attention has been focussed. Interestingly, Kracke makes sense of the early affinity with children and young people in the culture. When he was feeling regressed on encounter and was, for example, unable to speak much of the language or accomplish much useful activity, his experience shared many aspects of theirs as he functioned more like a child than a grown-up. This also represents well the bewildering experience of moving from objective and realistic conceptions of psychological therapy to the use of personal and subjective experience required by a clinical practice learning group. A further association of my own to this work and perspective is that it makes use of Bion's (1970) concept of negative capability, the avoidance of action and the toleration of not-knowing.

Leaving psychoanalytic anthropology for now, I draw particularly on the notion of a psychoanalytic ethnographer approaching the learning group as part of an exotic culture. The task of ethnography can be described as making the exotic familiar (Chandler, 2001), which when applied reflexively, for example, to psychoanalytic anthropology itself, includes also making the familiar exotic. Together with a position both within and without psychoanalysis, this discipline offers a perspective on my topic that balances insider awareness with 'alongsider' critical perspective. The contribution of psychoanalytic ethnography to the study is particularly (but not exclusively) to the

answering of the methodological question and focus of the thesis. I will consider the contributions of psychoanalysis and the understanding of groups below, both substantive and methodological: when methodological aspects of the contribution from those fields can be added to that of psychoanalytic ethnography, then this can go on to inform the construction of a framework for investigation in the next part of this chapter, Chapter Two Part Two.

I now turn to psychoanalysis. It is important for the purposes of this study to focus particularly on the concepts of transference, countertransference, projective identification and containment.

The phenomenon of transference, noted by Kracke in his anthropological work, is apparently universal, and can be seen as related to the process of projection.

Transference is the bringing (or transfer, or projection) of a past experience into a present one, such that the present is unconsciously experienced as if it were the past (Freud, 1914/1958). The past experience is in general one that is not available to consciousness in itself, but is expressed through distorted perception of the current situation, or intensified emotional reaction to it. It entails some distortion of the present experience, as this is unconsciously invested with meaning from the past. This is the basis of the psychoanalytic phenomenon of over-determination, whereby objects (of relationship and perception, that is, people and things) become polysemic, containing a number of simultaneous representations at the same time. For example, a partner can seem at times also to be like either of one's parents, or one's child, and often in quick succession or even simultaneously, *as if* one were relating to that familiar other or others and not one's partner. Loewald (1960) pointed out that transference is what gives emotional depth and significance to any relationship or experience. As now

conceptualised, transference enters into all significant relationships (including those with places, objects and ideas as well as people), that is, all relationships that are invested with considerable emotional meaning (Bird, 1972).

Clinically, transference may be of less direct importance than countertransference for two reasons. The first is that there is a rational, modernist trend in Freud's work, so that insight came to be seen, at times by Freud and by some amongst his followers, to have a central and relatively uncomplicated role in psychological change. Thus, from this perspective the role of the analyst is to understand the transference on to them by the patient, and to share that understanding, in the form of interpretations, with the patient. Quite apart from the question of resistance that Freud quite quickly identified, it now seems clear that the process of change is far more interpersonal and intersubjective than this (Ogden, 1994). This idea is elaborated further in the consideration of psychoanalysis later in this chapter.

Secondly, psychoanalysts have come to work with patients with difficulties at earlier levels of development than those relating to the Oedipus complex (ideally at least partly resolved at around 5 years of age), which is how Freud saw the bulk of his patients' difficulties. There is now a fuller awareness, both that some of Freud's patients described in his case studies indeed had difficulties originating earlier in their development than he thought, and that for patients with difficulties at these earlier levels of development, what is needed (at least initially) is a relational form of understanding rather than the offering of insight. Nonetheless, transference is still a crucial concept in psychoanalytic theory and practice.

Countertransference has been variously defined (Hinshelwood, 1999; Racker, 1957). A 'narrow' definition would be to regard it as the response in the analyst to the patient's transference onto the analyst, particularly the aspects of the response that arise solely from within the analyst. A 'broad' definition would be to regard it as the totality of the analyst's response to the patient, including responses arising solely within the analyst, general responses to the type of patient and to the type of material that they are presenting, as well as more unique responses to this patient and their particular material (Joseph, 1985). Freud's attitude to countertransference was to take a narrow view, and to regard it as a hindrance, resulting from insufficient analysis of the analyst.

Hinshelwood (1999) notes that it appears to be mentioned in the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (Strachey, 1953-1974) on only four occasions, and then in the discussion of other topics.

There is an interesting parallel here to the changing anthropological attitude to culture shock noted above. In the first half of the twentieth century, the appropriate response to the experience of countertransference was seen as a return of the analyst to their own analysis. Even though Melanie Klein's (1946) conceptual work laid the foundations for the subsequent and continuing burgeoning of interest in intersubjectivity (Heimann, 1950; Ogden, 1994; Racker, 1957; Searles, 1955), she was reticent about the extension of possible uses of her concept of projective identification, which was to become a key building block in the development of this interest. Spillius (1992) notes that Klein thought that extending her ideas in this way would open the door to claims by analysts that their own deficiencies were caused by their patients.

Projective identification is the interpersonal phenomenon where an individual unconsciously projects elements of their experience (for example, sadness) onto an



available other. An additional requirement is that there is a valency within the other to receiving and responding to the projection, in other words that this other is a potential introjector of this experience. It is crucial that, at some level, the other is involved. The projector can then relate to and identify with the projected experience within the introjector (Stadter, 1996).

Projective Identification is different to more straightforward projection, which is open to reality testing. For example, in projection, someone may remind me a key figure in my past, such as a parent. However, if this person does not have a valency to introject my projections, and if my need to project and projectively identify is not overwhelming, then we can establish relatively easily through what is known as ‘reality testing’ that this is not the relationship that I might anticipate from my previous experience.

An example of projective identification would be the so-called ‘Helping Profession Syndrome’ (Malan, 1979). In this case, helping professionals with traumatic pasts, perhaps involving childhood abuse and neglect or other traumata, are unable to process and deal with these experiences directly, but instead are drawn compulsively to respond to and to deal with these experiences in others, for example by choosing, partly unconsciously, to work with clients who have experienced similar traumata.

Incidentally, avoidance of phenomena of this type is one reason for the requirement for intending psychotherapists and psychoanalysts to undergo treatment themselves before qualifying to train or to help others.

Although this example may help understanding of the process of projective identification, it is relatively negative, focussing on its function as a psychological defence mechanism. Projective identification is an apparently universal phenomenon,

and almost certainly reflects something of the nature of the human mind (Matte-Blanco, 1988; Rayner & Tuckett, 1988). It is crucially important for a number of reasons other than as a mechanism of defence, not least for its role in the interpersonal communication of experience, as in countertransference. Here, it leads to evocation of feeling in the analyst, which can be understood and shared with the patient, through a way of being as well as through the construction and offering of interpretations.

There are other key psychoanalytic concepts related to transference and countertransference. Of particular interest to this study is that of containment (Bion, 1959). Bion's interest in the earliest stages of the mind led him to focus on the link between something innate (an infant) and something foreign (an experience perceived in external reality). For example, a newborn baby already seems to know what to do when the nipple touches its cheek. Its head turns and it begins to suckle. The reflex seems to be innate, but the nipple has to be there in the external world to realise the reflex. In Bion's view, when an innate pre-conception meets with a realisation (in perception), they link to create a mental object, and with it, a mind to hold the mental object.

Bion went on to note that in this type of example of linking, one thing (the nipple) goes inside the other (the infant's mouth). This notion of linking is of an intimate process, rather like a hand in a glove, and captures the important notion of the inside quality of links. Bion developed this into the notion of containment, and the concepts of container and contained (Bion, 1970). Most simply, containment is a function where primitive emotional material (often consisting of anxieties) can be held on to until it can be transformed by thinking. Importantly, he stressed that containing is not a passive function, but an active inter-relationship, in the case of this example, between mother and infant. He described a range of possibilities along a continuum between rigid,

dutiful containment, through flexible containment, to fragile containment prone to disintegration. The extremes of this continuum will represent unsatisfactory care, where either the infant experiences presence but with no understanding and no attuned response, or a sense of his or her experience being destructive and intolerable as the mother 'goes to pieces' or panics. In between, the mother responds by acknowledging the infant's anxiety and doing what she can to relieve the infant's distress. As Segal describes:

The infant's perception is that he has projected something intolerable into his object, but the object was capable of containing it and dealing with it. He can then reintroject not only his original anxiety but an anxiety modified by having been contained. He also introjects an object capable of containing and dealing with anxiety. (1975, p.134)

Leaving psychoanalysis, I am taking a particular epistemological view of human relationship and communication built out of the concepts that I have outlined (Bion, 1967; Hinshelwood, 2002), which links this literature to the teaching and learning of psychotherapy, as well as to group dynamics and group work. The aim of formal practice teaching in psychoanalytic psychotherapy within the university or the clinic is to convey an accessible theoretical and clinical grasp of these concepts. At the same time, these concepts can be used to make sense of the experience of the participants in the practice teaching.

Concerning groups and group work, and in particular training (which takes place in a group) for the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, there are a number of strands in the literature. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and this is a vast field in which to attempt a succinct synthesis.

First, there is knowledge about groups from the group therapy field. There have been significant recent developments (Dalal, 1998; Lipgar & Pines, 2003; Nitsun, 1996) of

the classic theoretical formulations of Foulkes (1948, 1964) and Bion (1961) amongst others. In particular, these developments take more account of the destructive forces within groups, and there is a growing interest in the social unconscious based on the notion of social as prior.

Second, and linked, there is knowledge about groups from the group therapy training field. Group therapists are trained and supervised in groups by group-aware trainers (Barnes, Ernst, & Hyde, 1999; Behr, 1995; Behr & Hearst, 2005; Hearst and Sharpe, 1991; Sharpe, 1995a, 1995b). There is a small but growing literature on clinical supervision of group psychotherapy that takes place in groups (Tsegos, 1995).

Third, there is knowledge about groups from classic and more recent studies in the human relations field (Hinshelwood & Chiesa, 2001; Hirschorn, 1988; Main, 1957; Menzies, 1960; Miller, 1990; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994; Trist & Murray, 1990). Much of this work focuses on organisations, management at the boundary, and anxiety and institutional defences against it. All of these are relevant to the training process. This is particularly true in a contextual fashion, for example, in terms of understanding the training course as a temporary institution (Bridger, 1990), but many experiences encountered in human service organisations (Menzies, 1960) are also directly relevant to the training process in psychotherapy.

Fourth, there is knowledge, particularly but not exclusively, about groups from the fields of education and training. A particularly important concept is Schön's (1983) notion of the *reflective practitioner*, one able to move from reflection-on-action (post hoc) to reflection-in-action. To enable this transition is surely one of the key tasks of psychoanalytic psychotherapy training, and it is hard to see why one would not work on

this in a group. Works on the organisation of training, which might seem apparently more peripheral, such as the paper by Modena (1986) are relevant here. Modena describes the processes of a psychoanalytic training organisation that has struggled since the 1960's against bureaucratization, and of the awareness that has grown about the impact of these dynamics on training and subsequent clinical practice. Negative aspects of training organisations are beginning to be more publicly acknowledged. For example, the apparent impotence of the British Psychoanalytical Society to prevent the abuse of a number of patients by a prominent Member of the Society has been linked to seemingly obvious problems in that person's character not being addressed during selection, training and particularly in the qualification process (Sandler, 2004).

Fifth, there is knowledge about training and personal development from psychoanalysis, and in particular, from the field of training in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. This includes Ekstein and Wallerstein's classic text describing the experience of training at the Menninger Clinic, which in addition to being a core text for training in supervision has elements of psychoanalytic ethnography (1958, 1972). Casement's idea of the *internal supervisor*, a position that one can learn to take up within one's own mind, is an excellent capturing of a core clinical capability, linked to process awareness, and an aim of training programmes that can probably most effectively be cultivated by clinical teaching group membership (1985, 1990). This builds on the classic work by Searles (1955), who rapidly applied the then emerging clinical use of countertransference (Heimann, 1950) to the understanding of the process and experience of clinical supervision. Although Searles' work was based on supervision of individual clinicians, this can easily be extended to supervision groups and teaching groups.

There are occasional writings such as that by Cabaniss on 'How to Think Like an Analyst 101' (1999) and Wallace and Tisdall (1991), which are in the tradition of practice wisdom rather than researched studies, and there are also longer texts in this area on the making of psychotherapists (Symington, 1996). There is a literature about clinical supervision that takes place in groups, but where the work discussed is individual psychotherapy. Some of this is in a tradition that uses Winnicott's (1971) ideas on play and creativity to conceptualise the place of the group, as a 'transitional object' (Schneider & Berman, 1991) or as a *transitional space* (Schlachet, 1986). In this tradition, Belger (2002) has cast the function of theory as that of a maternal environment. One concept that my colleague and I have used is Haley's (1963) notion of *dead serious play*. Green and colleagues noted differences in experience and outcome related to didactic or exploratory formats during psychiatric training, but the follow-up by qualitative study that they recommended (Green, Stone, & Grace, 1983) does not seem to have happened.

Drawing together these threads of literature on groups, groupwork and training is a complex task. There is a good clinical understanding about how to convene, run and end a therapeutic group, which can be applied, with due modification to training. However, although the understanding that the tutors have may be similar to that of the therapist(s) in a therapeutic group, the opportunity to use this understanding directly is not necessarily available, and there is less clarity on the educational and developmental use of the group. There is considerable understanding of the capabilities that psychoanalytic psychotherapists require, and some understanding of how these may be available in part through participation in a learning group. However, the knowledge that is available in this field tends to be in the form of disparate models from different fields, and this has rarely been brought together and examined in relation to learning groups. I will attempt

a brief synthesis of some of these ideas below. Elements of this include contributions from the field of infant observation, the importance of the debate between André Green and Daniel Stern, the contributions of writers on clinical discussion, and the work of Donald Meltzer.

### ***Infant Observation***

One training, research and practice tradition that has a range of parallels with the current study is that of the Infant Observation training method of Esther Bick (1964) and subsequent developments of it. Hollway (2004) has played a significant role in these latter developments which will be elaborated below. I share much of Hollway's (2004) argument about the limitations of contemporary research paradigms, even and perhaps particularly those of qualitative research, in her discussion of the infant observation model. This is a fundamental part of my own thesis.

Bick developed her method of infant observation, initially in the training of child psychotherapists at the Tavistock Clinic from 1948, and it was extended to become a pre-clinical requirement in the training of psychoanalysts at the Institute of Psychoanalysis from 1960 (Bick, 1964). Hollway (2004) notes the suggestion that this was partly in order to develop in child psychotherapists and psychoanalysts the capacity that Bion (1970) came to articulate later as negative capability, introduced on Page 30, above. Bick's system is more than a particular type of observation process, not least because it includes the observer having an ongoing membership of and participation in a seminar group designed to facilitate a certain kind of discussion of the products of the observation. Over recent years, the practice discipline of infant observation has grown to have its own journal, *Infant Observation*, founded in 1997, and to encompass

“...case studies on infant and young child observation, research papers, and articles focusing on wider applications of the psychoanalytic observational method, including its relevance to reflective professional practice in fields such as social work, teaching and nursing”

(From the journal website, <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13698036.asp>, retrieved 13 June 2010).

This aim of the journal has been borne out by the production of a special issue (Hollway, 2007) which is a series of accounts of the experience of using the psychoanalytic observation method as part of an empirical research project on becoming a mother for the first time, claimed (Hollway, 2007 page 331) to be the first use of this method in British funded research. In addition, conferences such as “From Baby to Boardroom: The Tavistock-Bick Method of infant observation and its application to organisations and in consultancy” held at the Tavistock Centre in 2008 (Miller, 2009) have drawn together accounts of the application of the approach outside of its original context.

There are clearly strong parallels with the current project, although there are also some differences. One focus of these differences is linked to an ongoing debate in psychoanalysis between alternative research paradigms, which is represented particularly well by a debate between André Green and Daniel Stern.

### ***The debate between Green and Stern***

This debate, elaborated by Sandler et al (2000) in a report of a conference focussed on it in 1997, symbolises a paradigm clash between ‘scientific’ and ‘psychoanalytic’ research. Put simply, Stern is a representative of those engaged in observational studies of infants, and argues that these can inform and support psychoanalytic practice: Green is one of the most vehement critics of this approach, arguing that it fails to take account



of (and hence may destroy) core aspects and values of the clinical practice of psychoanalysis. Hollway (2001) in her review of the work of Sandler et al suggests a way forward, by means of an allied process (that is, one allied to psychoanalysis, the Tavistock-Bick model of Infant Observation described above). Although this allied process has psychoanalytic characteristics (Hollway elects to highlight frequency and regularity, particularly of the observation relationship), it also has scientific characteristics, in particular the privileging of direct, objective and conscious experience of an infant (albeit that these are complemented by indirect, subjective and unconscious perspectives in the related discussion seminar).

My own position in relation to these challenges is that my research is in a tradition that I would argue is more on Green's side of the paradigm clash. This is so in relation to the subject of the investigation, the training method of the seminar, which proceeds by a psychoanalytic process (not least by accomplishing a form of experience of negative capability through the role assigned to the presenter in the seminar under study), and which privileges the study of the infant in the adult patient. This is true in relation to the nature of the investigatory method and methodology of the study (which together privilege a psychoanalytic attitude towards the data of the study). This is also the case in relation to the conceptual framework of the investigatory methodology and its products, which derive from the use ways of knowing available in clinical psychoanalytic work, and from the psychoanalytic stance in relation to the data (which neatly mirrors the capacity the training under study seeks to develop, and the capacity modelled by the staff in the training in relation to the clinical data brought by the presenter and the experiential data present in the discussion seminar). The integrating focus of *the infant in the adult* is thus present at a series of levels in the research and its subject matter (in the clinical work that is the subject of the seminar group's consideration, in the

purposeful attention of the seminar group to this aspect of the data, and in the location (albeit in a manner adapted for an interpersonal analysis) of the contribution to knowledge undertaken on the part of the thesis. Arguably, this current study, together with the training work which it explores and seeks to understand, both contribute to the practice tradition that Green espouses, and to a greater extent than the research tradition originating in infant observation.

***The work of Ogden, Norman and Salomonsson, Thorndeycroft and McCabe, and Balint***

Thoughts on related approaches to research lead on to related substantive knowledge, which may take the form of theory, or accounts of practice, or any of a range of combinations of the two. I will briefly consider some leading examples.

Ogden (1994) is a theorist studied on the course as part consideration of psychoanalytic discourses, and contributions of his such as the analytic third (1994) and the role of the analyst's subjectivity in their clinical thinking are significant foundations of the practice that the students on the course are encouraged to develop. Ogden (2006) has described aspects of his clinical seminars and how he structures these. Ogden's work clearly can be seen as support for the approach to learning in the semester under study, although the latter is a more explicit, systematic and formal approach to learning as part of basic training, whereas Ogden's work is more focussed on post-qualification opportunities for learning available within routine professional development activities.

Norman and Solomonsson (2005) have described a method of discussing psychoanalytic material in groups, based originally on professional development work by practising psychoanalysts, although this is a valuable tool in its own right as well as for what it can

enable in the hands of trainee psychoanalytic psychotherapists. Their work is consonant with the approach in the semester under study, although more focussed, as is Ogden's, on learning within ongoing professional development than learning as part of formal training

Thorndeycroft and McCabe (2008) offer a description of a coherent model to develop much needed reflective practice in clinical services in mental health. This is useful in highlighting the importance of participant engagement, and the way in which (much as in the case of the semester under study) deeply distressing experience can be experienced and expressed in unconscious ways by staff members and psychotherapy students alike. Their work is valuable in recognising the need for explicit structure, as well as aspects of phenomena that will occur during these types of activity, but again, is more directed to the maintenance and development of ongoing practice.

The practice tradition of discussion of clinical work, particularly that of general medical practitioners, based on the work of the psychoanalyst Michael Balint (1957) has many elements in common with the approach taken in the semester under study. Balint's approach has continued to thrive, and latterly been extended to the work of other clinical disciplines, and by the addition of other theoretical concepts, particularly (as in this study) by the inclusion of aspects of the theories of Bion (1962a) (e.g. R  th, 2009). As in the semester, in a Balint group the presenter makes their work available to the group, but then sits back from the ensuing discussion, in which group members are asked to speak from their own experience of the material under discussion. However, despite the similarities, the purpose of the seminar under study is training rather than support for clinical practice, and the deliberate obscuring of practical details in the seminar is not equivalent to the de-emphasis on practical details in the Balint approach.

### ***The contribution of Meltzer***

Consideration of Donald Meltzer's work highlights many links to the threads of ideas developed in the thesis. As a successor to the tradition of Freud, Klein, Winnicott and Bion, he was extremely influential from the 1960's until his death in 2004, both through his clinical work, and also through his writing and very extensive teaching. In his introduction to one of his major works, *The Claustrium*, he notes (Meltzer, 1992, page 3) that,

The thrust of psychoanalysis has moved relentlessly from a simplistic explanatory hypothesis and an optimistic aim to cure mental illness towards a state of bewildered description of mental phenomena.

Later (on the same page),

This book is an attempt to bring together my clinical experiences of projective identification as seen in the consulting room, and from this to extrapolate a view of it as a mental phenomenon of significance in the development of the individual and in the evolution of the society that each person both inhabits and in some measure helps to form.

Meltzer is important as a representative of the generation after Bion, for his elaboration of his predecessors' theoretical advances, through his own clinical work and his contribution to that of others, through his teaching in relation to clinical work, and through his exploration of the processes of being, teaching and learning. In relation to this research, which can be seen in the same tradition of 'bewildered description', his contribution is important both for what he has drawn together, and also for his parting company.

Meltzer's work very much intersects with the Tavistock-Bick Method of Infant Observation, having had his second analysis with Melanie Klein, and supervision of his adult cases from Hannah Segal and Herbert Rosenfeld, and of his child cases from Betty

Joseph, Hannah Segal and Esther Bick (all psychoanalysts in the Kleinian group of the British Psychoanalytical Society) (Hahn, 2005). Hahn notes the importance of Meltzer's works 'The Kleinian Development' (1975), three volumes based on a series of lectures at the Tavistock Clinic where Meltzer exercised a much appreciated influence on the profession of child psychotherapy, and 'A Psychoanalytical Model of the Child-in-the-Family-in-the-Community' (1976), commissioned by the United Nations and co-written with his then wife, the psychoanalyst Martha Harris, who was for many years the Head of Training for Child Psychotherapists at the Tavistock Clinic.

A contrasting but nonetheless important feature of Meltzer's interaction with Bick-Tavistock Infant Observation Method is his departure from relationship with established formal structures within psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic training, and his focus in the latter part of his life on teaching more informal groups of colleagues in various parts of Europe and the Americas. According to Hahn (2005), Meltzer's discontent appears to have focussed on the establishment of the Kleinian group and of the British Psychoanalytical Society of which it is a part, and in particular the concentration on professional politics in which those bodies were engaged. In my view, this conflict over differing foci and priorities has strong parallels with the debate between Green and Stern reported above, whereby what Green calls the spirit of psychoanalysis can face threats from science and from other sources of power and influence.

## ***Conclusion***

In order to conclude this part of the literature review, I would like to draw together some of the threads in these various streams of ideas.

In relation to the methodological question, there is a wealth of knowledge and skill in both clinical psychoanalysis and in psychoanalytic anthropology, and increasingly these have been brought together for research purposes. In particular, the experience of the analyst/ethnographer, based on facility with transference and countertransference, projection, projective identification and containment, can enable a particular form of participant observation as well as the description, analysis and interpretation of psychosocial experience. This collaboration has mostly been in relation to the study of exotic cultures. I wish to turn the focus of this enquiry on to training for psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

In relation to the substantive question, it is clear that there are large gaps in the theorisation of the learning group, although there is accumulated practice wisdom, particularly from allied practices such as aspects of the teaching and learning of infant observation, as well as a range of methods and ideas that have been developed to meet the challenge of creating an environment where clinical work experiences can be explored, as in Balint-type groups. My aim, through this research, is to contribute further to the filling of the remaining substantive gaps.

## Chapter Two Part Two

### Methodology

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This chapter is a discussion of concepts and approaches drawn from relevant literature to provide a theoretical framing for the thesis, both substantively and methodologically.

An important point in relation to methodology is that this study involves the construction by a practitioner of an approach from within their own practice experience, in an example of practitioner research. As such, it functions primarily as *an exemplification*.<sup>1</sup> The direction of the development of knowledge is thus ‘inside-out’, rather than the more usual direction of investigation, from the ‘outside-in’. A consequence of this is that the approach may be more readily accessible by ‘practitioners’ (principally those with a clinical or similar background or perspective).

#### ***Refining the theoretical and philosophical orientation of the study***

In Part One of Chapter Two I have examined some concerns and contributions from a group of disciplines, and assembled some of those contributions into an embryonic conceptual apparatus to begin the study of the learning group. In what follows now, I will refine this apparatus into the basis of a novel methodology.

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful here to Professor Victoria Grace for her articulation of this notion, which in my view neatly encompasses what this thesis represents. The process of this exemplification is to explore practice from a particular participant-observer perspective, making use of theoretical notions which have usefully informed practice in the field and thus created practice wisdom, and to take the opportunity to reflect on this exemplification for what it can contribute to the understanding and practice of others.

To recapitulate from Chapter One, the thesis has two gaps to fill, so there are two tasks to be completed. The first is to develop a means of investigation, or methodology, and the second is to deploy that methodology in the study of a learning group. It is the task of this second part of Chapter Two to construct and elaborate the methodology, and of Chapter Three to translate the methodology into research methods.

Disciplinary strands from psychoanalysis, group-analysis and ethnography will be outlined, and then formed into post-Foulkesian group-analytic ethnography.

Before doing this, though, it seems important to acknowledge that spelling out this framework in this particular study poses significant challenges, for reasons that follow.

In a situation where, say, an ethnographer is setting out to study aspects of life in a remote village on a distant continent, then it is perfectly possible for that ethnographer to have a very different philosophical perspective to the people they will be living amongst and whose lives they will be studying. An appropriate relationship of respect and trust between the ethnographer and their informants will be essential to the success of the study, but there may be minimal connection between parties outside of or even within the study.

The situation in this study is very different to that. This study can be seen as involving a range of *allied practices*. For example, the aspect of life that is a focus of this study is the teaching and learning of the practice of psychotherapy, which is carried out in a group setting. One part of this picture, *the practice of psychotherapy*, has a philosophical basis, and this is espoused by the researcher as a clinician. *The practice of teaching (the practice of) psychotherapy* also has a philosophical basis, and again, this is espoused by the researcher, as a teacher. All of this work is undertaken by the



researcher as a person When the viewpoint becomes *the practice of researching (the practice of) teaching (the practice of) psychotherapy*, the researcher *as researcher* has already adopted philosophical underpinnings from these allied practices, as a person, as a clinician and as a teacher.

There are two important consequences to this situation. The first and most obvious is the challenge to the researcher to hold firmly to the role of researcher, and for the role not to be compromised by the range of constraints in the situation. Instead, one is prone to finding oneself drifting<sup>2</sup> (*or, I find myself drifting*) towards involvement as a person, a clinician or a teacher. This is a challenge, and one addressed elsewhere in the study as a methodological issue. However, this is also similar to issues faced in clinical practice, and instead of changes of position or pressures to move position being seen exclusively as problems, these can also be analysed as informative.

The second consequence of this situation is that the theoretical orientation of the study, and hence its philosophical basis, is essentially given. A key component of the theoretical framework is the discipline of psychoanalysis. This entails a philosophical position and permeates the clinical field for which the teaching is preparing people, as well as the teaching itself, and consequently, the research into aspects of that teaching and the learning that it invites. The discipline has a view (or rather, a range of views) on the nature of the person, consciousness, development, health and illness, and the process of change. This study reflects some of those views, in a unique and deliberately chosen collection of positions on those dimensions.

***(I am changing voice at this point, because I wish to refer to my own experience).***

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<sup>2</sup> I am changing voice at this juncture, or rather, adding my own personal voice. I am aiming to write generally, but I have particular experiences that are vivid.

Early on in the life of the study, I planned to make use of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998). A major reason for my initial choice of grounded theory was that I thought I needed a philosophical base relatively ‘outside’ of psychoanalytic practice. I thought this to be true given the extent to which, participating as I was in the work under study as both a tutor and course director, I was very much ‘inside’ the work, and in positions of power. However, the analytic methods of grounded theory, which deal with text and involve fragmenting that text in analysis, proved in my experience to be unsuitable for the exploration of intersubjective and unconsciously associative processes. Practically, this was evidenced for me by my difficulty in engaging in ‘associative play’ (the activity that my colleague and I try to develop in our students), when discussing my work in a grounded theory research working group. Also, although there are some studies combining grounded theory with psychoanalysis (Tuckett, 1994), in general, grounded theory methodology does not seem able to accommodate some phenomena of crucial interest in the area of psychoanalysis that informs this study.

A particular challenge comes from Hollway and Jefferson’s (2000) notion of “the defended subject”, that is, a subject theorised to have an unconscious mind and to be inevitably unable or unwilling to be fully open with an investigator. Related concerns are echoed by Ewing (2006) in her appraisal of ethnographic interviews as a research method. I therefore returned to psychoanalysis as an epistemological basis for the study, but decided to supplement this with the added lenses of group analysis and of anthropology, or more particularly, group-analytic ethnography.

This framework involves a synthesis of a range of theoretical and disciplinary contributions. The methodology is formed from a particular interweaving of

psychoanalysis, group analysis and ethnography. The contribution of each of these fields will now be set out in turn, and then some previous inter-weavings will be outlined so that this one can be set in context.

## ***Psychoanalysis***

There is a range of theoretical orientations to psychological therapy. These orientations are themselves constructed on differing philosophical bases. One example of a classification would be into psychoanalytic, humanistic, cognitive-behavioural and systemic approaches.<sup>3</sup> Although some approaches seem more naturally suited to particular clinical problems (behavioural approaches to the treatment of specific phobias, for example, and exploratory approaches to existential difficulties), key determinants of outcome include *client factors* (including pre-morbid adjustment and motivation for change) and *therapist-client matching*. In my own practice, I have come to work from a psychoanalytically-informed perspective (Bion, 1959, 1967; Freud, 1900/1953; Hinshelwood, 2002; Klein, 1946; Matte-Blanco, 1988; Meltzer, 1967; Ogden, 1994, 1999; Sandler, Dare, & Holder, 1973; Symington, 1986; Winnicott, 1971). Briefly, this involves consideration of the unconscious of the patient, accessed principally through the intersubjective relationship with them. The aim is to enable a transformation of the inner world of the patient so that they have greater choice in their lives and access to an expanded range of repertoires of response. As Hinshelwood so aptly puts it:

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<sup>3</sup> Such classifications can be problematic, but I hope that the above array is clear. Historically in Western Europe and the USA, psychoanalysis was an early paradigm, opposed first by behaviourism (followed decades later by cognitive-behaviourism) (the challenge based on the perceived lack of empirical evidence for the efficacy of psychoanalysis as compared with these approaches), then by humanistic approaches from another perspective (*that* challenge based on the apparent disregard by psychoanalysis for what it means to be human, and in turn to *be with* another human in distress), and subsequently by systemic approaches from a third perspective (based on the need to attend to the systemic context of behaviour and experience as well as their individual manifestations).

The journey, of learning and understanding begun by Freud concludes today, with the intuitive learning from the moment-to-moment interaction of two partners interacting, and struggling to know about that interaction. The knowledge we seek now is the immediacy of the analytic moment, the configuration of projections and introjections that make up both the communication and also the defensiveness in the analytic setting. (2002, p. 9)

It is not difficult to find the roots of contemporary psychotherapy in a variety of archaic spiritual and clinical practices and traditions. In the last fifteen decades (since the birth of Freud in 1856), the epistemology underlying psychotherapy has undergone a series of revolutions. This has many similarities to (although some differences from) patterns of change in the other social science disciplines. In the case of psychoanalysis as an early and profoundly influential psychotherapy, Freud (1905b/1960) included both modern and post-modern elements in his theorising, and also moved through a range of paradigms as his interests progressed and deepened. Pine (1990), in his work entitled 'Drive, Ego, Object, Self', offers one view of this progression, which makes sense of the traditions which have grown from the punctuations of this sequence. Within the broader field of social science, writers such as Lincoln and Denzin (1994) have argued for a series of moments as punctuations, marking the transition between the former dominance of one paradigm and the emerging significance of another.

Although we ignore our biological heritage at our peril, we can no longer. However, an early scientism, aimed at recognition by the (primarily medical) establishment, arguably led Freud to over-emphasise the scientific basis of psychoanalysis and to downplay the relational aspects. Similarly, one can argue that a wish to ease the task and to get at underlying intra-psychic structures led Freud to de-emphasise the importance of real relationships with significant others and their role in the experience and resolution of personal as well as interpersonal difficulties. Freud can be seen as having left it to his successors to focus on these aspects (Benjamin, 1990; Fairbairn, 1952; Guntrip, 1971;

Joseph, 1985; Klein, 1946; Kohut & Wolf, 1978; Matte-Blanco, 1988; Racker, 1957; Stolorow, Brandschaft, & Attwood, 1987; Winnicott, 1971).

It was Klein (1946) who evolved the initial formulation of the concept of projective identification (discussed above), but it was left to Bion (1962, 1967) to apply this concept as a keystone in the understanding of group process. His later psychoanalytic work, following his own analysis by Klein, is focussed almost entirely on the psychoanalysis of individuals, but it is firmly built on his earlier work and contains many concepts that are of immense value in the understanding of groups. For example, his 'Theory of Thinking' (1962) describes a construction of the mind where thoughts exist prior to the presence of a thinker, and in particular, of a mind to think them. Hence, what Bion calls 'beta elements' (primitive mental contents) are transformed by thinking (which, in Bion's view, includes affective as well as cognitive processes, and of which containment, described above, is a major component) into 'alpha elements'. These 'alpha elements' are then available to consciousness as dream material and thoughts.

A further contribution of Bion's is his use of his experiences and observations with psychotic patients to describe the way in which deviations can occur from those alignments of functions within the person which can otherwise enable learning and thought (1959, 1962a). Bion's notion of attacks on psychological and emotional linking by disturbed individuals, both keen to gain assistance but profoundly threatened by the provision of that assistance, can be used to understand how both groups and individuals will at times feel hatred towards the prospect of learning from experience, and will seek to destroy the opportunity to gain such learning.

These notions provide the grain of detail for Bion's earlier conception of the group. This earlier work (1961) is based on the idea that groups can be seen to behave as a whole as if they embody what Bion called 'Basic Assumptions', notably Dependency (BaD, or Basic Assumption Dependency), Fight/Flight (BaF) and Pairing (BaP). In these modes, it is *as if* the group has met solely in the service of this purpose, respectively to be dependent, to fight or flee, or to witness two members taking on a task (akin to the creation of the Messiah) on behalf of the group. At other times, groups can seem to transcend these more primitive and restrictive modes of functioning, and can enter what Bion called the 'Work' mode (W).

Winnicott (1953, 1971), is also a key contributor of ideas that can be applied to the group as a holding environment and a transitional space, which are discussed further below (see 'Group Analysis') in Hopper's list of reasons why groups are helpful.

Winnicott is clearly an associate of and successor to Klein. He did not generally refer to or address groups in his writing (other than in his concern with psychological education of the public), focussing for much of the time on the mother/infant dyad. However, Schlachet (1986) has applied Winnicott's ideas directly to groups, particularly learning groups, notably in his extension and application of Winnicott's idea of *potential space* (created by play between mother and infant) into *group space* (created by play between facilitator and participants). Winnicott himself extended the notions of Freud and Klein into his observations of mothers and infants (carried out over several decades working as a paediatrician and a psychoanalyst), and theorised this interaction by means of a series of concepts, including 'me/not me' (questions of boundary) and 'in-between' (questions of space) (Winnicott, 1953). Applied to the group, albeit in a form of anthropomorphism similar to that used by Bion to treat the group as though it were a single patient, the group can come to represent the space between me and not me,

between mother and infant where the infant is free to play and the mother to respond.

Moving from the mother/infant dyad back to the group, the state that Bion called *reverie*<sup>4</sup> in the nursing couple of mother and infant can be experienced by the group conductor in relation to the group. This has led Schermer (2001) to reflect on the role of group therapist as mystic. Taken together, this thread of representation is one rich source of tropes or figurations for experience in groups.

The particular benefit that psychoanalysis brings to understanding dyadic relationships is that it is an elaborate conceptual structure that offers a theory of human development, a theory of clinical practice, and theoretical notions that can be applied to non-clinical situations. In the case of ‘group theory’ (harder to see as a clear field), this requires an understanding of an entity (that is, the small group or larger group), which may be conceived of variously as a body or as an arena; a theory of clinical practice (group analysis); and theoretical notions that can be applied to non-clinical situations (applied group analysis). Foulkes (1948, 1964, 1971, 1975, 1990) is the theoretician who has done most to articulate the foundation of this discipline. This leads to a consideration of group analysis.

### ***Group-analysis***

Group-analysis is particularly associated with the psycho-analyst S H Foulkes. Many of his ideas are set out in his work ‘Introduction to Group-Analytic Psychotherapy’ (1948), written shortly after his contribution to post-war rehabilitation of service personnel at Northfield Hospital in Birmingham, where other pioneers such as Bion and Main (1957)

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<sup>4</sup> Reverie is a term linked to day-dreaming, but adopted by Bion (1970) to describe a state like that of the nursing mother of a contented infant, without memory or desire. This state is an aim of the analyst, but linked to that, is also an achievement by the patient. In addition, this state can be attained by the group therapist, both together with and apart from the group.

also worked. He wrote then about the deeply social nature of the human being, and argued that the individual was an abstraction (following Karl Marx, but foreshadowing Winnicott's dictum (1960) that there is no such thing as an infant, only a mother-and-infant), as well as that reality and unconscious phantasies were inseparable. He also introduced his description of therapeutic factors that were group-specific, notably the mirror reaction, exchange, social integration, and activation of the unconscious. In 'Group Psychotherapy: The Psychoanalytic Approach', written with James Anthony (1957), he introduced the notion of four hierarchical levels of communication, the Current Level, the Transference Level, the Projective Level, and the Primordial Level (see below). He also wrote about networks of relationship, later to be called the 'group matrix' (see above), modelled in part on the ideas of the neurologist Goldstein (1937) on the nervous system, as well as processes that are transpersonal. In 'Therapeutic Group Analysis' (1964) he defined the matrix more clearly, and in 'Group-Analytic Psychotherapy' (1975) he defined the foundation matrix (based on the biological properties of the species, as well as on culturally embedded values and reactions of the wider culture) in contrast to the dynamic matrix (formed in particular situations such as a therapeutic group).

Many of the basic psychoanalytic concepts that inform this field (such as transference, countertransference, defences against anxiety, projection, and projective identification) were introduced in Chapter One. In the case of group-analysis, the additional shared knowledge and understanding of group psychotherapy helps practitioners to know how to form Foulkes' idea of the group-analytic matrix and then to use it.

Matrix has a meaning in mathematics as a device for arraying data, but was defined by Foulkes in various ways at various times. (Confusingly, the term 'matrix' is also used



by Matte-Blanco (see below) and others to signify the totality of the dynamics of transference and countertransference, which overlaps in part with Foulkes's definitions). Powell's (1989) summary of Foulkes's definitions of the group analytic matrix includes the following:

The matrix is the hypothetical web of communication and relationship in a given group. It is the common shared ground which ultimately determines the meaning and significance of all events and upon which all communication and interpretations, verbal and non-verbal, rest (Foulkes, 1964, p. 292).

The network of all individual mental processes, the psychological medium in which they meet, communicate and interact, can be called the matrix (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957, p. 26).

Inside this network, the individual is conceived as a nodal point (Foulkes, 1964, p. 118).

The mind is not a thing which exists but a series of events, moving and proceeding all the time (Foulkes, 1973, p. 212).

(the) ... lines of force ... (of the matrix) ... may be conceived as passing right through the individual members ... (of the group) ... and it may therefore be called a transpersonal network, comparable to a magnetic field (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957, p. 258).

The creation, maintenance and repair of the group-analytic matrix is a recursive process, and can be a large part of the work of group therapy, much as the creation, maintenance and repair of the therapeutic alliance is a significant part of the work of individual therapy (Bordin, 1971). Group analysis contributes an understanding, although it may often be elaborated *post hoc* (an example of where clinical work borders on research), in this case of how individuals change in a group, and how a group forms and changes so as to enable change in individuals. I need to give more detail on how this works.

Garland (1982) has characterised the process of change in a group as the deflection of the individual and the group's attention away from the problem on to the non-problem (which is how to be and relate in a group), and then the facilitation of play. This is so that new patterns of behaviour can occur in a context which does not support the typical

response of the individual, but yet which does support particular kinds of new behaviour.

Yalom (1996) and Hopper (2003) have laid out what they see as the key therapeutic factors in groups, based on research and clinical experience in Yalom's case, and clinical experience as a psychoanalyst and group analyst in Hopper's. Because Hopper's list is group-analytic, and contains more detail of the processes involved in the operation of these, I will include this below. Hopper (2003) notes that there is an extensive literature on the treatment of difficult patients in groups, and in conjoint and serial combinations of dyadic and group modalities. He argues that this literature can be summarised by a list of ten reasons why treatment in groups is thought to be helpful for the most difficult patients. I consider that these reasons therefore contain a highly pertinent summary of the group-analytic contribution to understanding the learning group. Hopper's reasons are set out in the following table:

1. The group provides a holding and containing environment, which is supportive, facilitating and encouraging. Some think of this in terms of Winnicott's concept of the "environmental mother", but others prefer the concept of an "archaic good mother".
2. The group offers an opportunity for experience with transitional objects and transitional phenomena, because it is so clearly a "me – not me" object, and, therefore, it helps an individual to individuate and to separate from archaic, negative maternal objects.
3. The group provides opportunities for safe play, that is, for trying on and taking off various gloves of identity without serious consequences.
4. The group provides opportunities for realistic feedback from people who are heterogeneous in their social and personal qualities.
5. The group provides the opportunity to negotiate personal and social boundaries both between self and other and within oneself, and in this connection to test reality and to understand the difference between psychic and social facts.
6. The group offers ample opportunities for benign mirroring and echoing, with many "witnesses" and "referees" who help to limit the intensity of negotiations about psychic and social truths.
7. The group offers protection and shielding from tough but necessary confrontations. Although scapegoating occurs, the conductor can usually bring some objectivity to this process, and help the various members reclaim those parts of themselves that are projected.
8. The group provides opportunities for intimacy with males and females, but in general that intimacy is more diffuse, and, therefore, less frightening to the vulnerable patient, who usually suffers from a degree of confusion in his or her gender identity.
9. The group offers opportunities for altruism, that is, patients can simultaneously both help and be helped, and this greater degree of symmetry and interdependence between patients and the group conductor provides an opportunity for reparation and forgiveness, and an opportunity to moderate the experience of destructive envy and rage.
10. Face to face interaction with peers and the therapist is especially suitable for anxieties associated with shame, which is more than merely an archaic form of guilt.

**Table 2(ii).1 – from Hopper (2003b)**  
**Hopper's reasons why groups are helpful to difficult patients**

The theoretical basis for many of these reasons may be apparent elsewhere in this chapter. For example, reasons 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9 are based on the work of Winnicott (1953, 1971) on the formation of the self and identity of the infant out of the relationship with the primary caregivers, although they are transformed here by a kind of equivalence into features of group behaviour and experience. For now, they represent powerful contributions from the field of group-analysis, which contribute to the philosophical basis of the research.

### ***Ethnography***

The word ethnography is used to denote both the practice of long-term participant observation in a field setting, as well as the product of that practice, an ethnography. This is usually, but not exclusively, undertaken in the disciplinary context of anthropology or sociology. I am engaging in a process like the former use of the word, and I am writing an example of the latter. In terms of underpinnings, and taking ethnography as method, this has gone through many of the transformations of other social science disciplines for more than a century. For example, in 1898, the British psychiatrist W H Rivers (who had written on his treatment of soldiers with shell shock following World War One) was a member of the University of Cambridge expedition to the Torres Straits, which was a step in the modification of the existing tradition of cultural scholars based in the mother country and making interpretations of the observations of colonial officials and others. Arguably, Freud's cultural works (Freud, 1913/1950) were in this tradition. However, it was not until the 1920's that Malinowski (1884/1922) began what has become and remained the traditional method of ethnography, extended participant observation. Interestingly and tellingly, his account of the personal experience of this earliest work was not published until almost half a century later (Malinowski, 1967).

As will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Three, Stewart (1998) is among many commentators who note that the only watershed in methodological development in ethnography has been the continuous rise of ethnography through participant observation. Having said this, the transformations that the discipline as a whole has gone through are remarkable, with challenges to notions of truth, objectivity and subjectivity (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Marcus & Fischer, 1986) in deciding what ethnography through participant observation means and how it is to be represented.

One or two significant examples of ethnography which reflect some of the tensions I have alluded to will be considered here.

Fine and Martin (1995, p. 90) note that if one takes ethnography as the description of a scene, setting, group or organization, then like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain (who was amazed at being able to speak prose), we all write ethnography without awareness. However, Fine and Martin note that few ethnographic texts are privileged. They analyse Goffman's (1961) work as one of these, in particular the power of his use of humour. Goffman, who identified primarily as a sociologist, wrote the highly influential work, 'Asylums', based on participant observation at St Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC (1961), then the largest state hospital in the USA. As an example of his theorizing, Goffman develops the notion of an individual's primary and secondary adjustment to an institution, primary adjustment being the overt way that an individual gives and gets in an appropriate spirit what has been systematically planned for, whether this entails much or little of himself. Goffman notes that an organisation could also be said to have a primary adjustment to an individual. This definition of primary adjustment enables the consideration of secondary adjustment, any habitual arrangement whereby a member of

an organisation employs unauthorised means, or obtains unauthorised ends, or both, hence getting around the organisation's assumptions as to what he should do and get and hence what he should be.

About his own ethnographic method, in a rare detail Goffman himself notes,

In considering the secondary adjustments of mental patients in Central Hospital, I will cite, where possible, parallel practices reported in other types of establishments and employ a thematic analysis of secondary adjustments that I think applies to all establishments. An informal combination of the case-history and comparative approach will therefore be involved, with more emphasis in some cases on comparisons than on the mental hospital studied. (1961, p. 185)

Fine and Martin underline how remarkable was the impact of Goffman's theorizing, making a major contribution to and providing an underlying rationale for de-institutionalisation, yet how, as Goffman himself acknowledges in the passage above, little raw data and few details of transformations of that data are given in his account.

To consider another example of a notable ethnography, Kondo (1990) has contributed what is seen by many in the field (Agar, 1996; Stewart, 1998) as a benchmark account in her work 'Crafting Selves: power, gender and discourses of identity in a Japanese workplace'. Coming from the background of an educated Japanese-American from Harvard, Kondo lived the life of a single woman in the house of a host family in Tokyo and did unskilled work in a cardboard box factory in the local community. To give a series of examples from this ethnography, Kondo is very personal in her account of experiencing humiliation as the woman nearest the rice cooker and hence expected to attend pleasantly to any man in the family who pushes his empty rice-bowl at her with a grunt. She describes the shock of completely failing at first to recognise her own reflection as she passes a shiny metal shop cabinet. In that case, when pushing a child of her host family in a stroller, and wearing a shapeless shift dress worn by all of the local

women in intense heat, she thinks first how dreadful and down-trodden *that* woman looks before becoming aghast that it is *her*, and this is what she has become. The response of some of her hosts to her Japanese-American pronunciation of Japanese, spoken from her humble social position as a junior foreign woman on the edge of a local family, was that she must be a bit simple, or even worse, a Korean. Importantly for this study, she comes to a notion of a layered and complex crafting of selves within the individual, particularly informed by her capacity to position herself within hierarchies and to articulate experience from those positions.

Much as Fine and Martin have reconsidered Goffman's work and its consequences, Ewing (2006, pp. 95-97) has considered how aspects of Kondo's work impose limitations on her account. For example, arguing for the importance of clinical awareness in ethnographic interviewing, Ewing notes how Kondo retreats from a very personal approach by a young man to her as a wiser adult, which, given the twin lenses of psychoanalytic clinician and ethnographer, Ewing can readily and convincingly highlight as significantly transferentially determined. The importance of the synthesis of ethnography and psychoanalysis that Ewing notes leads to consideration of other inter-weavings of the two disciplines.

### ***Inter-weavings between psychoanalysis and ethnography***

There have been some notable and productive disciplinary inter-weavings between psychoanalysis and anthropology.

Devereux is a striking example of someone trained as both an anthropologist and a psychoanalyst, and determined to exploit the overlap between the two disciplines to the full. As a clue to the path he took, his major work is titled, 'From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioural Sciences' (Devereux, 1967). In one of a series and range of

anthropological and psychoanalytic case reports, he describes at length the showing of an ethnographic documentary film of ritual subcision of a man's penis to two audiences, an anthropological one and a psychoanalytic one. He describes at length the responses of members of both audiences, and then gives further data, particularly in the psychoanalytic setting (the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas) of a series of follow-up interviews with psychoanalytic colleagues, involving disclosure of their responses which include dreams. It would appear that Devereux and his colleagues actually make use of these interactions for therapeutic purposes. They are framed as research, but the phenomenon is familiar to that reported by many investigators in the overlap between psychoanalysis and ethnography of being pressured by respondents to repeat the interview process. The psychiatrist and ethnographer Levy (1973) in his study of Tahitians, noted both their concern to present 'smooth and fragrant surfaces' to others, yet also the hidden distress, and the frequency with which respondents would request a second or subsequent interview because of the relief they experienced at being able to be more direct and honest in a confidential setting with a stranger. A particular argument of Devereux's, which is ahead of its time and fits well with this study and its concern with metonymy, is his response to critics of Freud and of Freud's major reliance in his theorizing on data from Viennese patients between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In defending against the claim that Freud's very particular sample of patients (and hence his conclusions) lacked breadth, Devereux puts forward very firmly the notion that breadth is equivalent to depth rotated through ninety degrees, and that what Freud's studies and theories might lack in breadth they more than make up for in a depth that breadth of scope would always struggle to emulate.

Hocoy (2005), in a more recent example of inter-weaving, notes how Harry Stack Sullivan in 1940 described the psychotherapist as most essentially a "participant-



observer”, and that the myriad similarities that exist between the anthropological method of ethnography and psychotherapy afford a distinctive pedagogical opportunity. He proposes a model of psychotherapy instruction in which ethnography is used as conceptual framework and experiential metaphor. Hocoy argues that in what he see as<sup>5</sup> the absence of any established pedagogy in psychotherapy and given current pressures in graduate training programs to condense curricula and integrate research and clinical instruction, ethnography provides a valuable teaching alternative or supplement to current psychotherapy training methods.

A final example of interweaving comes from Williams (1997), an anthropologist who trained as a psychoanalyst *after* conducting his fieldwork and *before* writing his thesis, In other words, Williams trained as a psycho-analyst in the middle of his anthropology PhD. Furthermore, the site of Williams’ research was a special psychiatric ward run by the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Murray Jackson for the psychoanalytically informed psychotherapeutic treatment of patients experiencing major psychoses (Jackson & Williams, 1994, 2001). In his thesis, Williams explores aspects of the milieu that impacted on the success of the ward, as well as issues that led to its eventual closure.

As a final point on ethnography, it is important to clarify that this study is not a form of auto-ethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, 2006). Although the current approach makes use of subjective and private experience from the position of participant-observer, this is used with other data in the service of description, analysis and interpretation of what happens in a group, not principally what happens in the researcher.

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<sup>5</sup> The basis of this study is that there is an embryonic pedagogy in psychotherapy, which the study is seeking to clarify and advance, so Hocoy’s view is contested even though his response is valued.

### ***Group Analytic Ethnography***

Examination of the work of researchers in areas related to my own, I found much of this informative but variously differing in emphasis. Hunt's (1989) pioneering work was cast as psychoanalytic fieldwork. Writers such as Walkerdine and colleagues (Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody, 2002), Hollway and Jefferson (Hollway and Jefferson, 1997, 2000), and Clarke (Clarke, 2002), are concerned with much of the same ground as myself. However, many of these identify as academic social psychologists or sociologists, and although some have significant interest and some training in clinical work, as researchers many collectively eschew the role of clinician. In Cartwright's work (2002) on the development of the psychoanalytic research interview, he elaborates why the psychoanalytic approach has a huge untapped research potential, having had an almost exclusive and very limited focus on clinical single cases. He also captures something of the extent of scrutiny and reflection that goes on in routine clinical practice. However, he takes a different turning when his response is to set out to develop in the standardized research interview something that is decidedly separate from clinical research work, and which therefore heads towards a post-positivist paradigm strongly influenced by demands for reliability and validation.

It slowly dawned on me that what I have come to be doing in my own research is group analytic ethnography. That is, if I look at how I characteristically proceed, I am analysing the process of a group or groups, and the way that I do this is as one would analyse a group-analytic group (Foulkes, 1964). In a sense, this is using a form of clinical group-analytic method with what Foulkes called a Functional or Work Group as opposed to a Group-Analytic Group or a Life Group, and naturally this requires modifications to be made to that clinical method.

As well as building on the work of Foulkes (1948, 1964, 1975; Foulkes & Anthony, 1957), his successors (Brown & Zinkin, 2000; Pines, 1983), and the contributions of Winnicott and Bion earlier in the chapter (under Psychoanalysis), group-analytic ethnography can be integrated theoretically by including the contributions of Matte-Blanco (1975, 1988). This integration is explained next.

Ignacio Matte-Blanco was a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. He was also a mathematician, and carried out study of unconscious processes, working towards the specification of the operation of the mind and the process of thinking in the widest sense (including feeling). At the core of his work is the notion of *bi-logic*, the idea that instead of reality just having an either/or, true/false (bivalent) nature, it also has a both/and aspect. He identified two logics, asymmetrical (i.e. either/or) and symmetrical (both/and). These are variously present in the bi-logic.

Matte-Blanco's work is firmly grounded in that of Freud on the nature of the unconscious. Matte-Blanco took the five characteristics of the unconscious outlined by Freud (1915), and added to those a further eight he could find in Freud's 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (1900/1953), and then proceeded to explain these in relation to a new conception of wider logical processes.

It is hard to better the introduction to Matte-Blanco's work by Rayner and Tuckett (1988). They use the example of Archimedes Principle as a theory that makes use of a number of elements or concepts, and which links them together. In the same way, they outline how Freud took a number of concepts which are the subject of his introductory lectures (such as trauma, resistance, repression, development of the libido, regression, formation of symptoms, and transference) and articulated these in terms of traditional

bi-valent (either/or, asymmetrical) logic. However, Freud also added descriptions of unconscious processes which contribute very new and different understandings, although Matte-Blanco argues strongly that the full potential of these has tended to be ignored by many psychoanalytic writers since Freud.

The five features of the operation of the unconscious which Freud identified in his paper ‘The Unconscious’ (1915) include:

- (1) The absence of mutual contradiction and negation
- (2) Displacement<sup>6</sup>
- (3) Condensation<sup>7</sup>
- (4) Timelessness
- (5) The replacement of external by internal reality

To these, Matte-Blanco added the following eight, which are largely varieties of blends of the previous five, to make thirteen altogether:

- (6) The co-presence of contradictories
- (7) The alternation between the absence and presence of temporal succession
- (8) Logical connection reproduced as simultaneity in time
- (9) Causality as succession
- (10) Equivalence-identity and conjunction of alternatives
- (11) Similarity
- (12) The co-presence in dreams of thinking and not-thinking
- (13) The profound disorganisation of the structure of thinking

What Matte-Blanco has done is to extend Freud’s awareness and understanding of the principles of the workings of the mind, and then to bring this enhanced awareness and understanding back into contact with both everyday experience, as well as with the experience of patient and therapist in the clinical setting. The application of these ideas outside the consulting room is particularly important for this project. Canham and Satyamurti (2003) demonstrate the value of Matte-Blanco’s ideas in the consideration of

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<sup>6</sup> Displacement is an unconscious mechanism whereby the mind redirects affects from an object felt to be dangerous or unacceptable to an object felt to be safe or acceptable.

<sup>7</sup> Condensation is an unconscious mechanism where one object can stand for several associations and ideas. Hence, “dreams are brief, meagre and laconic in comparison with the range and wealth of the dream-thoughts” (Freud, 1915)

poetry and creativity. They point out that they open the door to a role of the unconscious in creativity that is not dependent on the construction of parallels with pathological processes, and free the unconscious from having to be involved with transferred traumatic dynamics.

Matte-Blanco notes how Freud's arguments typically have great respect for bivalent (that is rational, asymmetrical, true/false) logic. This is true both in their form, (having, as Strachey notes in his editorial introduction, a head a body and a tail); but also in their content, involving, for example, frequent oppositions between two incompatibles (such as satisfaction and blocking of wishes, forgetting and remembering a trauma).

However, in his descriptions of the characteristics of the unconscious, Freud noted phenomena which do not conform to the rules of bi-valent logic. Matte-Blanco's contribution is to take and explore what Freud noticed, and hence to realise more of its potential.

Matte-Blanco points out that the bi-valent logic of conscious thought depends principally on asymmetry. Hence, in this mode, if A is on the left of B, B is on the right of A. Most relationships in this mode are asymmetrical, for example parent and child, brother and sister, patient and therapist. There are exceptions (eg brother and brother), but they are just that. In the logic which underpins the working of unconscious processes, such as in dreams, and in the manifestations of parapraxis (such as slips of the tongue or pen, or forgetting) that Freud noticed, there is a dominance of what Matte-Blanco calls the principle of symmetry, and relationships are largely symmetrical. In this logic, as in a dream, A can be on the left of B and B can also be on the left of A. To quote Dalal:

Here both things can be simultaneously true – Jack is bigger than Jill and Jill is bigger than Jack, or somebody is killed and they are still alive. It is the logic of dreams, where all kinds of strange and impossible things can take place. (2001, p.549)

Instead of time being a sequence of instants which follow the one before and precede the one after (as in asymmetrical logic), it becomes instead a collection of instants all with the property of following-succeeding. In this way, all instants become the same and time disappears. By a similar process, space also disappears, and hence Freud's phenomena such as displacement and condensation become easily possible.

### ***Some concepts that are part of the philosophical underpinnings***

#### ***Matte-Blanco's Strata***

Matte-Blanco noted from examination of Freud's characteristics of the unconscious that there is often a mixture, of respect for bi-valent thinking together with its negation. In addition, he also suggests that our everyday ideas, thoughts, feelings about people, things, and their relationships mean different things to us at what may be considered deeper and deeper zones or strata in our minds, conceptually differentiated according to the degree of symmetrization routinely present at that level. He suggests that at the deepest levels of our minds (hence, mostly in our unconscious), we experience a unity, between ourselves and everybody and everything else. This is not incompatible with recognising differences at less deep, more conscious or more superficial levels. In these terms, human experience can be conceived as structured by the existence of up to an infinite series of strata in which our capacity to recognise differences declines as the amount of symmetrization increases. Matte- Blanco characterised five strata.

At the first stratum, experience is characterised by the conscious awareness of separate objects. At this level, thinking is mostly delimited and asymmetrical.

At the second stratum, there is a significant amount of symmetrization within otherwise asymmetrical thinking. It is the stratum in which more or less conscious emotions related to distinguishable and separate elements within a class are discernible. Matte-Blanco argues that emotions, like the unconscious, are bi-logical structures.

The third stratum is one in which different classes are identified (thus containing a fair amount of asymmetrical thinking) but in which symmetrization is taking place to the extent that the parts of a class are always taken as the whole class, and vice-versa. A constant feature is the symmetrization of the class. Because the part of a class becomes the same as the whole class, each individual becomes the same as the class in question. Because of the identification of individual and class, intensity tends towards infinite values. Because there is no difference experienced between the two, the first acquires all the potentialities of the second. As the classes (of, say, angry mothers or fathers) can be infinite in size, so the individual can attain, at this level, an infinite degree of the class characteristic. Klein's (1946) observations about both children and adults (and particularly about the role of aggression and destructiveness) have masterfully explored this stratum. Some degree of timelessness is a consequence of symmetrization of the class and thus a characteristic of this stratum. As noted above, time becomes conceived as a set of instants with the same properties of succeeding-following, and after symmetrization of the class, instants become indistinguishable one from another.

The fourth stratum is defined by the fact that there is the formation of wider classes which are also symmetrised. However, some class differentiation and hence some

asymmetry remains. Because classes or sets are unified, symmetrization becomes wide and more comprehensive. For example, the class of 'man' (*sic*)<sup>8</sup> is a wider class than those comprising men, women and children, and when symmetrised this means that to be a man is identical to being a man, a woman or a child. Matte-Blanco suggests that schizophrenics tend to function at this level, in that they treat as equal things which belong to sub-sets or sub-structures of a larger set or structure. For example, a woman patient said that because a man is very tall he must be very rich. Since both rich and tall can be considered sub-sets of the larger set of those who have something in a high degree, it is through the formation and then symmetrization of this higher class that she draws her conclusions. Very tall = very rich. In this fourth and rather deep stratum, a number of the features of the Freudian unconscious are also characteristic. There is an absence of contradiction. If a set, which contains all affirmations of an idea and also their corresponding negations of it, is symmetrised then there is the conclusion that any assertion is equal to its negation. There is no possibility of contradiction. For this reason, there is also an identity of psychical and external reality.

Finally, the fifth and deepest stratum is that in which processes of symmetrization tend towards the mathematical limit of indivisibility. From this point downwards, the amount of symmetrization is so great that thinking, which requires a degree of asymmetrical relations, is greatly impaired. Here, Matte-Blanco envisages that everything is experienced as everything else. An infinite number of things tend to become mysteriously only one thing.

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<sup>8</sup> Here I am quoting Rayner and Tuckett (1988), who quote Matte-Blanco's (1988) use of 'man'.



### ***A return to Foulkes' Levels***

It was noted above that one of Foulkes's early theoretical contributions (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957) was the notion of levels of interaction, which he named as Current, Transference, Projective and Primordial. It seems clear that these are versions of the application of Matte-Blanco's strata in the group domain.

The Current level can be seen as equivalent to the First Stratum, involving conscious awareness of separate objects and asymmetrical thinking. The Transference level has an equivalence to the Second Stratum, involving a significant amount of symmetrization within otherwise asymmetrical thinking. For example, there is a confusion of similarity with sameness, and the intrusion in transference of emotion from prior relationships in to other relationships evocative of those prior relationships. The Projective level seems clearly equivalent to the Third Stratum. The link to Klein's elaboration of this level was very clearly made by Matte-Blanco himself. Bion's capacity to merge his own conception of group processes with Klein's elaboration (in particular his promotion of her concept of projective identification from a form of defence mechanism to a fundamental communicational process) is also highly significant here. Finally, the Primordial level encompasses the Fourth and Fifth Strata. As Usandivaras (1986) notes, beyond conceptualising and naming this level Foulkes did very little exploration of it in his subsequent writings, but the phenomena which Foulkes, Bion, Winnicott and indeed Usandivaras variously describe fit well with Matte-Blanco's Fourth and Fifth Strata.

### ***Bi-Logical Depth***

The notion of Bi-Logical Depth is used in this study to refer to the particular stratum of Matte-Blanco's bi-logic (roughly corresponding to one of Foulkes's four levels) which predominates at any point in time, providing a means to represent broadly the current

mix at any moment of bi-valent logic (rational, conscious) and symmetrical (non-rational, unconscious) logic. The more the latter intrudes and eventually comes to dominate as one proceeds down through the strata, the more fluid and emotional things become. This notion is extremely powerful in moment to moment understanding of group process, and I have made it a core component of an heuristic for doing just that which I go on to describe in Chapter Three, Research Methods and Their Use, on Page 104. It is also manifested in the notion of 'Sticky Moments', mentioned in the Preface and discussed in Chapter Three, but about which I will say more in the next section.

### ***Sticky Moments***

As mentioned in a footnote to the Preface on Page xv, I have used this term borrowed from the title of a television game show to indicate moments which are dense with layers of meaning. Given the framework that has been articulated above, moments of group interaction that are complex and layered will contain a series of different but related meanings. Hence, at such moments it will almost certainly be apparent to all participants but particularly to those responsible for facilitating the interaction that multiple meanings are present. In choosing moments or episodes from the recordings of the semester for analyses in Chapters Five to Nine, I looked for markers of such moments, for example, parapraxes or mis-performances, eruptions of emotion or humour, expressions of probable unconscious conflict, or awkward silences. The role of the concept of Sticky Moments in the research methods of Post-Foulkesian Group-Analytic Ethnography is discussed in Chapter Three on Page 99.

### ***Linkings of Matte-Blanco's work, and that of Foulkes***

Rayner (1995) makes a range of links between Matte-Blanco's work and that of other theoreticians, but his list of these does not include Foulkes. Dalal (1998, 2001) has been

the writer to make most of the overlap in concerns between Foulkes and Matte-Blanco, and there has been some writing in response to his work. However, although Dalal includes Matte-Blanco's work as a key component of his Post-Foulkesian Group-Analytic Theory, he does not go on to apply this clinically, and in particular seems to value Matte-Blanco because his work has not generally been appropriated by individual psychoanalysis.

Dalal's (1998) major use of Matte-Blanco's work is in a social theory, and his engagement is as more with social rather than with therapeutic or educational experience. Dalal is particularly concerned with how the human mind perceives differences and similarities, collapsing differences within classes by symmetrisation, and expanding differences between symmetrised classes by using asymmetrical logic. Hence, for example, by this means all of 'us' are like each other and completely different from all of 'them', who are similarly like each other. This will be recognisable as a basis for phenomena like racism and other forms of prejudice. Dalal goes on to use the work of Elias (1994; Elias & Scotson, 1994) to explore how power in society determines the meaning and value given to the experience of groups in relation to each other.

Although Dalal and others, for example, Nitsun (1996) and Hopper (2003a, 2003b) have done much to extend the theoretical basis of a group-analytic perspective, none of these writers has sought to apply a combination of Matte-Blanco and Foulkes's ideas in relation to what might be called a 'life group', that is, one formed for a purpose other than psychotherapy. Also, in some senses Dalal is a critic of psychoanalysis, countering the potential arrogance of the discipline (resonant with early psychoanalytic forays into anthropological territory, real and symbolic, as the expert interpreter) in going beyond

its epistemological basis without sufficient reflection. In contrast, because the teaching that is the object of the current study has a profound concern with individual psychoanalysis, a model constructed to study that teaching needs also to retain a respect for the tenets of individual psychoanalysis. Perhaps Dalal risks rejecting a psychoanalytic ‘straw man’ because of a strong desire to unearth what he terms the Radical Foulkes, and a clear awareness as a theorist of prejudice and racism of the complex constraint that psychoanalysis represented for Foulkes.<sup>9</sup> Hence he excludes the work of Bion from his thinking, principally, he suggests, because Bion’s work can be argued to be based on an essentialist fallacy. However, it can be argued that this ignores the crucial role that Bion’s work (and by extension, the work of Klein on which it is based) has played in the development of an intersubjective perspective in psychotherapy.

***How are the students perceived by the staff, (and indeed by each other, and vice-versa), as individuals, as a group of individuals or of sub-groups of individuals, or as a group as a whole?***

I think this is effectively what Matte-Blanco has called the matrix of transference and countertransference. Taking the framework that has been sketched out above, it is possible to see these perceptions as part of a fluid whole that will transform from moment to moment in line with dynamic changes within the group. It is interesting that Matte-Blanco like Foulkes chooses the term ‘matrix’, albeit to name something slightly different. Matrix as a term is common within mathematics, and broadly used to mean a form of structure or array, whereas for Foulkes the term was apparently evoked by the

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<sup>9</sup> A major thrust of Dalal’s (1998) argument is that Foulkes held back from a whole-hearted development of the implications of his theories, not least out of a concern to retain the acceptance of his psychoanalytic colleagues. As a German refugee in independent private practice as a psychoanalyst in post-World War Two England, he would have very much needed that acceptance.

nature of neuronal networks and enhanced by the etymological link to ‘mother’ and ‘womb’ as a model for the structure of the group.

Within the matrix of transference and countertransference, the perceptions of the self and of various arrangements of others will have components from each of the strata. There will be ‘real’ aspects to these perceptions, from the first stratum, and descending from here there will be aspects coloured by emotion and varying degrees of unconscious influence.

***The Importance of Internal Good Objects in Stressful Situations (Under Fire)***

This is an idea with implications for the person holding the role of group conductor, and comes from the work of both Bion and Winnicott in individual psychoanalysis. Bion’s concepts (which were influenced by his World War One experience as a tank commander) refers to the need for the analyst and in particular, his or her mind, to survive attacks by an individual patient (or indeed by a group), which may be envious or contain other primitive elements (1959, 1962). Winnicott’s ideas are expressed in his paper on ‘The Use of An Object’ (1969), and include the notion that for psychological development to occur, the infant needs to destroy his or her primary objects in phantasy and yet have them survive. Foulkes wrote less about the negative and primitive aspects of group life, and it has been left to Nitsun (1996) to evolve the notion of ‘the anti-group’, a destructive constellation that can be assumed by the group and which can threaten the integrity and effectiveness of the group process.

### ***A Group-Analytic Approach to Understanding Learning***

Pines (2000) provides an elegant articulation of the link between the psyche and the social that is at the heart of Foulkes' theory, based on the difference between cohesion and coherence. Although *cohesion* is seen as a core concept in group functioning, Pines links this to the more ancient and Germanic root of the word group which is linked to 'crop', the gizzard of a bird where an agglomeration of substances can be found. These have lost their individual and discrete nature and are clumped together to form instead a fibrous mass. Pines argues that one form of group can be seen in the image of individual elements partly digested and glued together to form a bolus. He suggests that it is possible to see Bion's Basic Assumptions (described above, on Page 55) as instances of powerful group cohesion.

Pines differentiates this cohesion from the form of group pictured by the use of the later Latin root of the word group, which is connected with the concept of 'grouping' as an active process. In this, objects are actively grouped together to display an organisational principle of *coherence*. In a group-analytic small group, meetings take place under conditions set down and maintained by the conductor as dynamic administrator. These conditions relate to issues of space, time, reliability, confidentiality, the privilege of verbal communication over action, and the understanding that people meet together in order to increase their understanding of themselves and thereby to gain mastery over their inner lives. These organisational principles are part of the group analyst's own mentality, derived from his or her training and position in the training matrix of the group-analytic community. Pines argues that it is this basic structure which will be tested over and over again through the life of the group, and which gradually becomes internalised by the group members themselves, so that in the long run they themselves become the organisers of the group. Each member of the group comes to occupy the

position of what Pines calls a ‘double agent’, both member and recipient of the group processes but also a supporter and vital link in the group structure. Group members are gradually able to work at higher levels of psychic organisation, maturing over time as the group develops. This double process plays an increasing part in holding the group together and yet at the same time allows members to experience deeper, more regressive, more loosely organised aspects of self through their own inner explorations and through participation in the psychic lives of the other group members.

### ***Conclusion to consideration of the theoretical and philosophical framework***

This is a description of philosophical underpinnings which owes almost all to writing about therapy. However, to borrow an argument from Devereux (1967), with facilitation, what emerges from this range of assumptions about people, behaviour and experience can now readily be applied to the theorisation of a form of teaching, and to the carrying out of research into groups and their workings. The turn of a post-Foulkesian gaze towards teaching and learning is one of the original contributions of this study. The way in which this gaze is applied is detailed further in Chapter Three, ‘Research Methods and Their Use’, and Appendix Two includes a series of varying examples of the methodology and methods in action. However, in order to bring this consideration of literature and methodology to a close, I include below a consideration of the theoretical and philosophical framing of the study, through which the meta-level concepts considered in this chapter can be applied to the data to be considered in Chapters Four to Nine.

### ***Theoretical and philosophical framing of the study***

The aim of this section is to provide a clear framing for the thesis, to enable the reader to understand aspects of the process of data collection and transformation, in particular the application of the theory behind the study in the way that data is being sampled and analysed. This is important both for showing how the investigation takes place (and also for pointing to how it might otherwise be deployed), as well as in helping the reader to understand and to accept the various findings.

I will now attempt to pull together the collection of theoretical and philosophical understandings on a level, which, if not operational, is available to be made operational. I will attempt to highlight examples of moment-to-moment application of this theory in the analyses in Chapters Five to Nine. Plaiting together the strands in this chapter from psychoanalysis, group analysis and ethnography, I will describe the particular selection I have formed from these traditions, which will be used to inform both investigation as well as the transformation of the data that results from that investigation.

A core of the approach is the understanding gained from the practice, in a range of roles (including as *group therapist* and *individual therapist, patient* and *patient in a group*), of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and particularly, of group analytic psychotherapy. My application of this understanding is based partly on my own experience of these roles, but others who have come along similar paths will have access to comparable understandings. A foundation of this synthesis is Foulkes' notion of the matrix of connections of which individuals are but one part. This is sublated<sup>10</sup> in the Hegelian

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<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Professor Katherine Pratt Ewing for drawing my attention to this core notion of Hegel's. In *sublation*, a term or concept is both preserved and changed through its dialectical interplay with another term or concept. Sublation can be seen as the motor by which the dialectic functions. The methodology of this study is post-Foulkesian, sublating Foulkes' work by taking it into the study of psychoanalytic psychotherapy training.



sense by drawing on a wealth of ideas from psychoanalysis, notably those concerned with the nature and phenomena of the unconscious (both the individual unconscious and the social unconscious, as well as the links between them); an array of group and individual defences against anxiety; transference and countertransference; containment and projective identification; as well as a broadly intersubjectivist perspective.

Philosophically, an integrating theme for this array of ideas is a phenomenological stance, because meaning is seen as largely co-created by participants, but this is tempered by an awareness of both the power of the social context, as well as the importance of the individual inner world of phantasy and the unconscious.

This approach regards much of behaviour and experience as unconsciously determined, particularly those aspects which lead to dissatisfactions in living. These dissatisfactions are considered to be best understood and responded to in the context of a carefully structured relationship, which enables both the expression of the experience and behaviour as well as a route to different ways of relating, both interpersonally and to oneself. These processes, of understanding and responding to personal and interpersonal difficulty, can be addressed highly effectively in a clinical context in small groups.

This perspective is extended in the study from a clinical context both to teaching and learning, and to research. In teaching and learning, it can inform the development of core clinical capacities (which can be measured, if required, as competencies), notably for students to develop their ability to use the accumulated wisdom from clinical practice in their own developing clinical practice. In relation to the teaching and learning considered in the study, the delivery of this had not lately been fully theorised at the time of the study, although there were many ideas from psychoanalytic training,

and elements consistent with group-analytic ethnography if not articulated as such. In its extension to research, the perspective enables the study of the process of teaching and learning, with a view to the further theorisation and hence development of that process.

In relation to research, and in particular this study, the perspective is used to notice and mark phenomena (for example, as ‘Sticky Moments’), and to consider those phenomena *as though* they are the clinical material of an individual psychotherapy session or the conductor experience of the interaction of a group-analytic psychotherapy group.

At this level, the theoretical perspective determines central issues which influence decisions elsewhere in the process into which it is adopted. In particular, the epistemological perspective involved in working clinically in a group-analytic practice tradition has major implications when transferred to teaching and learning or research settings.

As an illustration of this last point, and returning temporarily to a pedagogical perspective, the therapeutic capability that is *being developed* in the trainee in the training under study (which cannot be expressed as ‘*taught to*’) involves a capacity to be present with a patient, listening carefully, and responding in a measured way that includes consideration of what the patient has said, as well as what they have not said, what is evoked in the therapist, and what is known about the patient and their experience from the experience of the relationship with him or her. This captures a distinctive stance of this perspective on *how things are known*. In this invented clinical vignette, the therapist does not ask the patient directly what the therapist wants to know, and does not then share all of their reasoning explicitly with the patient, revising their formulation for the full agreement and sign-off by the patient. What the patient reports

and shows in other ways is crucial, but is not the sole determinant or source of what is known by the therapist. Similarly, in the training under study, the staff do not just tell the trainees what to do as part of their training, and neither do they directly model the capability in question. Rather, they create a milieu, rather like that of an individual or group clinical session, into which thoughts can be brought in various ways.

In a research example, in the current project, the teaching and learning that is being studied is, like the process that is being taught (the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy), profoundly intersubjective. Hence, as in the therapy where manualisation is not appropriate, so too in the research, the interpretations that are made will pertain in part to that researcher and that focus of study, although another researcher following similar principles with a similar group would likely come to similar conclusions.

As another clinical example, there is a strong trend currently in public-sector mental health settings for every session of psychotherapy to be formally evaluated by client completion of a standard form, because research has shown that attention to the therapeutic alliance is highly significant in determining therapeutic outcome. This perspective would take a very different approach to the same issue, attending to therapeutic engagement in a manner with greater complexity, and according a lot of emphasis to reflection by clinicians.

Approaching the study in question from this epistemological stance, one aim of the research methodology that stands out is to privilege *researcher countertransference*. As in the other domains of clinical practice and training, it seems important in group-analytically informed research to foreground this and other ways of knowing that are

both distinctive and yet underused in much other research practice. Other key elements include *an understanding of bi-logic*, meaning recognising and responding to the significance of the presence of a varying combination of both symmetrical and asymmetrical logics, as well as *an understanding of group and individual responses to experiences of identification with, and difference from, others*.

### ***An heuristic for considering social situations***

Taking researcher countertransference as an example of an aspect of relationship and hence of *connection to others*, together with *experiences of likeness and difference* and *bi-logical depth* as dimensions, it is possible to construct a heuristic for considering a range of social situations, with these dimensions or axes of (put more simply) connection, difference and depth. This is typical of the kind of framework that I might employ in clinical practice, say, when conducting a psychotherapy group, or a team supervision group. In both settings, I will be looking for my responses to people and interactions, at my experiences and awareness of likeness and difference, and at the particular quality of the interaction that is taking place. In the case of the latter dimension, this will range from a highly rational discussion, through one more tinged with emotion, to one where reason barely exists. I use my awareness of this quality to make sense of what is happening, and to direct my attention to phenomena (such as Sticky Moments) which I have proposed as being highly revelatory.

In each of the five analyses of a Sticky Moment, which are reported in Chapters Five to Nine, I have characterised each of these Sticky Moments as particularly representing one of Freud's (1915) five characteristics of the unconscious, that is timelessness, condensation, displacement, the absence of mutual contradiction and negation, and the replacement of external by internal reality (or symbolisation). Whilst the study

privileges multiple meanings, and openness to continual reworking and revision of interpretations, this device has been deployed to highlight an aspect of the overall impression of each episode, and to provide a particular view shaft on the episode. All of the characteristics will likely be present in any such episode: the highlighting of predominance serves to enable the appreciation of the processes observable in the episode.

### ***Sampling, and analysis and interpretation***

This leads on to three key areas in consideration of how meta-level concepts are applied in relation to data, *sampling*, *analysis*, and *interpretation*, in other words, what data is generated and how is it transformed?

Regarding *sampling*, I have described above (under ‘Sticky Moments’) how the moments and episodes were chosen for more intense study, based on the likelihood that they would be complex and layered. My approach to *analysis* is described in Chapter Three, but one imperative I adopt is to keep in mind the *task* of the group (and by implication, the *task* of the research, to explore how the work of the group can be investigated, and to reveal the fruits of that investigation). *Task* here is intended to refer to the Learning Task of the group (which is elaborated and discussed in relation to the Reference Locator in Chapter Seven), the task of learning and integrating the theory and practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Firstly, how is the group, and how are individuals through their membership of the group, contributing to the completion of that task? Secondly, how can those questions be answered in a way that privileges the understanding that underlies the clinical competence that is the goal of the group? The response of the study to these issues is to focus on the accumulation and integration of

the concepts outlined this chapter, and to apply those resources to a consideration of the data contained in each sample.

Regarding *interpretation*, again, this is carried out in the light of the theoretical and methodological perspectives that inform the study. How can those perspectives guide the formulation of summaries and conclusions from the data that characterise and focus on dynamics, concepts and issues which are particularly visible through a group-analytic ethnographic lens? As with previous foci, the challenge is to link ideas about how learning and personal change can take place with incidents where that may be either happening or being prevented.

Regarding *analysis*, the study turns next in Chapter Three, to a consideration of methods, and in Chapter Four to an account of the events of the semester. Further implementations of this linking theory follow in Chapters Five to Nine, the Synchronic Analyses.

In order to make clear the argument of the thesis, the findings of each chapter, both on the processes of the learning group and on ways in which those processes have been investigated, are summarised at the end of each of the five ‘Synchronic’ analyses in Chapters Five to Nine, and these findings are then linked together in the summaries and conclusions in Chapter Ten.

# Chapter Three

## Research methods and their use

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### *Introduction*

Chapter One ended with two questions, one about the nature of the gap in knowledge of learning groups, and the other about the gap in ways of investigating such gaps in knowledge. Chapter Two Part One examined the literature for concepts and findings about learning groups and potential ways of investigating them that circumscribe and begin to fill these gaps. Chapter Two Part One also set out some examples of investigations in a range of disciplines. Aspects of this assembled material were then synthesised in Chapter Two Part Two into the methodology of Group-Analytic Ethnography, as a set of principles underpinning the research methods and their rationale, in relation to the research questions and to the theoretical approach as a whole. This third chapter is aimed to complete the elucidation of this methodology, by outlining compatible research methods, that is, how data are produced and analysed, and by discussing issues relating to these methods and how they have been specified and deployed in the study. (Other possible deployments of this novel methodology and its methods are considered in Chapter Twelve, and a series of illustrations of its possible use are contained in Appendix Two).

It seems important to begin with some background on the development of the study, in order to put into context the issues to be considered in this chapter.

***Some background to the study - how ethics committee approval and participant consent were established***

I began this study prior to registration for a higher degree, and in particular prior to registration for the degree of PhD at AUT. However, I was clear privately and also in discussion with my co-participants (see information sheet – Appendix 1) that I intended to direct this work towards the completion of degree requirements. In particular, I wanted to carry out the research as I did because of the opportunity that was available to link my interests in clinical practice, training and research. I was aware that the opportunity to carry out the research might not present itself again for some time. I teach infrequently. The particular course that I eventually studied has run infrequently (i.e. on only three occasions in the nine years since I undertook the study). I therefore decided to proceed in order to take the available opportunity.

I recognised immediately from my professional backgrounds (as a psychologist and psychotherapist) and from the various ethical codes of those disciplines to which I am subject (for example, the British Psychological Society, the New Zealand Psychological Society, the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists) that I needed ethical approval to carry out the research. Initially, I obtained that ethical approval from the committee responsible for research ethics in the agency where the fieldwork took place. I was clear that I wanted Associate Professor Steve Appel, as it happens a clinical and training colleague in the agency at the time, to supervise my research. We met, and I got Steve's agreement to do this, although we were unclear whether that supervision would take place with me being registered at a UK institution with Steve providing local supervision as an agent of that institution, or at the institution where Steve was currently a staff member, or through some other arrangement. In the event, and after I had begun my research with ethical approval from the agency, Steve took up his post at AUT, and drew my attention to the opportunities there for doctoral level scholarship. I then



applied for registration for the degree of PhD at AUT, which required me to make a formal draft proposal of the research, and once that was accepted, to apply for ethical approval from AUTECH (AUT Ethics Committee), which was granted (See Appendix One for the documents relating to these steps). Throughout this time, I had been working with supervision from Steve on an informal basis. With the acceptance of my draft proposal and the granting of ethical approval, that supervision arrangement became formal. Hence, although the research had an informal beginning, I sought at all times to obtain appropriate approval and supervision until that beginning was formalised.

Regarding the process of obtaining consent from the participants for the research to take place, I explained the research to, and obtained consent from, my teaching colleague before we began the semester's teaching. I then presented and explained the project to participants on the first occasion that we met each of them during the semester (that is, to most of the group at the first session, and to three others as they came variously for the first time for them, two at the second meeting of the course and one at the third meeting), and asked each of them for their consent to take part and for the teaching to be recorded (See Appendix One for a letter summarising this presentation). The group were given opportunities to ask questions, and to withdraw from the project if they did not wish to take part.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the majority of the participants, i.e. those people present on the first occasion, heard the explanation and request three times. The participants returned signed forms of consent (see Appendix One). I then tape-recorded the semester

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<sup>1</sup> In a project allied to the study (i.e. data recorded but subsequently not included in the thesis because of a change of emphasis), the study of a focus group conducted with people who had attended a reading group on the works of Sigmund Freud, I encountered one cohort where almost all readily consented to take part but where one member objected to the execution of the research. In that case, I withdrew from that group after thanking them for their consideration and willingness to take part. I met with the person who had objected, and was able to address his concerns about my work. Subsequently, I engaged with a second cohort who had undertaken the same reading group, and with their informed and unanimous consent conducted a focus group with them. I could not have continued with this study and the recording if I had not had appropriate consent.

as agreed, and after the semester was over, I began eventually to study the tape-recordings. Although I subsequently obtained permission from the AUT Ethics Committee to collect more data from participants by interviewing them (see Appendix One), I chose not to avail myself of that opportunity. Following discussion with both of my supervisors (undertaken in series of joint meetings) I decided to focus the study on two tasks, the elaboration of an appropriate methodology, and the application of that methodology through research methods to the analysis of the data that I had already collected. I considered, in the light of these supervisory discussions, that I had sufficient consent from participants and approval from the ethics committee to proceed with these tasks without seeking further consent or approval, and sufficient data to complete my project.

I am aware that this last point, that I had sufficient data, is controversial. I wanted to study my topic in a particular way, one which captured the experience and skill that I personally can bring to that task. This was not out of a sense of grandiosity, but rather stemmed from a wish to privilege the development of research based on adapted forms of reflective practice which can increasingly be incorporated into that practice, not solely but also not least in order to furnish practice-based evidence. I'm also persuaded by over thirty years of clinical experience on the limits of a direct and completely objective approach to accessing the consciousness of others. As discussed in Chapter Two Part One, this latter point is explored by a number of authors, notably Hollway and Jefferson (1997) writing on the defended subject, and Ewing (2006) on the limits of the interview. Personally, I came, as detailed at length in Chapter Two Part Two, to particularly value the taking of a group-analytic perspective, which values individuals and their worlds but also values a trans-personal perspective, and in particular, unconscious aspects of both individual and transpersonal experience. It would be of

interest to contrast the picture that this methodology can draw with one that takes a more neo-realist perspective and obtains triangulating data, but that task was beyond the scope of this project.

As I registered my draft proposal at AUT and began to work towards my candidature, I already had a significant volume of data and permission to use it. Since this had been collected relatively unobtrusively (that is, alongside normal professional practice as a trainer), and since I had by then decided that the design of the study would be emergent and indeed that the methodology would be one product of the study, it had not been necessary in order for the study to commence that I should articulate the research methodology in detail beyond that it would be a qualitative study (and indeed, that it was important to allow a methodology to emerge). The methodology that did emerge was elaborated in Chapter Two Part Two: here it remains to articulate the principles of that methodology into methods. Since this methodology has had to be discovered in Chapter Two Part Two and fleshed out here, the work in this chapter is another part of the original contributions of the thesis.

### ***Research methods - The contribution of Alex Stewart's model***

In a way that I suspect is familiar to anthropologists, I only began to be fully clear about my research methods towards the end of my study. After I had finally articulated my methodology and spelled out my methods of collection and transformation of data, I came across the monograph by Alex Stewart (1998), *The Ethnographer's Method*. I have made considerable use of this text since, and in particular, I have used it to review my own approach. I will elaborate something of Stewart's model here.

Stewart analyses the apparent inattention to method in ethnography, arguing that despite a series of waves of ethnographic theory, there is really only one watershed of method, the rise of ethnography based on participant observation. He bravely seeks to address the gap in texts on method in ethnography, and arguably succeeds well, as follows.

Stewart emphasises participant observation, holism, context sensitivity, socio-cultural description and (possibly) theoretical connections as the five characteristics that lead to a determination that a study is ethnographic, but also notes the complexity of this situation. These elements are tabulated below in Table 3.1.

Participant Observation
Holism
Context sensitivity
Socio-cultural description
(and possibly) Theoretical connections
<b>Table 3.1 - Stewart's (1998) Characteristics of an Ethnographic Study</b>

Stewart surveys a number of systems to address methodological concerns and values in qualitative study, and settles on the values of *veracity*, *objectivity* and *perspicacity*.

Stewart then moves to describe a series of tactics to use in the pursuit of each of the values. Finally, he analyses a series of three notable ethnographies,<sup>2</sup> and provides a checklist for a funding application for an ethnographic study.

Veracity and objectivity are largely as expected, and link to the notions of validity and reliability in quantitative studies. Perspicacity is interesting, linking profound awareness of context and attention to it. This is so both in the recognition of phenomena, as well as in applying the results of the research, looking widely (or perspicaciously) in both cases.

The tactics that Stewart suggests to pursue perspicacity include intense consideration of the data, and exploration. The former, intense consideration of the data, is achieved through inspiration and perspiration; decontextualising, memoing and recontextualising; theoretical candour, and comparisons with other ethnographies (emphasising both credit to other scholars as well as the constitutive role of literature-based comparison in ethnographic enquiry). The latter tactic, exploration, is pursued by site selection and the search for contingencies, as well as by the search for theories and ethnographic writings that are invoked for consideration.

The above ideas on method represent formulations of much of my approach to transformation of my data. In particular, *intense consideration of the data* is achieved by much of what I have outlined, and particular I am adding capability with Matte Blanco's

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<sup>2</sup> This is a very important contribution to the characterization of the field. As illustrated above in Chapter Two Part One, when considering ethnography, it is a key feature of anthropological scholarship that fieldwork accounts are available for re-analysis by others.

bi-logic (Matte-Blanco, 1988; Rayner & Tuckett, 1988) and the group-analytic social unconscious (Dalal, 1998; Hopper, 2003).

### ***The application, in research methods, of Post-Foulkesian Group-Analytic Ethnography***

In Chapter Two, I laid out the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of this work. From that viewpoint, I have articulated a model of individual and group interaction with which to approach the task of studying the processes of the teaching and learning of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The model, post-Foulkesian group-analytic ethnography, brings together the theoretical and practice wisdom of an integration of group analysis and psychoanalysis, with the wealth of the tradition of ethnography. However, its deployment in this way as a source of research methods remains to be theorised.

As a background to this articulation, I can acknowledge the value to me of the sociological and anthropological fieldwork traditions and their vicissitudes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). I can also value my clinical tradition as a group and individual psychotherapist (Brown & Zinkin, 2000; Symington, 1986). In a sense, this study is applied anthropology, or rather anthropology applied (to avoid restricting what can be drawn on). This makes use of what is known from research traditions about groups. In order to understand and theorise training in the professional practice of psychotherapy, it also draws from the traditions of the use of ideas about groups to treat people clinically and to understand organisations and cultures,

### ***The design of the study***

I must account for the design of the study, how the research was planned and executed in order to follow through on its purposes in terms of choice of elements such as sites

and participants. This study is a qualitative investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005), an original, group-analytic, form of psychoanalytic ethnography (Ewing, 1987; Hunt, 1989; Kracke, 1987; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Obeyesekere, 1990).

The main method used to gather data in the study is participant observation (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Becker, 1958; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Jorgensen, 1989).

In the case of this study, a key feature is the use of *participant-observer countertransference*, the product of systematic exploration of what is evoked in the participant-observer by the setting. In Chapter Two, I traced the development of the use of this competency in both psychoanalysis and anthropology, for clinical and fieldwork purposes respectively. Here I am forming a new synthesis of these parallel developments, using competencies that are variously psychoanalytic and anthropological in the service of research.

The design of the study has been emergent, with successive phases of enquiry guided by the outcome of prior phases. As I have collected and analysed data from one source, this has provided questions and hunches with which to explore data from other sources. For example, a concept may occur to me through personal reflection in the process of writing or studying my field notes, which I can then examine in relation to aspects of the audio-tape recordings. I will say more about this in the section that follows.

### ***The data***

I have collected and made use of data from two sources. Thus, as described in Chapter One, one source of data is *the audio-tape recordings* of my co-teaching of a semester-long psychotherapy practice class. My other source of data, and a central expression of

the methodology of the study, is *my observations of (and reflections on) experiences salient to the study* (collected since 2002). Effectively, I have regarded myself for the duration of the project and since as being on continuous fieldwork assignment, and my accumulated notes over this period as data.

I believe the use of audio-tape recordings is relatively uncontroversial, and aside from the well known limitations of such data (such as their restriction to the auditory modality), unproblematic. I am aware that the same is not true for my other source of data, my observations of (and reflections on) experiences salient to the study. With this source of data, as is commonly the case in qualitative methodology, many of my observations and reflections are part of the next stage of the research, the *transformation* of the data, which is considered in the next section of this chapter. However, from my perspective as a group-analytic ethnographer, I am choosing to regard some of my observations and reflections *as data in their own right*. This stems from the idea explored in Chapter Two Parts One and Two, that in some forms of therapy and research, the subjectivity of the clinician/researcher (notably, the experience of the relationship with the patient(s)/research participant(s)) is a valid and at times crucial source of data about the patient(s)/research participant(s). I have given examples of using my observations and reflections in the data chapters, eg on Pages 147 -151, 153-158, 161 and 162, where I have recorded relatively 'raw' or unprocessed associations to the transcripts of sessions, based on a combination of my memory of the experience in which I participated and a *post-hoc* response to reading the transcript, and then offered some illumination of what I am making of this data. These illuminated aspects are then picked up, for example in the comments at the end of the transcript in Chapter Five, and in the more experience-distant reflection that follows in each respective chapter.



Regarding the initial approach to the raw data prior to analysis, this followed parallel strands for the two sources, the audio-tape recordings, and observations and reflections on experiences salient to the study.

### ***Transformation of the data***

I have proceeded through the phases outlined by Wolcott (1990, 1994) of *description*, *analysis* and *interpretation*, and as phenomena have emerged from this process, I have considered them in relation to the findings in the other sources of data. The main method I have used for the collection of data is participant observation. Becker (1958) gives a classic description of the process of field analysis in participant observation, albeit needing to be read with a view to when it was written. His three stages are the selection and definition of problems, concepts and indices; the check on the frequency and distribution of phenomena; and the incorporation of individual findings into a model of the organisation under study. A fourth phase of final analysis involves presentation of evidence and proof. A critical perspective enters the study through the seeking of negative cases. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) offer a more contemporary and far more complex account, highlighting some of the range of positions that have variously been taken on issues such as the epistemological foundations of ethnography, the link between theory and practice, and rhetoric and representation .

As I develop the definitions of phenomena of interest, as well as comparing these against other existing sources of data, I am applying these in further subsequent participant observation.

***The choice and treatment of ‘Sticky Moments’ for synchronic analysis***

I will say something here about what I am doing in the five Chapters Five to Nine, the synchronic analyses. In these, I am taking a series of five points in time in the life of the class, rather like a series of cross-sections of the alternative diachronic account which appears in Chapter Four.

The five moments or episodes were chosen after at least two hearings of the complete tape-recorded data, that is the recordings of fourteen two-hour classes. In choosing moments or episodes from the recordings of the semester for analyses in Chapters Five to Nine, I looked for markers of such moments, for example, parapraxes or mis-performances, eruptions of emotion or humour, expressions of probable unconscious conflict, or awkward silences. These moments rapidly stood out for me for a range of reasons, but key factors were that they could involve a positive presence of phenomena, as in the episodes in Chapters Five, Six and Seven (Up-Bringing, The Eruption and The Fish-Hook), or a relative absence of phenomena that might be expected to be present, as in the episodes in Chapters Eight and Nine (The Scrap and Losing Time).

In each case in the synchronic analyses, in other words, in relation to each Sticky Moment, I set the moment or episode in the context of the session of the course in which it occurs, describing what takes place, and then offering analysis and interpretation of this material. Clearly there will be biases even in my description, let alone in my analysis and interpretation. In the case of Chapters Five (Up-Bringing) and Eight (The Scrap), these biases can be examined by comparing my description with the fairly extensive verbatim transcriptions which are included in each of these chapters.

I use a range of methods as part of my analytic and interpretive strategies. The methods include: the extraction from the data of patterns of content and of themes; psychoanalytic free association to elements of the data, whether images and metaphors, or the product of the first method, content and themes, and making use of the phenomena of metonymy;<sup>3</sup> at all times, the noting of my own countertransference, or responses (of thought, sensation, feeling and imagery) evoked in me by aspects of the material that I am studying, which may have come from a range of combinations of the experience of the original event (in the session), reflection on it at various times since, or from my own experience; the noting of transference from the students onto the programme, the group, other students, and the staff including myself; the induction of figurations (Elias, 1994) to the data, derived from theory or grounded in the data; and the articulation of sequential chains of interaction, together with their possible meanings through translation. These methods of analysis are laid out in Figure 3.2 on the next page.

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<sup>3</sup> Metonymy is defined some length at in the Preface, on Page xiii.

Extraction of patterns of content or themes
Psychoanalytic and group-analytic free-association to elements of the data (making use of metonymy and metaphor)
Noting of counter-transference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the event</li> <li>To the experience of analysing it</li> <li>From my own personal experience</li> </ul>
Transferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From students - to the programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to the group</li> <li>- to other students</li> <li>- to the staff</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Induction of figurations
Articulation of chains of interaction, and their possible meanings through translation
<b>Table 3.2 - Methods of group-analytic ethnographic data analysis</b>

I will say something about each method in turn, defining it and giving some examples of its use. I will then attempt to portray something of how these methods are used as part of a palette of resources, saying what I can about how each contributes, and what it contributes.

### ***The extraction of patterns of content or themes***

An extended description and demonstration of the clinical use of a form of this method in relation to material from individual psychoanalysis is given in Casement (1985). In this study, I want to make data-analytic use of the method in relation to social phenomena. If descriptions of social processes have the identifiers removed from them, then they are rendered more general and available for inclusion in a wider context. For example, if I am with patient A and I feel inexplicably powerless, then rather than say this directly, I can abstract the notion that someone feels powerless in the presence of someone else. This can obviously lead to a consideration of counter-transference (see

the next method), but here I am more interested in the abstraction of the theme (the presence of powerlessness experienced with another).

Casement acknowledges the work of Matte-Blanco in his formulation, and as elaborated in Chapter Two Part Two, Matte-Blanco's work is central to group-analytic ethnography. As a relatively simple example, I may find myself feeling ashamed whilst consulting to a clinical team. If I can reflect on *somebody feeling ashamed*, then I can identify that whilst that somebody may or perhaps should be me, instead shame is an unacknowledged affect in the situation that the team (both as a collective and as individual members) are trying to address in their work together with me.

### ***Psychoanalytic free-association to elements of the data (leading to metonymy and metaphor)***

This is such a crucial part of my approach. Freud articulated his clinical approach to dream material in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900/1953),<sup>4</sup> and this method has similarities with that. Rather than treat the whole dream as a symbol, Freud broke the dream into elements and explored the associations of the dreamer to these elements to expand the imagery and symbolism of the dream. Only then did Freud pull the products together and relate them to the dreamer's life.

As with the elaboration of patterns, this method can be extended into a group-analytic handling of data. In a clinical setting, interpretations are generally conveyed to the patient around the time of the bringing of the dream, although the dream then forms a significant item in the shared world of the therapy and may be returned to later and

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<sup>4</sup> Freud's invitation to free associate is as follows: "So say whatever goes through your mind. Act as though, for instance, you were a traveller sitting next to the window of a railway carriage and describing to someone inside the carriage the changing views which you see outside. Finally, never forget that you have promised to be absolutely honest, and never leave anything out because, for some reason or other, it is unpleasant to tell it" (Freud, 1913/1958, p. 135).

perhaps repeatedly. In the current research setting, generally it is the eventual product of the researcher's free associations that become the focus of the work. In previous studies (e.g. Devereux, 1967), participants have contributed dreams and associations.

### ***The noting of counter-transference***

I defined and described counter-transference in Chapter Two Part One. Here, I want to show how it is used as part of the transformation of data. The Example below is an account of the beginning of a semester like the one in the study, involves the use of my counter-transference.

### ***The noting of transference***

In Chapter Two Part One, I gave a definition of transference as the bringing (or transfer, or projection) of a past experience into a present one, such that the present is unconsciously experienced as if it were the past (Freud, 1914/1958). Along with many others, I believe that this is a ubiquitous phenomenon, since memory and desire play a major role in perception.

What is important here is the extent to which transference is taking place in any situation, and the significance that it has for understanding interactive processes. I believe that an example of significant transference occurs in Session Ten, to be discussed at length in Chapter Five (A Beginning). I am thinking particularly of the way that Kelly seems deeply invested in the group and in the teaching and learning, to the extent that she is eager to come even when she has been quite seriously unwell with a major physiological syndrome.

### ***The induction of figurations***

This idea belongs to the sociologist Norbert Elias (1994), and is a notion that Dalal (1998) suggests transcends the individual-society dichotomy. Figuration describes the interconnectedness of human existence. For example, to say that the individual is embedded in the group is to give priority to the group, and to say that society is an aggregation of individuals is to give priority to the individual. Elias argues that the concept that is needed is ‘interdependent people’, and then ‘individual’ refers to interdependent people in the singular and ‘society’ to interdependent people in the plural. His notion of figuration addresses both the relationship between the parts, and also refers to the same thing as social ‘structure’, which is a description from the perspective of the ‘whole’:

What we call ‘figurations’ with reference to the constituent parts is identical with what we call ‘structure’ with reference to the composite unit ... the structure of societies and ... the figuration or pattern of bonding of the individuals who form these societies ... are ... the same thing seen from different angles’ (Elias, 1978)

### ***The articulation of chains of interaction, and their possible meanings through translation***

This is related to the notion of figurations, but applies more to situations where the connections between individual and group are less clear than in figurations, but where phenomena can be outlined and interpreted or translated through more of an input from the translator or interpreter, or in this case, the researcher.

### ***An heuristic for considering interaction***

As noted in Chapter Two Part Two, drawing together several theoretical notions, I have developed a particular heuristic for the study, which I refined through experience gained from presenting a workshop to psychotherapists on dealing with difference. This

heuristic involves a three-dimensional array, with *x* and *y-axes* representing the extent of the experience of *connection* and *difference* respectively, and the *z-axis* representing bi-logical depth, in other words the particular mix of asymmetrical and symmetrical logics at any point in time (see Page 85). This can be applied to samples of interaction, by examining the ways in which connection, difference and bi-logical depth are being expressed or manifested in particular instances.

### ***Procedure***

My practice has been to study all of my records of the semester, including notes and copies of clinical transcripts, as well as tape recordings of sessions and a range of transcriptions of those. In addition, I have been able to reflect on my recall of the events. As I have carried out this study, I have made further notes of various kinds in my project logbook, particularly observations and analytic and methodological notes. I have used the NVivo qualitative data analysis software (Bazeley & Richards, 2000) to manage this logbook as well as other notes and documents that I have accumulated. Although some of my notes remain hand-written, I have a store of data in electronic form that I can rapidly access and utilise. This procedure has yielded the material for the analysis and interpretation described above.

Analysis and interpretation has followed an iterative process, in that I have been engaged in a continuing cycling between the data and my reflections on it. After two hearings of the complete sequence of tape recordings, I selected the five foci that are the subject of these five chapters. I chose these because I judged them to be ‘Sticky Moments’, that is, instances, sequences or episodes when there is a form of disruption to what is consciously intended. Transcripts of these episodes were then variously re-read, and the analytic and interpretive procedure that I have described above was applied.



***Example 3.1 - An example for the purpose of illustration***

Appendix Two contains a series of illustrations of the use of the methodology, in order to indicate the potential for this method and logic of enquiry. Here is an example taken from my fieldwork notebook, particularly illustrating my use of my countertransference.

***Description of the example***

The incident takes place at the beginning of the fourth semester of the course, one for which I have had lead responsibility. (The run of the course in this current example takes place three years after the run that is the main focus of the study). I'm always very anxious at the beginning of semesters, particularly the first, but this fourth one also, even though sessions usually go well. I put this down partly to the need for me to contain the anxiety of the group, as well as their other projections onto, and projective identifications with, *us* (i.e. my Colleague and myself).

(What follows are separate fragments from my fieldwork notes, in a sequence that reflects their order of occurrence).

These are an attempt to write field notes at 11.30pm, when I finished at 6.30pm. I think the meeting went well: go-round for 50 minutes, then a break, then the group re-assembling to go through the course description, the assignment, the marking grid, the report required from each student's clinical supervisor, the dates for handing in of assignments, the schedule of presentations by each student in turn, and back to the detail of presentations and what is required, and then back to the assignment. This was followed by discussion. Finally, I raised the issue of my research, saying that although not studying this semester, I am in the process of carrying out an ethnography of this type of experience and might be developing ideas as we went along. I got a generally

positive response, individually from A, B and C (three students), after C's concern about the confidentiality of her client had been addressed ...

We (or rather I) got into a hole at one point - I think about anxiety, about (Colleague) and I being on the assessment panel at the conclusion of the semester. I tried to reassure people by saying, "it's only us", which was greeted with what felt like derisive laughter, an appropriate response, on reflection, to my clear naiveté ...

I'm interested to think of who is whose therapist, and supervisor, and so on. I think dual relationships with (Colleague) and I are particularly significant ...

### ***Analysis and interpretation***

Mixing analysis and interpretation of these descriptive notes, I believe that I feel ashamed in the second paragraph (when my statement evokes what feels like derision), and I think this is in part countertransferential, in other words forming a response to the way in which I am seen and related to by the students. I think the anxiety level in the group is very high, and awareness of the unconscious is heightened at this stage in the programme: frequently in this type of initial session there can also be what feels like very dependent questioning. I think newness, awkwardness and self-consciousness are very present, as well as a hatred of learning from experience. At some level, participants want to be taught didactically, and are angry that this will not happen. In addition, I think my attempt to diminish the significance of my colleague and myself is an emotionally determined attempt on my part to reduce anxiety, most probably my own. I believe participants are angry at the disingenuousness of this. I think it suits the group to have me as the one who says the stupid thing, which leaves me to carry their shame. I

think that my wondering about dual relationships is about raising my own awareness of these, which are extremely significant in terms of group process, addressed at the beginning of the programme but not here. Perhaps these have become a bit glossed. I may also be responding to a need to reassert my control *post hoc* by working out ‘what is really going on’, including (in my fantasies)<sup>5</sup> in the personal therapies of the students.

Clearly, power and position are particular issues for this project. Regarding roles, these are many and complex. In my own case, at various times I have been Director of Training for the agency where the fieldwork has been carried out, Course Director for each of the two runs of the course of which the two practice classes are a part, a co-tutor, a clinical supervisor for one of the students on one course, and at one time the manager and a colleague of my current primary supervisor for this research.

Hammersley (1992) considers the difficulties of this kind of situation in his discussion of practitioner ethnography. Benefits of access and background knowledge need to be set against blind spots, the risk of the loss of the benefits of culture shock, and biases in what can be learned. My response to the challenge of these issues is to make the maximum use of opportunities for critical private reflection, critical reflection in research supervision, and any consultation and presentation opportunities that I can find.

### ***Summary and Conclusion – challenges and responses***

A key issue in this study is the equivalent to the need in clinical psychoanalysis to avoid what Freud called ‘wild analysis’. My understanding is that concern about wildness was strong when the clinical insights of psychoanalysis were extrapolated to non-clinical settings, so there was not then the chance (as in clinical work) to go back and check the

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<sup>5</sup> I am using *fantasies* here to describe my imaginative but conscious wondering, as distinct from unconscious *phantasies* as described by Klein (1946, 1959).

outcomes of interventions. Interestingly, Phillips (2002) points out that Freud saw fear of this as an equivalent in society to the resistance of the individual patient to psychoanalysis. To some extent, there is a need for wildness, in that developing the capacity to play imaginatively with the cognitive and emotional contents of both conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind requires a loosening of narrowing constraint. Writing about the clinical practice of psychoanalysis, Tuckett notes that:

I find that sometimes I only realise what I am saying or see links, or perhaps decide I have completely missed the point, while I am actually speaking, or possibly later when I notice how my patient responds. This can seem untidy and even undisciplined but the analytic work, based as it is on the claim to be able to sense another person's unconscious mental life, is founded on the analysis and understanding of subjective feelings, unconscious enactment and unconscious realisation. Moreover, for interpretations to engage the patient it is probable they will need to be spontaneous and empathic – predicated on the analyst's emotional engagement and capacity to be surprised. (1994, p. 1160)

The means to address these concerns within clinical psychoanalysis is through some kind of 'third' position, like the 'analytic third' that Ogden (1994) describes as crucial to the psychoanalytic relationship, and through support for this function, again through clinical supervision or group consultation, which have been pioneered in the psychotherapeutic field. I built multiple opportunities for such reflection as part of my interpretive activity during the study.

Other complex issues in the use of this kind of epistemological framework and methodology include confidentiality and the rights of respondents to approve what is said. My general principle in obtaining the informed consent that I have is to offer that no data will be published that allows individuals to be identified without a further opportunity to consent. However, there is a dilemma in this work because of the nature of the methodology, with one of Stewart's core foci, holism and context sensitivity.

In clinical psychoanalysis, linked to the previous point about the need for reflective space, it is crucial that there is the capacity to open the psychoanalytic encounter to other views, especially when the intersubjective load on the analytic relationship is so great as to threaten the collapse of that relationship, or at least of the ‘thirdness’. At the same time, intrusion, even in fantasy, of others into the analytic relationship can be extremely destructive to that relationship. For these purposes, it is important to recognise that the analytic process is one that goes on well beyond the period of contact between therapist and patient, if not over a whole lifespan. Knowledge of others who may be involved as supervisors or consultants can seriously disturb the process. Hence, to obtain consent to discuss *clinical* material with others, and to check the ‘accuracy’ of that material, can risk the therapeutic value of extensive and intensive therapeutic work.

In *research* such as this project, the risks are slightly different but related. Ethically, I must obviously obtain informed consent. The participants (students and fellow tutors) are part of my own small professional community, so the need for confidentiality is as great as ever. Despite their collegial position, I am inevitably dealing with defended subjects. My solution is to blur details in any writing or presentation as much as I am able, and to be extremely cautious in my writing and presenting for publication. I have been trained as a psychologist to communicate with the media as though a group of colleagues were present, and I need to write with internal witnesses present, balancing the challenge to be as truthful as I can about my analysis and interpretation of what I present whilst protecting the privacy of my participants and my prior and continuing relationship with them.

Concerning veracity, related to the notion of validity in quantitative research, this is a challenge to this type of study, which relies largely on inter-subjective processes.

Stewart is, I think, a kind of neo-realist. In terms of justifications for objectivity, many of these do not stand up in this kind of study. I think here of Ewing's critique of what is not revealed in interviews. This study is a site for theorisation that can, in this methodology, at least initially only be carried out by the participating-and-observing researcher.

# Part Two

## Data and Analysis

## Chapter Four

### The diachronic analysis – who, what and when?

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#### ***Introduction***

Saussure (1983) distinguished two analytic perspectives, the *diachronic* (*across* or *through* time) and the *synchronic* (*with* or *in* time) (Stables, 2002). Although Saussure's distinction has been criticised, Stables illustrates its value in relation to the consideration of educational achievement, and I believe it contributes to a wider perspective in this study than would be the case were just a diachronic or synchronic approach to be taken. This chapter is a *diachronic* analysis of the semester. It is created by first setting the scene (including actors, their aims, and the setting) and then relating a narrative of what took place over the life of the semester. The group of chapters that follow (Five to Nine) represent a series of synchronic analyses, particular moments or episodes in this narrative that, I propose, warrant a closer and deeper look.

#### ***Setting the scene***

This chapter begins with a table (table 4.1, below), showing two responses from each individual, one made at the beginning and one at the end of the semester. I then look in turn at questions and learning edges for the students (i.e. where they began the semester); the setting trope; the fieldwork; the story so far for the group; and issues that members bring, both between them as individuals and collectively as a group.

The above is intended as a succinct view of the context of the fieldwork project, in particular, something of the worlds of the participants and of the group that Judi and I



form with them, as well as impressions of the issues that we bring. This chapter concludes with a narrative account of the semester, with week-by-week summaries of what took place, so that it is then possible to look in the chapters of Synchronic Analyses that follow this one at a series of episodes in this tapestry of experience in space and time.

	<u>Hopes</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>
Frances	How to hold confidence and not lose it.	Difference and identity, difficulty with openness.
Heidi	Isolation. Concern for client in the semester.	Acknowledges enactments, and also now has a place for these in her own therapy.
Kelly	How to understand and manage the role of therapist	Found somewhere to be herself. Didn't have to be anything other than she was.
Mary	Understand and use the relationship, confront own feelings	Scared, difficult with two approaches. Surprised by what she got from the third hour
Nancy	Bamboozled, gauche. Hope to learn <u>something</u>	Exhaustion, enabled, the setting made it safe. Jagged edges, rivalry
Paula	Difficulty re-joining, abandonment, losing, wish to do it all over again	From denial to rapprochement, being like Mum, and being held and challenged
Ron	How to hold non-captive clients. The challenge of working differently	(Thoughts disturbed on ending). Enjoyed this (the seminar), couldn't take in the third hour
Tom	To strengthen self as a therapist. Deal with ambivalence	Transition, from differences and pulling away to commonalities and pulling towards
Veronica	Confusion with people. How much to say (in therapy) and with what as the focus	Equality, unconscious competence, pleased at an experience with no status anxiety
<b>Table 4.1 – For each person, hopes at the beginning of the semester and outcomes at the end.</b>		

This table portrays an important view of the experience of the participants in this learning group. It sets in the same row their hopes at the start of the semester and a phrase to capture what they have learned at the end. Purely as a form of evaluation, it is interesting for me to read down the list, to think of the individual, and to see if I can make sense of the transition that has taken place between the collection of Hopes and that of Outcomes.

This table highlights one perspective on the outcome of the work of the semester and the course, and of the process that has taken place. This is the viewpoint of comparison of some of what people say about themselves at the beginning and at the end of an experience. An alternative viewpoint is for me to think about the people involved from my perspective.

### ***Dramatis Personae – The Students***

**Frances, Paula, Tom, Mary, Heidi, Ron, Kelly, Nancy and Veronica.**

When first writing this chapter, I went through the group, listed each person, gave their profession (e.g. psychotherapist, psychologist, doctor, nurse), and their workplace (e.g. private practice, public mental health service, voluntary agency, residential setting). I then tried to capture something of them by representing them in relation to the group in one sentence. An example of me doing this is, ‘\_\_\_\_\_ is by (their) own admission a beginner and an outsider in relation to psychoanalytic psychotherapy, but (they) want to get in and learn more’.

On reflection, I am not going to describe individuals in that form. The individuals can be seen in their own right, or at least in their own words (or in my account of those words) at a number of points in the text that follows. To say more risks identifying them

to no useful end, and tends to emphasise the role of the individual in the events that follow, whereas I am more interested in foregrounding the vertex or viewpoint of *the group*. At the same time, later in this chapter (see ‘And Now in A Different Form’), I do want to highlight some of the issues that people bring as part of the context. There, I have decided to describe these issues as I see them, but to detach each issue from any particular person. For example, with the representation at the end of the previous paragraph, I might include, ‘... being or feeling an outsider in relation to psychoanalytic psychotherapy and wishing to change that’. Although some readers may know or feel able to guess with accuracy the owner of all or some of the issues, I am neither encouraging nor enabling this.

### ***The Setting trope***

I will now say something about ‘The Setting’. As an immigrant to New Zealand from the United Kingdom in 1995, I would argue that I have since then been engaged in an informal long-term research project involving participant observation. I have had to migrate successfully. I have done a range of work in different settings, in The Agency as head of training, as a trainer, and as a psychotherapist; in the private practice of psychology and psychotherapy as part of various groups of practitioners; at universities, as a locum psychologist in a counselling service and as a clinical supervisor of psychotherapy trainees; and as a consultant to work teams and organisations. After some years, I moved to working full-time in solo private practice, much of that in long-term and often more-than-once-each-week psychotherapy with individuals, and as a clinical supervisor of others. I have had a long-standing involvement in the development of group work. Throughout, I have done some couple therapy and co-therapy with a number of colleagues. Eventually, I became formally engaged in this research, and hence became a researcher again.

This is a trajectory of migration, of beginnings, of finding a place, of being sought after and sought out, and then relatively ignored. I have a range of positions and perspectives as a result. These include that of total outsider (the stranger), welcome immigrant, envied fast-tracked rival, respected member of the community, deliberately isolated mentor, researcher, and all the way through, participant-observer. A major trope<sup>1</sup> is the setting, including the agency, the professional communities of psychotherapists, psychologists, psychiatrists and other mental health workers, the communities that we serve as therapists and of which we are a part, and our national and international groupings of professionals and others. This setting impacts greatly on the group under study.

### ***The fieldwork***

The most intense part of the fieldwork takes place in the second half of the year 2000. I think that there is a sense of disturbance around the millennium, evidenced by the amounts of bottled water and torch batteries that have been purchased in case of major breakdown of computer control systems. By the time of the set of experiences that I am studying and analysing (i.e. July to November 2000), things have resolved a lot. The annual conference of the national psychotherapy association (always a major marker of time in the local professional year) has been and gone in February 2000, with a lot of tension around dual relationships. The previously uncontested model of how The Agency functioned was contested then, and things were never the same again. We (the Agency staff) could no longer afford to do what we had done. The Director had resigned from May 2000, and my colleague and teaching partner Judi had become Acting

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<sup>1</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971) defines *trope* as ‘In rhetoric, a figure of speech which consists in the use of a word or phrase other than that which is proper to it: also, ... figurative language’. The use of trope in describing Sticky Moments has something of the former meaning, and in describing the setting has the latter meaning.

Director from August 2000, during the course of this semester. At the time of the study, The Agency is in a kind of hiatus, as if poised between one millennium and the next. By this time, Judi and I have worked together as teachers twice previously. We have developed a partnership from being clinical colleagues, in particular from undertaking some couple and family work as co-therapists. The next year, 2001, a crisis arises as the Executive Committee of The Agency resigns *en masse* in March, and Judi and I are faced with trying to effect a rescue. In a way, then we really become Mum and Dad to the Agency. Perhaps we are on the way at this time, as the two of the most senior members of staff.

An overseas visitor to the Agency came in October 2000 (his visit is mentioned in Session 5). Using his visit to locate my memory, I recall that I was very disaffected with The Agency by this time. I had counselled against the hiring of a new Director in 1997, whereas Judi was part of the search and selection committees, and very much in favour, so this is a tension between us. The Director's departure after two and a half years had been no surprise to me. With the visit, I felt 'left with it', having 'had' to step in and organise the visitor's workshop, and whilst greatly enjoying his visit and his energy, I had been very hostile to colleagues at The Agency. After I had directed some frustration at the psychotherapy association, who were ostensibly partners in the visit (having done all the hosting in other centres but none in this), I then got on with it, but resentfully.

Here, I first wrote 'I think my own position is that I felt confident. This group had sustained the loss of C and S (students who didn't return for year two), which is discussed in Session 10'.

However, I then went into a journal memo entitled ‘Session 10’, and read it through. In that memo, I am contrasting my recall of the events (as part of constructing a narrative, for only the first time as a conscious act), with more objective data, which I have had all along but which I have only just begun to process.<sup>2</sup> I realise on reflection that in reality I was feeling very jangled somewhere at the time that I wrote the memo, although I would have had trouble articulating that at the time). I think I felt angry at being left (a personal pattern that continues to challenge me and I it), that I had known that this would happen, and that I was having to show how brilliant I was by sorting it out. On some level, I was engaging in a kind of passive aggression, taking revenge, I now think, at my perceived humiliation by The Agency and New Zealand.

I felt suddenly caught by trying to construct a narrative of this event, between perspectives that are emic (from within) and etic (from without). Perhaps that is what was underneath my slip into the nonsense I wrote just now – I took up the etic perspective, but in the face of my writing in the Memo, I couldn’t hold it and ended up emically back at my jangled experience.

### ***The story so far for the group***

There had been a difficult first year of the course for this group, with many changes and disruptions at The Agency. I think there are derivatives of this in Session 10 (discussed in Chapter Five), when I talk about Reder’s (1986) work on the way that social service agencies come to reflect the difficulties of their clientele, almost as if I am subtly and unconsciously blaming those who bear the painful experience of the disruptions resulting from the turmoil in The Agency and the responses of Judi and I to these

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<sup>2</sup> What follows to the end of the paragraph is an example of the product of some reflection over an extended period of time, but reached through privileging associative capacity

disruptions. I taught the group (together with another colleague) for their first Semester in the first half of the previous year, so the students were known to me prior to this semester, but not to Judi.

As I think of myself back at this time, I am aware of a number of things. One is that back then, I had not clarified for myself the distinctions between the myriad roles in which I found myself. Perhaps there are particular difficulties for therapists as teachers, not to mention as researchers, theorists and writers, in that they have to swim in a very different way to that which comes naturally. Another awareness is that although I had some structuring notions to hold onto (for example the importance of the detection of patterns of surprise in clinical work, and the value of the impact of the work on those discussing it as an aid to understanding the challenges in the work), I had precious little content, nor anything particular to say.

One thread that I wanted to pick up was, what will happen as I think of the group now? Who comes to mind? I am tempted to go with their order of presentation, always something of a temporal sculpt of a learning group. If I do this, from memory after some time analysing the data, I get Veronica, Tom, Ron, Mary, (Kelly – should have gone here but was unwell and presented at the end), Nancy, Paula, Frances, Heidi, Kelly. Even that isn't easy to imagine. I don't recall easily recall where Mary, Frances, Heidi and Kelly come. I think about the changes. Kelly seemed to move towards the front of the class, but it is as if she then took fright. When she came back, she could be nearer to the teachers, hand back to us. (I've checked back at the schedule, and it looks as if Frances comes after Nancy (who is number 9) at 10, with Paula at 11, Heidi at 12, Kelly at 13, and discussion and a presentation from me at 14. I put Frances before Kelly rather than vice-versa, but otherwise I recalled their schedule of contributions with good



accuracy). (I realise from the original schedule that Paula moved later too, having booked at Session 7). So, definitively, 1 Contracting, 2 Judi (tutor), 3 Bill, (tutor), 4 Veronica, 5 Tom, 6 Ron, 7 Mary, 8 Discussion, 9.Nancy, 10 Frances, 11 Paula, 12 Heidi, 13 Kelly, 14 Discussion and Bill, 15 Closure. This and other data on attendance are in Table 4.2 below:

WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Break	11	12	13	14	15	Σ
Frances	A	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P	P	12
Heidi	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A		P	P	P	P	P	13
Kelly	A	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	P		P	A	P	P	P	11
Mary	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P		P	P	P	A	P	13
Nancy	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	A	P	P		P	P	P	P	P	12
Paula	A	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P		P	P	P	P	P	11
Ron	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P		A	P	P	P	P	12
Tom	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P		P	P	P	P	P	14
Veronica	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A		P	P	P	P	P	13
																	<u>111</u>
<b>Totals</b>	6	8	9	7	5	6	8	7	6	7		8	8	9	8	9	<u>111</u>

**TABLE 4.2 - ATTENDANCES THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER**  
This table shows each student's attendance at each session, whether they were absent (A) or present (P), and the P shaded in red indicates who was the presenter that week.

### ***And now in a different form ...***

I was thinking of how, in some sense, the mind is social, a network of representations of relationships with others. I can only consciously be myself in relation to others, real or imagined. Where (or who) are the people I have listed in the process of the group, and how does it move them (or fail to) towards their goal? In the following paragraph, I will list some of the issues that I have identified in relation to individuals, without specifying to whom they belong. Some of these issues will be shared by many if not all in the group, and will, as it were, merely be expressed by one or more individuals on behalf of the group. Other issues will be more personal, but the other members of the group and the tutors will have a part to play in the manifestation and possible resolution of those issues. Linked to this last point, some of my perception and understanding of these

issues in relation these people is something that I have reached counter-transferentially, in other words in response to what is evoked in me by them.

The list is as follows:

Struggling with authority, and unresolved Œdipal<sup>3</sup> difficulties, particularly in relation to the tutors.

Difficulty (with hindsight) in some of the later sessions, including reservations about the idea of psychotherapy.

Seemed well able to settle towards the end. I'm aware of my own lingering irritation in reaction to the use of phrases which seem to contain infantile longing.

Is exciting, and managed not to be there through a very difficult phase. Is very present when actually attending, but perhaps in a way that's intimidating to others, in particular to the less confident.

Very serious and committed, inclined I think to project a very harsh super-ego. Struggling very much in this semester, although probably developing some admirable capability to not know.

Experiencing painful and difficult dynamics in the workplace, and I wonder if the body could not cope with these. Ended up in a strange place in this group, torn between looking after others and being looked after by them.

Always there somehow, I notice in the analysis, engaged, but seeming to be experiencing fairly constant anxiety.

Struggling with the task. Not really able to do much other than hold on tight, and possibly getting missed as a result, but getting something from being there.

Seeming to be cautious and defensive, but from a position of apparent superiority. Leaves me with a feeling of being somehow thwarted.

So what do they leave me with as a group?

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<sup>3</sup> The Oedipus complex: Freud (1905b/1960) saw the patterns of dynamics that reflected those represented in the myth of Oedipus (Graves, 1984), (particularly the range of erotic and aggressive impulses in young children in relation to their parents and to the relationship between them) as a cornerstone of individual development. It is used in this sense to refer to dynamics which seem to arise from the challenge of resolution of this stage of development and which can persist into, and recur, in adulthood.

### ***Back to the narrative***

Thinking back to the beginning of the semester, I recall an air of anxiety as we begin,<sup>4</sup> always there on such occasions, but subtly shaped by each new semester group in their own unique way. This is not the easiest group. This group starts after I had worked on the structure of the course, introducing learning outcomes, a team approach to teaching with a system of peer supervision of our work, and moving towards external university accreditation (finally achieved with the intake next but one after this). This intake are the first group to have a ‘reflective group’ (conducted for them by Q). This takes their attendance from 2 hours to 3.25 hours each week (4.30 pm to 6.30pm, 6.45pm to 7.45pm), an increase of over sixty percent, and begins the process by which it becomes harder for people to pass through the course with their ambivalence intact.<sup>5</sup> Because they are a kind of ‘oldest child’, the first to experience this new model, they are the first group to have a ‘sibling’ like them in this new form, in the sense that the next intake will have a similar pattern to them. Because the next intake also has a reflective group, their conductor, S, has a partner in Q, (that having been one of the pre-occupations of this intake’s first year, that unlike the tutors, Q had no partner). I introduce the idea (to enable the impact of the reflective groups) that the reflective group should follow the teaching session but take place in a different room. This means that instead of staying in the same room (and as the ‘older’ group, staying upstairs, albeit ironically in the playroom, as compared to the first years’ meeting room, used for more grown-up purposes), they have to come downstairs to have their group, to move all of their things, to let go of the chair that they have adopted as their transitional object (Winnicott,

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<sup>4</sup> I am carrying on in the present tense, in order to convey vividness.

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Tom Davey (personal communication) for this characterization of a possible route through the course.

1953),<sup>6</sup> to enter somewhere afresh that is their conductor's but not theirs. I believe that this group hate me for that. They also appear to find ways to show that hate to me, by behaving badly, not coming out of their room until the last minute, not enabling the 'first-years' to pass them on the staircase, and so on.

I'm aware as I write that I am unearthing a lot of my own feelings and associations about this experience. Some of this is in the nature of the transferential relationship that the students form with The Agency, with me as Tutor, Course Director and Head of Training (which on reflection must have made me seem overwhelming), and with the course and the group, and in the case of my own responses, my countertransferential relationship to the experience.

### ***Summary to 'Dramatis Personae and The Setting'***

I trust that I have conveyed a succinct view of the context of the fieldwork project, in particular, something of the worlds of the participants and of the group that Judi and I form with them, as well as impressions of the issues that we bring. Next, I want to give a narrative account of the semester, with week-by-week summaries of what took place, so that I can then look in the Synchronic Analyses at a series of episodes in this tapestry of experience in space and time.

### ***Narrative account of the semester***

The remainder of this chapter is a session-by-session account of the semester.

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<sup>6</sup> Winnicott (1953) developed the idea of the transitional object, often a favourite toy or blanket used by the infant to mediate between 'me' and 'not me'. Carrying this forward into adult development, most people will have objects (which can be people, things or ideas) which fulfill this function at times of transition or stress, which includes much of adult learning.

## **Session 1**

**Present:** Bill, Judi (Staff); Tom, Heidi, Mary, Ron, Nancy and Veronica (Students).  
**Absent:** Frances, Paula and Kelly.

(What follows in relation to this first session is based on field notes made in the session and shortly afterwards. This first session was not taped, as I had yet to gain consent for this from the group in this session).

The session is spent contracting for the learning to follow, with each person being asked (following modelling by the tutors) to articulate *any questions that they have been left with from the previous teaching*, as well as *their learning edges*.

Interestingly, people take turns in a different order to that in which they subsequently present, so they do not have a single pattern for organising themselves, as if they were institutionalised. I go first. I talk about being Head of Training at The Agency and in private practice, and doing research. Then (in order), Judi (my colleague), Tom, Nancy, Veronica, Ron, Heidi, Mary. The next week (Week 2), Frances, and Kelly (who were absent in Week 1). The next week, (Week 3), Paula (who was absent in Weeks 1 and 2). This is a very staggered start, which seems to reflect a dynamic that comes to permeate the Semester. I will list something of what each of the students says, using one phrase.

### ***Questions and Learning Edges from Session 1***

Tom - to be open and to have a stronger idea of how to practice; feels rejecting of some traditional ...

Nancy - exploration of differences between people - some take 6 weeks, some take a lot longer; I feel bamboozled, and gauche, just hope to learn something that I can try.

Veronica - always confused when with people, and more confused (about the experience of merger in the work); how much to say back, where should the focus be?

Ron - How to hold clients that aren't captive; challenge to work differently.

Heidi - Isolation feeds go-it-alone; need help to think about taping, including how will taping help (my client)?

Mary - Goals were to understand the therapeutic relationship and how to use it more effectively; useful to confront my own feelings (including acknowledging my own anxiety) and to not just work more.

### ***Questions and Learning Edges that come in Session 2***

(I am aware that the phrasings that follow are less succinct, and qualitatively different from those in the first session. It is as if the latecomers had a lot more to say, or alternatively, that I had more time, and space in my mind, to write).

Frances - Theory and practice don't match, but how to hold that with confidence. Works in a chaotic setting - hard to hold confidence in the work, so needing to feel a confidence and not to have that eroded.

Kelly - Wanting to understand the role of therapist, the differences of work with children and adults, perceive my role in the session as involvement in attachment but leads to boundary issues, not good at asking questions, finds self in the right place with the right book, the unconscious works, but ...

### ***Questions and Learning Edges that come in Session 3***

Paula - difficulty in re-joining, issues about abandonment when people don't come, felt lost with Semester 3 (Object Relations and Self Psychology) compared to Semesters 1 (Key Concepts and Their Application) and 2, (Development and Psychopathology), preoccupied with moving house, wishes could do the whole thing again, questions of taping, relationship, readings, and room for presenter process (although not supervisory).

## ***Session 2***

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Tom, Heidi, Mary, Ron Kelly, Nancy and Veronica.**  
**Absent: Paula.**

In Session 2, we do some more introductions (of Kelly and Frances, recorded together with those that came in Session 1, above, although Paula is absent again). I experience irritation here, as the whole purpose, that of bringing the group together, feels sabotaged. I do not voice this irritation explicitly, but at the time and with hindsight I

am aware of it. I am sure that it has a bearing on how the group goes. It also represents a major challenge, that is the need for a balance between what one might wish (and perhaps need) to say, and the need to be careful, respectful, facilitative and inclusive. I think now I routinely address this disappointment, or at least voice it directly. Judi then presents her patient, a narcissistic man having difficulty as an adult achieving psychological separation from his mother. This gives the group their first experience of this method, and with the tutors going first, is aimed to reduce some of the unhelpful anxiety. I hope it does that but I can't yet tell with confidence if it has.

### **Session 3**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Tom, Paula, Heidi, Mary, Ron, Kelly, Nancy and Veronica (in this session, all are present for the first time).**

Paula, the last to arrive back from the break, finally comes to this session (and her introduction is recorded with the notes in Session 1, above). As it happens, she is highly facilitative later on (particularly in Session 10).

In Session 3, I present my work with a patient of mine, a another very narcissistic man with whom I had worked for about 5 years. At the end, in my notes on the tape I write, “extensive dénouement, but we don't look with them at the process in the group. Seems like a good feel as we finish, but I wonder about what layers are below the relief that I feel at having done mine”. We are going pretty carefully.

### **Session 4**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances (very late), Tom, Paula, Mary, Ron, Nancy and Veronica. Absent: Heidi and Kelly.**

Session 4 is the first student presentation, from Veronica. She brings a vulnerable woman who had experienced psychosis, but was now recovered and employed. There is

a sense in this session of the group beginning to work, arriving at a picture of the patient that seems quite a good fit, and which includes her avoidance and competitiveness, and her struggles in middle age with the adolescent issues of appearance and identity. There is a thread in the session about the patient's anxiety about the therapist and their intactness, suggesting a sadomasochistic relationship, and primitive anxieties in the patient as to whether they will be cared for. The group that is here seems to be working well, at least at this stage of the proceedings.

### **Session 5**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Tom, Heidi, Mary, Kelly and Veronica.**

**Absent: Frances, Paula, Ron, and Nancy.**

Session 5 is Tom's turn. There are some interesting peripheral phenomena. There is terrible coughing and spluttering in the tape recording, which I think is Kelly being unwell. Kelly and Heidi were absent the previous week, and we seem to have had difficulty getting their messages. Four people are absent this week, Frances, Nancy, Paula and Ron. In fact, Veronica, Mary and Tom are the only people who have been here for both of the last two weeks. Because of that, it becomes really difficult to discuss Freud's paper Mourning and Melancholia, since Kelly and Heidi do not seem to have received the copy that was sent. Tom wants to discuss the paper, but also to get rid of the empty chairs.<sup>7</sup> It is as if the group are still not settled down.

Tom brings his work with a man in his mid-thirties, with very limited relationship or sexual experience. There is a difficult feel in this session, and in the break, Judi and I wonder whether there is some influence of the taping in the clinical work, with the patient seeming to experience the therapist as different and self-conscious. There are

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<sup>7</sup> In group-analytic therapy, the chairs of absent members would typically be left in the group, to symbolize both the presence of the absent members in the mind of the conductor (and probably some other group members), and also their absence.



certainly parallels in the material of the clinical session and in the material of the group. For example, removing the identifiers, there is something, both in the clinical session and in the group, about a very hurt man on the edge of a group who doesn't get to have intercourse. Tom says at the end that being the presenter has felt like taking his clothes off, which reflects the patient's experience of meeting the Professor of Psychiatry on the beach with his shirt off. Veronica identifies the patient's power to project into the therapist, and Tom acknowledges that he hasn't really got an understanding of that. Veronica notes that presumably no one has ever held his (I think she meant the patient's but also perhaps the therapist's) projections and projective identifications before. I think this latter is actually a highly facilitative comment from one student to another,<sup>8</sup> acknowledging the parallels in the material but at a level that can remain below awareness.

## **Session 6**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Tom, Paula, Heidi, Mary, Ron and Veronica.**

**Absent: Frances, Kelly and Nancy.**

In Session 6, Ron brings his patient, a professional educator who has experienced long-term impacts of psychosis. In the early part of the session while people are arriving (frustrating again), we attempt to discuss Freud's paper Mourning and Melancholia, which involves Judi and I in some hard work, but we don't seem to get through. There is an underlying tension in the group, with Tom particularly seeming to be rather covertly harassing the tutors. It is a challenge for the group to be discussing a patient with psychotic experience, and it is useful to consider the impact of that in this analysis.

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<sup>8</sup> Whether or not they become conscious, it would appear that occurrences of this type are highly transformative. This is perhaps particularly since they embody extensions of some of Hopper's (2003) reasons why group are helpful to disturbed patients, in that they are helpful to people learning about how to be with others so as to bring about change.

The tape of this session of the course records for the first time the conversation in consulting break between Judi and me. We met in the break from session 2 onwards, so this is the fifth time we have done this. The atmosphere of our discussion is slightly anxious. We are balancing a sense of being into it, with interesting material and those that are present beginning to interact, and to explore their countertransference, against concerns about lateness and other covert hostilities. Towards the end of the session, there is a passage in the recording where the therapist talks about trying to make connection with the patient, and that dynamic seems to enter into the group, although that was not apparent to me at the time the recording was made. In conclusion, I think this was a session when the material was particularly impactful on the group, and I wonder about the extent to which Judi and I were able to pick that up directly.

### **Session 7**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Paula, Heidi, Mary, Ron, Kelly, Nancy and Veronica.**  
**Absent: Tom.**

Session 7 is Mary's turn. It opens with a difficult conversation about the group's lack of feedback response to the tutors of the previous semester, and then turns to their interest in the 'new baby' (the course to be accredited by The University which will replace this one). There is a depth and sarcasm in these exchanges, which is not understood or addressed in the session. After the first half of the two-hour session, when Judi and I break, the sound quality of the tape recording improves a lot. We certainly seem to be picking up a vulnerable young woman with a rather odd internal world, including inappropriate compliance. We detect a sense of a heaviness in the group. Hearing this session again made some diachronic sense for me, particularly of my subjective recall of an eruption in the next session, Session 8 (see Chapter Ten, 'The Eruption'). In the consulting break, which is an interesting sequence in that we seem a bit unconscious to put it mildly, Judi notes the tension that she can feel in Heidi who is sitting next to her.

There is in the session a sense of a lot of attention to the subtlety of the client's communication - less on the process between therapist and client, and indeed on what is happening in this room. In the break, we seem to be a bit scattered, concerned with L and D (the previous tutors) and the quality of their group skills, but I wonder about us. Judi refers to the heaviness in the group, and the sense that we need to feed them a bit – I wonder if I can pin-point what it is that takes us in this direction.

After the break, there is more flow to the group, although in the denouement, Judi forgets Mary's name and it turns out to have been a *man* that we've been discussing. As I read my notes, I recall the same thing happens in Session 10 (Discussed in Chapter Seven) when Frances presents. There as here, in the therapist's mind the group are talking about the therapist (in their use of 'she') when in the minds of the members of the group, they are talking about the patient.

At the end of the session, I say "Part of his difficulties is that he has no freedom to think. There is no sense of anyone kept in mind, of anyone thinking of anyone else".<sup>9</sup> I notice that Ron and Veronica seem both to be negative about the client, Ron in finding 'him' unconvincing, and Veronica tending to be mocking of 'him'. We wind up with a complex discussion about who is next (Kelly), and who if anyone is prepared to stand in for her (no-one it seems).

## **Session 8**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Tom, Paula, Heidi, Ron, Kelly and Veronica.**

**Absent: Mary and Nancy.**

Kelly was due to present in Session 8, but was unwell. However, she came anyway. We used the session for discussion of questions that people had. Heidi comes in strongly

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<sup>9</sup> In isolation, this probably sounds pompous, but I was trying to convey a dynamic that I could perceive in the clinical material and which I thought may also have permeated to experience in the group.

after the break with difficult feelings about the experience of doing the semester, many of which are acknowledged and hence validated by other members. This episode is the focus of Chapter Six, 'The Eruption'.

The session starts with a discussion of Kelly's illness, which has led her to not present today, although she has wanted to come and indeed has. Ron opens with his need to prepare a presentation on countertransference, and asks the group if they mind to discuss how it might be presented and what people think he might need to say. Tom hasn't thought about what he might bring, but wonders about looking at his notes for clinical questions. Veronica wonders about attachment theory. She points out that all of her clients have avoidant attachment styles, which raises questions for Veronica about whether she is being heavy-handed, and because she is an intimate person, is she too intimate for the clients. Paula wonders about how to hold someone so desperate to get away. Frances talks about her service being in chaos, and wonders how to retain spirit against the onslaught of the desperate. We take these interests as our foci, at least to start with.

Countertransference first. We have what feels like a useful discussion, but as a group we have difficulty in responding to my invitation to 'bring it in here', in other words, to try and make the topic part of current experience in the room. There is a wealth of experience of teaching this topic to others, and people are indirectly revealing, for example, Tom relating how a female client had told him with a smile on her face about having a crush on a man, Kelly saying that it's different for her because she offers herself as an attachment figure rather than issuing a transference invitation, and Paula talking about a documentary on an aggressive treatment regime, presumably as a warning to those who risk acting from their countertransference.

I'm aware that we continue to avoid the countertransferences thrown up in here by the material that people bring, and we don't make use of the group other than as a source of suggestions. Paula does try to move in this direction by bringing in an example of erotic countertransference in response to my original invitation, but we don't seem to get beyond anxiety as a response to this, and safety mechanisms such as talking with colleagues and the use of supervision. I am aware as I write this that we also don't manage to make much use of our anxiety in teaching as an example of how these things might be addressed.

Tom has no specific clinical material or issues to bring, so we move on to Veronica's question about how to be with avoidant clients. Veronica brings an example, from her work with an avoidant female client, who scoots out of talking about the relationship despite many communicative behaviours which indicate that it is important. For example, the patient cries when the therapist says 'last session'; the therapist says 'you have feelings', and the patient flees; the patient acts out the countertransference (*sic*)<sup>10</sup> by getting into casual sex, leaving the therapist feeling guilty. Judi offers a Kleinian interpretation that the patient kills off objects, and gets into a difficult exchange with Veronica about whether or not the patient, who thinks of herself as a slut, might indeed be a bit of a slut.

Veronica seems to identify with the patient at this point. Paula talks about her proneness to let people go when they talk about leaving if she isn't busy (interestingly counter-intuitive), followed by Tom who talks in a disconnected kind of way about 'intensity

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<sup>10</sup> I think I mean transference, but I wrote countertransference. Perhaps I'm thinking unconsciously about the therapist's response to the patient, which may get acted out by the patient if not addressed in the therapy.

adjustment’, and the use of hypnosis to get closer to the patient. This needs more discussion, which it doesn’t seem to get, because it becomes time for the break.

In this, Judi expresses anxiety about being more of a teacher.<sup>11</sup> Judi is trying to raise the issue of both Paula and Veronica bringing themselves into the group rather than what has ostensibly been invited, but then takes that to Ron doing well (a possible unconscious stroke to me as his clinical supervisor). I am wanting to bring things back in to the group, but again Judi goes to Kelly, and then to a fear of Veronica feeling got at. I am more worried about Heidi, who Judi notes smiled at a couple of things that Judi said, and Judi picks up on her (Heidi’s) anger or resentment at the women who are able to be ‘ditsy’. Judi is concerned at Tom’s missing the boat. I am concerned at him bringing in something so different to psychoanalysis at the point when we are working hard to integrate the group’s understanding of psychoanalytic concepts. We do not really seem to know what to do with Tom other than support him. Thinking anxiously about getting back, Judi plans that we try and talk about feeling a pressure to be too supervisory, and I think that we should reflect with them on what is happening and how we are going.

Judi and I return after the break. Before I turn the tape on, I ask how things are going. As the tape starts, I am responding to Heidi saying (rather shockingly) that she feels dead. In a way, one meaning for what happens next is that Heidi brings things right into the room through identification with the patient. As noted above, this sequence is analysed in more depth in Chapter Six.

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<sup>11</sup> As I write, I am aware that we don’t try and hold on to (i.e. mark and recall) our experience, for example on first breaking, as powerfully influenced by our countertransference, fuelled in the break by recency and urgency, and hence we lose some of our potential capacity to make meaning of it.

## **Session 9**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Tom, Heidi, Mary, Kelly and Nancy.**

**Absent: Paula, Ron and Veronica.**

Nancy presented in Session 9, which comes after the eruption (which can sound much less of that to me now, over four years later). She reported that she hadn't been able to persuade her colleagues in her workplace to let her tape and bring her work with a patient. Instead, she brought two clinical vignettes from her work with the team, and the group played with them. It was different, and an active example of constant comparative method, as well as a chance to look particularly at the impact of defensiveness on the work in the learning group.

## **Session 10**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances (late), Tom, Paula, Mary, Ron, Kelly and Nancy.**

**Absent: Heidi and Veronica.**

I am moving now to think about Session 10, when Frances presented, but turned up late. As in Session 8, it seems that one member's openness (Paula, the member behind the 'discloser' in Session 8) brought forth a lot of very important acknowledgement from many members of the group about their difficulties with the learning, with the course, and also with the reflective group. Yet it seems that Judi and I are not able to take this up directly.

Hearing the consulting break in Session 10, I am aware that Judi and I are quite jokey. We are unable to work out which of us should be facilitating, Judi resenting the burden, and me saying that I don't know whose turn it is but that I pretended it was hers because I didn't want to do it. There is something a bit regressed about the way we are being. I wonder if we are just surviving, and perhaps the disclosures in Session 10 are too hot to handle, representing a regressive pull for Mum and Dad to take away the uncertainty

and the hatred of learning from experience. We are certainly in touch with the more regressed aspects of the students, and note several of these in our discussion, for example bids by more than one student to be special. At the time, we may well have had a conscious imperative that we ought to be classically psychoanalytic (as in Freud, Klein and Lacan, prior to the intersubjective turn) and encourage the presenters of displaced material to ‘take it to therapy’. That would be to avoid something, perhaps in the same way that the eschewal of countertransference was in part an avoidance of the hatred of the therapist of learning *from* (I slipped here to *by*) experience.

**The Mid-Semester Break (2 Weeks) comes between Sessions 10 and 11**

**Session 11**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Tom, Paula, Heidi, Mary, Kelly, Nancy and Veronica.  
Absent: Ron.**

In Session 11, Paula presented her work with a woman who hardly ever came, and when she did would come very late, and Paula struggled in the group with her shame at the fact that *her* patient picked at her face. Looking at the transcript, the session itself seems to consist of a Work Group in Bion’s (1961) terms, with the group doing well with the patient, although much less focussed on the relationship between patient and therapist, and the process between the clinical work and the group. It is as if they are getting on with it.

When Judi and I break, we actually have one of our most difficult consulting breaks (discussed in Chapter Eight, ‘The Scrap’), when there seems to be a lot of hostility between us. I wonder if this is some referred impact of Paula's competitiveness (noted by Judi in the break in Session 10), which is not able to emerge in the flow of the session. And does this (all) represent the group at work, almost as if we were linking the



discussions (between Judi and myself and the discussion in the group) to those (in clinical supervision and in the therapy)?

## **Session 12**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Tom, Paula, Heidi, Mary, Nancy, Veronica and Ron.  
Absent: Kelly.**

In Session 12, Heidi presented her work. The first side of the tape is barely audible, but the second is much more so. The consulting break is tense, with apparent hostility between Judi and me, and although we note that Heidi has brought interesting and stimulating work and that the group are doing well with it, it may be that again we are containing something for the group.

## **Session 13**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Tom, Paula, Heidi, Mary, Ron, Kelly, Nancy and Veronica (All present).**

In Session 13, Kelly presented her work with a child, who was making an imaginary boat in his play in the session with her. In my notes on hearing this session, I wrote, “Towards the end of the first side, the conversation is about the boat. Interestingly, not directly involving Judi and I a lot, a number of them in here, Paula, Frances, Ron, Veronica, Tom, and Mary. Only Heidi and Nancy are not speaking, and it feels like the group are able to play with the notion of the boat.”

I had a fantasy when writing this piece of the text that the group are actually in the boat. There’s a lot of discussion about how big is the boat, and can you get the control for a Mercury<sup>12</sup> engine to fit in, but it’s almost like the group are *in the same boat*. Perhaps

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<sup>12</sup> A proprietary brand of outboard boat engine.

it's that the group can enter the world of a child more readily than the group can enter the world of an adult. Perhaps there's too much identification with the world of an adult, and too much particularity about what the world is actually like, whereas with a child there can be more flexibility, more space, less direct identification. Some of it is also probably a phenomenon of timing, since the group have been together for all these weeks and now they're nearing the end, but I think some of it is a phenomenon linked to the subject matter'. I also wrote, "What we're doing as a group is inductively fitting hypotheses to the data, so we're actually undertaking a version of my current research task as a group, and it would be really interesting to graph the observations on these various tasks, the research task, the clinical task, the training task, the therapeutic task, to try and relate the various understandings and the transfers that I've noted". It seems that by this time, we were really beginning to work as a group. It would be good to look at measures and concepts of group process for this part of the work, to see if they can reflect the experience that I have as I write.

### **Session 14**

**Present: Bill, Judi, Frances, Tom, Paula, Heidi, Mary, Kelly, Nancy, Ron and Veronica.**

**Absent: Mary.**

In Session 14, we aim to spend the first half on discussion of concepts, as we had in Session 8, and in the second, Judi and I decide that one of us (me as it happened) will give a case presentation for discussion. The thinking here was that a primary aim is to give the group the opportunity to work together. Together with them, we had spent 13 weeks building a remarkable capability to play with clinical material. In previous years, we used some material from a book (Michael Jacobs' (1991) adaptation of a case of Masud Khan's, 'The Evil Man'). We had begun to feel uneasy about using this again, and in the light of subsequent outrage at Khan's behaviour and the British

Psychoanalytical Society's impotence in dealing with his misdemeanours (revealed by his former patient Wynne Godley), we were probably well justified by subsequent events (Sandler, 2004). However, we wanted to give the group a chance to try out their capacity to play, and also to address the complaint from this and previous groups that as tutors we are too reticent to teach. This has, in my view, a number of determinants. One is the hatred of learning from experience. Another is a reflection of a reality, that (as I have said, speaking for myself) I am over-cautious. At any rate, it felt like at this point we could relax a little and give them something to play with, and Paula particularly implies in Session 15 that this has somehow made a major difference for her. In a way, we (and I as part of that) finally matched her own commendable openness.

### **Session 15**

**Present: Bill, K, Frances, Tom, Paula, Heidi, Mary, Ron, Kelly, Nancy and Veronica (All present).**

Session 15, the final session, merits a chapter of its own, and is indeed discussed in Chapter 9, 'Missing Time', as the last of five episodes for synchronic analysis. In some ways, it is a set of findings on the outcome of the learning group over the two years of the course and over this Semester in particular. However, it is also interesting to look beneath the surface of what is going on. Broadly, we seem to be very avoidant. Each person gets their turn, nearly all share significant positive experiences, or at least positive outcomes. However, we struggle to keep time. Collectively, we allow some people to take more time than is available to them as individuals, and we almost totally lose the opportunity to look together at the experience as a group.

### ***Summary and Conclusion***

In these fifteen two-hour sessions, eleven of us meet (with between seven and eleven of us there at any particular session). In turn, apart from the sessions at the beginning and the end, we discuss clinical material brought by one of us. By the end, people have moved in terms of their capacity to integrate theory and practice. They have had an experience of thinking about working with a patient or client, forming a response to what the client says, and of taking part in a particular kind of group discussing the process and content of the clinical material.

As a story, it only seems to make sense with hindsight. Maybe that is inevitable, because this has to be a story that writes itself as it happens. We are seeking to help students to become more spontaneous and creative in their interactions with clients and patients, and to help each of them to shift from doing what they feel they ought to do or hope to be told to do, towards what they intend and are able to do, all the time having a stronger sense of themselves as an effective therapist. I will say more about this transformation in other parts of the thesis, but for now, I am acknowledging that as tutors perhaps we can only let each student's narrative of this group emerge. We can and do intervene very powerfully, but perhaps this can only ever be to create and protect the frame around the emergence of the narrative.

# INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS FIVE TO NINE

## The Synchronic Analyses

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### ***Introduction***

The journey through the study has come some distance. The study has been introduced and the questions articulated. There has been an exposition of the methodology, one of the products of the study. This was followed by a narrative account of the teaching and learning that is the focus of the study and to which the methodology and methods are to be applied.

### ***A word about research method***

(I am changing voice here for clarity). My research methodology is described fully in Chapter Two Part Two, and my methods of gathering and transforming data in Chapter Three, but I will say something here about what I am doing in these next five chapters, the synchronic analyses. Here, I am taking a series of five points in time in the life of the semester, rather like a series of cross-sections. These are ‘Sticky Moments’, in the sense that they involve some disruption to the expected flow of events and thus imply underlying complexity worthy of further exploration. In each case, I set the point in the context of the session of the course in which it occurs, describing what takes place, and then offering analysis and interpretation of this material. In this, I am following the framework offered by Wolcott (1994). Clearly, there will be ‘bias’ even in my description, let alone in my analysis and interpretation. In the case of Chapters Five and Eight, this can be seen by comparing my description with the extensive verbatim

transcriptions from which the data for analysis has been extracted, which are included in Chapters Five and Eight respectively.

I use a particular range of methods as part of my analytic and interpretive strategies. The methods include: the extraction from the data of patterns of content and of themes; psychoanalytic free association to elements of the session, whether images and metaphors, or the product of the first method, content and themes; at all times, the noting of my own countertransference, or responses (of thought, feeling and imagery) evoked in me by aspects of the material that I am studying, which may have come from the experience of the original event (in the session) or reflection on it at various times since; the noting of transference from the students onto the programme, the group, other students, and the staff including myself; the induction of figurations (Elias, 1994) to the data, derived from theory or grounded in the data; and the articulation of sequential chains of interaction together with their possible meaning (These items are tabulated in Table 3.2 on Page 101).

My practice has been to study all of my records of the semester, including notes and copies of clinical transcripts, as well as tape recordings of sessions and a range of transcriptions of those. As I have carried out this study, I have made further notes of various kinds in my project logbook, particularly observations and analytic and methodological notes. I have used the NVivo qualitative data analysis software (Bazeley and Richards, 2000) to manage this logbook, as well as other notes and documents that I have accumulated. Although some of my notes remain hand-written, I have a store of data that I can rapidly access and utilise. This procedure has yielded the material for the analysis and interpretation described above.

Analysis and interpretation has followed an iterative process, in that I have been engaged in a continuing process of cycling between the data and my reflections on it.

After two hearings of the complete sequence of tape recordings, I selected the five foci that are the subject of these five chapters. Transcripts of these episodes were then variously re-read, and the analytic and interpretive procedure that I have described above was applied. The five chapters that follow are the result.

## Chapter Five

### A Beginning (Up-Bringing - Session 10)

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A full transcript of the beginning part of Session 10, from which the data analysed in this chapter has been drawn, together with some researcher commentary, is included as part of this chapter, on Pages 147 to 162.

#### ***Introduction***

This chapter is the first of five analyses of episodes of interaction. In this case (all are subtly different), first there is a verbatim transcript of a series of events, followed by my researcher account as participant observer to the events of the transcript. The account (and the transcript) is of the content and process of the *beginning* of a session, with limited (but nonetheless significant) analytic or interpretive comment. Next, an extract from the session is chosen and highlighted as a Sticky Moment. In order to complete the contextualisation of that moment, there is next a description of aspects of the discussion in the class over the rest of the session, including the break in the middle of the session when the tutors meet separately from the group. Then there is some analysis of the Sticky Moment. Finally, in a more interpretive manner, I develop the linking of the products of this analysis, both to other points in the session and the semester, and to relevant theory.

#### ***The aims of this chapter***

Methodologically, this chapter demonstrates the capacity of the methodology to explore and understand group processes. Specifically, this particular demonstration is of an analysis of a temporal sequence of events which constitute a beginning of something.



Substantively, I show how a kind of embodied understanding, such as a form of containment of projected experience (rather than an overt verbal response), is a substantial contribution to enabling a group in its task.

In particular, I illustrate aspects of the learning group such as the matrix of the group, a step in the further formation of that, and the heuristic of connection, difference and biological depth at work.

Finally, from the substantive perspective, I argue that these phenomena ostensibly related to beginning are in fact central to the middle of this piece of work, and as such, are particularly illustrative of *timelessness*, one of Freud's (1915) characteristics of the unconscious.<sup>1</sup>

## **DESCRIPTION**

### ***The beginning of the session – a verbatim transcript with commentary***

The analysis of the beginning of the session continues in the section after this. Here, I am including a transcript of the audiotape recording of the beginning, together with some brief comments from me close to the surface of the utterances of speakers. I follow a similar pattern in Chapter Eight, which also includes a lengthy transcript. Epistemologically, these comments could, on one the one hand, be seen simply as my own responses and associations, a mix of reactions at the time of the events and those since during data analysis. On the other hand, within the methodology, as within ways of working that privilege participant-observer subjectivity (e.g. Ogden, 1994), these

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter Two Part Two, Page 85 for an account of the significance of this characterisation, made in each of these five synchronic analyses, of the episode considered in this chapter as showing a predominance of one of Freud's (1915) characteristics of the unconscious. The aim is not to reduce the richness of the particular episode, but rather merely to highlight a key aspect of the unconscious in operation. The capacity to recognise these phenomena is a key feature of this epistemology.

comments are also data, rather like the ‘intersubjective clinical facts’ of the sub-title of Ogden’s paper. As noted in Chapter Three, these comments, and observations and analysis developed from them, require illumination through the application of theory, which is provided at various points. The transcript follows on the next page.

Transcript	Commentary
<p><b>Session begins. Bill, Judi, Paula, Ron, Kelly present. Apologies from Heidi and Veronica.</b></p> <p><b>Mary, Frances, Tom and Nancy absent, apparently without apology</b></p> <p><i>Judi</i> Heidi isn't in?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> No.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Right.</p> <p>Is she ill?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> I don't know, she didn't say.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Right.</p> <p>(Door opens)</p> <p><i>Mary</i> Sorry I'm late.</p> <p>I nearly stood on those as I swung round the corner (referring to fresh eggs brought by Paula).</p> <p><i>Paula</i> From my hens. They're from my girls.</p> <p><i>Mary</i> From your girls.</p>	<p>Judi's first comment is about Heidi. Many others are absent too. I wonder if the focus is on Heidi because of her role in Session 8, and the vulnerability she showed then. Perhaps we are making use of Heidi. (Here I am paying attention to symbolisation particularly <i>in first words</i>, a clinical device, noting Judi's focus on Heidi).</p> <p>I said something wrong now I long for yesterday (as in Yesterday by The Beatles). I feel like I've driven her out somehow, as if I should be reproached. (I am playing or <i>alluding</i> here, extending the second half of my utterance into a popular song that contains it, one about being left).</p> <p>Themes of fragility, veiled aggression, an attack on fertility, frustration with the space that Paula is taking up, rivalry. (I'm reading possible emotion, here and in some of what follows, rather than overt apology. I'm choosing to consider bi-logical depth, not just the rational, surface meaning of utterances at Matte-Blanco's (1975) First Stratum)</p> <p>Maternal, broody.</p> <p>Possibly mocking – an ambivalent relationship between these two.</p>

<p><i>Ron</i> Choice.</p> <p><i>Mary</i> We lived on a country block for a while, and the thing I enjoyed most about it was having chooks. I loved them, eh?</p> <p>Apart from they used to shit all over the deck, but I thought they were the grooviest thing.</p> <p>Must be that my Methodist up-bringing gave me huge amounts of satisfaction that all those nice kind of healthy looking scraps could go to the chooks, and they used to scuttle round after them.</p> <p><i>Paula</i> (inaudible) and you get to raid their nest, and get their babies.</p> <p><i>Mary</i> ... follow you around. That's right, and you have to push the broody ones off with a broom so you can get the eggs and ... a bit like (inaudible)</p> <p>(Silence)</p> <p><i>Bill</i> I don't know if there are things like connecting up to last time. This is Week 10, so we've got five more meetings after the break. So we've got a break after today, back on the 11th October.</p>	<p>Again interesting – approval of rural domesticity.</p> <p>Warm childhood memories, a sense of reverie. (NB 'Chooks' is New Zealand slang for chickens).</p> <p>Who cares about the shit everywhere? (Here, and in my next two comments, I am underlining and expanding the student's statement, for emphasis. Effectively, I am adding bi-logical depth in this expansion).</p> <p>Alchemy – turning shit into gold.</p> <p>Glee at aggression.</p> <p>A kind of chain phenomenon – as if Mary is trying to merge with Paula (happens again later). Could be rivalry, or Mary's difficulty in being there in her own right.</p> <p>A pause here. A sense of discomfort, as if a rather anxious beginning, possibly reflecting the poor turnout at a crucial stage of the proceedings). (What follows is my reflection, made on the basis of recall of the event, and also on considering it again when listening to and transcribing the audiotape). This group seem to be locked into an early (i.e. developmentally early in human terms, infantile, primitive, helpless) pattern of ambivalence. Bion's notion of hatred of learning from experience comes to mind.</p> <p>Focussing on how little time we have left. Is this an anxious response to the last set of changes or an existential acknowledgement and drawing of a boundary?</p>
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<p><i>Mary</i> What's the date of the last one, because people (Paula interjects "My birthday") were saying there's only four after the break? Is the last one the 8th November?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> I've got the 8th November, yeah.</p> <p><i>Mary</i> Oh okay, that's what I thought too.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Hmm. That's right.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes, there are only four then.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> No, 11th, 18th, 25th October, 1st and 8th November.</p> <p>I'll notice if you don't come to the last one (laughter).</p> <p><i>Judi</i> As if you'd come on the last one.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> I usually do. I try and make a habit of doing that.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> So who are we expecting?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Veronica's away, isn't she?</p>	<p>Why are we still unsure about the dates at this late stage? Seems to imply a very disordered attachment, anxiety and confusion. (Here, I am drawing on clinical experience of the possible meaning of patterns of discourse, and on the capacity to detect the impact of these partly through my own bodily and mental experience).</p> <p>Is this anxious banter, reflecting the frustration and tension in the group? There is also a playful quality. (As an aside, this is an important aspect of staff contribution to learning by students. I wonder whether the students mention this kind of behaviour from, and interaction between, the staff in the final session, Session Fifteen. In fact they do not).</p> <p>We don't seem to know who is in this group – are we enacting their inner turmoil? (This reflection comes from my own clinical experience of countertransference impact).</p>
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<p><i>Mary</i> Ah, right. She'll be in England.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> And Heidi's apologies.</p> <p><i>Kelly</i> Frances.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> And Frances is presenting.</p> <p><i>Mary</i> And Nancy.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> So Frances, Tom ... Nancy.</p> <p><i>Paula</i> I've been aware of my ... (inaudible) about being away a lot this term. I was away last week and I am really noticing my kind of ambivalence. I was wondering about it, and I was thinking about the third hour and the way that makes it harder. It makes it more ... um ... I don't know, I probably need to talk about it in the third hour, but it's something about what happens for me there makes it sometimes harder to connect here, you know, do you know what I mean?</p> <p><i>Mary</i> Mmm. Mmm. I've felt it's been really disjointed. But I notice that more in the third ... than I suppose ... different people</p> <p><i>Paula</i> That's right. And I'm not saying it's not valuable and stuff, but I've felt it ... 'cause I'm normally this really kind of ...</p>	<p>Incredible, isn't it!</p> <p>Heidi and Veronica absent. Paula, Kelly, Mary, and Ron present (only 3 of them at the start).</p> <p>A very important opening up from here on down. (Here I'm signalling the importance of what follows, recognising both from being present and witnessing what happens subsequently, but also from clinical experience, that this is a significant disclosure). This is clear from the timing, the manner of the utterance, and aspects of the topic (such as the Third Hour, available for personal reflection on the otherwise less conscious aspects of experience)</p> <p>Disjointed, tails off. Indicative of disordered attachment? (See above and also below. Regarding <i>disordered attachment</i>, I am drawing on the finding (Main and Solomon, 1986) from interviewing adults about their attachment experiences in childhood that those with disorganized attachment patterns in infancy</p>
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<p>I really noticed how often I've been away, and normally I just wouldn't do that. You know, I'm normally kind of very ... um ... conscientious, committed, and I've really lost it this term. And it's about other people being away as well, so that makes me think, "Oh ... ", you know I lose it then, you know I can't hang on ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i></p> <p>How is that connected with the third hour?</p> <p><i>Paula</i></p> <p>Because, because of what ... you know, like the process we have is like deeper and for me a lot of like childlike feelings come up in that time, I feel like, you know, I mean the childlike, probably "Oh, if you're going to be away, I'll be away, you know, like I feel quite abandoned or that sort of thing, whereas if we were just doing this, I don't think I would feel like that so much, it would just be ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i></p> <p>You'd be in your adult more.</p> <p><i>Paula</i></p> <p>Yes. Whereas I have a problem going from be... trying to be this student person here to that, and, I mean, containing both of those things ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i></p> <p>Hmm..., Hmm</p> <p><i>Mary</i></p> <p>It also affects the continuity of it more, like it seems to be that</p> <p><i>Paula</i></p> <p>... when people are away ...</p>	<p>typically produce disrupted narratives about these experiences. I am interpreting disruptions in the utterances of group members as indicative of disturbances in the experience of attachment that the course offers to students).</p> <p>Despondency.</p> <p>More grown up (not stated, but offered instantly by Judi in her next intervention).</p> <p>Bang on.</p> <p>Core challenge for the integration of theory, practice and the person of the therapist. This comment is a direct reference to a core challenge in learning complex capabilities such as those of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, the field of concern of the thesis.</p>
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*Mary*

... yes, yes ... you start talking about something and there's something you desire or wish to continue ... it's like you've got a different audience, you've got to bring people up to speed with what they missed out last time, it just doesn't feel like everyone's there ...

*Paula*

Hmm ..., Hmm ... It started happening for me at the beginning of the year but it's got worse as the year's gone on.

*Judi*

Hmm. Did you notice it in the first semester? Is this also something that ...

*Paula*

This year? Yes. Yeah.

*Judi*

But you were away, though?

*Paula*

More than usual ...

*Kelly*

There was less absences

*Paula*

... I think I missed a couple and that would be more than usual. Like the year ... time before, I think I hardly missed any. I was one of these ...

*Judi*

But this is the second year of the reflective group, isn't it?

Interesting, in this turn and the next two, there is an interweaving between Paula and Mary, almost like a merger.

Succinct. Ungrammatical (there were)

So, is it just about the Reflective Group? I wonder what else Judi has in mind.



<p><i>Paula</i> Yes.</p> <p><i>Mary</i> Yeah.</p> <p><i>Paula</i> But the process and that is much different.</p> <p><i>Mary</i> We spent the first year trying to get into it and the second year trying to get out of it (laughs, and others laugh).</p> <p>(Frances enters).</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Hello.</p> <p><i>Frances</i> Hi. Did you get my message?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yes, I did.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> (Inaudible) (Laughter)</p> <p><i>Frances</i> It's the one time I would have been on time, oh, and I was blocked in the car park and we just couldn't find the owner of the car.</p> <p><i>Kelly</i> How frustrating.</p>	<p>So what's different?</p> <p>This! Is it about ambivalence? Maybe groups have an attachment style.</p> <p>Cue all the feelings that have been expressed or alluded to previously.</p> <p>There seems to be considerable tension here. What did I say?</p> <p>I'm speechless.</p> <p>... you are. (Here, I'm adding something not said, but which I can feel at times, and which I imagine Kelly and the others feel).</p>
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<p><i>Mary</i> You're lucky it was only one that blocked you in. I was blocked in by about five once and do you think we could find them all?</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Is this at your respective ...</p> <p><i>Mary</i> It used to be at the same place, yes ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i> That's absolutely ...</p> <p><i>Mary</i> I've said that ... I've told them ever since I've started working they need to have a key rack where everyone hangs their keys at the start of the day so you could just shift each other's cars, but ... it's the bad idea that never went anywhere ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i> So we're waiting for Tom ... is that right?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> And Nancy. (others agree)</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Of course, yes, hmm ... I suppose we should ... should we continue this discussion for another couple of minutes while ...</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yes, maybe, yes ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes, so we'll continue what you were bringing up. Up-bringing, whatever</p>	<p>I think this conveys thinly veiled anger. Mary (on our behalf) wants to bury Frances in cars. (As above, where an apology for <i>nearly</i> breaking eggs was seen as a possible unconscious expression of aggression, I am using clinical experience and awareness of bi-logic to wonder privately, then and now, about veiled emotion).</p> <p>Mary is identifying with Frances. Is she defending against her rage, or rather her carrying of our rage, that she then voices (or not) for us. Here, I am interpreting Mary's behaviour, and that of the learning group, proposing effectively that the group has delegated to Mary the making of their response to Frances, and in turn accepting that she does not really express it.</p> <p>For goodness sake. This is an adult learning experience.</p> <p>... give up.</p> <p>This is a sticky moment. Paula speaks from</p>
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<p>(laughter).</p> <p><i>Paula</i> (laughing) A windy baby!</p> <p><i>Judi</i> I didn't ... the use of the word was unfortunate, it wasn't ... (laughter).</p> <p><i>Paula</i> It's probably quite appropriate, really. Yeah, I don't really have anything else to say, other than that's I suppose in a way ... um ... I'm defending myself for my absences. You know? Just kind of, talking about it.</p> <p>(Tom enters)</p> <p><i>Tom</i> Apologies. Nancy's on her way too.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Nancy's on her way?</p> <p><i>Tom</i> She was just parking.</p> <p>(Silence)</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Do you want to briefly mention what you've been ... brought up, again?</p> <p><i>Paula</i> I was just talking about how I've noticed how many absences I've had, and kind of relating it ... , thinking about ... , I was thinking about what that was about, and obviously there's practical things, but you can always have practical things (Nancy enters) which are really ... um ... sometimes ... (to Nancy) ... hi ... sometimes really important but other times they could be overcome ... um ...</p>	<p>the unconscious in response to Judi's parapraxis. Image of The Group as Baby.</p> <p>It seems like Judi has come to feel defensive here.</p> <p>This seems very astute – as if Paula has taken over, somehow. (On reflection here, my comment refers to the way that Paula has somehow collected authority for herself, making sense of what she has been raising).</p> <p>What can anyone say at this point?</p> <p>I certainly wouldn't – Paula must be in some kind of denial.</p> <p>Bravely setting off for the <i>fourth</i> time.</p> <p>Doing our job for us. Interesting example of environmental failure.</p>
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<p>yeah, and just wondering what it was about and kind of relating it to the group and then thinking about the third hour and how grumpy I get at times and how hard it is to hold this adult bit and that bit. You know? That's what I was saying, does that make sense?</p> <p><i>Frances</i> Hmm. Hmm.</p> <p><i>Tom</i> I'm just catching up with it.  (murmurs of agreement)</p> <p><i>Paula</i> And thinking about what it must be like for you, it must be ... you know ... I was thinking if I was doing what you're, I'd be really ... feel quite disappointed about it this term? There's been so many comings and goings, and it must be quite difficult, and I felt sort ... wondered how that was. Hmm.  (murmurs of agreement)</p> <p><i>Ron</i> It's felt in a way to me that we haven't been very cohesive this term, so yeah.  (murmurs of agreement)</p> <p>And that may have almost been triggered in a way by the people that were in this group and then didn't come back this year ...</p>	<p>Grumpy. Hard not to let fly. Throws up deliberately. (Here, with 'throws up', I am playing with the idea of bringing something up, and associating to a baby vomiting. Combining this image with my sense that the unexpressed frustration that I feel is not merely my own but belongs to other group members, I am wondering if there is an angry impulse in the group, captured by the idea of semi-deliberate regurgitation).</p> <p>Defensive.</p> <p>Defensive.</p> <p>Displacement. Also names disappointment. Where <u>are</u> Judi and Bill?</p> <p>Death. (Here I am associating to the expressed theme of people leaving and not returning. From clinical work with such themes, it is a short step to the symbol of death, and its manifestation for individuals</p>
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<p><i>Paula</i> Yeah ...</p> <p><i>Ron</i> That somehow had an influence.</p> <p><i>Paula</i> It had a huge impact.</p> <p><i>Frances</i> Kind of de-stabilising.</p> <p><i>Kelly</i> And never really talked about, eh? Kind of avoided talking about it.</p> <p><i>Paula</i> We talked about it a little bit, but then it sort of ...</p> <p><i>Kelly</i> It's true because we haven't talked about it for a long time, because when I met Ursula the other day I was wondering what she was doing and where she was up to ...</p> <p><i>Paula</i> When that, when they left, it was like to me I just couldn't believe that someone could leave, it was like ... (laughs) ... you know, just, I don't know, when I like, yeah, it was just like really difficult. I had lots about that.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> I'm not sure who left.</p>	<p>in various bereavements and losses).</p> <p>Like we're doing now? (This comment is a recognition of a transference taking place, of the relationship between the group and reality, from before to here and now, and also of the avoidance taking place yet again, even as it is talked about).</p>
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<p><i>Bill</i> Two people, Ursula and David.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Ah.</p> <p><i>Paula</i> Did the year and then didn't come back.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Ursula came back and said, didn't she?</p> <p><i>Paula</i> Yes, but David didn't.</p> <p><i>Frances</i> No, Ursula didn't come back, she sent a letter, which I read (murmurs of agreement).</p> <p><i>Tom</i> To me it says something about the group, that it's shaken to the core by two people not coming back after Christmas, suggesting that we hadn't got basis to stand up to that, because that wasn't exactly a mortal blow.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> It sounds like Paula's describing this kind of ricocheting ambivalence ...</p> <p><i>Frances, Paula, Kelly, Tom</i> Hmmm. Yes.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Someone bumps in to you and it knocks your own off, so you act your own out, and that hits somebody else.</p> <p><i>Paula</i></p>	<p>Denial and minimisation. Deflection into an attack on the group. (Here I am responding to what I believe to be expression of an underlying emotional experience, rather than the overt communication).</p> <p>At last, an interpretation of a kind.</p> <p>Relief</p>
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It's almost like if they can be away so much, so can I, or ...

*Frances*

Hmm.

*Paula*

... I can get away with that. You know, that's where the childlike thing comes, I think, it's like it's not my adult that like, you know, wants to be responsible.  
(murmurs of agreement)

*Frances*

I've been feeling really unreliable too this term, and that's most unlike me.

*Tom*

It seems that the group cohesion has been really poor. There's been a few times it's been good. Actually, one of the best times was just when in the first and second hours we just talked about things with ourselves, you know, a couple of weeks back. I felt that was quantum leap ... quantumly, if there's such a word, different in the quality.

*Judi*

Yes, (inaudible).

*Ron*

I want to defend us and say that we haven't been that bad.

(much laughter)

*Kelly*

Good on you, Ron.

I think as individuals we are, but there has been something about the group process which has been quite fragmented in my experience, too.

And so what is that about?

More on the case this time. Refers to Session 8, when Heidi raised it for us then.

(Lets Frances off the hook, though).

Having previously acknowledged the depth of the impact.

*Paula*

And it's ...

*Kelly*

And it has a kind of ripple effect, doesn't it, which effects things.

*Paula*

And the kind of things that we bring up in that last hour are actually quite, I think, for me I probably tend to minimise a bit in a way, because that's how I deal with it, but actually some of it's quite potent. It's actually quite potent, a dip into something, ooh! I said it wasn't long enough, and then it was too long. Some of the things were left unfinished at times, and ... , because, because of ... yeah, a lot of us in that type of groupwork were open and process-oriented, it's quite full on really.

(Pause).

And then there was Christmas.

A kind of marker.

*Frances*

Yes, I ...

*Paula*

I mean that feels, I feel embarrassed to say it, but, I mean, that for me has been ...

*Frances*

It was sitting with me when we were talking about the beginning of this year ...

*Kelly*

We were supposed to all meet up, and we didn't, only two went ...

*Judi*

Hmm.

(pause)



It's hard to know what to do with this very important something that's been raised, because it's almost like the beginning of a group process, but in a sense we're in a different process here. This is something that you can continue in the third hour. It does seem something that also seems unfinished in terms of this group and where we are at the moment, but I think that also we do have an agenda, in a way, so ...

*Paula*

Yup, sure.

*Bill*

Hmm.

*Judi*

Yeah. So perhaps we can just leave it by saying that, and it obviously needs to be addressed in some way. But it may take some time. Okay.

*Bill*

I think it's better if you can get it into words, and you probably need to get it into words in the second (sic) hour. This is like making a start.

Are you (to Judi) going to do this?

*Judi*

(laughs)

*Bill*

Toss a coin?

(laughter)

*Judi*

Okay, right.

A necessary boundary, but also a deflection.

Does Bill help?

Interesting parapraxis (i.e. second instead of third. (I believe my slip here, from *third* hour i.e. the Reflective Group to *second* indicates my unconscious ambivalence between getting into these dynamics and putting consideration of them aside in favour of the core task of the semester).

We're ambivalent. Whose turn is it, in fact?

<p><i>Bill</i> Do you want to?</p> <p><i>Judi</i> No. (The transcript is passed around. All read transcripts silently for 10 minutes approximately.)</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Okay, how are people going? Right, just another couple of minutes.</p> <p>(pause)</p> <p>Okay? So.</p> <p>Well, let's do our usual checklist. Do we ... do you think it's a man or a woman?</p> <p><b>DISCUSSION OF CLINICAL MATERIAL CONTINUES</b></p>	<p>Tension. We're just acting out (like at the beginning of the extract).</p> <p>Reading through my notes on Session 10, I became aware (staring me in the face, if I care to look) that I go on about Peter Reder's work after the challenge. I wonder if I am a bit blown away by Paula's openness, and the difficulty of responding to what others then bring forward, including the presenter who is then late. In responses to her account of her lateness (not an apology), one member (Mary) says that it's lucky that Frances wasn't blocked in by five cars, which I read now as a form of hateful wish. The discussion gets to the lack of safety of the group, and the two members who departed. Now I can read this as an attack on Judi and myself. (Here I am recognising another transference, this time of the relationship from the end of the last year between the group then and the two people who left the group at Christmas, to the relationship between the group here now and the tutors, who are representatives of the caretakers who left at Christmas). We are, I think, caught in a bind: for myself, I can feel angry at Frances for her apparently arrogant lateness, but the group seem to present as so fragile that it feels to me that it is impossible to confront her or them. On one level, we do need to get on with work. On</p>
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	<p>another, the most important work might have been to explore this in some depth. I wonder if moving on is a way of protecting the group, and indeed myself and ourselves from my rage and our rage respectively.</p>
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### ***The beginning of the session – a researcher summary account***

All beginnings of sessions are a bit like this, in that we invite people as we re-form as a group to, ‘bring back anything they are left with’. This means that they agree to report to the group aspects of their experience of learning whilst on the course. This is a common standing invitation in psychoanalytic group psychotherapy, and is intended there to privilege the group in terms of how and where members account for their experience. Here, it is consciously aimed to connect the members of the group, with each other and the task.

Perhaps you can sense, feel or imagine the atmosphere as the session begins. We are in the upstairs child psychotherapy clinic, set up as a playroom. This is part of a large house dating from about 1910, with the rather leafy surroundings of a residential city suburb outside the window. It is late afternoon. This session has a familiarity for this group of late arrival, but this must be the worst instance yet, starting with only three of the nine students present (not including the presenter), four absent un-notified, and two absent having given prior notice. The two staff members are on time, but initially they are silent as the absent people continue to arrive.

Unusually, in the previous session, number Nine, Nancy brought vignettes from her clinical work (that is, her summary descriptions of scenarios and interactions) rather than the basic standard requirement of a verbatim record of ten minutes of the presenter working with a client or patient,<sup>2</sup> and so the group was in a different mode. Nancy had sought permission from the course staff to do this, on the grounds that her colleagues in her work setting were not happy with the ethics of a colleague presenting interactions between them and their patient to this course.<sup>3</sup> This permission was granted, largely because there was very little alternative at the stage that the problem arose. One impact of that outcome was more control by the presenter over what the group could make of the material. The session prior to that, session Eight, is discussed in Chapter Ten (which follows this one), but that too was an unusual session because on that occasion there was no clinical material because of the illness of the scheduled presenter. Therefore, this session is, in a way, the first opportunity for the group to get on track with its familiar task since session Seven.

This week,<sup>4</sup> session Ten, it is Frances' turn to present her work for the group to play with, but as noted above, she is absent as the session starts. Only Paula, Ron and Kelly are present together with Judi and Bill. Veronica and Heidi have sent apologies. Mary, Tom, Frances and Nancy are absent without notice. Mary soon comes in to the room, and, as she comes past Paula's chair, nearly knocks over some eggs laid by Paula's hens, which are in a bag on the chair.

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<sup>2</sup> The terms are used relatively interchangeably in this course, based on convention in the presenter's work setting, or alternatively, based on their personal preference, which may be theoretically determined or linked to practice traditions.

<sup>3</sup> It is possible that this refusal of a basic course requirement (very rare, in the researcher's experience over many years of training) represents Nancy's perceived lack of 'suitable' material to bring, her inexperience at seeking consent, her reluctance to do so, or her experience of fear at the exposure of her work (and actual or feared criticism that may ensue) that presenting clinical work quite so openly can evoke.

<sup>4</sup> The attendance register for this semester is recorded in Table 4.2 on Page 121.

There is then some talk between Paula and Mary (joined at times by Ron) around the eggs, hens, the benefits and challenges of having hens, but the delight none the less.

There is discussion of the need to push broody hens off the nest. Enter Bill and Judi to the discussion (from their silence).

Bill raises the two-week inter-semester break in the teaching which is due the next week, to be followed by the last five meetings of the whole course. Paula starts to talk about her mixed feelings about participation in the course, and the difficulty of the third hour (that is, the one-hour facilitated 'Reflective Group' which excludes the tutors and which follows each two-hour taught session). Mary joins her. Paula is despondent, and acknowledges that when she was absent from early sessions of this Semester she was reflecting feelings that she describes as regressed. Mary then interweaves with Paula as a participant in the discussion, and they give more information about experience in the reflective group as well as outside of course meetings that has not previously been shared with the tutors.

Next, Frances enters the room and comes straight in to the discussion. She excuses her lateness on the grounds that her car was blocked in the car park at her workplace prior to leaving, and she could not locate the owner of the offending car. Mary tells Frances that she is lucky that it was not five cars blocking her in. Ironically, Mary then identifies with Frances. Then comes a Sticky Moment (in the course of this Sticky Episode, which is located in a Sticky Theme).

Judi tells Paula to go back to 'whatever she was bringing up ... up-bringing (laughter) ... (Judi becomes flustered) whatever'. An extract of the transcript is re-produced below, and this description of the process of the session continues after that.

***Considering an extract from the transcript as a Sticky Moment***

An extract from the transcript of the audiotape recording of the session (included above on Pages 147 to 162) is given in the left-hand column of Table 5.1 below. This is one focus of my analysis, but at the same time, I am keeping in mind the array of other data that I have, not least my responses in the right-hand commentary column throughout the transcript of the whole session, my experience of the rest of the session and of the semester as a whole. This extract is presented as a Sticky Moment, in brief because it seems to me to be a moment dense with layers and depths of meaning, and it is my thesis that such moments are particularly amenable to group-analytically oriented investigation (see Page xv of the Preface, Page 76 of Chapter Two Part Two, and Page 101 of Chapter Three for discussion of Sticky Moments). The Sticky Moment is particularly useful in highlighting a discontinuity, but much of the exploration that follows is aimed at giving meaning to the episode that led to the discontinuity and accounting for what follows.

In the case of this extract, I have selected this because it seems to be the point at which there is maximum disturbance to the surface of the interaction in the session, and thus likely indicative of complexity of dynamics around this point. In terms of analysing and interpreting the extract, this will largely be done through consideration of the session as a whole, and then this moment and the surrounding episode within that context.

<p><b>Judi</b> Of course, yes, hmm ... I suppose we should ... should we continue this discussion for another couple of minutes while ...</p> <p><b>Bill</b> Yes, maybe, yes ...</p> <p><b>Judi</b> Yes, so we'll continue what you were bringing up. Up-bringing, whatever (laughter).</p> <p><b>Paula</b> (laughing) A windy baby!</p> <p><b>Judi</b> I didn't ... the use of the word was unfortunate, it wasn't ... (laughter).</p> <p><b>Paula</b> It's probably quite appropriate, really. Yeah, I don't really have anything else to say, other than that's I suppose in a way ... um ... I'm defending myself for my absences. You know? Just kind of, talking about it.</p> <p>(Tom enters)</p>	<p>... give up. (at this point, I feel deeply frustrated by so many apparently false starts to the work of the session).</p> <p>This is a marker of a sticky moment. Next, Paula speaks, it would appear from her unconscious, in response to Judi's parapraxis.</p> <p>It seems like Judi has come to feel defensive here.</p> <p>This seems very astute – as if Paula has taken over, somehow.</p>
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**Table 5.1 - Extract from the beginning part of Session 10**

***The beginning of the session – a researcher summary account resumes:***

Next, Tom comes into the room and announces Nancy's imminent arrival. Judi ignores Tom (and Nancy), moves right on and asks Paula to continue. Nancy enters in the middle of Paula talking, so finally all nine people due to be present are here (in order of arrival, Bill and Judi, Paula, Ron, Kelly, Mary, Frances, Tom, and Nancy). Tom and Frances are reluctant to agree with Paula.

Ron re-enters the discussion, and agrees with Paula. Then, Ron mentions David and Ursula (the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> members of the group, who left the nine remaining in this group after the first year of teaching). Paula, Kelly and Frances come in to the discussion too. Kelly says that the group has avoided talking about this. Paula and Kelly then 'chorus' (as it were, supporting each other) about being flabbergasted by 2 people just going (i.e. leaving the group) and not saying that they were going to do so prior to their departure, which would be a usual expectation of any experiential or therapy group. Judi does not know who left, not having taught the group prior to this semester. Tom expresses the hope that the outcome of David and Ursula leaving is not so bad. Bill steps in, and names 'ricocheting ambivalence', and consequential 'acting out' (see below for a discussion of this). Paula and Frances make acknowledgements of their actions in this.

Tom is critical of the group for its fragility, in apparently not being able to survive the departure of two members. Ron steps up to support the group ("I don't think we've been that bad"), in an apparent reversal of his previous support for Paula's criticism of the group. There is laughter at this. Paula and Kelly chorus about the Reflective Group and its ripple effect. Paula, Kelly and Frances talk in chorus about the previous Christmas break, when a social meeting for the group was arranged to which only two people



turned up. The two people are not named (nor have they been since). Judi then draws the attention of the group to their main task (that is, the integration of the theory of psychoanalytic psychotherapy into each person's clinical practice).

Judi moves to draw the beginning discussion to a close, and Bill joins her, suggesting talking about this in the *second (sic)* hour. This seems to be a parapraxis (Freud, 1914), with a conscious purpose of suggesting that the group carry on talking about these issues in the Reflective Group (actually the *third* hour), together with an underlying if unconscious recognition that these are issues that need further discussion in this group but which Bill fears may take the group too far away from its primary task. Bill and Judi between them then arrange for the group to attend to the primary task.

**THE GROUP MOVES TO 10 MINUTES OF SILENT READING OF  
FRANCES'S TRANSCRIPT HERE, AND JUDI THEN OPENS THE  
DISCUSSION**

***The section of discussion up to the break***

One element in this segment is Bill's bringing in of a reference to an article by Peter Reder (1986) about how social service agencies reflect the dynamics of their clientele. In the case about which Reder writes, that of a social work office, there is a lack of appropriate clear boundaries between generations, so children in client families would be raised by their grandparents, and very junior staff would be left to provide services to clients with the supervision of a very few much more senior staff. In both cases, the middle generation, of parents or of senior caseworkers, is absent.

***The break***

The very beginning of the discussion in the break is not recorded. The *recording* of the break therefore starts a short way into the discussion. Judi and Bill talk with apparent irony or even sarcasm about the group, agreeing that the group spoiled something for themselves. Judi then complains about the cold in the room where they are spending the break, and then seems to berate Bill because she has had to do the facilitation that week. Bill ‘reasons’ with Judi, and then, in response to her attempt to dismiss the topic, turns the discussion by saying that it could have been his turn but that he wanted Judi to do it, in other words that he has manipulated her.<sup>5</sup> Judi takes this at face value as a compliment. She then goes on to say how the group feels easier to her, that she and Bill know what they are doing in terms of their ... (unstated) and that it’s been good to have a break.<sup>6</sup>

The discussion then moves on to the Reflective Group, and Judi expresses a view that it is not working properly because it is facilitated by someone who does not teach on the programme. Bill does not respond directly, but instead carries on with considering the work of facilitating the learning group in the current session.

Bill and Judi then move on to discuss the longer-term process in this group, the end of the previous (first) year, the way that the group declined at that time (apparently

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<sup>5</sup> The three utterances down to here, and the interaction between the participants of which they form a part, have a quality of ambiguity. This creates an atmosphere that appears to have a playful quality. This may enable feelings to be expressed, some of which are carried over by the tutors from being with the group. This can happen with a kind of safety because the participants can be said to be ‘just kidding (joking)’.

<sup>6</sup> This ‘break’ apparently refers to what took place in Session 8, two weeks previously, when Kelly was due to present. There was a break in the usual pattern of how the session was conducted. Kelly was unwell, and contacted Judi at short notice to advise of this. Kelly then came to the session, but as there was no clinical material for the group to work with, the tutors suggested using the session for a more general discussion of their concerns. In the course of that session, after the interval in the middle, Heidi introduced her difficulty with the experience of the course in what became Sticky Moment 8, discussed at length in Chapter 6. There was a break in two different senses.

angrily) to attend for two meetings offered over the break of sixteen weeks between one academic year<sup>7</sup> and the next, and the Christmas function (just mentioned for the first time here in the learning group) when only two people came to a planned meeting. Judi speaks about her fear that the water that she is drinking has been poisoned. Bill is keen to look at what the group may have contributed to the previous semester, Semester 3, being a difficult experience, leading to a complaint by at least one student about the teaching. Judi then notes that it is too late to ask about the Christmas Party, but goes on to report her noticing of her experience of rivalry with her from Paula (which Judi sees as now apparently resolving) and Kelly (which Judi sees as now apparently emerging).

### ***The section after the break***

The group seems to work well together, with many members making apparently pertinent contributions to understanding the clinical material that is being discussed. When the group gets to the *denouement*,<sup>8</sup> the patient turns out to be a 28-year-old man, rather than a woman as many (but not all) of the group have thought. Frances (as Mary did before her, when she presented her work and the same thing happened) then acknowledges that during the discussion, she heard the ‘she’s’ as being about her rather than her male patient.

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<sup>7</sup> This teaching is taking place in the Southern Hemisphere, where the academic year is concurrent with the calendar year, rather than commencing in the last third of the calendar year as in the Northern Hemisphere.

<sup>8</sup> This term, borrowed from detective fiction, is used for the part of each session when the presenter breaks their silence to share with the group the details of gender, age, presenting problem, duration and course of therapy, and diagnosis and formulation of the client or patient’s presentation, all of which have been deliberately withheld by the presenter up to this point.

## **ANALYSIS**

Here I am trying to transform and render into a kind of summary prose some of the body of observations that I have from studying this session, and the dynamics and issues in and around the highlighted Sticky Moment.

### ***A Sequence***

What follows here is one view of the sequence of events that I have described (and which are transcribed above): one student presents herself as a mother (“my girls”); there is a style of talk which reflects the group getting into an associative mode, as if engaged in group-analysis; sadistic pleasure is expressed, at disrupting creativity; a series of pairs of people get alongside and face each other, apparently on behalf of the group; the group tries to tell of their struggle and to bring it into the here-and-now; there is a sense of an impulse (which the group seems to find difficult to express) to make an angry attack; one staff member subtly attacks the group, but then in turn is attacked in the break by the other staff member; after the break, the group work well at their core task. This view has been derived by extracting themes from the verbatim recording of the session.

The elements of this sequence are now considered in turn.

#### ***One student presents herself as a mother (“my girls”)***

Somehow, Paula’s putting herself forward in the early part of this session seems a precursor to her role in the interaction that follows, and there is a latent theme in that interaction about nurturance and growing up.

**Mary**

Sorry I'm late.

I nearly stood on those as I swung round the corner (referring to fresh eggs brought by Paula).

**Paula**

From my hens. They're from my girls.

**Mary**

From your girls.

**Table 5.2**  
**A fragment of interaction from Page 147**

The meaning of one person's representation of herself as a mother can be seen in a range of ways. In this section and in what follows, this plurality of possible meanings can be reached by the taking of an associative and allusory stance, informed by an appreciation of metonymy and of bi-logical depth. These meanings include that this is an attempt to soothe her own anxiety by assuming competence; that she is challenging the tutors as caretakers, particularly given the impending end of the course (signalled by the final mid-semester break, which will follow immediately after this session); and that disavowal of the tutors and the establishment that they represent may be a way of beginning to attempt to deal with the losses that are about to befall the individual members of the group and the group as a whole. These particular meanings are expressions of a group-analytic perspective on the interaction in the group and its relationship to the world of the group.

***There is a style of talk which reflects the group getting into an associative mode, as if engaged in group-analysis***

The content of the beginning of this session is slightly unusual in that one member is very diligently trying to raise and air their personal experience. Even though, as noted above, the tutors offer a relatively open invitation for reflections at the beginning of each session, generally sessions begin with people asking questions about previous teaching which invite a more cognitive or didactic response. This difference contributes to this session seeming more like a group psychotherapy session, and the session is from the start in an associative mode. As part of this, there is a kind of '*loose talk*'. By this, I refer to two aspects of the talk that are loose. One is the apparently chatty and fluent nature of the discourse, without apparent regard for the unconscious themes, and hence *loose* in the censoring that participants employ. The other is the trajectory of the discourse, which leaves it not confined to formalities, and open to non-linear progression determined by links that arise spontaneously. Taken together, this is a highly productive state for a group to be in, if appropriate use can be made of these phenomena. An example of 'loose talk' follows in Table 5.3, and aspects of this are explored in the section that follows the table.

*Mary*

We lived on a country block for a while, and the thing I enjoyed most about it was having chooks (hens). I loved them, eh?

Apart from they used to shit all over the deck, but I thought they were the grooviest thing.

Must be that my Methodist up-bringing gave me huge amounts of satisfaction that all those nice kind of healthy looking scraps could go to the chooks, and they used to scuttle round after them.

*Paula*

(inaudible) and you get to raid their nest, and get their babies.

*Mary*

... follow you around. That's right, and you have to push the broody ones off with a broom so you can get the eggs and ... a bit like (inaudible)

(Silence)

**Table 5.3**  
**Fragment of interaction from Page 148**

***Sadistic pleasure is expressed, at the thought of disrupting creativity***

There seems to be some anticipation of sadistic pleasure, voiced by Paula who is in turn followed and echoed by Mary, at the prospect of pushing the broody hens off the nest and getting the eggs. One view of this could be that Paula is struggling with parts of herself, not least the part that wishes to regress completely and the part that identifies with her potential aggressors and wishes to push her out for that wish. In addition, it is the broody hen whose desire is thwarted and whose chicks are then destroyed. Some aggression and envy will be experienced towards the staff and their creativity, and this

may represent that. Clearly here, in this difficult area, Paula, in representing and expressing difficult, primitive and (from a conventional perspective) relatively unacceptable feelings and impulses, is doing a great deal on behalf of the group.

***A series of pairs of people get alongside and face each other***

It is as if members (including the tutors) play some things out between people. In this case, it is initially Paula and Mary, including a near-breakage of eggs outlined above. Bill and Judi seem to mimic that dynamic but ineffectively. Then Paula starts again, and begins to really open up, joined again by Mary. Judi meets Paula, but Mary joins in behind Paula, and Judi withdraws, apparently disorganised. Frances then arrives as Paula is talking for the third time. Frances takes the floor. Mary seems to attack Frances in a veiled way on behalf of the group, but then falls in behind her. Judi then turns back to Paula to invite her again to begin, now for the fourth time, and slips to bringing-up/up-bringing

***The group tries to tell of their struggle and to bring it into the here-and-now***

I think here particularly of the theme of this session, 'Up-Bringing', which comes from Judi's concern at having described Paula as bringing something up. I think this captures the tension between the wish to make something known and the sense of taboo about doing so. Paula and Mary are talking about the Third Hour,<sup>9</sup> or at least the impact of it on them. To talk about it risks challenging the boundary around the Reflective Group, but not to do so risks leaving key personal experience out of the arena of this group, the learning group.

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<sup>9</sup> This refers to the Reflective Group, discussed elsewhere, which is deliberately arranged to be highly separate from other parts of the course.



***There is a sense of an impulse (which the group seems to find difficult to express overtly) to make an angry attack***

Evidence for this includes the feelings of sadistic pleasure in the discussion, noted above; the apparently unsuccessful attempt of the staff to fight in front of the group (which is but one of the series of pairs, again referred to above); the focus on people who left, which exposes Judi's entry to the group late in terms of the whole course, as well as the leaving of Bill's former teaching partner; and the pattern (discussed in the next paragraph) between the staff in the break.

***One staff member subtly attacks the group, but then in turn is attacked in the break by the other staff member***

From my notes and from re-hearing the tape of the session, I am aware of the tension from the beginning that seems to persist into the first period of discussion. Regarding the Reder paper, I think that consciously I brought this in as a response to the patient's family, where the grandparents, unlike the parents, know what to do with a child who cannot sleep. On reflection though, I wonder if I am unconsciously blaming the students, for the unarticulated difficulty in this group that struggles to sit down together, and which at some level is enraged with its facilitators.

Judi's remark in the break about the Reflective Group (that it does not work because the person who facilitates it is not part of the teaching staff) is a kind of attack on Q, the facilitator of the Reflective Group, and on S, the facilitator of the Reflective Group for the first year students. It is also an attack on Bill, who structured and manages this programme. It links to the issue of the request for sandwiches discussed last week. Among other things, displacement seems particularly important here.

Between Bill and Judi, he is her boss in this context, so she is expressing her anger at the difficulty she has to bear as tutor to this group. If the group could do its job, she could get on and teach. She can be seen as acting as ‘the students’ to Bill’s ‘staff’, and as elements of individual students towards corresponding elements of caretakers and others represented in Bill.

Significantly, this conversation does not appear to have a negative outcome. I am aware when I re-read the account of the break, that there is intense hostility between Judi and me, but it is wrapped in humour and contained within the boundaries of a collaborative working relationship. At the same time, perhaps part of what we are not talking about is the real rivalry between us. Maybe instead we let the students enact this for us. This is a kind of representation, hopefully in an adaptive direction, with us containing and processing Bion’s  $\beta$  elements (1962), although as with parallel processes (Searles, 1955), these processes can go in either direction: if, as teachers, we are unable to perform some transformation, we may pass dynamics back to the students to grapple with. Furthermore, we may also pass on to the students dynamics of our own that we cannot deal with, which may connect with resonances in them, or may be experienced more as a kind of brutal insertion, and hence as alien.

***After the break, the group work well at their core task.***

I noted in my responses to listening to the tape of this part of this session (the discussion after the break) that, ‘there’s a flow to the group and it seems that pretty much everyone can be involved’. This seems effectively to represent Bion’s (1961) notion of Work, as opposed to Basic Assumption forms of operation. The meaning of this in the context of the session is addressed below.

## **INTERPRETATION**

It occurs to me that this session comes at a stage in the group where the students have come to be able to use the group. What took me to that was the recognition that in this session they repeatedly bring in a kind of complaint about their experience on the course, and the pain of the difficulty and vulnerability that is involved in this kind of learning. This seems to illustrate well Bion's (1961, 1962a) notion, outlined in Chapter Two Part Two on Page 56, of the hatred of learning from experience.

As reminder, Bion made use of his experiences and observations with psychotic patients to describe the way in which deviations can occur from those alignments of functions within the person which can otherwise enable learning and thought (1959, 1962a).

Bion's notion of attacks on psychological and emotional linking by disturbed individuals, both keen to gain assistance but profoundly threatened by the provision of that assistance, can be used to understand how both groups and individuals will at times feel hatred towards the prospect of learning from experience and envy of the capacity, and will seek to destroy the opportunity to gain such learning.

Bion also described the way in which groups can operate *as if* there is one of a set of underlying basic assumptions for how the group should operate, Dependency (*as if* the group were met to be dependent on the leader(s) for all that takes place), Fight-Flight (*as if* the group were met for the purpose of either fleeing from participation or of fighting, possibly alternating between the two), or Pairing (*as if* the group were met for the purpose of two members getting together to be creative, perhaps by producing The Messiah). Alternatively, at other times the group can operate in Work mode, when members co-operate in the primary task for which the group are met. Basic assumption

modes tend to predominate when there is disruption of the group's engagement with its primary task, likely around Sticky Moments.

The group seem to struggle to represent their experience to Judi and I, and we seem to struggle to represent it back to them in a form which they can use. Nonetheless, perhaps because this difficulty can be spoken about, the group seem able to get into 'Work' mode (particularly in parts of the session where there is discussion of clinical material), rather than lapsing into one or other of the 'Basic Assumptions'.

In this particular session, the members of the group bring the difficulty of the third hour, as if it may have just begun to impact on some of them, particularly as the course ends. If I had to characterise this group in relation to others we have taught, then I think I would note the relatively greater differential distribution of experience and aptitude, and again the relatively greater extent of acting out rather than acting in.

Regarding 'acting out' and 'acting in', Rycroft (1968) defines acting out as 'the substitution of acting for remembering'. This privileges the cathartic and classical versions of the process of psychoanalysis, which do not take account of the value both of interpretations in action (Stadter, 1996), and also of the spontaneous expressions of a dynamic matrix that can value 'mistakes' such as the various forms of parapraxis noted by Freud (1914) and others. Acting in is a way of seeing action that becomes available for analysis in the group (or in an individual therapy) and therefore remembering.

Perhaps what is significant about this extract, or rather this beginning is that a lot of thought and feeling is brought into the session, even if it is not possible to address and process this directly or fully. Even though Frances does not make any sense of her

unreliability, at least she offers it for some form of scrutiny. An outstanding feature of this beginning is the way that Judi and I fail to comment on this and all manner of other matters, and, going beyond this synchronic extract, how we fail to structure the ending of the course (in Session 15, and leading up to it from this Session 10 and before) so as to make sense with the group of the process that has passed and is passing between us, including the less than fully conscious aspects and the less than fully palatable ones.

In terms of what does happen in this session, there appears to be a thread of interaction through the sequence traced above (Paula as mother, loose talk, sadistic pleasure, and so on). Towards the end of this, it is as if there are attempts to have conflict in the room, but this does not quite happen. For example, it is as if Mary's attempt to confront Frances on behalf of the group comes to naught, as does Tom and Frances's disagreement with Paula. Interestingly, when Ron suddenly introduces David and Ursula, the people who left after the first year, this serves to highlight that Judi is a person who has come.

My analysis is that these elements (noted in the last paragraph) represent deep issues in the mental life of the group. Part of what the group is struggling with is ending, which in this case involves loss and abandonment, growing up, a difference between generations, and unresolved concerns and fantasies about what tutors/parents get up to when their door is closed. From accumulated experience of the clinical phenomena of exploratory psychotherapy, these tasks of ending and separation, for that is what they are, inevitably evoke profound resonances with early experience. I see there being a process following the crystallisation of *people who leave without saying goodbye properly with a replacement mother figure*, which involves attempts to process the affects stirred up by these two figurations. This process flows through the group fleeing

from Frances's albeit veiled invitation to them to tackle her about her lateness, through Bill's attack on the group (in referring to Reder's paper), to the 'fight' that Judi and Bill do manage to have in the break (even if it remains formally unacknowledged). I suggest that even if these dynamics have hardly been made explicit at all, and even if there is apparently very little intentional participation from Judi and Bill, nonetheless their contributions do lead to the group being able to enter so readily into work on return from the break.

My thought is that Bill and Judi, not least through their restraint from reacting, have somehow managed to contain and deal with something between them. This includes not least the projections of the group, and but also the more primitive responses of the students and themselves to the experience of membership of the learning group.

Thinking of what becomes of what they bring and how we deal with it, I recognise that in this session we have not been diverted from our task. This is, I believe, the integration of theory and practice, through participant observation in the discussion of clinical work. As noted in Table 5.4 on Page 184, I consider the dominant characteristic of the unconscious represented in this session to be *timelessness*, in that lateness and anxiety do not inhibit the significant work of the group.

### ***Conclusion - findings, both methodological and substantive***

Methodologically, this episode is an illustration of the choice of a sample of interaction together with its context, forming an episode, and the analysis of that episode by exploring the meanings around a sequence within the episode leading up to and following a moment of disruption. Because the sequence is a structure present in the

data, this particular analysis is relatively close to the surface of the phenomena of the interaction, contrasted, say, with the analysis in Chapter Nine of the end of the semester, which is based more on researcher countertransference.

Substantively, a number of findings have emerged above. These include *the provision of containment*, by the tutors but more importantly, through their work, *by the group*, and *the group in action*, and hence, a portrayal of a learning milieu.

A table summarising the description, analysis and interpretation of events in this chapter is on the next page. As noted in the table, the predominant characteristic of the unconscious in this session is represented as *timelessness*, partly because the session is a kind of beginning fairly late in the course, and because the person bringing something up is not daunted by issues of time.

The aims set at the beginning of the chapter were: to demonstrate aspects of the capacity of the methodology to explore and understand group processes; to show, as a result of this exploration, a kind of embodied understanding (rather than an overt verbal response) as a substantial contribution to enabling a group in its task; to show the structure and function of the learning group in action as well as a way of understanding it. I suggest that all been met.

Another exploration follows in Chapter Six.

Chapter Five A Beginning Up-bringing	Description	Analysis	Interpretation
<p>This is the beginning of a session (Session Ten). In addition, although the session actually comes in the middle of the semester, it begins the last run of sessions of the whole course. What happens in the session also represents a beginning of something different in the group.</p> <p>In this session, the predominant characteristic of the unconscious would seem to be <i>timelessness</i>, partly because the session is a kind of beginning fairly late in the course, and because the person bringing something up is not daunted by issues of time.</p>	<p>This is an account of the beginning of a session – important because this particular beginning seems very disrupted.</p> <p>Significantly, as the first example of this approach to analysis, this account sets a tone.</p> <p>The sequence has a place in the context of the semester.</p> <p>There appears to be a theme of <i>acceptance</i> in the group, of the process of learning and the difficulties that learning entails.</p> <p>The incident (of <i>up-bringing</i>) is a representation of a struggle to take a developmental step in openness.</p>	<p>A sequence: One student presents herself as a mother (“my girls”).</p> <p>There is a style of talk, which reflects the group getting into an associative mode, as if engaged in group-analysis.</p> <p>Sadistic pleasure is expressed, at the thought of disrupting nurturance.</p> <p>A series of pairs of people move to face each other.</p> <p>The group tries to tell of their struggle and to bring it in to the here-and-now.</p> <p>There is a sense of an impulse to make an angry attack.</p> <p>One staff member attacks the group, but is then attacked in the break by the other staff member.</p> <p>After the break, the group work well.</p>	<p>This is the group in Work mode (Bion, 1955) – there is a pattern of complaints and challenges, and then a sense of the group evolving beyond these. The reference to the ‘Third Hour’, the Reflective Group, signifies the recognition of personal impacts of this work and a beginning capacity to use those impacts in the work.</p> <p>Arguably, the session represents <i>containment in action in a climate of associative perception</i> – at its best, the non-action of the staff is an important modelling of being subject to intense communication and yet being open to understanding the communication rather than reacting.</p>

**Table 5.4**

**A summary of description, analysis and interpretation of data in Chapter Five.**



# Chapter Six

## Part of a Session (The Eruption – Session 8)

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### ***INTRODUCTION***

There is a particularly dense moment in this session, after the break in the middle.

This chapter is an exploration of that moment, of its place in the narrative of the session and the semester, and of some of the range of meanings of the moment in group and individual terms.

There is also a consideration of how the moment is handled by the teachers, the students and the group, including the outcomes that ensue.

### ***Theoretical and philosophical framing of the study***

In this chapter, as in the other analytic chapters, I need to elaborate how I am investigating, as well as demonstrating the fruits of that investigation in relation to the particular data being studied.

Regarding the investigation, I have selected a moment (or rather a series of moments in chronological sequence, in other words an episode) from my experience of the semester and from consideration of the transcript of the audiotape of the whole session. A summary of the transcript is given below in the analysis of the events of the session. I extracted the particular episode, and that portion of the transcript is reproduced after the summary. From studying that extract, I recorded in the right hand column of the transcript of the extract my associations at that time to what I was reading. The best way that I can describe this is that it is like viewing an impressionist painting, where impressions emerge in the viewer from a sustained, persistent but un-anxious scrutiny.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is an example of where a clinical capability can be adapted to enable the analysis of the data of experience. I believe most experienced clinicians would acknowledge the experience of the awareness of patterns of unconscious competence such as this in their routine practice. This issue is discussed elsewhere in the thesis, notably in the Preface, in Chapter One and in Chapter Ten.

Keeping in mind the accumulating array of my impressions and thoughts, I then considered the events of the whole session, and some of the issues and themes that stood out for me from that consideration, in relation to the primary tasks of the semester and of the research. With the themes and issues, I then link these to these primary tasks, in the form of a considered interpretation of this material.

This chapter involves an iterative process, as in the previous Chapter, Five. A difference between Chapters Five and Six is that whilst Five is a direct exploration of an episode or sequence of interaction in the session, Six is an exploration of an episode from consideration of aspects that the episode highlights, with aspects selected by the researcher. This example of exploration is further from the surface of the events than that in Chapter Five.

### ***The aims of this chapter***

**predominant characteristic of the unconscious in this session can be seen as**

Methodologically, the aim of this chapter is to show an exploration of a set of phenomena, notably an eruption of emotional expression, extracting a set of themes by an impressionistic process, and then examining and transforming the material that can be generated from those themes.

Substantively, the aim is to show how the products of this process contribute to an understanding of moments of difficulty in the process of teaching and learning. This particular moment involves a sudden shift of mood, and I show how this approach to

research applied to such phenomena can illuminate the personal and group elements of experiences such as this type of learning. I also argue that the *symbolisation*.<sup>2</sup>

### ***The session and the moment***

The moment I will explore takes place almost exactly at the mid-point of the semester. It comes just after the break in the middle of the middle session. The attendance record of the semester in Table 4.2 on Page 121 shows that Frances, Heidi, Kelly, Paula, Ron, Tom and Veronica are present with Bill and Judi, and Mary and Nancy are absent.

In this session (number 8 of 15), as the Table 4.2 also shows, there is effectively no presenter. Kelly had previously put her name forward to present her clinical work on this occasion, but had rung Judi shortly before the session to say that she had been too unwell to prepare a presentation. Judi had said that we would manage. However, Kelly wanted very much to come anyway, and did so. As there is no clinical material available, the first half of the session is spent looking at questions and issues invited by the tutors from members of the group. As the group resumes work after the break in the session, Heidi seems upset, and has just said in response to Bill's enquiry that she feels dead. The transcript beginning on the next page follows from that point. This is presented as a Sticky Moment, in that there is an acute momentary disruption of the flow of communication.

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Two Part Two, Page 85 for an account of the significance of this characterisation, made in each of these five synchronic analyses, of the episode considered in this chapter as showing a predominance of one of Freud's (1915) characteristics of the unconscious. The aim is not to reduce the richness of the particular episode, but rather merely to highlight a key aspect of the unconscious in operation. The capacity to recognise these phenomena is a key feature of this epistemology.

<b>Transcript</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<p>Heidi laughs</p> <p><b>Bill</b> Are you feeling bad?</p> <p><b>Heidi</b> In class I am, not the rest of the time, no.</p> <p><b>Judi</b> Wow! Well, we don't want that on your feedback form! (Bill laughs).</p> <p><b>Heidi</b> I don't think it's (inaudible).</p> <p><b>Judi</b> Well, maybe you want to talk about that, actually.</p> <p><b>Heidi</b> I don't know what to say.</p> <p><b>Paula</b> (interjects) It was like that last week.</p> <p><b>Heidi</b> (Rapidly) It was exactly the same last week.</p>	<p>This seems incongruous to Bill, particularly in the light of Heidi having said that she feels dead, but obviously more than that, leading to his response. On reflection, this is a shocking experience as a tutor, perhaps particularly given that this semester is part of training to work with personal disturbance.</p> <p>This seems direct, occasioned perhaps by the intensity of Heidi's expression.</p> <p>Heidi brings the issue right here and now.</p> <p>Judi responds to the impact of that, with clear acknowledgement. However, this is also wrapped in a joke, clearly shared by Bill. Much as the student's communication has involved an apparent joke, well known (e.g. Freud 1900/1953) as a conveyor of layered meaning, perhaps Judi's response in the same apparent form is an acknowledgement of this.</p> <p>Heidi probably made a remark dismissing concern with her expression.</p> <p>Here, Judi is trying to challenge Heidi's move to dismiss the attention of the staff and the group that she has just engaged, and also perhaps the possibility that the group or the task (of learning psychoanalytic psychotherapy) may have had an impact on her experience.</p> <p>The sequence of these three statements (by Heidi, Paula, and then Heidi again) shows</p>

<p><b>Judi</b> Do you feel that it's something to do with the way things are going in the group?</p> <p><b>Heidi</b> I think it's probably about me. That's what I think it's about.</p> <p><b>Bill</b> I mean, one question that I was coming back with was how are we using this time, and clearly I was wondering how it was for you.</p> <p><b>Heidi</b> I'm not really here. I don't know why, I'd rather be at the gym with my mates having a good time. And that's how I felt last week.</p>	<p>an immediate impact of what Paula says, in that it somehow pinpoints and confirms Heidi's experience and enables her to express it, in contrast to Bill and Judi's as yet unsuccessful attempts to do this.</p> <p>Judi raises very directly a key question, naming the group, indicated, I believe, by the intensity of Heidi's expression, and the discontinuity around her making it.</p> <p>This response is in sharp contrast to Heidi's rapid acceptance of Paula's intervention, and effectively represents a disavowal of Judi and Bill's attempts to reach out to her.</p> <p>This is clumsy and dysfluent, probably a result of anxiety in a staff member, but the concern still gets conveyed, for the experience of the student making the expression, also naming the participation of the group in these events.</p> <p>This image (being at the gym with her mates having a good time) is explored below.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Table 6.1 – Transcript of an extract from Session Eight Key Sticky Moment 8 - The Eruption</b></p>	

### ***DESCRIPTION - AN OUTLINE OF THE WHOLE SESSION***

Having detailed this episode with some analytic comments, it remains to put it in the context of the whole session. As noted above, the transcribed sequence comes after the return from the break in the middle of the session. Looking at the whole session, this can be seen as a series of episodes, as follows.

There is a beginning to the session, when Bill and Judi let the group know that Kelly, although present, will not be presenting, and that the plan is to use the space instead to explore questions that people have that are relevant to the business of the semester. This is not re-stated, but the tutors seem to assume that the students are by now familiar with the core aim of integrating theory and practice.

Four students raise issues in response to the invitation. Ron is due to give a presentation at a conference in his employing organisation on the use of countertransference, and asks if he can talk about that. Veronica wants to discuss her observation that all of her clients have Avoidant attachment styles (Holmes, 1997), so she finds herself concerned with the risk of being too intimate or intrusive with them. Paula has a related question for discussion, namely how to keep engagement with people who are desperate to get away. Finally, Frances raises the challenge for her of working in an organisation that is in chaos, leaving her to find a way to maintain her spirits.

The group proceeds to attempt address these issues in turn. First, the discussion on Ron's topic, the use of countertransference, focuses on the uncomfortable balance between the fear of getting things wrong in disclosure of ones countertransference and the risk of acting out the countertransferential experience if one is unable to voice it. Somehow, this discussion does not lead to thought about how this issue is addressed in the present in the room and in the group as that process is taking place.

Secondly, the discussion moves to the area raised in different ways by Veronica and Paula, as if the two questions are considered together. Broadly, there seems to be a frustration in the group with this part of the discussion. Bill and Judi both talk about

modelling, but do not really offer any, and it seems in hindsight that part of the problem is that there is no map for where or how this session is to go. It seems unclear whether the staff have such a map, or if instead they are expecting the students to draw one. In the confusion, frustration mounts. This part of the session ends with Tom describing what is presumably his own practice of using hypnosis to manage distance, which seems to directly challenge the concern that both Veronica and Paula have raised in different ways, as well as the purpose of the semester.

The next episode is the break. Bill and Judi get to a concern that they are being too supervisory or behaving too much as teachers. Their discussion doesn't really reach the level of considering the dynamics of the group, focussing instead on impressions of individuals and expressions of anxiety. Bill has an urgency, though, to become involved in the dynamics of the group, and is short with Judi, wanting to look ahead.

Thirdly, there is the return from the break (which is the episode transcribed above). This is dominated by Heidi's statement, made as the group is still resuming, but in response to Bill's question as to where the attention of the group is now following the break, that she feels dead. The rapidity and intensity of this communication (in following the break and being part of the resumption) is what gives it the quality of an eruption. Heidi acknowledges her own part in this, including an identification with the client discussed the previous week, her sensitivity to changes in her life outside the course, and the unbearable pressure she feels in the group to 'get it right' when actually she is feeling extremely small (i.e. as if she were extremely young).

Fourthly, Bill introduces the question of the culture of the group, asking 'What do we co-create here?' Paula talks about missing her own therapy appointment that day, by

going instead and unconsciously to her old house (from which she has just moved). Bill and Judi try and talk about the defensive system of the group. Frances seems to try and disrupt this focus (possibly with her own specific concern in mind, i.e. maintaining one's spirits in the chaos of an organisation), and seems to try to differentiate 'out there' from 'in here'. Tom and Paula challenge this move, and Heidi acknowledges this module (probably meaning semester) as the hardest of the course. Frances talks about acting out by keeping her patient waiting. No-one picks up the parallel in her lateness in coming to group sessions.

Fifth, Heidi talks about hating yet valuing this semester, and is able to respond in the affirmative to Judi's wondering about feelings of rivalry between students. Kelly denies any rivalrous feelings. Heidi firmly acknowledges hers, and also that her supervisor has helped her to face these. Judi is keen (probably as a result of the pressure to be supervisory that the tutors have felt) to eschew the role of supervisor, which may reflect a caution about opening up issues 'in here'. Bill acknowledges the role of the Reflective Group, in particular that this new experience within the course, when there is no tradition of dealing with it, may be extremely challenging.

Sixth, there is some discussion of Frances's issue, the maintenance of spirits in chaos. A number of people have reflections here. This theme is interesting because it has an outside focus (as Frances had wished it to earlier), but at the same time, the challenge faces this group too, and arguably there has been an experience of chaos 'in here' this week.



## **ANALYSIS – THEMES AND ISSUES IN THE DISCUSSION**

Here, I have collected eight foci for the discussion. From these, as described at the beginning of this chapter, I will collect information on how I am investigating, as well as what is emerging from this investigation. What I have made of that collection comes after these themes and issues.

### ***To be at the gym with my mates...***

The first focus that I want to look at is the image that is based on Heidi's wish, "to be at the gym with my mates". Particularly in consideration of this first element, I am employing a form of analysis based on Freud's treatment of dreams (1900/1953, p. 135), described in Chapter Three on Page 102.

These words conclude the transcribed section of the session, on Page 189. Here, my own associative expansion follows each of the segments of Heidi's utterance: *a wish to be* literally elsewhere, somewhere different (an attack on, or at least a rejection of 'here', the tutors and the group, and all else implied in 'here'); *at the gym*, physical recreation, rough and tumble, bodies in contact, skin to skin (pleasurable physical experience contrasted to this cerebral one); *with my mates*, with friends, no colleagues from this group, a band of peers with no staff or differences, a social situation, (by researcher extension of this) a pleasurable experience, (experiences contrasted to this).

Gathering the strands laid out above, as in Freud's (1913/1958) method, I want to argue that Heidi seems to be expressing, on behalf of the group, a primitive and intense rejection of the world of the session and all that it contains, in favour of an alternative

world that is altogether more physically, socially and sexually pleasurable. This rejection, which I believe to be largely unconscious, is reflected in the difficulty that the staff, unlike Paula, have in connecting with Heidi in this episode.

### ***Managing countertransference***

This is Ron's topic, and the discussion highlights the delicate balance between the fear of getting things wrong in disclosure of one's countertransference, and the risk of acting out the countertransferential experience if one is unable to voice it. The obvious association is to 'here', how do we manage our countertransference here, which I read as referring to how do we deal with the feelings evoked by case material brought by students, those evoked by the task of integrating theory and practice, and those evoked by our various memberships of the learning group. With regard to the concern about acting out, I wonder what we do already act out here, i.e. in the group. I wonder about Heidi's subsequent 'eruption' in this context. Perhaps this represents a group dynamic, in that other members of the group may feel the feeling that Heidi voices, but that they are reticent to do so to the extent that they leave Heidi to voice it for them. A clue to this comes in what follows: on reflection, a different response by the tutors to the material in the next heading, which came before Heidi's intervention, might have obviated the need for that intervention.

This leads on to the question of my own countertransference, which has projective, projectively identified and personal aspects. I recall a feeling of shock and surprise in the session, and some fear, although I think I mostly felt cautiously (rather than comfortably) numb. I felt a lot of concern for Heidi, needing to protect her by containing her feelings and working to understand the meaning of what she was expressing whilst helping her to limit the extent of the disclosure that she was making. I

was aware of an intense anger, which I link to the difficulty of the task with which we were facing the group. For example, one aspect of the task involves them submitting transcript of a segment of their work (albeit a sample chosen almost entirely freely by them). This is typically an incredibly anxiety provoking experience, particularly when discussions in class in previous semesters have been more (although not exclusively) theoretical. Submission of a transcript of clinical work makes the work (and hence the trainee) much more publically visible than hitherto.

This focus, managing countertransference, highlights a very important issue. Given that the experience of participating in the group has become disturbing, the challenge becomes, can the staff at least offer some containment of that disturbance? Arguably, the response of the staff, in implicitly and explicitly acknowledging the intensity of the students' various experiences, conveys a kind of 'interpretation in action' (Stadter, 1996), and the subsequent outcome, of greater group participation and involvement, indicates the relative success of this strategy.

### ***Managing distance in therapeutic relationships***

Lost in the woods of distance in relationship, with Veronica, Paula and Tom. All three of them seem to bring in to the group accounts of themselves in their practice, but it as if the issue maybe becomes too hard (or hot) for them and for the group to handle. The issue comes unmistakably into the group when Tom comes forward strongly, in response to Veronica's wondering about how to be aware the relationship between her extravert style and the avoidant attachment patterns of all of her clients, and Paula's wish to reflect on the experience of a client pulling away strongly. What Tom brings is his account of feeling bored (I mis-typed *board* here) when people are just talking, and

inviting them to go deeper, and if they wished to do so, to use hypnosis. As I write this description, I wonder, does Tom want to put Veronica and Paula, or the group, to sleep?

Both Veronica and Paula are strong personalities, and are confident in their coming forward into the group, bringing personal experience (particularly current or recent immediacy in their client work, in some ways the focus of the semester) with apparent ease. Tom has acknowledged already (in session 5, see Chapter Four, The Diachronic Analysis) his feeling of vulnerability in displaying his work, as well as his unfamiliarity in being aware of and using countertransference. One view of the dynamic between Tom, Veronica and Paula in this session is that they are representing core conflicts for the group. These could align around the clinical challenge in psychotherapy of whether to head into or away from anxiety (a symbolic representation of Freud's (1900/1953) Reality Principle). More particularly, and linked to some of the underlying themes of the session, this alignment could be around the conflict in the group, between being honest (yet vulnerable) and being competent (yet distanced from oneself and from the freedom to learn).

### ***The break***

It is notable that Bill and Judi seem in this break to be *reflecting* rather than *reflecting on* the nature of the discussion, in that there is a space, but no clear structure for using that space. There also seems to be frustration (I want to say here 'a sense of' frustration, meaning that I, Bill as Researcher, have a sense of there being frustration between Bill and Judi in the break). I think it reflects the disarray in the apparent collapse of the frame of the course represented by the group ending up without any clinical material to discuss) that there is apparently a collapse in the frame of the break. Incidentally, I

realise that there has been far less thought in the understanding of teaching about issues of the break in the session (such as how the break is used, what phenomena take place, and how they might be understood) than there has about issues of the session *per se*, (although, even in that case, there has been almost no overt theorising).

On reviewing the themes and issues that I am describing, I am noticing how the eruption in the session is (if anybody's) maybe Tom's rather than Heidi's, and in that sense comes before rather than after the break. Perhaps Heidi is making use of the rip that Tom has torn in the fabric of connection in order to come forward for a time. I am also noticing that Bill and Judi don't refer directly to the challenge *for the group* of what Tom has said, although they do reflect briefly (albeit in their break, so in a kind of private space) on the challenge to themselves.

### ***The culture of the group***

Obeyesekere suggests that the work of culture is,

... the process where symbolic forms existing on a cultural level get created and re-created through the minds of people (1990, p. xix).

The task of the group, in this study of how people acquire the capacity to use the immediacy of their experience to effect change in others with whom they are present, is cultural work. A particular question for the study is how this cultural capacity is evoked and developed by the chosen teaching method, a particular type of focused discussion.

The Sticky Moment considered in this chapter is particularly important from the perspective of the culture of the group. Arguably, although continuous reflection on the task of the group is ostensibly encouraged throughout the semester, it is as if this reflection had relatively disappeared from consciousness until the moment of the

eruption. At this point in the experience of being in the group in the room during the performance of the task of the group, attention was clearly and firmly returned to this reflection. This mechanism has a quality that seems homeostatic.

### ***Rivalry***

Heidi is clearly able to acknowledge her rivalrous feelings, which certainly seem to be a major determinant of her speaking out when she did, as if she was unable not to do so. After the transcribed part of the session, she goes on to talk about rivalry with her clients who seem to be moving (i.e. making progress, in this case in their psychotherapy with her) when she doesn't feel that she is (in her own personal psychotherapy), and also makes her own experience of rivalry in the group decidedly real by describing how she has discussed it with her supervisor. The introduction of the topic of the supervisor at this point may itself be a rivalrous move (albeit an unconscious one), in that such relationships (between student therapists and their various supervisors, as well as between student therapists and their patients, which are inevitably triangular, as noted by Ekstein and Wallerstein (1958, 1972), among others, unlike the dyadic nature of individual exploratory therapy) can be sites for rivalry and rivalrous feelings that originate (at least partly)<sup>3</sup> in relationships between students, and between tutors and students.

### ***Keeping spirits up in chaos***

This is Frances's topic, and is an issue for her in her workplace, which she describes as chaotic. It seems that other students (for example, Tom and Paula) challenge her clear distinction between 'in here' and 'out there', but she seems to hold firmly to it. The

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<sup>3</sup> Here I am aware that some of the rivalry and rivalrous feelings that emerge in situations such as this group have their origins in the families of origin and the experiences of the members of those families, including particularly those of the participants in this group.

challenge is really important, since it is rare in this class for students to challenge each other, but the outcome is that it is not possible for Frances to be usefully challenged by individuals or the group. This may be a result of factors in Frances, or of the lack of leadership by the tutors (which leadership would almost certainly be needed to make possible the challenge), or of a group process such as scapegoating. Scapegoating would imply that at some level of awareness there is an imperative that Frances should not be challenged because she is carrying out a task on behalf of the group.

### ***Abandonment***

Abandonment seems to be a major theme in the session. I became aware of this when I saw the pattern of the eruption coming when *the caretakers (tutors) come back*. This is reminiscent of the pattern observed in the studies of the attachments of children to their caregivers, of distress on reunion, that led to the evolution of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980). I want to suggest that this may be a symbolic manifestation at the level of the group of infant behaviour following reunion with a primary caregiver, as studied in the development of attachment theory. It as if the group's accomplishment in the task of sustaining the trust of the group in the group and in the process of the semester has temporarily been lost. Linking in to the previous point about managing distance, that trust was probably diminished by the non-response of the tutors to what Tom said about hypnosis before the break. What was needed might only have been a particular kind of holding remark.

This is a version of a familiar challenge to the psychoanalytic principle of abstinence. Whilst working psychoanalytically implies acceptance of the 'fundamental rule of psycho-analytic technique' (that the patient say anything that comes to mind) and the rule of abstinence (that the analyst refrain from responding directly to the patient's free

associations) (Freud, 1913/1958), Winnicott's comment to Guntrip (1975, p. 151) is salient too. Near the end of their first session with Winnicott as Guntrip's analyst, Guntrip reports that Winnicott said to him: 'I've nothing particular to say yet, but if I don't say something, you may begin to feel I'm not here'. Somehow this captures in an elegant manner the paradox of dealing with early, pre-verbal experience.

To conclude this consideration of themes and issues in the discussion, it is notable that the themes and issues considered have a range of origins. One relates to a phrase spoken by a group member, others are technical psychotherapy practice issues (managing countertransference, managing distance in therapeutic relationships, and the break, and the culture of the group), while others are emotional experiences (rivalry, keeping up spirits in chaos, and abandonment). Next, I will consider meanings around the Sticky Moment as well as the themes in the session as a whole.

### ***INTERPRETATION - MEANINGS AROUND THE MOMENT***

So what happened in this episode in the context of this session?

One relatively simple version might be that there was a break in the programme because of one person's illness, and the break caused some disruption in the group whilst it was trying to use the time to have a discussion related to its core task, the integration of theory and practice in psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

A more elaborate version is that the group is shaken by one person's failure to present their work, and that this has evoked a kind of group regression. This may be an explanation for the countertransference of the tutors in the break, that they have felt themselves to be put into the role of teacher or clinical supervisor when they are trying



to invite participation. Heidi is chosen by the group to voice the negativity and ambivalence evoked by the task, and indeed is helped along by Paula. However, she is in that place because the tutors have apparently not managed to grasp the communication underlying the choice of topics from the students, nor to address the fate of the discussion in the first half of the session.

A conceptual structure (the Reference Locator) will be elaborated in the next chapter, Chapter Seven, but in order to begin to introduce this here, it relies on consideration of a triad of foci in a group such as this semester's class, including *clinical* (the material being discussed), *task* (relating to the outcome of the semester, the growth of professional ability in psychoanalytic psychotherapy), and *group* (relating to the personal and shared experiences of members of the group). These foci are arrayed as the vertices of an equilateral triangle.

Considering the impact on the group resulting from Kelly's failure to present some material, or alternatively, to schedule a replacement, one consequence has been that one vertex ('Clinical') of the triad of foci (i.e. 'Task', 'Group' and 'Clinical') has been removed. This serves to lessen the attention it is then possible to pay to the 'Task' focus (even though this ostensibly comes forward, but it does so at a time when there is no link via the Clinical material). What becomes foregrounded is the 'Group' vertex, but as this comes forward in a disconnected manner, there is maybe, in the minds of members of the group, a collapse into something like therapy.

Briefly changing voice here, certainly at times the group feels more like a therapy group than a learning group. By 'feels', I mean my felt response as one of the tutors to the experience of being with this group, both at the time and in subsequent study.

One way of viewing the dynamic between the group as a learning group and the group as a therapy group is that this represents an expression of an underlying and possibly unconscious conflict, manifested on a group level but with inevitable individual determinants. There is a range of possibilities that might be expressed, but an obvious one is between the rational task of learning a craft and the chance to express the emotional pain involved in this task, and in so doing, to regress in a safe emotional environment. In this sense, the episode can be viewed in classic Freudian terms as a form of symptom, expressive of aspects of underlying conflict and phantasy (Freud, 1900/1953).

### ***INTERPRETATION - THEMES APPARENT IN THE SESSION***

The above is a weaving of the events of the session from a group perspective. It is also interesting to look at other themes that capture the events of the session, or at least some aspect of them. These include, first, that this session becomes something of a mid-course correction. On reflection, if I have not reviewed a course with the participants by the half-way mark, then I would feel negligent. The tutors had not made a plan to review the progress of the semester,<sup>4</sup> so in a sense this session represents the students taking the important step of challenging the framework and what may have become an anxious adaptation by the group to the task.

Second, in terms of the lifespan of the group, this session maybe represents adolescence, with all of the ambivalence, the search for identity, and the simultaneous and apparently contradictory need for independence and dependence that characterises that life-stage.

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<sup>4</sup> This can be seen as one of the problems of co-teaching, particularly when either there is no clear hierarchy or there is complex hierarchy (as in this case) between the colleagues involved, there may be a paralyzing impact on the spontaneous taking of responsibility.

Third, this session contains an attempt by the students, the tutors and the group to address the frustration implicit in the task of the semester. This frustration follows from the notion that a favourable outcome in terms of individual student achievement almost certainly includes a growth in the capacity for negative capability, that is, tolerance of not knowing what is happening in therapeutic interaction. This is hard to bear, and may represent the intrusion of Basic Assumption (Bion, 1962) modes of operating into what it seems should be a 'Work' experience. It may be that the function of this session is to allow necessary learning-group maintenance to take place.

Fourth, experientially there was a primitive, almost lethal quality to the experience of being with this group as a tutor in this session. Maybe this represents an intrusion of Nitsun's (1996) notion of the anti-group. Related to this, in some senses people are beginning to find themselves as clinicians around this point. Although it seems as if there is much that the tutors fail to grasp consciously, deliberately or explicitly, it may be that they are inevitably modelling dealing with a challenging, emotional and complex situation, not least by surviving.

Fifth, this phase of the group life (at least over the course of this semester, so effectively, of the group working in this manner), may represent Tuckman's (1965) classic notion of the developmental stage of the group of Storming (following Forming and Norming, and prior to Performing and then Ending).

Sixth and finally, all of the questions that the students raise could have been addressed to the group, with a view to them being explored in the group, and this did not happen. How to explain countertransference to people who have no idea may be a really

important topic for exploration, and not just ‘out there’ – what is the understanding in this group? Maybe this is one contributor to Heidi’s eruption. How to manage distance in relationships – am I too much for you, how do I deal with it when you pull away and push me away so forcefully, and how do I deal with the frustration when I can’t get close to you? How do I and we deal with our morale in the chaos that is in here?

### ***Conclusion - findings, both methodological and substantive***

Regarding how I am investigating and what that is revealing, I will consider investigating first. I have described in this chapter how I have processed the raw data of my participant observation and the audiotape recordings to arrive at consideration of a powerful moment, and how I have then dealt with that data to arrive at the themes and issues that I have elaborated. This, like other examples of the application of group-analytic ethnography, relies on an understanding of an individual unconscious as well as a group unconscious, and a capacity to engage emotionally with the range of researcher experience including countertransference.

From a substantive perspective, an episode has been highlighted in this chapter, placed in the context of the session as a whole, and linked to the semester as a whole. A series of images have been traced that can be seen in the process of the session, and some themes have been outlined that locate these images. These can be summarised as a reflection of those faced by patients in the clinical work, and by students in the learning task of the course and the semester, and occur in the group. However, the group does not have the remit to address these directly, and the capacity to negotiate such remits does not yet exist between the staff and the students. What erupts sees the light of day, and is experienced and witnessed at some level, as is the absence of an overt acknowledgement of what remains un-acknowledged.

A table summarising the description, analysis and interpretation of data in this chapter is on the next page. As noted in the table, the predominant characteristic of the unconscious in this session is seen as *symbolisation*. Whilst some difficulty is experienced in representing experience in words, the frustration of one member of the group comes to stand for (and hence, to *symbolise*) the frustration of many others.

My aim in relation to the methodological question of the thesis (how can a learning group be investigated?), has been to conduct an exploration of a set of phenomena, extracting a set of themes by an impressionistic process, and then examining and transforming the material that can be generated from those themes. Substantively, I have offered a demonstration of the products of this process contributing to an understanding of moments of difficulty in the process of teaching and learning. This particular moment involves a sudden shift of mood, and I have shown how this approach to research can illuminate the personal and group elements of such experiences in this type of learning. I have also argued that the predominant characteristic of the unconscious in this session is *symbolisation*.

Another exploration follows in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Six Part of a Session The Eruption	Description	Analysis	Interpretation
<p>This segment was chosen because of the abrupt nature of the way it becomes part of the session, effectively like a kind of eruption, and hence the title. The other side of the coin is that it could be called ‘The Containment’, because it seems that that is part of what eventually transpires.</p> <p>The predominant characteristic of the unconscious in this session would seem to be <i>symbolisation</i>.</p> <p>Whilst some difficulty is experienced in representing experience in words, the intense frustration of one member of the group comes to stand for (and hence, to <i>symbolise</i>) the frustration of many others.</p>	<p>There is some setting of a scene, because the regular task of the group is not possible due to illness and no back-up presenter.</p> <p>Four issues are discussed in the group, but the process ends at the break with a feeling of distance of the members of the group from each other and the reality of the topics.</p> <p>In the break, there is something of a scuffle between the tutors.</p> <p>After the break, an incident occurs (the eruption). This leads to a broadening of discussion, and a series of acknowledgements about the experience of the semester and the session.</p>	<p>One member would rather be at the gym – maybe this is a kind of gym, with posing, sparring and other performances</p> <p>The group discusses, and inevitably enacts, issues of managing countertransference and distance. This discussion takes place in relation to clinical work, but can be thought about in more personal and group terms.</p> <p>The break is an opportunity to access and explore the experience with the group via displacement, but instead is needed for survival by the tutors. The complex and emerging culture of the group includes rivalry, hostility, keeping up spirits in chaos, abandonment.</p>	<p>This is possibly just a gap in the schedule, or alternatively and much more likely, a regression by the group in response to that gap, but linked at a deeper level to the difficulty of the task of the semester. Key phenomena include tutor inattention to task, the adolescence of the group, the pain of learning, a manifestation of the anti-group, and the failure (possibly because of unprocessed anxiety) to make more use of the group in the fulfilment of the task.</p> <p>What erupts is contained, witnessed, and refereed. It can also be seen as a reflection of themes faced by patients and therapists in clinical work and by students learning. It highlights the potential of the group-analytically informed model of teaching and learning.</p>

**Table 6.2**

**A summary of description, analysis and interpretation of data in Chapter Six.**

# Chapter Seven

## A Discussion (The Fishhook – Session 14)

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### *Introduction*

Issues and dynamics emerge. Some of these are not addressed directly within the penultimate session.

This emergence and subsequent outcome is analysed in terms of core developmental issues for therapists, in practice but particularly during training.

The incident is also analysed from a group perspective.

In this Chapter, I want to look at the dynamics around a particular moment in Session Fourteen, the week before the end of the semester and the course, when one of the students asks the tutors (and the group) about how often should one go for therapy (as a trainee therapist), and subsequently a second student compares encouraging patients to come more often to therapy to ‘putting bait on a fishhook’. There is a stunned silence, and then a third student laughs in an intense way.

As in all of these five synchronic analyses (that is, Chapters Five to Nine), the episode will be set in the context of the session. Next, there is a transcript of the interaction, together with some brief commentary alongside the transcript, followed by a summary of some of what happened subsequently in the session. After that, there is some analysis and interpretation of the dynamics, concepts and issues involved, both in the extract and in the session as a whole.

Chapter Five was an analysis of a sequence of interaction in a session, whilst Chapter Six began with a focus on a moment in the session, broadening out to aspects of interaction throughout the session and drawn into an interpretation at the end. This

chapter, Seven, follows a similar pattern to Chapter Six, moving from a focus on a moment to consideration of aspects from throughout the session.

### ***The aims of this chapter***

Methodologically, as in Chapter Six, the aim of this chapter is to conduct an exploration of a set of phenomena, extracting themes by an impressionistic process, and then examining and transforming the material that can be generated from those themes.

I am aiming to make use of an understanding of the unconscious phenomenon of *condensation*, arguably the dominant feature of the manifestations of the unconscious in Session Fourteen. This understanding is focussed on the context and events of the episode, and illustrates how those contexts and events can be unpacked and rearranged, as in the psychoanalytic treatment of a dream.<sup>1</sup>

Substantively, I aim to show how this analysis of aspects of the material of the session highlights both potential opportunities for advancing the work of the semester, and also the realisation of that potential when some of these opportunities are taken. I also want to argue that, as noted in the paragraph above, the predominant feature of the unconscious present is *condensation*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This method of dream analysis is elaborated on Page 102. A further extended illustration of the method is given between Pages A2-14 and A2-21 of Appendix Two.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Two Part Two, Page 85 for an account of the significance of this characterisation, made in each of these five synchronic analyses, of the episode considered in this chapter as showing a predominance of one of Freud's (1915) characteristics of the unconscious. The aim is not to reduce the richness of the particular episode, but rather merely to highlight a key aspect of the unconscious in operation. The capacity to recognise these phenomena is a key feature of this epistemology.



## **DESCRIPTION**

### ***The episode in the context of the session***

As noted above, this is Session Fourteen, the penultimate session of the semester and the course. As in Session Eight, outlined in Chapter Six (The Eruption), the format for this session is atypical. However, this session was intended to be different, whereas that was because of unavoidable circumstances. In this case, the first hour is to be spent discussing questions about the integration of the theory and practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy with which members of the group still want help. (Incidentally, the analysis and interpretation below explores the structural impossibility of this primary task for the session, and the inevitability of frustration as a result).<sup>3</sup>

The discussion is to be followed in the second hour of the session by a case presentation by one of the tutors, and discussion of that case by the group. As it happens, this presentation was given by the researcher, who chose to present some challenging work that had, on the face of it, not gone particularly well. There is some feedback on this in Session Fifteen (see Chapter Nine), where it appears that the case presentation as well as what happened in the first hour of this fourteenth session have had quite an impact, apparently positive, on some group members and their experience of the semester.

### ***Events of the session prior to the extract***

All except Mary are present (ten people). After some discussion about the imminent end of the course, graduation and the need for students to settle their financial accounts, Tom brings in his own strong responses to the case material in the previous week's

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<sup>3</sup> In the studies carried out by the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations (Trist & Murray, 1990), and following in the tradition of Bion's (1961) work with groups, *the primary task* of a workplace or other organizational setting is kept in mind throughout, and moves away from it can then be more readily observed. This notion is invaluable to this study.

session, when Kelly presented her work with a child. Frances talks about recognising (in her clinical work) the need to ensure that the suffering of children in a client family is not overlooked because of the middle-class appearance of their mother.<sup>4</sup> Bill refers back (in attempting to guide the group in the primary task) to Session Eight (discussed in Chapter Six).<sup>5</sup>

Ron talks about wanting to do the whole course again. Paula says the more she learns, the less she knows. She also wonders how she would know if she were to be integrating theory and practice, and acknowledges that she missed a lot in the first part of this second year of the course. Kelly talks about the importance to her of all students bringing a case in the course of a semester, which is a statement of her displeasure (shared by some other group members) at the presenters in the immediately previous semester (Semester 3), who adopted a different approach involving more didactic teaching. Nancy speaks up about valuing the previous semester, suggesting that that may be due to her background (as a mental health clinician rather than as a psychotherapist, which most of her peers in this group are). As a consequence, she had less clinical material to bring to sessions. Kelly points out that only one case is needed. Bill steps in with a second (unclear) question (or, more accurately, set of questions) asking *what are members of the group wanting* (from the opportunity represented by the first half of the session), and following that, *where do people find themselves*. There is a response from Ron, wanting to know more about the concept of mirroring.<sup>6</sup> Bill and Judi avoid responding directly to this, diverting into recommendations for reading and

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<sup>4</sup> This description of Frances's changed awareness seems to be an acknowledgement of her growing competence with dynamic issues – see below for fuller discussion of this. At the same time, I also wonder why the group are struggling with the task, and recognise that the tutors are also struggling, arguably with the countertransference of teaching.

<sup>5</sup> This can be seen as Bill cueing an eruption – see the section 'Interpretation' below, in this Chapter, for more discussion of this.

<sup>6</sup> (Changing voice for meaning) As I approached the end of my analysis (and editing), I was inclined to add here. "... and seeming to expect that the tutors would tell him". This is discussed further below in 'Interpretation', under 'Ron's question'.

historic accounts, linked to an article on the precarious institutional state of psychoanalysis. This discussion includes a slip from the researcher as he endorses Judi's recommendation of a book, that he has read it on a *subsequent* occasion.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, Paula enters, as it were in the role of patient (in the sense of referring to her experience from that perspective)<sup>8</sup> in response to an apparently naive question to the tutors from Tom about how often one should aim to go for therapy as a therapist in training.<sup>9</sup>

The extract in which 'the fishhook' emerges comes at this point. After the extract, the process of the discussion continues until the break in the middle of the session, and after that the session concludes with the researcher's clinical presentation. This concluding part of Session 14, the presentation of extensive clinical case material by one of the tutors (that is, the researcher) was not included as part of the analysis for reasons of confidentiality. A transcript of the incident with some commentary follows on the next two pages.

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<sup>7</sup> (Changing voice again) I am fairly certain that this slip on my own behalf represents a compromise between the fact of having read the book and the strongly felt need to go and read it again. I consider this to be an example of the unconscious phenomenon of condensation. With hindsight, I would now be more honest with the group.

<sup>8</sup> This is clinical shorthand, used to describe the way that an individual may present themselves to the group, or the way that the group may invite or induce an individual to behave.

<sup>9</sup> Although, like Ron's question about mirroring, this question seems innocuous, it is not really a direct response to the question asked by Bill – so, is it that Tom wants to be told how often to go, or for the tutors to ask the group for him how often he should go?

<b>Transcript of part of the session</b>	<b>Commentary by researcher</b>
<p><b>Paula</b> It's really hard to do that if you hadn't ... if, for me, if I hadn't had that experience, because I think that the issues are so different if you're working once a week.</p> <p><b>Judi</b> You're right, the feeling is different, and I think it's one of those passed down experiences</p> <p><b>Paula</b> And I've never been three times a week myself, so I haven't really ... it's never something I've done. Whereas I know people who have, and that ...</p> <p>... would work that way. <i>It's like how you teach someone to put bait on a fishhook, how it's been shown to you.</i></p> <p><b>(Chuckle by Frances during the above)</b></p>	<p>Paula seems to be struggling here, first to bring herself into the conversation (... if you hadn't...if I hadn't...), and then,</p> <p>to bring herself into the possibility of working three times a week. So,</p> <p>Paula makes the clear point that it's like how you need to be shown how to do something basic but crucial, that you need to learn by mimesis, but the example that she uses involves an extremely dense symbol.</p> <p>I think that an important issue here is that Paula is describing the lack of something very profound, and that others have had something that she has not, and that she feels that lack very deeply, perhaps particularly at this point in the course (approaching the end). <i>Bait</i> and <i>hook</i> both suggest a kind of tantalisation. It may be that <i>envy</i> is involved here, with Paula, as others have previously, expressing (or rather symbolising) something on behalf of the group. Klein (1959) described the phenomenology of envy, and of the various defences against it, which include disavowal, stealing, and the projective identification of envy in others leading to impoverishment, all of which can be extremely destructive, particularly to learning and thinking. It may be that this explains the rather anxious humour which follows.</p>

<p>PAUSE</p> <p><b>Paula</b> Different analogy!</p> <p><b>Judi</b> It's an interesting one.</p> <p><b>GROUP LAUGHTER (intense burst after a pause)</b></p> <p><b>Bill</b> That's a very penetrating form of training!</p> <p><b>Paula</b> Maybe we should delete that bit.</p> <p><b>Bill</b> Yeah! I'd be sad if you felt we had to, because one of the aims of this semester has been to help people to be comfortable to ...so that they don't feel kind of hounded or over- interpreted.</p> <p><b>Judi</b> And I think that that's what Winnicott's so good at (continues)</p>	<p>Frances's rapid recognition of this (evidenced by her chuckle), <i>whilst Paula is still speaking</i>, is perhaps an indication of a response below full consciousness to the intensity and density of issues and dynamics involved.</p> <p>Paula can recognise this for herself, as it were underlining the emergence of unconscious material in her own utterance, and interestingly marks the analogy as 'different'.</p> <p>Judi is relatively non-committal, as if acknowledging something, but going slowly, which gives the group as a whole (and herself) the chance to catch up.</p> <p>It is left to Bill, more on the sidelines, to make something like an intervention, both in the choice of words, and also in the form of words ('a very penetrating form of training'), which links one association to putting bait on a fishhook (i.e. penetration) to the training.</p> <p>This is followed by some caution by Paula, interestingly showing some awareness of the tape-recording and hence the research, followed by a response from Bill (the Researcher), overtly concerned at the potential disruption of the core task of the group, and with hindsight, anxious about the research.</p> <p>Soon after, there is an intervention from Judi, who moves back to a more obvious mode of that core task.</p>
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**Table 7.1 – Transcript of an extract from Session 14  
Key Sticky Moment 14 – The Fishhook**

***The part of the session after the extract and leading up to the break***

Following the extract, it is as if Frances and Tom present alternative perspectives, Tom valuing events outside the course and the group (the Agency's Seminar Series, open to the local professional community), followed by Judi promoting a forthcoming talk by Bill as part of that series on the work of Bion, whilst Frances emphasises the importance of what is available here.

Frances then turns to having lost what she got from Judi (i.e. not being able to recall an insight that she had previously acquired through her learning from Judi in this group), but then to being able to find what she needed for herself outside,<sup>10</sup> in other words, being able to make a new sense of what she encounters without explicit reference to any content of the course.<sup>11</sup> Judi mentions research, and Paula then brings in material from a patient, as if to emphasise the importance of clinical work as well as the impact of case studies. Judi responds to Paula's difficulty with her patient in relation to her own (i.e. Paula's) need to write a case study by offering an approach that she, Judi, has used, which is to write the case study prior to asking permission to use it for purposes such as a membership application to a professional body. These two contributions, Paula's and Judi's, seem to raise anxiety in the group.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I will examine this further below. Prior to this, I am prepared to bet that the case in question involves the containment of negative transference or counter-transference. My confidence in being prepared to do this is because of my strong hunch that Frances, in both having got something almost certainly from the group yet seeming to find it elsewhere, may be reflecting dynamics of her clinical work such as her experience of her treatment by a patient in her relationship with this, the learning group. This is, I believe, an experience for the group of projective identification.

<sup>11</sup> With hindsight, this is also a clear symbolization of integration of learning.

<sup>12</sup> The sequence described in this paragraph is explored further as Example 7.1 on Page 212 in 'Analysis', below.

Nancy expresses empathy for colleagues in these situations. Paula shares her struggle with the issues, including her identification with patients. Bill and Tom talk about the various difficulties of making use of countertransference. Somehow the group gets into the issue of what patients know of what we know about them, Judi suggesting that they know that you know about them. Clinical concerns about patients reading notes as well as task issues in how to deal with situations where this is an issue are then discussed by the group.<sup>13</sup>

This part of the session concludes in a way that seems to suggest to the researcher that members of the group are skilled, and can apply this skill in work with real cases.

The Break involves the staff discussing wider issues connected with the course (including staff performance), in which they are involved as agency managers. A consequence of this focus is that Judi and Bill become relatively neglectful of their more immediate responsibility in other words, this learning group.

Changing voice briefly, as with incidents such as this elsewhere in the semester, I wonder if this lapse represents (perhaps at an unconscious level) a welcome diversion from a more difficult task that may actually feel impossible.

## ***ANALYSIS***

### ***More general points***

The start to the session seems challenging, with apparently strong feelings present. For example, there is a reported impact of the previous week (Session Thirteen), when Kelly had presented her work with a young boy whose future care arrangements were in some

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<sup>13</sup> This sequence too is explored below, as Example 7.2 on Page 221.

doubt. This was the first time that anyone, staff or student, had presented work with a child. Another aspect of the sense of challenge, with hindsight, may be a result of the group facing the task of understanding what had been proposed in this current session. Some of this may be due to Bill's clumsy instructions. Also, the group gets into a mode more representative of bringing the Semester to an end. One way of looking at either or both of these factors is that they in turn result from turbulent unconscious dynamics to do with ending. Bill wants to avoid it, so he doesn't help the group to finish well, and the group want to avoid it so they muddle their task and get caught up in clarifying that (or not) with Bill.

Changing voice, as I write now, I can see that these twin concerns, that of the clinical material and that of the group (including the tutors) and its task, intertwine in this session. The boy in Kelly's work was very anxious about his future, and discussing the material in the class the previous week seemed more than in any previous session to have had a major impact on the group and on individual members, evoking an identification of the members of the group with the boy client. At the same time, looking at the difficulty that the group seems to experience getting to the overt task in this session, it is as if the members of the group and the group as a whole are determined to begin to end the semester. One interpretation of this constellation is that the clinical material of the previous week has indeed engaged people in a way that has not happened before, both because of the nature of the material but also because the group has developed and people are becoming more engaged themselves, with each other, with the overt task, and with the implicit possibilities of such a situation. There is a welcoming of the learning (and some acceptance of the pain involved), but also a simultaneous hatred of the experience, as elaborated by Bion (1959, 1962a), and described in Chapter Two Part Two on Page 55. There is also a wish to avoid the grief



of the imminent ending. Ending in turn links back, through a kind of resonance, to the threatened impending loss of security for the boy with whom Kelly was working.

There are some issues raised so far that are worth highlighting. First, there is the impact of the previous session noted above. For example, Tom reported feeling identification with the child in the case, and Frances also noted (from a different perspective, that of clinician) that her professional response to a case that she was dealing with was very different following the discussion in the previous session.

Second, the timing of this session, coming as it does just before the end of the course, is highly significant. In one of the few works to explore structuring of the psychotherapeutic process, Cox (1988) argues persuasively that if we don't know when the end is, then we also don't know when just before the end is, a time when a great deal can happen therapeutically. In this case, we do know when the end is (and indeed, we are at just before when the end is), However, I am aware that we didn't make much acknowledgement of that together with the students. Whatever our responsibility or otherwise, this is a highly significant point in the course and the semester.

Third, the time available for the discussion (although, again, not well structured by the tutors) is six times longer than in previous sessions, and as I look now, I see this difference as a significant contributor to the depth of discussion and interaction that can be accomplished. In the latter part of this segment (the first half of the two hours), people are referring to some very deep phenomena, and connecting in a manner more typical of an established group-analytic therapy group (Foulkes, 1975) than that of a traditional learning group. The lead-up to Paula's utterance of the symbol is long and highly associative.

There is a process or rather a series of processes through this time, including what felt like a chain linking Veronica, Tom and Frances, followed by a flurry of interaction in which it isn't clear whether we're reviewing, complaining or merely longing. An analytic consideration of some aspects of these processes follows.

### ***The to-and-fro between levels or sites of experience***

It is interesting that the presentation of work with a child should have come at this point. This has made more vivid the to-and-fro between what is presented to the group in the form of clinical material and the task of understanding it, the more personal experience in and between sessions of individual members and of the group as a whole, and the themes that individuals must address as they undertake powerful learning which leads to developmental transitions. Laying these three foci alongside each other, that is 'clinical', 'group' and 'task', creates an opportunity for associative iteration between the three foci. I make use of this notion, below and elsewhere in the thesis, of what I have called here 'The Reference Locator' (see Table 7.2 on the next page). It reflects major elements that run through the thesis, *focus* and *metonymy*, in the sense that it is a device for focussing at one of a number of associated locations, and that there may be parallels (and hence, connections via contiguity) between associated locations.

<b>Clinical Experience (Clinical)</b>	<b>The Learning Group (Group)</b>	<b>The Task for Learners (Task)</b>
This is the level of the clinical work that is the subject of discussion, but also the ultimate aim of the teaching and learning, in that this is intended to develop the clinical work of the students.	This includes the subjective experience, conscious and unconscious, expressed and interpreted, of participants in the learning group (11 individuals), two obvious sub-groups (2 staff and 9 students), and the Group-As-A-Whole (1 group, 11 members).	This is the task of the semester and the course, to bring about learning by the students which leads them towards the learning outcomes for the course.
<b>Table 7.2 – The Reference Locator</b>		

I am calling this device a Reference Locator, in the sense that it offers a range of locations that may be pertinent at any time. In the case of the learning group, Clinical, Task and Group are three powerful foci, and as will become clear below, it is possible using them to track the shifts in focus during an episode of interaction.

Taking the example of Kelly's presentation in the previous session discussed above, it seems likely that the spontaneous interactions of a child with his therapist (the content of the 'Clinical' column on that occasion) then evoked more personal material within many of the students and in the learning group (the 'Group' column). Ideally the staff and the group can make use of reflections on this experience to accomplish the learning task (the 'Task' column). This can be accomplished in relation to the group (Group/Task), but also more directly by the students, in their work but reflected in their clinical discussion (Task/Clinical).

It is also possible to look at some of the sequences of this session through the lens of this device, the Reference Locator. These serve as examples of its use in the process of data analysis in research more generally, as well as its particular contribution to the understanding of this session.

**EXAMPLE 7.1** *(Taken from the description of events on Pages 214, above. The Code in brackets, that is Clinical, Task or Group, represents the researcher's decision as to the core focus in that particular statement or event): 'Frances then turns to having lost what she got from Judi (Group), but then to being able to find what she needed for herself outside (Task/Clinical). Judi mentions research (Task), and Paula then brings in material from a patient, to emphasise the importance of clinical work (Clinical), as well as the impact of case studies (Task). Judi responds to Paula's difficulty with her patient in relation to Paula's need to write a case study by offering her own solution, to write the case study prior to asking permission to use it for purposes such as a membership application to a professional body (Clinical/Task). These two contributions seem to raise anxiety in the group (Group)'.*

Changing voice, in this example, Frances seems symbolically to come towards Judi with the loss of what Judi said, yet also with her own success outside, and the focus is more on the latter than the former. I want to argue that on a level that is largely unconscious, this both protects Frances from feared and fantasised retaliation from Judi, whilst subtly erasing Judi in an attacking way.<sup>14</sup> In the interaction that follows this, between Paula and Judi, both are ostensibly focussing hard on Task and Clinical areas. I want to suggest that these two participants are managing something between them for the group, and so their interaction can be seen as falling in the Group focus. The tension is possibly that between, on the one hand, the risks of identifying closely with patients who are anxious about exposure (Task and Clinical foci collapsing into Group), and on the other, holding on to one's own professional self and identity as a psychotherapist,

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<sup>14</sup> This is very much like a clinical interpretation. It is based on what I experience both from participation and from observation, whilst making use of the epistemology I have described in Chapter Two Part Two. In particular, I am using an awareness of bi-logic and depths of layered experience (Matte-Blanco 1975, 1988) to imagine what may lay beneath the rational and ordered surface level of interaction. This interpretation, and much of what follows in relation to Examples 7.1 and 7.2 represent my evolving hypothesising about sequences of interaction.

for whom the writing of clinical accounts is an essential task (Task and Clinical Foci highlighted and Group obscured). The integration of the capacity to contain and manage this conflict is aided by the presence of the group matrix, and ideally becomes integrated within each participant (Task). The presence of the Group focus (which represents and stands for the sense of the therapist's presence in their work as an individual as well as a person socialized in their professional milieu) is important. Much of this importance is because the challenge represented by the conflict that Judi and Paula are carrying is a very personal one, yet the implications in terms of potential clinical skill and capacity are very great. Far from being a problem, the raising of anxiety in the group represents a potential opportunity to learn personally and hence professionally from addressing that anxiety by confronting it.

**EXAMPLE 7.2** *(Taken from the description of events on Page 215 above), 'Nancy feels empathy for colleagues in these situations (Group). Paula shares her struggle with the issues, including her identification with patients (Group/Clinical). Bill and Tom talk about the various difficulties of making use of countertransference (Task, but also potentially Group). Somehow the group gets into the issue of what patients know of what we know about them (Clinical, but also Group), Judi suggesting that they know that you know about them. Clinical concerns about patients reading notes as well as task issues in how to deal with situations where this is an issue are then discussed by the group (ostensibly Clinical and Task, but also importantly Group).'*

In this example, it is striking to me that the Group focus is powerfully present throughout this sequence of discussion and interaction, but usually not explicitly so. I believe that a core issue is the difficulty in speaking directly in the here-and-now of the session. Maybe this is particularly the case at this point because the atmosphere that has prevailed (or at least, that the tutors have sought to foster) throughout the semester, particularly the eschewal of supervisory or critical comment, and of a sense of a 'correct' way of doing things, has to give way to a return to the world outside, including

the importance of some feedback from tutors to students on how well or otherwise those students are doing in terms of their clinical performance.

This conflict about whether to speak up (assuming that one can find the required thoughts, feelings or words) captures a challenge that is central to psychotherapy. I am particularly aware in this example of having missed an opportunity to try and bring the focus of discussion into the group, where it could have been addressed more directly.

## ***INTERPRETATION***

In the course of this process of interpretation, I will lay out a series of elements, and will describe how these contribute to what I come to say.

## ***Developmental Issues***

A range of developmental issues for therapists in training challenge the participants in this semester, and there is evidence of their presence in people's minds in this session. Awareness of this comes from practice experience, but is also supported by group-analytic theory.

These include:

- the tension between dependence and independence;
- managing in the future without the support of the course;
- the challenge of integrating theory and practice on one's own;
- translating one's learning more in to practice;
- the tasks of ending (leaving, separating and individuating from the course);

a new beginning and attachment elsewhere (possibly with a transformed identity);

the need to withdraw transferences from the tutors, other students and the group.

An awareness of these issues provides a context and elements of a framework for the interpretive steps that follow.

### ***Group manifestations of these issues***

From the group-analytic perspective, *the group* (and events and processes within it) as a level of understanding has the potential both to serve as an expression of developmental issues (for both individuals and the group), and also to facilitate progress with, and where appropriate, resolution of those issues.

Throughout the course, the group is invaluable in dealing with issues including naivety; the need to face into, rather than run away from, difference and anxiety; and the understanding and management of projections. In this semester in particular, members also have to address the ending of their own participation in this group and the rest of the course, and very significantly, the ending of the group itself.

Together with the framework of the developmental issues, the group perspective can inform consideration of the images and commentary that follow next.

### ***Images in the work***

At this point in the data-analytic process, I am collecting some associations that occur to me in response to particular words and phrases, and which can function as building

blocks in constructing an interpretation of the events of the session, in a manner similar to the method of dream analysis referred to elsewhere in the thesis.

‘Bait’ to me evokes enticement, allure, a trap, being caught, but also being used as bait.

‘The fishhook’ evokes ‘hooked’ very intensely. In particular, I understand that if a fishhook pierces the flesh (of the fisher-man or -woman), then to try and remove it manually is doomed to fail, in that the hook can only become further embedded.

Regarding ‘showing’, this is contentious in this group. As tutors, we haven’t shown much *directly* (although a lot of what we have offered *indirectly* has, we believe, been of considerable benefit to many if not all of the students).

‘Longing’ seems to be an important part of what takes place. My associations go to wanting, hunger and thirst. Linked to this, I wonder if the question that contains the fishhook is actually a way of catching the staff, either catching their attention or catching them out.

### ***A commentary***

In this section, I am approaching the interaction in the session as a sequence, bringing in some of the perspectives I have outlined, as well as introducing some others as lenses through which to view aspects of the interaction.

This session seems very dense in terms of underlying dynamics, which suggests much condensation (Freud, 1915; Matte-Blanco, 1988; Rayner & Tuckett, 1988) is taking place. Partly this is because things are ‘hotting up’ as the end of the semester and of the course draws near.



The students seem to have difficulty grasping the task of the session, but at the same time, this is not clearly put back to them by the staff. Whilst the invitation to them is, ‘to bring forward questions that remain for them in terms of the issues that they raised at the beginning of the semester’, some find it hard to do this. Instead, they bring forward reflections of experiences and learnings in the course of the semester. Some seem to want answers from the tutors: others seem to want to bring and share experiences and reflections.

The question is revised a short way in to the session to *where do students find themselves as the semester and the course ends*. One possible answer seems to be *lost*. The use of case material is offered by one student (Kelly) as a remedy, with the practice of each student bringing a case ensuring that all are on a level, and that there is material each week. In turn, this gives a security that is different to that present when the course depends more on the tutors to teach. One student, however, reports having liked being taught, because she has so few cases to bring. With hindsight, I wonder if this is partly an expression of anxiety, disavowing her clinical experience in order to try and avoid painful personal and interpersonal learning on the course.

Judi talks at some length and with some openness about how she would approach gaining consent for the use of clinical material, that is, by writing the study first, and then asking the patient for permission to use the material. This is a complex intervention, on one level evoking responses suggesting views that a degree of manipulation would be involved (and indeed Nancy identifies with the apparently ‘coerced’ patient), and yet it is a creative solution to the intrusion to the work that can happen when the patient knows that they are being written about. This can potentially

destroy the work because of the disruption to the state of reverie that therapist and patient can co-create.<sup>15</sup>

Fear of exposure seems to be an issue, in all of this kind of work but particularly at this point. More that one person mentions the unease that talking about countertransference with a patient can engender. Whilst listening to the tape of the session, I felt moved to write about (and included in my notebook) an account of some of my own clinical work at that time with a patient who was overwhelmed with anxiety about being too much for me emotionally, and hence very ashamed. I know that I felt fearful in the first half of Session Fourteen, partly because I was about to present some of my work without any significant preparation (when drafting this segment, I mis-typed *presentation*, leading me to wonder whether unconsciously I was presenting, or hoping to present, my clinical work without making any significant disclosure, not least of myself). In this, I am, I think, reflecting something of the dynamics in the group in my response, which I see as countertransferential. By this I mean that I think that I was impacted by my anxiety in this session in the process of writing about it, in addition to the impact at the time. More substantively, I think my raised anxiety (experienced in these different ways) is in part a reflection of the raised anxiety of the other participants in the group.

Some of the concentration on these particular clinical and task foci may be an outlet for the difficulties of the experience in the group, difficulties, that is, for both students and staff. This too (as well as the world of clinical work) is somewhere where the students know that the staff know about them. Students will have fantasies about what the staff think about them, and what they say about them in private, and these will have varying degrees of accuracy in terms of correspondence with the experience and perspective of

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<sup>15</sup> This dilemma is discussed by Casement (1990, p.224). Judi's suggestion reflects his approach to this issue, and in a sense, so does the approach that I have adopted in the thesis.

the staff. The staff also know that the students know about them, and a similar mix of perspectives follows.

Arguably, as in clinical work, there is a challenge about when, what and how much one says about these phenomena. There is a tightrope between on the one hand merely ignoring the phenomena, and on the other hand saying too much and making an interpretation of a transference from a student or the group which is too direct, too clinical and basically inappropriate. The point of balance would seem to be where anxiety experienced by students is sufficient to be alerting, but not so great as to risk disabling fear of exposure and shame, or worse, actual evocation of that outcome. Achievement of this balance is indicated by a capacity for *comfortable-enough*<sup>16</sup> reflection

### ***The impossibility of the task***

Here I am moving to the first of a series of additional lenses on events and phenomena. Earlier in this chapter on Page 209, at the beginning of the description of the context of the session, I mentioned this issue, the impossibility of the task that is set for the group. This task is to some extent is a version of Freud's fundamental rule, mentioned in Chapter Four. As a reminder in his paper 'On Beginning the Treatment' Freud encourages (in his instruction to his patient) a lack of censoring and avoidance of concern with logic, summarised as:

So say whatever goes through your mind. Act as though, for instance, you were a traveller sitting next to the window of a railway carriage and describing to someone inside the carriage the changing views which you see outside. Finally, never forget that you have promised to be absolutely honest, and never leave

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<sup>16</sup> Here I am alluding to Winnicott's (1953, Page 53) notion of the *good-enough* mother, which is discussed at more length in Chapter Nine on Page 280. Briefly, Winnicott elaborated an image of mothering that includes the potential for both illusion and disillusionment, and that is successful not through perfection but sufficiency.

anything out because, for some reason or other, it is unpleasant to tell it. (1913/1958, p. 135).

Freud argues that this is something essential to psychoanalysis (in the sense that without such a determination the work becomes impossible). Haley (1963) examines how there are also paradoxical aspects to the invitation to say whatever comes into your mind, because it is impossible to do so, and how the invitation is effectively an induction, an example of the hypnotic ‘confusion technique’.

As researcher, I am interested that Bill offers an invitation as unclear as he does.

Subjectively and changing voice, I can recall anxiety going in to this and other sessions.

In this particular session, my anxiety was triggered partly by an absence of a clear structure agreed between Judi and me and a generally difficult countertransference.

In applying the approach based on Freud’s in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900/1953), I am seeking in what follows to construct interpretations that link together the understanding of the events under study, particularly informed by consideration of what is being unconsciously expressed and resolved.

### ***Enactment***

This is a second additional lens on the data. In this particular case, one way of seeing what takes place is that it represents unconscious expression and resolution of crucial issues during training. Hence, the fishhook is a symbol of a transference enactment of students towards staff, involving them as real people as well, and it is as if the group need to idealise the staff, and then crucify (or otherwise impale) them, but then for them to come back to life. This seems to be a group version of the dynamic Winnicott (1969) noted, in relation to the use of a mental object by an infant in early development, that

the infant needs *in phantasy* to both attack and to destroy the object, so that a representation of it can then be taken inside.

This characterisation of the unconscious life of the learning group, developed elsewhere but highlighted here by the opportunity to consider primitive aspects of individual and group mental life, illustrates well the array of possibilities for understanding the learning group and using it to promote learning.

### ***What does consideration of the reference locator reveal?***

We very much get to Task in this session. For the first time, the staff present and hence model not a carefully chosen sample of work in which the group gets to be the more exposed, but more a true sample of themselves working in their version of the tradition they are teaching, difficulties and all. This contribution is primarily Clinical. The staff also get to show more of themselves thinking and feeling in action, which are Group contributions. This sense of balance and integration, between the elements (Clinical, Group and Task), and also between the staff and the students in the group, seems to represent important integration taking place at individual and group levels by the end of the first half of this session.

### ***Underlying stories:***

(These ‘stories’ that follow here are threads of meaning that can be teased out of the condensation of dynamics that are present in this session, and which can be linked to the developmental challenges faced by participants in the group. They go further here than ‘Images in the work’, above, in which, for example, ‘bait’ was also included).

***Bait and fishhook***

At one level, the fishhook represents a challenge issued by Paula to Judi and Bill, questioning their position and even their authenticity. Where are they in the food chain?

***The teaching couple and their role in the resolution of developmental tasks***

Developmentally, children need for their parents to survive a series of attacks, both in actions and in phantasy, by the child on each of the parents and on the relationship between them. By extension of this psychoanalytic framework to the context of the group, there needs to be an individual and collective transition of this challenge by both staff and students: students need to be able to grapple with what they are being taught and by whom they are being taught it, and teachers need to be able to survive the challenge that is involved in that. In this context, with a couple of teachers, a man and woman, able to interact creatively with each other, there is the potential for much resolution of this challenge.

***Condensed roles***

Bill's last response of the extract, to Paula, comes from a condensation of his roles as researcher and tutor (and all of the echoes behind tutor, of course director, head of training, and so on). Training can promote the avoidance of multiple roles in various situations, but it can also develop the capacity for individuals to manage the multiplicity that inevitably occurs. Because there is available the group context, there is the opportunity for members to share and participate in engaging directly with this challenge.

### ***Punctuation of a developmental shift***

The way that this semester has been taught, and a key factor, is the avoidance of supervisory persecution, which has required a particular orientation towards the students which could be described as *part*-Rogerian or Self-Psychological. We now have to end, and enter the real world, and they want to know what we think of them. This seems to imply a discontinuity, a shift, an end to a kind of reverie. Maybe the sharp and piercing features of the fishhook are a kind of wakeup call to the group and the tutors in regard to the imminent ending of the course, a preparatory panic about being left under-resourced at the end.

### ***The question about mirroring***

There is a flurry of interaction around Ron's question early in the session. On reflection, I wonder if the staff's apparent choice to avoid a direct question may have been to avoid the discomfort of opening up a complex topic (actually taught previously by other tutors) unprepared. Also, interestingly given the theme of condensation in the session, the topic is an extremely dense symbol. It has relevance from a theoretical perspective, as an issue for the experience of everyone present here and now in this group, and as an issue for each individual member of the group (including the staff), as a person and as a psychotherapist, in considering aspects of their own psychological development. It seems clear that this question is sidestepped by Judi and Bill, and likely that this challenging density is the reason.

### ***Cueing and eruption***

I became aware, whilst keeping the Reference Locator and the Primary Task in mind, that I referred in my invitation to the students at the beginning of this session (see Page

210) to Session Eight (discussed in Chapter Six), as a model for how we might proceed now. Consciously, I was thinking (and seeking to remind the group) of an occasion when we departed from a typical format, and learned a lot together as a result. At the same time, I recognise that I may well be taken, consciously or otherwise, to be implying that I want the same kind of session, including intense emotional experience for some participants. In this sense (rather like the risk of ‘finding’ researcher-generated phenomena), I risk cuing or signalling for someone to oblige. This example highlights the importance of the expectations of the staff, both conscious and explicit as well as, in this case, less conscious.

***The case in a session as a play-within-a-play***

I am thinking here of ‘The Mousetrap’, the play-within-a-play in William Shakespeare’s play, ‘Hamlet’ (Thompson & Taylor, 2006). Hamlet’s aim in that situation is to embarrass and symbolically to trap his enemy (his Uncle Claudius, who has killed his own brother, Hamlet’s father), in front of the court. By making use of an indirect and polysemic form like an allegory, meanings can be brought together with experience in a way that is transformative. In a similar (but not an equivalent way), the clinical material brought to a session can evoke a particular experience at either or both individual and group levels, or may reflect one or more issues that need to be raised and addressed, or both. The device has all kinds of possibilities. In this approach (Post-Foulkesian Group-Analytic Ethnography), it is a site for consideration of the links between the Clinical, Task and Group Foci.



## **Summary of INTERPRETATION**

I will take the last device, *the play within a play*, to form a summary of the meanings that I have elaborated for the sticky moment, as a play within the wider play of the observable events of the session.

The baiting and display of the fishhook, and what emerges from the tear in the fabric of consciousness that it causes, capture layers of meaning. These layers include the challenge of development, personally and clinically, and the role of the group in the accomplishment of that development. They also include the achievement (or the lack of it) of a series of balances, between enactment and reflection, between comfort and learning, between a focus on the task of a group and a focus on the experience of being in the group, and between success and failure in the realisation of the potential of the learning group.

## ***Conclusion - findings, both methodological and substantive***

Methodologically, the analysis in this session (like those in Chapters Five and Six) is linked to a Sticky Moment, the emergence of a symbol which is rapidly recognised as extremely dense in meaning. As before, this is located and explored in a wider context. The ‘unpacking’ of a symbol is similar to the analysis in Chapter Six, and hence depends on participant observer responses to interaction. At the same time, the notion of the Reference Locator is introduced in this chapter, which enables a form of layered consideration. This is useful for untangling condensed threads of meaning, offering a series of meanings and of ways of thinking about the relationship between these.

Substantively, a range of aspects of this session have been highlighted, either directly from the text, or through the use of devices such as the Reference Locator as well as metaphor, allegory and metonymy. These aspects highlight both missed opportunities as well as clear examples of unexamined phenomena, but also demonstrate well the group in existence and in action, not least as a kind of *continuo*<sup>17</sup> to the more obvious Clinical and Task aspects of what is going on in the work of the Semester.

A table summarising the description, analysis and interpretation of data in this chapter is on the next page. As noted in the table, the predominant characteristic of the unconscious in this session would seem to be *condensation*. Both the symbol of *the fishhook* that emerges, the highly intense moment in the dialogue at which it emerges, and the wealth of associations and ideas that can be drawn from it seem to be excellent examples of one object standing for several associations or ideas.

My aims at the beginning of this chapter were as follows.

Methodologically, as in Chapter Six, the aim of this chapter was to conduct an exploration of a set of phenomena, extracting a set of themes by an impressionistic process, and then examining and transforming the material that can be generated from those themes.

Substantively, in this chapter I aimed to make use of an understanding of the unconscious phenomenon of *condensation*, with this understanding focussed on the context and events of the episode, and to illustrate how those contexts and events can be unpacked and rearranged, as in the psychoanalytic treatment of a dream. I have aimed to

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<sup>17</sup> In music, the bass line on which a keyboard player, accompanied by a bass stringed instrument, builds up a harmonic accompaniment.

show how this analysis of aspects of the material of the session highlights both potential opportunities for advancing the work of the semester, and also the realisation of that potential when some of these opportunities are taken.

In conclusion to this chapter, I believe that these aims have been met. Another exploration follows in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Seven A Discussion The Fishhook	Description	Analysis	Interpretation
<p>The title of this piece comes from a moment in the session when one member of the group compares getting patients to come more frequently to therapy to putting bait on a fishhook. (‘More frequently’ in this context means twice or more each week).</p> <p>The comparison, at face value, refers to the way that one has to witness and experience something like baiting a hook, rather than being told (or reading) how to do it. However, there are many layers of meaning <i>condensed</i> into this metaphor. <i>Condensation</i> predominates in the session (as a key characteristic of the unconscious).</p>	<p>This is the penultimate session of the semester and of the whole course. There is a different structure (discussion followed by a case presentation). The group is now more able than at the start of the semester to work in an associative way.</p> <p>People bring back strong feelings from the week before. There are reflections on the course, and the semester, and different preferences expressed.</p> <p>The image of the fishhook emerges in discussion. There are more differences named up to the break.</p> <p>In the break, the staff direct their attention away from the group to repairing the mistakes of others.</p> <p>The second half of the session involves a case presentation by one of the tutors.</p>	<p>There is an impact of the case from last week.</p> <p>There are dynamics around ending, generated by the timing of this session, which contribute to avoidance.</p> <p>There is an intertwining of Task, Group and Clinical foci, and a Reference Locator is elaborated.</p> <p>Associative capacity has grown, as has ability to go to and fro between sites and levels. There is more room than usual in this session for these capacities to be used.</p> <p>Two examples are given. There are: Developmental Issues and Group Issues.</p> <p>The impossibility of the primary task is considered.</p>	<p>Because interpretation is relatively missing from the session, there is enactment.</p> <p>There is an increasing fullness of portrayals.</p> <p>Underlying stories include: The play-within-a-play, The teaching couple, Developmental roles, Condensed roles, Punctuation of a developmental shift, Ron’s question, Cueing and eruption. All the issues and dynamics contained in these stories are managed.</p> <p>The students are hooked, and leaving is going to be painful, and there is anxiety that it may be destructive.</p> <p>Avoidance is overwhelming and the staff do not address it, leading to the outcome in Session Fifteen (discussed in Chapter Nine).</p>

**Table 7.3**

**A summary of description, analysis and interpretation of data in Chapter Seven.**

## Chapter Eight

### A Consulting Break (The Scrap - Session Eleven)

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In which the tutors come to represent and experience, by displacement, issues otherwise barely articulated in the learning group, via the totality of their interaction and discussion in the break.

The Transcript of the Consulting Break in Session Eleven is included in this chapter on Pages 242 to 251, and is referred to throughout the chapter.

#### ***Important note***

(Changing voice for integrity of meaning,) I am writing about myself and my colleague and what happens between us in an unguarded conversation in a backstage area. As such, I take sole and full responsibility for my representation of events, which is just that, my representation. What is due to my colleague is enormous respect and gratitude for the experience of working together that we have, and the learning that I am privileged to accomplish as a result.

#### ***Introduction***

This Session, Session Eleven, follows next in sequence after the one that contains ‘A Beginning’ (Up-Bringing - Session Ten), which is discussed in Chapter Five. In Session Ten, some members of the group began for the first time to talk about difficulties in the experience of learning on the course as a whole. It is arguable that one way they have previously displayed these difficulties is by acting them out.<sup>1</sup> This is not to overlook the

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in previous Chapters, according to Rycroft, (in clinical psychoanalysis) “a patient is said to be ‘acting out’ if he engages in activity which can be interpreted as a substitute for remembering past events. The essence of the concept is the replacement of thought by action and it implies that either (a) the impulse being acted out has never acquired verbal representation, or (b) that the impulse is too intense to be dischargeable in words, or (c) that the patient lacks the capacity for inhibition” (1968, p. 1).

importance of the episode in Session Eight (The Eruption), which is discussed in Chapter Six, but the Group vertex of the reference locator (see Table 7.2 on Page 219) is more to the fore in Session Eleven. This may sound paradoxical, given that the focus in this chapter is on the break, when the group are absent, but the chapter is an exploration of how the experience of the break can represent the experience of the session and hence the group as a key part of the session.<sup>2</sup> This exploration is particularly focussed on the break, and its relationship with the rest of the session and the group. *The break* refers to the 10-minute period in the middle of the teaching session when the student members of the group have refreshments in the teaching room, whilst the tutors withdraw to another room for a private discussion.

### ***Theoretical and philosophical framing of the thesis***

Again, as in previous data-analytic chapters, it is important to articulate and to keep in mind the rationale behind both how I am investigating, and what I am finding. In doing so, I aim to make clear my methodology, and also to justify my conclusions. In this chapter, I am depending particularly on *the analysis of researcher countertransference* as well as *bi-logical depth*, discussed in Chapters Two Part Two and Three. The former is a source of intentions in, and reactions and responses to, experience in the session and in recalling and analysing it, and enables my capacity to see beneath the surface of interaction. The latter is a way of making sense of the dynamics beneath the surface of interaction, and in particular to recognise, to understand and to utilise phenomena such as the extensive unconscious *displacement* that is evident in this episode.

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<sup>2</sup> An appreciation of metonymy (see the Preface, Page xiii) helps understand these steps, from *break* to *session* to *group*.

### ***The aims of this chapter***

My methodological aim in this chapter is to conduct and elaborate the investigation of a set of processes, those of the learning group, by using an allied experience, consideration of the interaction between the tutors in the break, as an example of the unconscious phenomenon of displacement.

My substantive aim is to detail what is revealed by this methodology, which includes a reconstruction and appreciation by the tutors of the world of the students and the group. This is argued to be central to the work of the semester, in that this process is a core element of the learning group.

Almost inevitably as a result of the structure of this episode (as a displaced element of the interaction which is the original focus of the study, the learning group), and as a result of the theory used, but also in terms of the processes that are exemplified, I want to argue that the predominant characteristic of the unconscious in the material of this chapter is *displacement*.<sup>3</sup>

## ***DESCRIPTION AND SOME ANALYSIS***

### ***A summary of the session before the break***

The session opens with the group re-convening after a two-week mid-semester interlude of not meeting, two-thirds of the way through this final semester. Only six of the nine members of the class are present together with the two tutors when the session starts. The remaining three members arrive late and join the group during the discussion.

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Two Part Two, Page 85 for an account of the significance of this characterisation, made in each of these five synchronic analyses, of the episode considered in this chapter as showing a predominance of one of Freud's (1915) characteristics of the unconscious. The aim is not to reduce the richness of the particular episode, but rather merely to highlight a key aspect of the unconscious in operation. The capacity to recognise these phenomena is a key feature of this epistemology.

There is some discussion of how people spent their break. One member has returned from overseas, and there is discussion of the relative cost of being there, and the presence locally of tourists who have resources far in excess of their local hosts. This part of the discussion ends with the idea of revolution.

Then, one member is asked how she is and gives a long and detailed answer, including an account of a health crisis experienced in a remote location. Next follows discussion about the non-arrival of the last member, whose lateness cannot be solely excused by the weather and the traffic, as a colleague from the same work location is present. The member with the health crisis also talks about issues of their professional identity, including a range of responses by authorities to their work.

The group are offered the topic of a forthcoming national conference to be held locally. One of the tutors suggests moving on, but then recalls two items of business, one a controversial proposal for a community meeting, the other a graduation event. The tutor is asked by one member to confirm the date of the graduation event.

The group then read the transcript for 10 minutes.

Next, as is usual, in the section up to the break the group discuss the material presented but without the participation of the presenter or any identifying details, ‘playing’<sup>4</sup> with the material provided, trying to guess gender, age, occupation, diagnosis etc. The picture that emerges is of a woman in her thirties with concerns about identity. Prior to the break, the group (with the help of the tutors) have elaborated a picture of someone

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<sup>4</sup> As explained elsewhere, *playing* in this context refers to the process of the group responding associatively to a written account of the presenter’s clinical work.



quite lost, with considerable emotional ability yet in touch with a disturbed inner world. She has just returned from a trip overseas to her country of origin.

***The break – a verbatim transcript with commentary***

The analysis of the break itself continues in the section that follows the one after this ('A summary of the events of the break from the transcript'). Here, as at this point in Chapter Five, I am including a transcript of the audiotape recording of the break, together with some brief comments from me close to the surface of the utterances of speakers. Epistemologically, these comments are, on one the one hand, simply my own responses and associations, a mix of reactions at the time of the events and those since during data analysis. On the other hand, within the methodology, as within ways of working that privilege participant-observer subjectivity (e.g. Ogden, 1994), these comments are also data, rather like the 'intersubjective clinical facts' of the sub-title of Ogden's paper. As in the other chapters, particularly Chapter Five which has a similar amount of transcript material with comments, they also represent an opportunity to demonstrate the application of theory. The transcript follows on the next page.

Transcript of the break in Session 11	Researcher's Commentary on elements of the transcript
<p><b>10 Minute Break begins</b></p> <p><i>Judi</i> It's cold isn't it.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Takes me back to my youth</p> <p><i>Judi</i> What?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> My mum had all kinds of furniture like this.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> My parents always had plain furniture, they were much more hard up so they couldn't afford it, so they got this ghastly stuff, ... anyway.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> It's interesting being back.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> I think the group is quite good.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yeah.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> I think it's gelling quite well, they're working quite well.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yeah.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yeah, that was an interesting thing about the autistic contiguous, I think, you know it has got that feel, and they're sort of more concerned for each other somehow. Do you feel that?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yeah, yeah that's right and I thought the reaction to having a community meeting is very much about sort of, "let's stay together" (i.e. not mixing with the other group).</p>	<p>I'm aware of making a regressive association, veiled by the formality. Also, I haven't replied directly to what Judi said. From clinical wisdom, first words are important, often conveying intense pent-up feeling, and to begin the break like this seems indicative of underlying conflict and other bi-logical depth.</p> <p>I note that Judi somehow trumps what I might say, whilst also conveying abhorrence of the physical conditions of her up-bringing</p> <p>I'm trying to focus here, by orienting us in time, to here and now, where we have the chance to reflect on our immediately previous teaching experience, and where we have just returned from a break.</p> <p>In the class, I have made a teaching point about Ogden's (1989) autistic-contiguous position. We are trying here to recognise the developmental level at which the group are operating – this can alternate between Klein's (1946) (more primitive) Paranoid-Schizoid and (more mature) Depressive positions, to which Ogden (1999) has added a level even more primitive than Klein's Paranoid-Schizoid, the Autistic Contiguous position. Ironically, the group seem to be operating at a level that seems more depressive</p>

<p><i>Judi</i> Yeah, maybe more maturely, I know I wouldn't want community meetings if I was in their shoes. What's the point of having it?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Because it seemed to make a difference in this group and in the other group as well.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> But if they don't want one I wouldn't go with it.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> No, no, I'm not interested, I want to find out.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Because I think at this stage you do something they don't want.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Well I've done plenty of that this year. I'm just following through that's all, it's just something we did say we would think about doing it again.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> But they're sort of maturing as a group, you know as a group. I suppose they're beginning to think more as a group. (inaudible) but they just seem to me, it's good to see most of them here today.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yes, there's only (student) missing and I'm sure there's a good reason.</p>	<p>(actually more sophisticated, showing concern for each other). Perhaps the important thing about the estimation of where the group are at is that they have the capacity to understand and to recognise from experience when they are in the autistic contiguous position (and hence also have another position from which to make this recognition) and when they are not.</p> <p>Judi identifies with the students and their opposition to the community meeting. Thinking about the conflict between us, over whether the group are being mature or primitive, and whether they need understanding or challenge, these are very much issues in clinical therapeutic work (for which we are preparing the students), and for the students as people in clinical training. We are almost certainly reflecting (Searles, 1955) and hence representing dilemmas that are present in the discussion with the students, but which cannot apparently be easily be expressed there.</p> <p>I sense that the 'not' in this sentence is a parapraxis. This is an example of the informative value of a mistake. I wonder if I'm both trying to avoid conflict with Judi (hence the 'not') whilst retaining and pursuing my own interests.</p> <p>I'm becoming frustrated. I think that a lot of my frustration is because the decision to think again about a proposed community meeting has been taken at a meeting that Judi failed to attend. Is she somehow standing for the students in my mind, with whom (as Course Director and Head of Training) I have a complex and tense relationship? Here I am wondering if the relationship between Judi and me has become a focus, through a kind of parallel process (Searles, 1955) for the experience of the dynamics of this other relationship, as well as of other relationships besides.</p>
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<p><i>Judi</i> Yes she's a really valuable woman. I thought it was good that B wrote that list.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yes it's helpful isn't it?</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yeah I said to her immediately when I saw that, “Great, let’s do that because it makes it much easier”.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Well she's, I think it's through getting involved in events and things but I’m getting much more of a sense that she's supporting what's going on.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes she is. * (see * in adjacent column)</p> <p><i>Bill</i> *</p> <p><i>Judi</i> *</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yeah that's right. But it feels like we're actually getting a service from her, she's thinking like what needs to be done, what would help them.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Well you see R hasn't been here and T isn't around, she's very nervous of T. So ... she might be more nervous with men than women, you know. So she's quite good because they were all bossing me around.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Sorry?</p> <p><i>Judi</i> They were bossing me around, other women boss other women around.</p>	<p>There’s a quality of <i>non sequitur</i> here. I’ve idealised a man (one of the students, as it happens my supervisee), Judi a woman (an administrator at the Centre),</p> <p>A woman who supports what’s going on.</p> <p>Judi is talking here as a manager of the agency, the Acting Director. She’s changed role.</p> <p><b>* <i>The text at these points, which does not have a significant bearing on the research, has been deleted from this copy of the transcript for reasons of privacy.</i></b></p> <p>I think Judi is trying to say that the arrival of a new staff member has protected her from bullying by the female administrative staff, who are afraid of men but not when they are absent, as they are now. Reflecting at bi-logical depth, Judi is also probably telling me that she’s nervous with me.</p>
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<p><i>Bill</i> I thought you could do the same thing and then you could boss her around.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes but, yes but. Just on tomorrow I just need to do a bit of thinking about it, I'm not sure I understand it, but I'll still not convinced about this therapy once a week, not convinced about like the work of it. I'm not convinced about, in terms of the cost structuring analysis in terms of the intakes that we get and nor of it's ... , in a way it almost trivialises something rather than ...</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Well psycho therapy [sic] trainings elsewhere, you know, you start therapy before you start training don't you?</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes, I'm not sure whether this is a psycho therapy training or ...</p> <p><i>Bill</i> It's part of the training for particularly for mental health professionals and as such it, ... lets talk about it in the meeting.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes let's talk about it then, I just thought I would mention it to you. I'm not convinced about it that's all and I think you should maybe use this years intake as a sort of a pilot in a sense to see what ...</p> <p><i>Bill</i> I mean we could write, I don't have to put the paper in until next Monday, we can write it in a different way.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> I think we should not write it in too particular a way. Lets talk about it tomorrow yeah that's what I feel.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Let's talk about it tomorrow. Yeah. That's one of the things with this group isn't it, particularly (student) and (student) haven't been near therapy and nobody has tackled them about it.</p> <p><i>Judi</i></p>	<p>I'm being facetious and patronising. I think it's because I feel attacked over the community meeting, and Judi's attempt to do something that feels like denying reality. Effectively, I'm retaliating by not taking on Judi's experience or concern.</p> <p>I hear that I'm trivialising something.</p> <p>I escalate my patronisation.</p> <p>I begin to think, "Why are we having this conversation?" Or perhaps, why am I.</p> <p>Backing down.</p> <p>Conceding.</p> <p>I shift the focus to the group, hanging on to my point of view about the course. I'm aware of changing position around here (i.e. role).</p>
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<p>No they haven't. But it's very vague in the group because they all now (inaudible).</p> <p>[End of side A]</p> <p><i>Judi</i> I think they're in the wrong, there, I mean they need to do more about that, but we're offering more service to community professionals, psychologists, nurses and things, we shouldn't be stuck with that.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> But it might then be more important in a way. Yeah. Anyway. With these guys I mean I agree I think I worry they are a bit quieter, I don't know if I'm ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i> No I think it's going well.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> It feels like a good pace really.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes it is we're exactly half way through sort of, is that what you mean by pace or just the feeling of.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yeah the pace of the discussion you know.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> It's hard to, you know I sometimes feel I talk too much ...</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Hmmm.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> ... I think I do and in a way it's now their stuff isn't it they have to do the work haven't they, we do less now they need to be able to.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yes, I'm aware of holding back.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> That's right yeah and it's hard just, but I think you're doing really well.</p>	<p>I am only now expressing my concern about the group, away from Judi's need to say how well it's going.</p> <p>Judi seems anxious too.</p> <p>There is a symmetry about this statement</p>
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<p><i>Bill</i> Yeah oh thank you. It's easy to feel anxious isn't it like I should do something, I should add something.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes I know, whereas I often feel that I hear myself talking and then I shut up and there's a silence and I think oh my God. So it's hard to get it ..., it's hard not to project our own anxieties into the group.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yeah. I was interested in Heidi coming in in her shorts and ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i> She's quite umm, and the stuff she said about her holiday, "Yeah great time", you know something's slightly not connected about her, she doesn't ... it's like anger or something.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Well yeah, and I what I was trying to say when I thought she was away for two weeks and it ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i> I interrupted you there but I just ...</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Well I actually missed her, but I think she experiences me as persecutory, "You can arrest me".</p> <p><i>Judi</i> That's why I, yes, yes,</p> <p><i>Bill</i> You rescued her!</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes. Yes she does, I think she experiences men as persecutory and I just didn't want, I suppose perhaps I shouldn't have rescued her, do you think I did the wrong thing?</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Oh no, no no, I noticed that you did, in a way it was probably ... between us it's like</p>	<p>and the next. I wonder if we are going through a process of re-alignment, having cleared and expressed some considerable tension between us, having faced an anxiety together. (Here, I am focussing on the dimensions of the heuristic, connection, difference and bi-logical depth (see Page 85). I'm suggesting that the process between us has led to some disconnection as a result of differences of opinion and perspective, which is now resolving. This resolution may be responsible for the symmetrisation).</p> <p>I think that Judi feels persecuted by me.(Here I am using the plasticity of person available if Matte-Blanco's (1975, 1988) bi-logic is applied)</p> <p>My three 'no's' suggest that at least one if not all should be a 'yes'. Our eschewal of</p>
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you know she's going to get sort of sympathetically thought about you know, but I was really I was concerned, I nearly wrote to her you know, I'm very conscious with the tape recorder she said how difficult she found it, you know that it silenced her, she tends to be silent in the discussions.

*Judi*

I don't agree that the tape recorder silenced her I think that's again sort of an enactment.

*Bill*

Well, it's like, it's my penis, isn't it, I'm waving that around.

*Judi*

Possibly yes that's right, absolutely.

*Bill*

Sticking it in everywhere I possibly can.

*Judi* She would probably yes. But also she's, I mean with a man if you want to look at it that way she would find something to complain about. You know you'd be dominating or persecuting her in some way.

*Bill*

Yeah if I didn't have a tape recorder it would be because I wasn't tape recording and therefore didn't care about what happened.

*Judi*

Yeah, yeah so it's just an excuse. You haven't bought the china cups they're white cups. Yeah she's somehow cathected to me, which is again a defensive sort of arrangement.

*Bill*

But it's good that she's kind of connected to someone.

*Judi*

At least she's done that, at least she's done that, yes. Yes oh well. The other thing is

criticism or supervisory remarks when working with the students and their clinical material can make it hard to be more direct in this current setting of the break. I wonder if this concern with Heidi is a delayed attempt to think about the previous week (i.e. Session 8, discussed in Chapter Five). On reading the transcript of Session 8, it looks fairly innocuous, whereas perhaps it had a primitive quality that we have yet to understand. I wonder if it did represent a communication on behalf of the group.

I certainly seem to be waving it around here. (Here, I am not seeking to be exhibitionistic, but rather to capture a non-rational experience. I am thinking symbolically, so the tape recorder may be experienced at an unconscious level as a symbol of my power, which I have inserted into the experience of the semester. Also, I wonder if I am unconsciously alluding to my experience in this current interaction, where I may (and with hindsight, do) feel that I am being experienced and construed as dominating).

Interesting. Is this move to the conflicted



<p>I'll mention before the meeting tomorrow that I'm not for these sandwiches again.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Well did you read the email?</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Yes.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yeah, good. Yeah I've just brought it back.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> But you've said there's an agreement about it.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Well we have made an agreement.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Obviously I wasn't there.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> You probably weren't. We agreed we'd try it once but I haven't actually done anything about it yet.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Well I wouldn't try it once I don't think it's worth trying once. I wonder about your anxiety in relation to S and Q (Reflective Group conductors).</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Oh they, I mean the difficulty, we just get backed up a bit it's hard trying to sort of contain all of the processes that go on in that meeting, which, many of which are kind of reflections of what's going on in the different groups.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Well they may be, but I think a lot of the stuff with S and Q is a reflection of their wish to be part of (The Centre), and to make sure that they are seen to be that. You probably don't agree with that.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> I don't have the history with Q but, no I think it's them possibly being overwhelmed by their identification with</p>	<p>and densely symbolic issue of the sandwiches revenge for my criticising Judi about rescuing Heidi? (Here, I'm reflecting on the fact that Judi has on a rational level, i.e. at Matte-Blanco's (1975) Stratum One, merely taken the chance to raise an administrative issue concerning the course, whilst on another level (Stratum Two and below) she has gone to another issue (in addition to the question of a community meeting about which we disagreed above) external to the group we are with, and that is the focus of considerable conflict amongst the staff (including between she and I), and which is the focus of struggles about ideology and identity as psychoanalytic psychotherapists).</p> <p><u>Probably</u> in response to <u>obviously</u>: who is in denial now? I wonder if this interpretation of my anxiety is actually a defensive response.</p> <p>Here and in my response, we are representing between us what can be seen as a dilemma between pursuing either an <i>individual</i> or a <i>group</i> perspective.</p> <p>I'm incoherent here – perhaps reaching out for Lacan's 'Le Nom du Père'. (Here, I'm drawing on Lacan's concept of the name</p>
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<p>their groups, that's more ... , but what I've appreciated from R which I guess he will still be around in that meeting which is helpful.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> He will be but he can't be there tomorrow.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> No ok but it's like nobody else much seems to sort of think about the group and sort of containing it.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> They feel a bit lost.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Yeah. I don't know if you've ever been in this position but if you're directing courses</p> <p><i>Judi</i> No.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> ... the transferences and projections that you get are so intense, I mean far worse than you get in therapy, therapy is a picnic compared to running courses.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> No, no I think you are right I think you're holding an awful lot, ...</p> <p><i>Bill</i> And I'm not ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i> ... so I wouldn't actually necessarily think you need to satisfy everything.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Oh no, no I don't, no, but equally I do need to listen and open up to people and take things on, and at least R's been in the position so he's quite helpful at sort of.</p> <p><i>Judi</i></p>	<p>of the father, which he juxtaposed playfully with <i>Le Non du Père</i>, the No of the father, representing the father's role, through his prohibition of Oedipal impulses in the creation of the Symbolic Order (Lacan, 1981)</p> <p>I wonder who is lost. Here I am assuming bi-logical depth in interpreting this remark, and hence blurring the person of the statement. I am wondering if Judi feels (and indeed I do feel) a bit lost in this conversation.</p> <p>I know she hasn't. I've gone back to being patronising.</p> <p>I have in mind what I'm having to deal with right now. It is striking here, and perhaps an illustration of the unconscious at work, that I or we don't reflect on the experience that we're having right here and now (as we are trying to model and hence to teach the students to do).</p> <p>R, where are you?</p>
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<p>I'm finding a lot of stuff is coming towards me at the moment.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> Same sort of thing. Mad, mad stuff.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> Completely mad.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> It's almost like it's not as continuous as in therapy, in therapy like every move you make you know you can actually ...</p> <p><i>Judi</i> No you can't, you can't anticipate it.</p> <p><i>Bill</i> No you can be a colleague, you can be quite chummy with people and then sort of suddenly you get kind of whoosh, impaled by something.</p> <p><i>Judi</i> I know, I know it's absolutely amazing.</p>	<p>You don't say. Judi is referring here, I think, to her role as Acting Director of the agency. She's changed level.</p> <p>What was I going to say?</p> <p>Hmm! (Here I am reflecting with irony that I am describing what can happen without apparent acknowledgement or even awareness that this dynamic has, I believe, been present between us at various points in this break, including the present moment.</p> <p>Saved by the bell. <b>(BREAK ENDS)</b></p>
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### ***A summary of the session after the break***

From the end of the break and up to the denouement,<sup>5</sup> the group reflect back the themes of *going overseas* and *feeling tired* from their break, in other words, from the students' discussion in the absence of the tutors. In the text that follows, Bill notes at one point (in relation to the presenter's patient), "It's almost like ... she has allowed her therapist into her inner world but she can't connect her inner world with the world outside". The picture that eventually emerges is of an unhappy and possibly histrionic woman

<sup>5</sup> I am using denouement here to describe the part of each week's teaching session when the presenter reveals if not all, then the core issues in relation to their work with the patient that they have brought for discussion that week, which have been withheld from the discussion in the session until this point.

engaging in a series of affairs via the internet in an attempt to resolve the consequences of sexual abuse in childhood.

In the discussion, the presenter is able to recognise that she has identified extensively with the patient. She also reflects that the exercise of having to present her work has caused her to face the extent to which she has absorbed her patient's anxiety about being seen, and the shame that is never far away as a result.<sup>6</sup>

### ***A summary of the events of the break from the transcript***

What follows here is a summary of the events in the 'Transcript of the Break in Session Eleven', reproduced above.

(It may help the reader here to refer directly to the transcript reproduced above whilst reading what follows). On the first page of the transcript (Page 242), Bill enters the conversation obliquely (not replying to Judi's opening remark), and then, when apparently 'trumped' by Judi in terms of her childhood adversity being worse than his, moves to consideration of the group. Judi appears keen to say that the group is going well. She then moves to the topic of a proposed Community Meeting for the course (to include this group, the next intake of students, and all staff), and is insistent against this, with Bill defending the proposal, but indirectly. Half way down Page 243, Bill utters what appears to be a parapraxis, "No, no, I'm *not [sic]* interested, I want to find out".

(Change of voice and position, in order to convey personal reflection) My thought about this parapraxis now is that this represents Bill's ambivalence. I also believe that this representation is over-determined, having many layers of origin. One layer of this is Bill being both interested and not interested in what the students (and indeed staff) think and feel about the proposal for a meeting, being fearful perhaps of knowing something and taking authority. Another layer is the fear of conflict with Judi.

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<sup>6</sup> This summary paragraph is concise, and almost certainly does not convey that the second half of the session seems to be the conclusion of some highly effective work by the group, the students and the staff.

From the bottom of Page 243 onwards, Bill and Judi seem to part company even further, as if trying to communicate via a bad telephone connection, with Bill valuing a male student and Judi the new receptionist. After some agreement, Judi moves the focus to her anxieties about management of the receptionist (a recently new role for her, and as a management responsibility in the Centre, an issue external to this setting).

(Change of voice and position) As I read down to page 246 now, I recall my growing frustration experienced in relation to Judi questioning a decision taken at a course staff meeting at which she was not present, particularly a decision that attempts to address community dynamics. I now wonder whether, here in 'myself and Judi', Judi can represent for me 'the students', who can arouse my frustration with what feels like unconscious resistance<sup>7</sup> to the work in hand. By 'myself and the students', I am referring to the picture of relationship between myself on the one hand, and the 'student body' (not necessarily including Judi) on the other. Therefore, my concern is that Judi and I may variously take on the role of either party in this interaction. I can and do play complementary roles for her too.

Bill is dismissive of Judi's anxiety on Page 245 (suggesting rather facetiously that the remedy for being bullied by the administration staff is to bully them back). Judi moves<sup>8</sup> to another anxiety, again in a different role,<sup>9</sup> although this time as Acting Director in relationship (that is, as his manager) to Bill and his plans as Head of Training. These plans concern training and the structuring of the new post-graduate course to replace this one. This interaction ends with some conciliatory remarks by both Bill and Judi, agreeing to consider the issues carefully. Bill then brings the focus back to the group in hand, but mainly to re-make his point in relation to the disagreement.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> I am taking phenomena such as persistent lateness, the prevalence of the taking of a dependent position as a learner, and apparent losing or forgetting of important learning as possible signs of unconscious resistance, in this case to learning.

<sup>8</sup> Another example of the tendency noted above for both Judi and Bill to make frequent moves of topic.

<sup>9</sup> This shift is apparently to another difference in another setting. This would seem to be a manifestation of displacement, and may well be a result of our difficulty of addressing directly difference between us in this setting.

<sup>10</sup> Down to this point in the transcript (page 246), one view is that a power struggle has been going on between Judi and Bill. This is discussed further below, in 'Interpretation'.

As noted in the introduction, this run of dialogue has potentially very great depth of structure, and encompasses many of Foulkes's Levels (1964) and Matte-Blanco's Strata (Rayner, 1995). As an example, when Judi is talking about the receptionists, she is talking about potentially traumatic anxiety in relation to work. This can be read, with an understanding of bi-logic as *Women are afraid of The Director/men/so, you, and I'm afraid of them/so* by extension, *I am afraid of you*. Subsequently, Judi talks about trivialising something, as indeed I think Bill is. Both Bill and Judi escalate their dismissal of each other's concerns. Here, I believe that part of what is happening is that we are, in various ways, representing dynamics and conflicts between us, without much conscious awareness, or any agreement that we try and process rather than re-act to what we are experiencing.

This is a vignette of a woman frightened of a man, and experiencing difficulty getting that feeling of fear heard. On Page 245, Bill is trying to postpone the issue until later ("Let's talk about it in the meeting"). This can be seen as both avoiding conflict as well as potentially containing it. This vignette is considered in more detail below, in 'More Analysis' under 'Displacement and Projection' on Page 261.

On Pages 245 and 246, Bill tries to get discussion of his anxiety about this group into this room now, in particular that two of the students have not had any therapy.<sup>11</sup> The theme of the intervention (again, derived by blurring the subject and object of the verb) is that *no one has tackled someone*.

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<sup>11</sup> Therapy here refers to the personal psychotherapy that the students are now required to undertake as part of the course and a typical requirement in psychoanalytic psychotherapy training. My recall is that this had been an issue of concern to many involved with the course, and was divisive amongst the course staff, some supporting Bill and some not. It was of particular concern to the facilitator Q, who was facing the approach of the end of the course and the group, and the issue of how that may leave two of the students. Incidentally, I also recall that at this point Bill and Judi have very different ideas (although these are not explored in detail) about which two students are of concern to Q.

On Page 246, Bill again appears to be trying hard to raise his concern about this group, now (i.e. this particular Semester 4 group, in this teaching session), rather than diverting to other groups and times. This seems to be very rapidly halted by Judi, but then used by her soon after to express her own concern.<sup>12</sup>

Judi does hold the focus, though, on her own anxiety with her teaching and the fear that she talks too much. This bravely raises an edge of shame. It seems difficult for Bill and Judi to recognise explicitly that these feelings may well be in part the result of countertransference to the teaching, involving the same affective experience (i.e. a fear of talking too much and of shame at doing that) but for a different reason (because these feelings are effectively those of the students, but experienced by the tutor so that they can potentially be understood and offered back in a form where they can be taken in). The absence of a fuller recognition (and possibly, exploration) of the dynamics at the time represents one of a number of missed opportunities.

On Pages 246 and 247, There is a process of symmetry, leading from Judi's offering that Bill is doing really well, to Bill's confession of anxiety of not doing enough for the group, to Judi's confession of the difficulty of not projecting her anxiety into the group. It may be that the symmetrisation is a partly unconscious attempt *to build and hold rapport in the face of pressures that are otherwise competitive*. This is rather like a verbal equivalent of the way that the non-verbal behaviour of two participants in a conversation can be mirroring, with each taking on the posture and gesture of the other.

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<sup>12</sup> I think this is a clear example of a group-related process, in that the capacity to voice anxiety has a strong social determinant.

Following this, on Page 247, Bill is able to raise his anxiety about a student's presentation. There is a concern that the feared relationship between Bill and the student is being re-cast between Bill and Judi, as occurred previously above in the case of the relationship between Bill and The Students.<sup>1314</sup>

Returning to the transcript, on Page 247, Judi seems to be experiencing persecution by Bill at that point. On Pages 247 and 248, Bill and to some extent Judi engage in some 'wild analysis' about the student. Importantly, this ends on Page 248 with Bill's letting go of the anxiety, by finding a positive frame for things. Judi is helpful in challenging Bill's potential identification with the role of persecutor to a student, hence enabling Bill to challenge this too. This can be seen as an example of Bion's (1970) notion of containment in action, with Judi containing Bill's anxiety.

At the end of that segment of dialogue (on Page 248), Judi acknowledges the student's cathexis to (or psychological investment in) her, albeit defensively. Bill jokingly diminishes the role that Judi plays in that. His response seems quite possibly over-determined, arising both from an empathy with Judi's unease as well as a resentment of her more idealised and hence superficially easier relationship with the student.

Discussion about 'The Sandwiches' which follows on Page 249 refers to the question of whether the course should provide food for the students between the teaching session and the Reflective Group. This group is the first to have a pattern of teaching as extensive as this, and to have a significant emotional experience (the Reflective Group) in addition to an already full evening of teaching and learning following a full day's

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<sup>13</sup> As an aside, this raises the question of how are the students perceived by the staff (and indeed by each other), as individuals, as a group of individuals or of sub-groups of individuals, or as a group as a whole. This brings to mind Foulkes' (1975) notion of the group-analytic matrix, discussed in Chapter Two, as an array that can assist in consideration of questions such as this.

<sup>14</sup> At the risk of overloading the reader, this experience, of handling simultaneously text, footnotes and transcript, is a useful representation of the research task, to keep a series of foci in mind at the same time.



clinical work. Indeed, challenges of this pattern were the focus of discussion by the students the previous Session (Session Ten). Set against this is the risk of responding in a concrete way to a demand raised on behalf of, but not expressed by, the students, in this case experienced by the group facilitator concerned, representing the group as a group-as-a-whole.

Put differently, the group seem somehow to have induced their conductor to ask on their behalf whether they can be provided with sandwiches. It may be that the Reflective Group conductor responds in this way to anxiety, which will be, at least in part, indicative of anxiety experienced with varying degrees of awareness by the student members of the group. The issue represents a conflict, arguably a conflict for the course organisers and presenters, for parents in childhood, and for teachers in general, between responsive and attentive care on the one hand, and optimal frustration on the other. Hence, the appearance of the demand can be seen as akin to a psychoneurotic symptom in an individual, signifying a conflict that cannot as yet be expressed and resolved directly.

The text on Pages 249, 250 and 251 begins an exploration of experience between Judi and Bill, which runs over several more pages almost to the end of the break. Judi disagrees fundamentally with the provision of sandwiches, not wanting there to be consideration of the idea let alone the provision of the food. Bill responds firmly but uncclearly on Pages 249 and 250, perhaps reflecting the ambiguity in Judi's condensation onto 'The Sandwiches'. Bill seems to be determined to not pick up Judi's anxiety or urgency, and doesn't appear to do what is probably necessary here. His 'you probably weren't ...' in the middle of Page 249 seems evasive. He seems defensive, although he acknowledges that he has yet to act (or perhaps that he has failed to act) on the decision

taken at the meeting from which Judi was absent, that is to have one try at providing sandwiches. In the defensive mode he is in on Page 249, he is keen to emphasise a group perspective rather than an individual one, enlarging the view.

This last point represents a very major move. It carries defensive aspects but it is also an attempt to reflect on aspects of the experience of running the course as a countertransferential phenomenon. Judi argues again for the single and unequivocal interpretation of S and Q's request as a reflection of their wish to be a part of the Agency. On Pages 249 and 250, Bill tries to put an alternative view. This is that S and Q are possibly overwhelmed by<sup>15</sup> their identification with their respective groups, and that this is more significant in terms of understanding than what Bill calls 'history' (that is, the history of relationships within the agency to which he is not party).

As Page 250 continues, Bill seems to reach symbolically for R, until recently the full-time Director of the organisation, who since resigning remains involved with the course and the course group as a staff member. It is as if R has assumed a talismanic quality for Bill, and Bill has brought him between Judi and himself as a third thing. He is contrasted by Bill as someone who 'sort of thinks about the group and sort of containing it' (*so thinks about containing the group rather than contains it, and rather does so*), as compared to those who do not (think about the group *et cetera*). I wonder if the diminution of the statement (by the use of two 'sort-of's') is an attempt to forestall an expected attack from Judi occasioned by his reaching for R.

Judi moves to 'They feel a bit lost', which seems to have the potential to be extremely polysemic. By this I am referring to the phenomenon by which 'They' could mean the

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<sup>15</sup> (Changing voice to enable a personal account) Initially I mis-typed 'buy' for 'by' here)

staff group, the student group, this dyad of Judi and Bill, or Bill, or Judi. In Bill's first draft comments on the transcript (prior to the PFGAE<sup>16</sup> methodology), he notes 'I wonder who is lost'. In his second draft (with the benefit of the methodology), he writes 'I feel lost. Judi doesn't seem lost to *me, here* (i.e. at the point of first writing this text), but I do wonder *now* (i.e. at the time of writing this second draft).

Bill's response to the end of the break is to launch into a complaint at the demands of his role, pausing only to defend against Judi's attempt to help him to contain rather than respond to requests. Bill returns to the idea of R, looking again for a third, perhaps in the intensity of this dyad. This suggests a *representational overload*.<sup>17</sup>

Interestingly, Bill's holding of his ground, however defensively, seems again to offer permission to Judi, who (on Page 251) acknowledges that, 'a lot of stuff is coming towards me at the moment'. Bill symmetrises this with his own concerns. However, when he attempts to voice the difference in his experience of teaching (or directing) to that of therapy, that these comparison experiences are more discontinuous compared to the continuity of alertness required for therapy, this is anticipated by Judi, but she does this in her assertion of the impossibility of anticipation.

The break concludes on Page 250 and 251 with Bill's apparently *unaware* and *generalised* description that, 'one can be a colleague, you can be quite chummy with people and then sort of suddenly you get kind of whoosh, impaled by something'. Judi agrees twice in quick succession, and acknowledges that this is indeed absolutely

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<sup>16</sup> Post-Foulkesian Group-Analytic Ethnography

<sup>17</sup> By representational overload, I am referring to the idea that a group, or indeed one or more individuals can become overwhelmed, for example with the sheer intensity of projective processes as well as the other phenomena that Nitsun (1996) has characterised as 'the anti-group'.

amazing. This disappears beyond the realms of consideration as the group (of the staff and the students) reforms.

### ***MORE ANALYSIS***

The analysis will continue here, through gathering together some threads from consideration of the transcript and various researcher responses to it, and through weaving of those threads into the beginnings of understandings and interpretations.

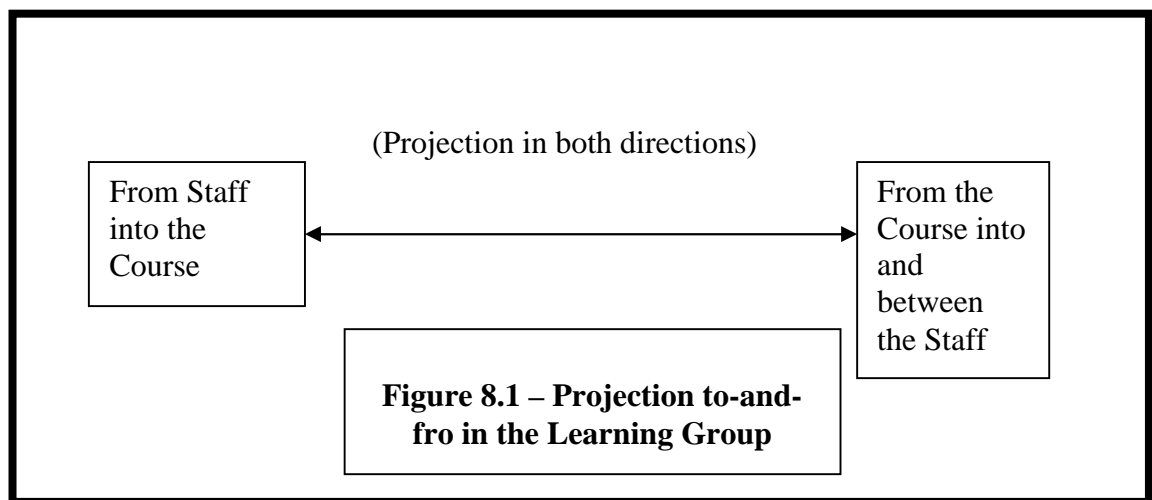
The rapid and effective conclusion of the break is remarkable, as is the immediate acceptance by both parties of what Goffman (1961) would see as the return to the stage. This mutual if unconscious acknowledgement seems to be a representation of what has just taken place, and what has just been experienced by the two participants, even though this has not been addressed directly. There has been very little if any direct process comment on (i.e. comment based on reflection on the process of the interaction as it happens), or direction of, the events of the break by the two participants.

### ***The use of breaks***

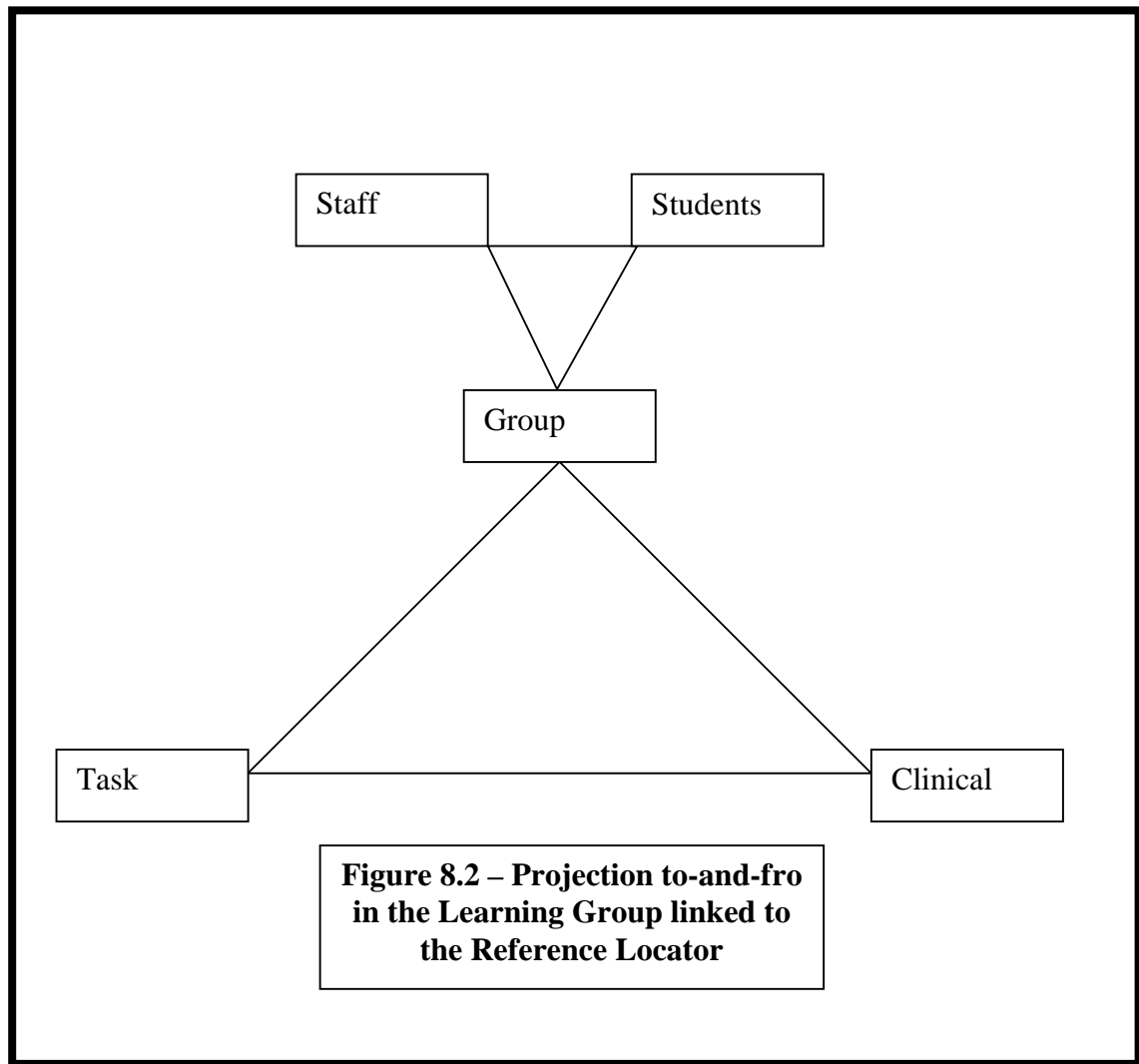
Consideration of this break led to consideration of range of uses of a break during consultations or other interactions with patients, families, groups or classes. Particular forms of break include the consulting break employed by teams in various types of family therapy (Andersen, 1987; Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin, & Prata, 1980), as well as the use of parallel and reflective processes in the *post hoc* clinical supervision of individual psychotherapy (Searles, 1955). Although the break in each teaching session of the semester was clearly an important part of the course, as has been noted above, in contrast, the role of the break (beyond that of a needed period of recovery) was not explicitly theorised.

### ***Displacement and projection***

An hypothesis implicit in the methodology is that dynamics from the group and from contact with the group will, among other things, lead to impacts on each of the staff members and on the relationship between them. This may lead at various times to embodiment, enactment, expression or articulation of issues that cannot be discussed readily or safely in other areas. Equally, the staff come to the course with existing personalities, as well as an existing relationship, all involving issues that are prior to the course. It may be, therefore, that the course is a container of sorts for those issues. This creates a sense of a flow in two directions, from the course to the staff, and vice-versa from the staff to the course (see Figure 8.1)



In fact, these dynamics can be represented by the vertices of a triangle, of Staff, Students and Group, in as much as any or all of those entities may be important at any particular time. This triangle can then sit at and hence expand the ‘Group’ vertex of the Reference Locator (consisting of Clinical, Group and Task) described in Chapter Seven (see Table 7.2 on Page 219). The Reference Locator can in turn be represented by a triangle, giving the following composite figure:



The vignette earlier in this Chapter, of the elaboration of one tutor's relationship with the receptionist, can be seen as an example of the ways that dynamics may be transferred from one setting to another, by projection and projective identification (see Chapter Two Part One), and the way that the dynamics come to be represented in the new domain.

In relation to this last point, Bion's notion of distorted projection in psychosis is important (1962). Put simply, this is that projection in the non-psychotic personality is often a direct process, whereas in a more psychotic personality, it as if the projected material goes through a range of distortions in transit. Extending this notion to the group

context, at times, the processes of projection in a group, particularly when there is disturbance such as tension or conflict, will introduce distortions between what is communicated and what gets represented and experienced.

### ***This is a kind of fight***

It does seem as if a kind of fight is going on between Bill and Judi in this break. This is the case soon after the start of the break, on Page 243, when Judi questions and opposes the idea of a community meeting including all course staff, this intake and the one that follows. It is also there at the end of the break on Pages 250 and 251, when Bill describes how, in the course of the practice of training, one can become impaired by the intensity of interactions with people, notably ones professional colleagues. It is also there in between, on Page 245 in relation to personal psychotherapy, and on Page 249 in relation to the sandwiches. The significance of this will be considered below.

### ***The theme of turmoil about ‘coming back’***

It is important not to underestimate the impact of breaks, endings, disruptions and other disturbances on the group and on the process of interaction in that group. It does seem as if the theme of turmoil about coming back is present in the patient’s experience as she resumes her work with her therapist after a trip to the country where she grew up and from where she migrated. This is also an experience shared directly by more than one member of the group (returning from overseas, some as migrants), and symbolically by the whole group (returning from the break). It may be that this resonance enables the group to be empathic to the material brought by the patient, for example when the group pick up on the patient having experienced some kind of collapse, detected I think by reflection on countertransferential experience. In my first draft, I registered this as, ‘quite lost’. It is important that by the break the group had reached that point, and it is

possible that unconsciously this had a bearing on the discussion in the break. This is examined further in ‘Interpretation’ (see below)

In the section after the break, the students elaborate on their discussion in the break, representing a contrast to their brief headline report of the themes when the group first resumed work (“going overseas and feeling tired”):

But I think the thing I suppose in the break we were talking about is just how much are you, when you go back to your homeland do you get a sense of being actually held by your culture in that kind of containment that’s very different from when you’re living out of your culture. So she’s been back to her culture and home or whatever that is and perhaps been in touch with that sort of level of containment again so then when you kind of bring yourself back to your new country there is a tremendous sense of abandonment or isolation or just being out of context really that you don’t somehow exist in quite the same way.  
(Veronica, Extract 8.1)

Veronica herself has, in fact, just returned from a trip overseas to her homeland, and in this contribution she is probably talking very directly from her own experience of re-migration (that is, returning from a trip to ones former home to ones home of subsequent adoption) with a renewed experience of the identity that has been lost by a move away from where ones roots are.

Bearing this identification in mind, this and other factors may have caused the group and the tutors to have a heightened sensitivity to the experience of the presenter’s patient. It is as if this sensitivity and resulting impact has been experienced by the group including the tutors in the first half of the session, somehow experienced by both sub-groups (that is, students and tutors) separately and differently in the break, and can now be thought about by the whole group together on re-union. By ‘other factors’, I mean that as well as the obvious identification of one member of the group with the literal



experience of the patient in the clinical work, there are a range of other issues and dynamics that are represented in this experience of discussion.

***Layered attention – a contribution of psychoanalytic (particularly group-analytic) theory***

In considering these phenomena, as elsewhere in the thesis I believe that there is value in the notion of a set of levels. These represent a sequence between them, which may be hierarchical (world, society, family, individual) or not (as in this case, with the dimension that relates the settings being distance from the experience of the patient in the clinical work being presented). The clinical session brought by the presenter is the first abstraction from this, with the reflection that the group is able to manage being at a second level. A third level is that of the discussion between the staff, as in the transcript, and the fourth that of this process of research. This study adds the strata of bi-logic as a range of levels at which the interaction can be considered, as highlighted in the comments on the transcript.

***The matrix that can contain apparent polarisation***

A key difference between Judi and Bill, and one which is acknowledged between them, is their different focus of attention between the individual and the group vertices, and their resulting view on which should be privileged at a particular points in discussion. Although their perspectives are not truly polarised, it is as if they each come to stand in the discussion solely for one of these (for example, see Page 249). I want to argue that this representation of containment of apparent polarisation is actually a form of interpretation in action, a modelling of a type of matrix that can contain difference and conflict.

## ***SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS***

Thinking of a process over the whole of the session, it seems that the group actually works effectively. The conclusion of the break, and the outcome of the second half of the session have both been highlighted as possible markers of this. At the same time, this work is not to any explicit conclusion. However, the jangling experienced between Judi and Bill may somehow reflect important and less visible aspect of the dynamics of the session.

In the work of the clinical session, the student presenter has clearly taken strides in progress in her work with her client. She reports that she has faced her shame at herself as represented by her work and by this client, to the extent that she is now confident in her planning to present the work for a professional membership process. The group develops steadily in its capacity to think usefully about the material that the presenter brings. The staff manage somehow to contain some turbulent dynamics between them, but it is as if this is managed intuitively and with difficulty, as evidenced by the markers of hostility. It is not until the research level that the experience as a whole begins to make sense, but obviously reflections from this level were not available at the time of the session.

## ***INTERPRETATION***

With hindsight, it seems clear to me that the staff and the group are operating at considerable bi-logical depth in this Session, at many of Matte-Blanco's Strata (1975, p. 1). By this, I mean that the interaction in this session is particularly complex and layered. These layers can be read as representing a range of mixes of asymmetrical (conscious) and symmetrical (unconscious) logics, from a mix that is principally conscious (Stratum 1) to one that is principally unconscious (Stratum 5).

A key feature of the perspective from a consulting break in a session, be it clinical or educational, is that it usually takes place in a backstage area, which in turn is a theatrical notion employed by Goffman (1961) in his classic study of asylums. Such areas provide contexts that are separate and different in significant ways. There are of course exceptions to this, for example in some forms of group and family therapy, where the other participants are allowed to listen in to consultations between co-therapists, but for the most part, consulting breaks take place away from the scene of the main action and involve considerable relaxation of constraints on thought and discussion. Clinical supervision in psychotherapy can be thought of as an example of this.

This is reminiscent of the setting of Tom Stoppard's play, 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead' (1968), which dramatises the experience of two minor characters from William Shakespeare's play Hamlet (1623), based in the back stage area of a theatrical performance of Hamlet. As a result, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are frequently interrupted by processions of major characters from the stage into their backstage domain. This motif captures the way that the interaction between Bill and Judi is subject to pushes and pulls from the interaction in the learning group, which in turn reflects in part aspects of the pushes and pulls on the learning group of the clinical session that the presenter has brought.

The students collectively have to struggle with their identities as psychotherapists, whether or not they think about themselves in that way. This is so in a way that is true for all therapists, in a way that is so for each of them in particular and for them as a particular group at this stage of their respective careers. In particular, it is also true for them as a group of psychotherapists and mental health workers making the transition towards involving psychoanalytic thinking more consistently in their clinical work.

Much of identity is a result of choices. Indeed, as noted in Chapter Two Part Two, the third of Hopper's reasons why groups are helpful to difficult patients (discussed on Pages 60 and 61) is that,

*... the group provides opportunities for safe play, that is, for trying on and taking off various gloves of identity without serious consequences. (2003b).*

I propose that what Hopper describes has been happening here, in that Bill and Judi have been clashing, with varying degrees of success, over dilemmas which challenge identity, for example in terms of who knows about how training should be conducted.

### ***Conclusion - findings, both methodological and substantive***

Methodologically, a key elaboration here is the use of another position from which to reflect, and the use of interaction between colleagues in that position as a way of elaborating dynamics in which both (or all, if there are more than two) have been involved elsewhere. This notion was highlighted in Figure 8.2 on Page 262 in relation to the revised Reference Locator, where the sub-groups (i.e. the students and the staff) that form the group can be separated, and from that, new perspectives are possible. This capacity, to reflect through displacement, is important in any field that depends on relationships, but it is both a central facility in a psychoanalytically informed methodology such as this, and also a major contribution brought in as part of the clinical legacy of this methodology.

Substantively, the findings that emerge from this analysis include the importance of breaks, resonances between locations and layered attention, and the importance of a matrix that can contain powerful dynamics such as polarisation.

In relation to breaks, these are widely understood within psychotherapy to be of importance, because they evoke traumatic experiences, particularly from childhood, such as separation and loss as well as characteristic responses to those experiences. They are also important in group-analytic research, in that they provide an opportunity for deeper reflection away from other tasks (such as teaching and group maintenance). It maybe goes without saying that they are a rich source of experience in learning groups.

Regarding resonances, it is argued that at this stage of the course, as the group complete the cycle of taking turns to bring their work, and as they return from the last mid-semester break in teaching before the course ends, the members are extremely concerned with and alert to their professional identities. This allows a resonance of the clinical material (in other words, the experience of a client with concerns about her identity) in the group, but it is as if much of the dynamics involved cannot be addressed directly through dialogue. Something similar is true backstage, but there, there is the chance to enact these dynamics, and an opportunity to make some sense of their impact. It seems particularly important that it has not been fully possible to do this in relation to this teaching until the opportunity offered by this research. More generally, it is clear that there is an enormous amount of staff interaction in settings beyond the study that will be highly representative of the issues of the staff's various charges (teachers' staff room conversation comes to mind), but which may not be recognised for its importance and value.

The notion of a matrix that can contain polarisation is another substantive finding. The concept of a matrix, of connections between individuals, groups and societies, is central to a group-analytic approach. It appears from the experience of this session that the conflict between the staff in the break which could be contained by a matrix of an

organisation and of relationships enabled the staff and the group to contain conflict, anxiety and pain, not least in relation to identity in transition, and hence to facilitate that transition .

As will be discussed in Chapter Ten, Summary and Conclusion, if the fruits of this research can be incorporated into the expectations of the outcomes of teaching such as that in the study, then it will be possible to make maximal use of those opportunities. For now, the meaning of this constellation of experience has been explored, by relating the interaction between the tutors to the situations of the group and its members. Hence, *displacement* is offered as the key characteristic of the unconscious prominent in this session.

A table summarising the description, analysis and interpretation of data in this chapter is on the next page. My aims in this chapter were as follows.

My methodological aim in this chapter was to conduct and elaborate the investigation of a set of processes, those of the learning group, by using an allied experience, consideration of the interaction between the tutors in the break, as an example of the unconscious phenomenon of displacement.

My substantive aim was to detail what is revealed by this methodology, which includes a reconstruction and appreciation by the tutors of the world of the students and the group. This is argued to be central to the work of the semester, in that this process is a core element of the learning group.

Almost inevitably as a result of the structure of this episode (as a displaced element of the interaction which is the original focus of the study, the learning group), and as a result of the theory used, but (as noted in the table on the next page) also in terms of the processes that are exemplified, I want to argue that the predominant characteristic of the unconscious in the material of this chapter is *displacement*.

I believe that I have met these aims, and in the case of the methodological aim, exceeded it with the elaboration of the reference locator.

The final exploration follows in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Eight A Consulting Break The Scrap	Description / Analysis	More Analysis	Interpretation
<p>The title of this moment refers to the way that aspects of the interaction between the tutors in the break in the middle of the teaching session can seem like a scrap or tussle.</p> <p>The meaning of this constellation of experience is explored, by relating the interaction to the situations of the group and its members. The relationship between the tutors is a prime site for displacement of what cannot be thought about elsewhere. Hence, <i>displacement</i> is the key characteristic of the unconscious prominent in this session.</p>	<p>The break is placed in a ‘sandwich’, of what came before and after, and then a verbatim transcript of the break is summarised with some analysis</p> <p>Before the break: someone is quite lost After the break: shame can be acknowledged.</p> <p>Topics include the community meeting, bullying by administrators, plans for the future of the course. A vignette is elaborated for analysis.</p> <p>One tutor reflects on their concerns about their teaching, and then the other followed by both about tasks outside of this teaching</p> <p>Then the tutors have an extended rally of discussion, about a fundamental dilemma for trainers between nurturance and setting limits.</p>	<p>There is a need for theorisation of the role of the break.</p> <p>Displacement and projection between parties – gives a framework, expands the reference locator to Figure 8.2 This is a kind of fight, and the tutors display polarisation.</p> <p>Turmoil about coming back – an appreciation of metonymy aids the understanding of how this resonates.</p> <p>It is now possible to make sense of how work can happen in a learning group such as this, particularly making use of the reflective capacity of the staff. If staff can model containment of intense projection, as well as the use of breaks to both recover and process these projections, the group can learn in many ways.</p>	<p>Being backstage (and backstage again) enables a different kind of understanding.</p> <p>The turbulent nature of the break, alongside the productive nature of the group, suggests that whilst there may be turbulence around the course getting in to the break, that the experience and containment of the turbulence may enable the group to work.</p> <p><i>Identity in transition</i> is a focus that links a range of levels of experience and a range of phenomena in the semester, and also explains why shame and anxiety are so prevalent in the break.</p>

**Table 8.1**

**A summary of description, analysis and interpretation of data in Chapter Eight.**



## Chapter Nine

### An Ending (Missing Time - Session 15)

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#### ***Introduction***

In this Chapter, I will examine the whole of the final session, Session Fifteen, as an episode, which makes it a different kind of Sticky Moment to those that are represented by more discrete incidents (such as those in Chapters Six and Seven) or briefer episodes (such as those in Chapters Five and Eight). A major feature of this particular episode is the apparent *absence* of attention to the significance of ending by the group and the tutors.<sup>1</sup> As part of my description of this episode, I first take an internal journey, accounting for my response to the challenge of addressing this task, and then I look at a more conventional summary of the content of the session. That summary is then followed by some analysis and interpretation of the data.

#### ***Theoretical and philosophical framing of the study***

As in previous synchronic chapters, I am looking here to make explicit the reasoning behind *how I am investigating* and *how I am making sense of what I am finding*. As previously noted, this chapter focuses on a long episode which did not go as it should have done. It takes place in the last meeting of the course, which instantly highlights to a psychotherapist *ending* and *transitions*. From consideration of the story of the session, it becomes clear that time has become disordered. In order to investigate this phenomenon, the experience is approached through researcher reverie in relation to the

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<sup>1</sup> I am aware of some potential ambiguity here. I have not been fully clear whether the group and the tutors are actors failing to attend, or subjects being neglected and neglecting themselves, but would like to leave that question open.

events under study, and iteration between this reverie and the events of the session.

Hence, this analysis depends particularly on researcher countertransference, as well as researcher associative capacity. This results in this analysis generally being more remote from the surface of interactions as compared to those in the previous four chapters.

### ***The aims of this chapter***

Substantively, I aim to show how difficulties in the confronting of issues in the group lead to some profound accomplishments and acknowledgements, but with some major issues not addressed. In particular, I want to argue that the predominant characteristic of the unconscious present in this session is *the absence of mutual contradiction*.<sup>2</sup>

Methodologically, I want to demonstrate how I can take a summary of an experience, and then through a series of associative process can arrive at an interpretation of that experience that is of value.

## **DESCRIPTION**

### ***An associative journey***

I've come to know, through careful analysis of my own recall and of the transcript of the tape of Session Fifteen that we did not really end the semester in a satisfactory way. By this, I mean that as teachers, Judi and I did not do what should be obvious in this situation to anyone facilitating a psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy training programme. Of all the things that we teach, some of the most important relate to good

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Two Part Two, Page 85 for an account of the significance of this characterisation, made in each of these five synchronic analyses, of the episode considered in this chapter as showing a predominance of one of Freud's (1915) characteristics of the unconscious. The aim is not to reduce the richness of the particular episode, but rather merely to highlight a key aspect of the unconscious in operation. The capacity to recognise these phenomena is a key feature of this epistemology.

modelling around basic concepts such as clear boundaries (of time, space, person, interaction) and careful communication. Therefore, what we did seems unforgivable. As well as that, ...

(here I wanted to write, *I taught these people about ending*, the italics representing emphasis).<sup>3</sup> I was responsible for teaching earlier in the course, in particular in the 'Basic Concepts and their Application' sessions at in the first semester, including the last of those sessions on 'Ending'.

Associating further, that response in me led me to think whether I could recall that particular session, and that took me to a dread (subsequently unsubstantiated, as it happens) that this was a group which I had to leave prior to the ending of a semester.. My doing that when I did, as it happens much later than this semester, was almost certainly experienced by students and possibly my colleague at the time as a kind of dereliction, and the opposite of good practice in psychotherapy training. At the time (of my initial reflection on my discomfort), I felt that this was just another of my 'misdemeanours'. (Here I think I have become aware of my shame at aspects of how teaching has gone, and that I have brought to mind episodes about which I am uneasy).

What happened just then was an experience for me of being pitched into shame. I got privately angry with the group (at the time, more recently during data analysis and again, at the time of first writing this), which subsequently and consequentially left me feeling quite exposed, and highly aware of other times when I felt like this. Freud's (1900/1953, 1901/1960, 1905a/1960) notion that painful experiences are often held below the level of consciousness helps to explain why these experiences can erupt as if joined together.

What I think I stumbled into just now is also an example of some of the complexities of the ethnographic task (Coffey, 1999). I need to get close enough to the experience to be authentic and honest, not least in order to avoid what might be glossed as colonialist assumptions, but yet I need to be distant enough to get through (rather than out of or over) being both a clinician and a clinical educator, and into being a researcher. In the

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<sup>3</sup> I'm moving at this point to a personal association evoked by writing the first paragraph, and beginning to reflect on the experience of Session 15.

example above, I need to be in touch sufficiently with my own inner world to use it to orient myself in the research, but distant enough so that this is not just an autobiography and so that there is an outer world in my study.

Moving on, or rather back to where I was, I thought of times when I had felt like this in the past, for example as a lecturer in the UK. I think I'm in touch with myself and in position now.

The particular link that took me to the UK was a clinical teaching seminar. As course director, I did not have the resources of staff that I needed, but simultaneously I both became very anxious, and tried to carry on regardless. In a way, there was a familiar quality and pattern to how I was being back then. I was trying to stand in for a friend and colleague who died quite soon after my stand-in. It links back for me to the dangers of teaching and learning, as an opening of the self and the inevitability of shame, and it also evokes personal dynamics around being left to stand in, and some primitive and irrational dread around my impact on others.

Recalling how I felt at the end of this Semester, I think I was feeling quite disturbed by events in both my professional and personal lives.

My thoughts go next to two professional events in which I was involved around the time of the semester, the first over a year before this semester started, and the second event towards the end of this semester, but held at the same venue. The first event was around triangular relationship dynamics, particularly those associated with couples. These dynamics, which inevitably include exclusion, jealousy and envy, rivalry and secrets, permeated the group life of the staff team for that event, making my own experience of being a staff member quite painful. At the second event, the content was different (i.e. on brief psychotherapy, and presented by a visitor), but the dynamics were similar. I found myself isolated and also isolated myself, to the extent that the presenter of the second event wanted and asked to meet other colleagues. I first wrote here "I think I was employing reaction formation against loss, by attempting a fantasised incorporation". If I can return the thoughts to English, I wonder if, in a burst of magical and hence irrational thinking, I was, as it were, trying to eat up our visitor, so as not to lose him, so as not to have to share him, and because of my fear and envy of him and his difference from me.

As I pull back in the account above from a description of participation towards observation and reflection, I am aware that I have temporarily turned this into what van Maanen (1988) calls a Confessional (as opposed to a Realist or Impressionist) Tale. We

are a way in to this account of an episode, a Sticky Moment, and so far I have talked mostly about myself. The reason that I am doing so is to try and tap in to some of what ended up unspoken in this Session, in other words, to think about what might have been transpired had we facilitated differently. I am particularly interested that my first response to trying to think about the teaching was a fairly strong sense of shame, and I'll try and make sense of that in what follows.

Taken together, the threads that follow convey a context to the ending of the group. I hope that I can link my introspection to events and dynamics in the group, and in doing so make some sense of these events and dynamics.

### ***The Case of the Missing Twenty Minutes***

When I look back at Session Fifteen, I see that a practical expression of the problem for Judi and me in ending 'properly' is that for some people we allowed far more time than was in the budget. Put more simply, we should have had 20-30 minutes at the end of the session, but instead we ended up with about 2-3 minutes. So this enquiry becomes The Case of the Missing Twenty Minutes, to borrow a form of title from detective fiction.

After I wrote 'more time than was in the budget', I was going to write 'at the expense of the experience of the other members', but as will become clear, now I'm not so sure that this is true. It may be that what happened was, at some level, to the benefit of the other members, and, unconsciously at least, that it took place at their behest.

### ***A summary of the session***

The group as a whole were slow to take up the invitation that the staff offered. They seemed reluctant, *"to take turns to reflect on your experience of the course, in relation*

*to the growing edges and significant questions that have been important for you”.*<sup>4</sup>

Paula joked that the uncomfortable silence that followed the invitation was Frances’s time (Frances being late then as she had been in virtually every session of the semester).<sup>5</sup> When they did eventually respond, group members brought in a lot.

Nancy went first, acknowledging a difficult experience but also her capacity to deal with it, and an honesty about her own early attitudes and their subsequent revision. Tom too wanted to acknowledge his *earlier* difficulty with the programme. He was wary of sounding contrived. Kelly was subdued, although seemingly grateful for some of her experience. Veronica was very articulate, and took more time than her share, and we encouraged her. That leaves Mary, Paula, Ron, Heidi, and Frances (who took their turns after the break in the middle of the session). Feeling the urgency now that I think I was unable to feel and express to Judi in that break (which might have been expressed as, “How are we going to get through all that we have to try and do?”), I wonder how best to capture what they said. What comes to mind are Mary’s surprise at the impact of the reflective group; Paula’s deep reflection on a surprising experience; Ron’s disturbed feeling in relation to the course and in this session; Heidi’s intense and harrowing experience dealt with largely elsewhere; and Frances’s determination to be and not be various things, but her loss at the same time of a sense of who she is. The time after these turns is very short, filled by thanks from the staff to the students, and some thanks from some students to the staff. The staff conclude by suggesting that the students keep in touch, and in particular, that they might wish to give talks in the Agency’s programme of seminars for the wider community of psychotherapists and mental health

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<sup>4</sup> This is the invitation that is offered to the class taking this semester at the first session.

<sup>5</sup> This joke is, I believe, representative on several levels, which include a shared anxiety about the task, as well as an expression of negativity to Frances as the scapegoat for the group.

professionals. The last word in the recording goes to Veronica saying, “that’s a bit of a tall order”.

### ***Another summary - themes in the transcript of Session 15***

These themes are constructed from a mix of the student’s direct report and my own very broad impressionistic speculation about their developmental issues.

Exhaustion, difference (beginner) but felt enabled (?included). Bill and Judi made it safe. Jagged edges. Envy and rivalry.

Transition. From differences and pulling away to commonalities and pulling towards (?Rapprochement). Anxiety about contrivance. My thought that it seems difficult for this person to deal with authority.

Somewhere to be myself. Disconnects from Dad. Gently valued by Mum.

Equality, recognition of unconscious competence. Gets in between Mum and Dad, a therapeutic experience free of status anxiety.

Vulnerable then and now. In denial to start with, Semester 2 very filling (laughs), a sense of rapprochement in Semester 4. Finally being like Mum, and being held and challenged. A sticky moment in this report.

Scared at first (confused narrative after that). Two approaches (possibly evoking a sense of parental inconsistency). Denounced one model for the other half way through. Surprised by what they got from the third hour.

Feeling confused and can’t get thoughts together. Liked Semester 2, Semester 3 a low point, then enjoyed this although puzzled. Didn’t like the facilitation in the third hour (couldn’t take it in). Laughter around therapy with people like us. Bill and Judi anxious.

Says masses. Acknowledges the enactment of key family and personal dynamics, and change in therapist to someone more experienced, and great personal turbulence. Gratitude to tutors for understanding. Tutors can hold this.

Talking about difference and identity, but seems determined to stand out as different. Says lots too, but much less open. Tutors also less open.

## ANALYSIS

### ***Consideration by level.***

An important analytic device for this particular experience is the notion of bi-logical depth, part of the heuristic with connection and difference that was discussed in Chapter Two Part Two. As laid out there, of particular relevance to group life are Matte-Blanco's Strata (*One to Five*) (Matte-Blanco, 1988), and Foulkes's *Current, Transference, Projective and Primordial Levels* (1948, 1964, 1975). In this case, a Current Level perspective on the group would take statements at face value. My sense is that Foulkes's description of the Transference Level involves uncomplicated transference based on projection, and does not rely on or make use of projective identification (which in turn makes particular use of an Other). Although the Transference level involves the unconscious, the Projective and Primordial Levels rely far more heavily on this, and on projective identification as communication, and hence are of particular value when matters at more conscious Levels seem oddly unsatisfactory.

Thinking at the Projective and Primordial Levels, one view of this group, and in particular the ending of it and what was not noticed or addressed, is that perhaps we did accomplish what we needed to do. This feels like a benign or charitable aspect on things. In Winnicott's terms, we were 'good enough'. This will be discussed next, but other possibilities are considered after that.

### ***Winnicott's 'good enough' mother/teacher(s)/group***

This needs some elaboration of Winnicott's notion of the good-enough mother into the good-enough teacher(s) or indeed the good-enough group. It also needs an account of



how this may be of use to the group and to the participants in the service of the primary task of the semester, the development of psychotherapists. Winnicott himself writes:

The good-enough mother...starts off with an almost complete adaptation to her infant's needs, and as time proceeds she adapts less and less completely, gradually, according to the infant's growing ability to deal with her failure... (1953, p. 93)

For example, when Bill and Judi wonder with a student in this extract from Session 15 Transcript whether they might have done more to address the student's obvious distress more directly, the student says:

**STUDENT** I think it would have been helpful if I had have taken the courage to ring one of you up or to email and let you know where I was with it, so I didn't feel quite so alone with it, I suppose I could get quite anxious about what you ... or have fantasies about what you would be thinking.

**JUDI** It's hard, there's no one answer.

**STUDENT** But I actually feel okay about it, so maybe I just needed to do that.

**JUDI** And I think it's important particularly in this semester that people can feel ... that there's no particular way that we have to bring ourselves to a group. We bring ourselves to a group as we are at the time.

**STUDENT** But I suppose the good thing about it was that I didn't feel the pressure, which felt like quite a different experience to (university) ... because I found my experience at (university) really traumatising.

**JUDI** Right, so in fact that may be playing over here. (From Session 15 Transcript).

In the last statement of this exchange, Judi begins to intervene at the Transference Level. The content prior to that can be seen as an acknowledgement that the holding offered was good enough.

It is interesting to reflect on this exchange, and on the trope that I have fitted to it provisionally. On the face of it, it seems that the student is valuing the permissive culture of the course, in contrast to what it seems they have been experienced in their previous training, and that the acceptance and holding of their distress has been sufficient for them to make a psychological shift. It is also important to consider that

there may be very different ways of reading the communication. For example, the student may be being compliant.

## INTERPRETATION

### *Phantasy in the group, and at the level of the group*

Thinking of the time context of the experience under study, there may well have been a group phantasy for this group-as-a-whole that they killed off their younger sibling.

There was massive tension between this group (the study group) and the intake that followed them ('the first year group'). Because the group under study were the first to have a longer programme, including a one hour Reflective Group after their two hour teaching session, I had arranged for the year previous to the study that they would move rooms between sessions, being taught downstairs, and then moving upstairs for their group session. This was no problem when they were the only group having a second session, but when we got to year two, there was the new first year group to manage too. I was clear that I wanted the study group to be taught upstairs (where they had had their Reflective Group the previous year), and then to come downstairs for their Reflective Group, and vice-versa for the first year group. This arrangement made sense to me, but it was clearly disturbing to the group under study. I can see that it would seem as if everything was different not just because of the presence of a new 'baby' (in the form of the new intake), but also because the study group had lost their arrangement of rooms. Indeed, for them it may well have seemed as if their previous arrangement had been turned on its head. At the Transference Level, Mum and Dad (represented by Judi and myself) had not only gone away for a break and acquired a big and greedy new baby, but they were planning for it to have its special time in the study group's time and space.

***My own inner world at the time***

Significantly, at the break in the first meeting of the course for the year in question (in other words, at the beginning of the semester prior to this current one), Heidi came to me on behalf of the study group. She asked if they could stay in the upstairs room for their Reflective Group. I should say here something of where I was emotionally. At the time, I was Head of Training, Course Director, and Co-ordinator for this semester. Quite apart from these formal roles, I was a member of the management group for the Agency, and the Director had recently left. The accumulation of the impact of these factors is a background context to the episode under exploration.

A colleague has described the tension and panic that can be experienced at the start of a programme like this as ‘modulitis’ (this course having been known colloquially for some years as ‘The Modules’). She was referring explicitly to the beginning of teaching with no other curriculum or programme changes, but I think that there are multiple components to the experience of beginning the year, and beginning this year in particular. My understanding is that ‘modulitis’, which may manifest as a headache or a feeling of exhaustion, is in part a consequence of the need to perform a major act of holding and containment of anxiety. The students have to be welcomed, introduced to the programme, formed as a group, and a culture established. At the same time (as the staff member with overall responsibility, not just for the group that I am teaching), I had to ensure that the other group were also accommodated. I had to manage the staff, including my own partner Judi, the other team (teaching the first year group), and the two conductors (one of them new to the task). I was all but overwhelmed, and I responded to Heidi’s request, with a clear but abrupt and angry ‘No!’. I want next to consider this episode together with the experience of the semester under study by using aspects of developmental metaphor.

### ***A developmental metaphor***

Child developmentalists suggest that one of the most difficult tasks for parents is dealing with their first child during the arrival into the world of their second. In considering the interaction in and around the group from the perspective of Foulkes' Transference Level (see Page 74), and making substitutions by use of metaphor and metonymy, such as using child to represent group and parent to represent tutor, Heidi's question and my response can be seen as indicative of dynamics that are under the surface. Heidi comes to represent the group(/child), literally by speaking on behalf of the others but also symbolically by being the one present when the request was raised, and I come to represent the staff(/parent(s)), because of my role where I am required to be responsible and respond, but also symbolically as the recipient of the group's concerns.

At the same time, it seems clear to me now that there was intense activity in all groups associated with the course (including first and second years, and staff) at the Projective Level, and probably too at the Primordial Level. Starting school has an archetypal quality in almost every culture in the world, and memories of this first major separation from home for many children will be evoked by the start of a new adult learning experience. Therefore, as parents, and for me particularly as parent-in-chief, we and I were having to manage a cultural event (the start of a new year of teaching) at the same time as the birth of a new baby and the reaction of my/our existing and fractious child.

Later in the year, one member of the first year group had a surgical operation on their foot, and was unable to go upstairs. Therefore, for the second semester (the period under study), the study group got their wish, and effectively had to be allowed to stay in their room throughout the evening of the course. The operation and the injury that it sought to

address can be seen as Œdipal after the Greek Myth of Œdipus (Graves, 1984), which means swollen foot, relating both to the nail-wound Œdipus sustained as an infant when his feet were pinned together so that the servant dispatched to abandon him on a hillside could ease his conscience, and to the injury acquired when Œdipus met his father Laius in the narrow defile between Delphi and Daulis, after he had decided not to return to Corinth following the oracle's prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother. In terms of my response to the group's request conveyed by Heidi, I think that I needed to be a strong representation of the Law of the Father (Trawick, 1992), both out of ordinary appropriateness as well as in response to the additional and clear disturbance in the agency resulting from changes of leadership and management.

### ***Scapegoating***

Something of which I can now make more sense is Frances's behaviour, and the behaviour of the tutors, other students, and the group as a whole. If this had been a therapy group, I would have tackled her firmly, and at the start of the run of sessions that semester about her lateness. On reflection, I think what floored me (and perhaps Judi too) is the degree of projective identification. I felt helpless, and I think that is what Frances, and indeed many others of the trainees, felt a lot of the time. I suspect she had never been as stretched personally in her work as she was currently at that time, and I think I became unable to think about what I felt about her behaviour, and hence to be able to respond or even to notice my lack of response. I link these phenomena to Usandivaras' (1986) ideas about the role of scapegoat (in that Frances is never really in the group) and the need of others for Frances. This is evidenced, I think, in Paula's joke that the silence at the beginning of the go-round is Frances's time. It should have been Frances's time, in the sense that if anyone should lose because of her acting out it should be her, but instead we effectively indulged her. Initially, I thought that it was

different with Heidi, who was able to work through her experience at the Projective level (and to make sense of her voicing of a primordial issue in Session 8 – see Chapter 6, The Eruption). Subsequently though, I wonder whether instead of ‘Bad Frances’ who couldn’t get her (not said but implied) primitive material into the public arena to be resolved like ‘Good Heidi’, Frances was actually enacting experience that she couldn’t manage to communicate consciously, but in so doing faced the rest of the group with that, and had to go on doing so. I wonder if we (particularly Judi and I, although that is probably on behalf of the group) were very angry with Frances, but were unable to face that and say so and risk going further into ourselves, that we let her seem to be the killer of the potential of the group rather than risk killing her. This is what I mean about my concern should I say that Frances’s behaviour was at the expense of other members.

### ***Conclusion - findings, both methodological and substantive***

Methodologically, the key feature of this particular analysis is the use of researcher countertransference, in particular of researcher *reverie* (Ogden, 1994). The use of this defies manualisation, but will be familiar to clinicians who work making dynamic use of the relationship with their patients, and represents the considered use of a layered awareness, taking a very full part in relating but also reflecting whilst relating on that relating, including reflecting on phenomena on the edge of awareness. In this case, the reverie was used to highlight possible meanings for *absences*, the key phenomena of this analysis, such as the absence of attention to ending and to the group.

Substantively, the analysis highlights issues to be faced, and possible avoidances to be considered.

Regarding issues to be faced, from a countertransferential position I can now associate to ways in which the Learning Group is essentially frustrating, unlike Abercrombie

(1983) who focussed more on the strengths. I wonder, as an aside, if teaching inevitably involves a kind of vampiric identification, and hatred of the student for having the experience that one is facilitating, not least because there is so much to deal with in the group and there is not the time or the space to do so for the group to fully learn. Some of this can happen in the Reflective Group, but that can also just make matters worse if it evokes feelings and then becomes somewhere else that things cannot be dealt with. In the break in Session Eleven (discussed in Chapter Eight), Judi was able to express what I take to be envy, which I certainly shared, of the role of Reflective Group conductor. Together with the experience of shame, which I came to by association with the events of this session, and which I feel at the outcome of this session and the course, these various feelings capture a group experience of the end of a training, with some gains but with some anxieties, regrets and injuries that could not be addressed because they had not been contextualised as issues of concern.

From a more conventional position as participant-observer, albeit one with the relatively unconventional benefit of a group-analytic perspective, I wonder if Judi, myself and to some extent the group were containing experience from various sources that we can only now begin to put into words.

A table summarising the description, analysis and interpretation of data in this chapter follows at the end of the chapter on Page 289. Whilst there is some sense of timelessness in this session, it seems that the predominant characteristic of the unconscious is *the absence of mutual contradiction* – it is the end, and yet it is as if it is not. The group has finished, but we have not really behaved as if it were truly the end.

My aims in this session were as follows. Substantively, I aimed to show how difficulties in the confronting of issues in the group lead to some profound accomplishments and acknowledgements, but with some major issues not addressed. In particular, I wanted to argue that the predominant characteristic of the unconscious present in this session is *the absence of mutual contradiction*.

Methodologically, I wanted to demonstrate how I can take a summary of an experience, and then through an associative process can arrive at an interpretation of that experience that is of value. I believe those aims have been met.

Part Three of the thesis, Conclusions, follows after the table.



Chapter Nine The Ending Missing Time	Description	Analysis	Interpretation
<p>This is the last of the fifteen sessions of the Semester, so it is literally the ending. Each student takes a turn to reflect on the experience of learning during the semester and the course as a whole. However, the experience of the session is also as if the ending is not happening, with the staff and the group not keeping to the time schedule. The issue of what happens is explored in relation to the missing time – where did it go, and why?</p> <p>Whilst there is some sense of timelessness in this session, it seems that the predominant characteristic of the unconscious is <i>the absence of mutual contradiction</i> – it is the end, and it's also as if it's not.</p>	<p>My data includes my own response to carrying out this analysis, which includes shock, resolving into disbelief and shame.</p> <p>The group are slow to take up the invitation, <i>“to take turns to reflect on your experience of the course, in relation to the growing edges and significant questions that have been important for you”</i>.</p> <p>I get into anxiety - did I mess up previously, and have I not really faced that experience?</p> <p>My mind goes associatively to shame.</p> <p>The above is about my inner world – now to apply these insights to dynamics in the group.</p>	<p>Somehow we slip from our purpose, throughout the session.</p> <p>Considering the level of this experience, it has projective and biological qualities to it (for example, it is the end, and yet it seems that it isn't)</p> <p>Particularly the staff, but also the students (as fellow learners) display a kind of blindness – this may link to the developmental transition, <b>a form of Oedipal resolution</b>, that has been poorly handled.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>Avoidance is a core issue.</p>	<p>The group phantasy A difficult child, disturbed and at times unhappy, but not able to feel safe to express disturbance directly.</p> <p>These students have to go through a transition, and their study of human development, their reflective group and their own therapy will have stirred up these issues</p> <p>Scapegoating is simultaneously both a very symbolic and a very concrete manifestation.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u> Reaching the end of the analysis of this episode of ending, it is apparent how the experience of teaching and learning of psychotherapy is probably always fraught.</p> <p>Are we just (barely) containing experience too difficult to voice directly? And does this explain how the ending of the group comes to be avoided?</p>

**Table 9.1**

**A summary of description, analysis and interpretation of data in Chapter Nine.**

<sup>6</sup> In the myth of Oedipus (Graves, 1984), as noted in this chapter, the eponymous hero blinds himself on recognising that he has killed his father and possessed his mother sexually.

# Part Three

## Conclusions

# Chapter Ten

## Summary and Conclusions

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### ***INTRODUCTION***

In this chapter, the first aim is to draw together and to summarise the findings of the thesis. These have been found in the analyses of Part Two (in other words, the Diachronic Analysis in Chapter Four, as well as the Synchronic Analyses in Chapters Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine). Some of these various findings have been discoveries about teaching and learning, and others discoveries about investigating. These findings will be evaluated in relation to the two questions of the thesis, how the learning group contributes to the development of psychotherapists, and whether a method of investigation can be applied to that process of teaching and learning, to which I will argue the answer is *yes*.

Following that, the second aim is to begin to utilise the findings from the thesis. From these, I will articulate a model for the teaching of disciplines such as the clinical practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, to set alongside the methodology for investigating phenomena such as groups learning.

This chapter ends with some conclusions. Of the two final chapters that follow, Chapter Eleven is a reflection on the limitations of the study, and Chapter Twelve a consideration of the directions that future practice, clinical teaching and research might take.

## **A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN THE THESIS**

In the Chapter One, two questions were elaborated. The first was *how does the learning group operate, how it might contribute to the primary task of teaching and learning, how it might be stopped from hindering the primary task of teaching and learning, and how might the answering of these questions have application outside of the fairly specialised field in question?* The second was *can a means of investigation be constructed that values and privileges the philosophical world-view underlying psychoanalytic and group-analytic psychotherapy, and which can fruitfully yet critically investigate aspects of those practices?* The findings of the thesis need to be considered in relation to these two questions, taking the methodological issues first.

### ***The methodological findings***

***How, using the examples present in the thesis, has the methodology been shown to be capable of valuing and privileging the philosophical world-view underlying psychoanalytic and group-analytic psychotherapy, and of fruitfully yet critically investigating aspects of those practices?***

This methodology was articulated into methods for researching the material under study. This involved spelling out some of what was known in the form of practice wisdom prior to beginning the research, as well as a description of procedures for collecting and analysing data.<sup>1</sup> One powerful heuristic that emerged from this process of spelling out is a three-dimensional array, with dimensions of *connection* and *difference* (representing the *x* and *y* axes), together with *bi-logical level* (representing the *z* axis) (see page 104).

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<sup>1</sup> The methodology and methods are demonstrated in a series of examples in Appendix 2. Some of these examples were from the researcher's own work, and some from the work of others.

***Chapter Four - Diachronic analysis***

In this part of the thesis, the account represents a significant transformation of the raw data of the twenty-eight hours of tape recordings. This transformation has been guided by the methodology outlined in Chapter Two Part Two, and formed using the methods described in Chapter Three. Although this perspective is highly partial, it is principled in that the methodology informed the transformation of the account. In addition, because of conceptual closeness of the research methodology to the clinical models underlying both the content and the process of the teaching and learning, it is in my view well able to capture and represent a series of significant dynamics and issues. Indeed, it was on the basis of the diachronic analysis that ‘Sticky Moments’ was developed as a concept, and that a collection of potential episodes for synchronic analysis was theorised and formed.

***Chapters Five to Nine - The synchronic analyses***

Methodological findings in these chapters include: the potential for analysis of sequences of interaction within an episode (as in Chapter Five); the more interpretive and indirect analysis of an episode (as in Chapter Six); the importance of the emergence of symbols for these analyses (as in Chapters Six and Seven); the value of devices such as the Reference Locator in order to sort and array meaning (as in Chapters Seven and Eight); the capacity to reflect from another position through consideration of displacement (in Chapter Eight); and the value of researcher reverie (as in Chapter Nine). My argument here is that the methodology, elaborated in Chapter Two Part Two, containing a theoretical and philosophical framing which can be applied in research methods, has been shown to be capable of engaging with key aspects of the process of teaching and learning under study, and to yield the substantive findings of the data analytic chapters which are summarised below.

### ***Substantive findings from the analysis of data***

***How, using the examples present in the thesis, has the group been shown to be helpful (and not), to the learning of psychotherapy, and specifically, in applying theory to practice?***

#### ***Diachronic analysis (Chapter Four)***

Changing voice for authenticity, my aim in this chapter was to describe the characters of this ‘play’, and something of the sequence of events that befall them and in which they participate. This has posed challenges. I am hopeful, though, that I have been able to convey a sufficient sense of real characters in order to personify the narrative, whilst avoiding making what I say being about them personally as individuals.

The account shows a progression, from the forming of a group in a particular constellation (both like and unlike that used for more traditional adult learning on this course), the occurrence and negotiation of various difficulties (some of which are analysed further as Sticky Moments), and the gradual building of capacity and confidence as the learning outcomes of the semester and course begin to be established.

#### ***Synchronic analyses (Chapters 5 to 9)***

Prior to the research, based on a synthesis of all of the practice wisdom described in Chapter Two Parts One and Two, the conduct of the group could be theorised, albeit at times implicitly and at times unconsciously. However, we (by which I mean myself, the teaching team, the students, our managers and accreditors) had not, as indeed I imagine many if not most colleagues in such a situation have not, fully studied our working model of practice and made our conclusions and intentions fully explicit. What this research has done is to detail and explore aspects of the process of the learning group. These have been sampled at points (i.e. in the middle and towards the end of the last semester of the course, which is explicitly intended to foster the integration of theory

and practice in psychoanalytic psychotherapy) at which these phenomena of interest are hypothesised to be more likely to be evident.

Based on my exposition of the methodology of the study in Chapter Two Part Two, including the articulation of this into the theoretical and philosophical framing of the study, I then explicitly applied this theory in the selection, description, analysis and interpretation of five Sticky Moments (or Episodes). It is important to consider the epistemological status of the findings that emerge from this process. As in many practices studied ethnographically (see, e.g. Fiske, 1997), someone in the role of ethnographer studies what the participants (who, in a study such as this, a practitioner ethnography, include the researcher) ‘just know’. Some of what has been selected, described, analysed and interpreted includes some of what I personally already know, as researcher but based in part on my roles as participant and theorist. Some of that I ‘just know’. What this research has attempted to do is to make explicit, to accumulate, and to successively develop this knowledge.

One key point is that because the research has grown out of the work of a practitioner, practitioner capabilities can be brought forward into the research, including intuitive and embodied ways of knowing, and also the appreciation of a range of practices and experiences that are understood to be therapeutic and which can be employed purposefully. At the same time, one challenge for this powerful contribution is that it is particularly salient for those with a clinical perspective, and others from different perspectives may need assistance to acquire something of these capabilities and this appreciation. The rationale for the selection of the episodes and the role of the methodology in this selection has been discussed (see page 99).

## Chapter 5

Chapter Five (Up-Bringing) shows the group in action, with important expression of emotion about the personal experience of learning, but also some thought and reflection on the experience. This is an expression of Foulkes' matrix, as well as Bion's containment of anxiety (see Chapter Two Part Two). It is argued that the extension of the matrix to include the discussion between the tutors (explored as a phenomenon in its own right in Chapter Eight) is an illustration of this constellation of the matrix in action. The *heuristic for considering interaction* described on Pages 85 and 104 enables awareness of *difference* (for example, in relation to feelings of psychological regression and apparent regard for the group), *connection* (in that the feelings and the difficulty of expressing and sharing them are heard and accepted), and *bi-logical depth* (in that the phenomena of both Foulkes' and Matte Blanco's arrays enable the perception of a range of constellations of experience, as detailed in Chapter Five). These constellations are the source of the headings in the analysis (which is a characterisation of a *chronological sequence*, in contrast to the analysis in Chapter Six, which is of a series of *themes and issues* drawn from throughout the session and not in chronological order). The constellations are also the basis of the interpretation that is reached in Chapter Five, that a discernable movement has begun in the group towards the conclusion of the work of the group.

## Chapter 6

*How has the group (in the example given in Chapter Six) been shown to be helpful (and not), to the learning of psychotherapy, and specifically, applying theory to practice?* To answer that, I would say that this moment suggested itself as a Sticky Moment even before the notion was elaborated. This is because of the sudden shift in the mood of the session, from frustration to a kind of alarm. I noted in Chapter Two Part Two that the



markers of moments that I chose included parapraxes or mis-performances, eruptions of emotion or humour, expressions of probable unconscious conflict, and awkward silences. This marker, largely an eruption of emotion, manifested as it is largely through the experience of one individual, presents a set of challenges.

This moment is a demonstration of the complex issues faced in the utilisation of a group-analytically informed model of teaching and learning, and also an example of a missed opportunity (and anything but a model response). The complex issues are illustrated by the challenge of the imperative of treating the student who becomes central with respect and care, and yet (if trying to make use of the opportunity for learning about the integration of theory and practice) using phenomena which could be experienced as highly shameful to some in the class in order to focus exploration. It can be seen from the episode that is studied that this challenge is not fully met on this occasion. What has been made clear is that some of the potential benefit of the teaching model will only be realised when the group is prepared to confront moments such as this. Had that preparation happened, members of the group (including the tutors) would be ready for the possibility that one or more of them might come to stand for or symbolise some aspect of the dynamics of the work of the learning group, and that exploration of that would take place once individuals' comfort and dignity had been sufficiently attended to. This point represents a major contribution of the thesis to the proposed model for teaching and learning.

## **Chapter 7**

In Chapter Seven, The Fishhook, I need to ask *how has the group in the example given been shown to be helpful (and not), to the learning of psychotherapy, and specifically, applying theory to practice?* As in Chapter Six, the illustration of the contribution of the

group is more potential than actual, and leads to a clear recognition of the need to facilitate this contribution through preparation.

What is also explored *post hoc* in the analysis in Chapter Seven is the density and overlap of meanings in *condensation*. The example illustrates the density of dynamics, and the analysis of the data in the example has led to the articulation and development of the Reference Locator (see Table 7.2 on page 219, and Figures 8.1 and 8.2 on pages 261 and 262), in order to enable some unpacking and sorting of these dynamics.

There is potential here for a very wide range of contributions of aspects of the group to learning psychotherapy, and in particular, in applying theory to practice. If the exploration that has taken place in the research can at least partly be brought into the teaching and into the group, then the students stand to learn how to recognise and deal with experience and dynamics in their clinical work, how to recognise and deal with experience and dynamics in their collegial and training experience, and how to be creative with clinical experience, as well as developing an understanding of a key feature of the inner world of their patients and themselves. This potential is articulated in Chapter Seven in relation to condensation (that is the density of meanings), but the same is possible in relation to the other features of the unconscious explored in Chapters Two and elaborated in Chapters Five to Nine.

## **Chapter 8**

Chapter Eight. On reflection, one of the core competencies that the course has always aimed to foster, and which is part of the explicit aim of this semester, is the capacity to reflect in action. This is not unlike Casement's (1985, 1990) concept of the internal supervisor, discussed on page 38, and again on page 101. One of the major means to

develop this capacity is through clinical supervision, which involves a form of withdrawal from the interaction under consideration. The break has a straightforward recuperative purpose, having been part of a course involving fully employed professionals (which includes the tutors) and therefore held at the end of a full working day. However, the break is also a chance to reflect on the experience of the first half of the teaching session, and hence has some similarity to clinical supervision. Certainly, for the staff, it seems inevitable that the dynamics of the teaching session will permeate the break, both because of coming immediately after the previous part of the session, and also because of their position in the whole group as a key sub-group. This latter contribution reflects the way that dynamics of clinical work permeate *post hoc* supervisory discussions via parallel processes.

The research has made apparent very clearly how the conduct of the break has not been fully theorised and agreed. At the same time, the methodology allows for an analysis of some of what did take place in one such break. This break was chosen with attention to the same criteria used with the other four Sticky Moments, that is moments of group interaction that are complex and layered, indicated by, for example, parapraxes or mis-performances, eruptions of emotion or humour, expressions of probable unconscious conflict, or awkward silences. This particular break was selected because it seemed to contain expressions of probable conflict which is not made explicit, and which therefore may well remain unconscious.

The example given in Chapter Eight shows how work in one setting can be reflected in another setting, where it can be usefully considered as informative and indicative in terms of the core task in question. This is clearly of value from a methodological perspective.

From a substantive perspective, some of what is available for analysis and interpretation has been elaborated, illustrating how a break such as this can be more fully used than for mere recuperation. Also, although not applied consciously and planfully, the staff demonstrate in the break an aspect of the conduct of their core task, the creation, maintenance and repair of a good-enough working relationship between them, at which I would argue they are broadly successful (as evidenced not least by the eventual outcome of this session). As with other demonstrations of the group being helpful, much of the highlighting is of missed potential, but this then contributes to the proposed teaching model (see below). Finally, the analysis of the episode and its context enabled the elaboration of the concept of *identity in transition* as a significant component and focus of that model.

## **Chapter 9**

Regarding Chapter Nine, and asking, *how has the group in the example given been shown to be helpful (and not), to the learning of psychotherapy, and specifically, applying theory to practice?*, the answer appears to be layered. Approaching the question directly, the students take turns (and indeed, almost the whole session) to answer this. Their answers (see page 279) include: the provision (by the tutors and the group) of safety; an opportunity for transition, and the resolution of conflict; a space to be oneself; a freedom from status anxiety and a place to recognise unconscious competence; being simultaneously held *and* challenged; an opportunity involving struggle with different models of working; confusion; an experience of enactment as well as an experience of what has been enacted becoming (appropriately) contained elsewhere, and an awareness of the staff having provided support for these experiences; and a place to consider difference and identity.

From the alternative perspective of the analysis of the episode reported in Chapter Nine, I can echo the accounts given by the students, which have considerable authenticity, and do reflect directly the achievement of some of the aims of the semester and the course. However, the example shows more than this in considering *how has the group in the example given been shown to be helpful (and not), to the learning of psychotherapy, and specifically, applying theory to practice?* As with previous examples, some of this was helpful and can be shown, whilst much of what the example illuminates is missed opportunities, only visible as possibility.

The group and the staff provide an environmental mother, in the sense of being a supportive and developmental environment, although to what extent this is ‘good-enough’ has been debated. The group exhibits scapegoating. The group has enabled the emergence and expression of less conscious impulses and dynamics, although what is missing (and therefore not helpful, and its potential helpfulness not seen) is collective thought and reflection on these dynamics. The group provides a site for identity in transition, but because the potential contribution of the group aspect of the teaching is not made fully explicit by the staff, students are not fully enabled to focus on and appreciate this.

The group effectively disappears, from the attention of the staff and students, and from direct consideration by them as a group. What is shown by this is that managing the group perspective on events needs conscious attention, even if the outcome of that attention is the choice to have the perspective disappear for a time. I believe that this example has shown that if endings such as this are not well considered ahead of time, they risk becoming sites for the enactment of primitive and ambivalent thoughts and feelings. Conversely, if the group is engaged from the perspective of itself as a group,

then this perspective will be in the minds of the members as the experience progresses and ends. Even if feelings and dynamics cannot appropriately be dealt with immediately in the learning group, students can be encouraged to identify issues that trouble them in their learning and to bring them back later, or to take those identified issues to settings such as the adjacent Reflective Group, or to clinical supervision or individual personal therapy.

## ***SYNTHESISING THE FINDINGS FROM THE THESIS***

### ***Introduction to a series of concepts***

Together, these concepts that follow link the findings of the study, make up the group-analytically informed teaching model, and inform research in group-analytic ethnography. They are: the matrix of the learning group; dynamic administration; the group as a reflective self; allusion, metonymy and metaphor; Sticky Moments, transfer of form; and identity in transition.

The thesis has, I would argue, demonstrated that a particular collection of understandings can be applied to experience in the professional practice of teaching the clinical method of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and that the outcome is a detailed appreciation of the role of the learning group, its actual accomplishments and its further potential. In ‘elevator conversation’<sup>2</sup> terms, I am confident I can now look at a learning group, real or potential, and that as a result I can with much greater certainty than before make some contribution to how the work of that group (and of the range of participants and stakeholders in the milieu of which it is a part) can be understood and further developed.

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<sup>2</sup> Here I am using ‘elevator conversation’ to refer to the conversation one might have in an elevator with someone inquiring about the progress of one’s thesis, or more particularly here, what one has learned. The conversation is, of course, limited by the length of an elevator ride.

If I have a few more floors (in the elevator), I am now confident I can convey to others how one can do this work (that is, researching via the exploration of group experience, and if appropriate, changing practice on the basis of the evidence *from practice* gained from such research). One might call this Practice-Based-Evidence-Based Practice (or PBEBP), in response to Mace's (2006) requirement that the empirical support for treatments includes acknowledgement of all consequences of clinical practice, welcome and unwelcome, in assessments of their impact, and of the necessity of bringing analytic capacity to bear on the complex motivations and institutional processes that accompany evidence-based practice. I will say more on this point in the next chapter in relation to what might follow this research.

What follows are details of the concepts that I propose as useful in synthesising the findings of the illustrations that I have explored. These concepts overlap and are interlinked: I will spell out each of them in turn, and then look at some ways in which they are connected.

### ***The matrix of the learning group***

A major contribution of a group-analytic perspective is the notion that through interaction a matrix of relationships is formed with particular qualities, strengths and challenges. This provides a context for awareness at a range of levels, and along dimensions of association, difference and bi-logical depth.

This matrix has ritual qualities. Some of these qualities are expressed in terms of what is inside and what is outside, what is permitted and what is forbidden, and of providing a particular kind of symbolic order. These qualities are particularly linked to the

*boundaries* of the space. Other ritual qualities included here are exemplified in Augé's (2004) notion of the emblematic form of *Suspense*, and what Fiske (1997) has referred to as learning and participating. These qualities are more related to the *processes* that take place in the ritual space, that is, what people actually do and experience.<sup>3</sup>

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It seems useful to regard the group matrix of the learning group as a form parallel to Bordin's (1971) concept of the psychoanalytic working alliance from individual psychotherapy. If one does this, then Bordin's casting of the creation, maintenance and repair of the working alliance as the business of therapy can also be adopted to make the creation, maintenance and repair of the group matrix one strand of the business of the learning group. The responsibility for this aspect of the business of a group is captured to a significant degree by the group analytic concept of dynamic administration. This is elaborated next.

### ***Dynamic administration***

This notion is regarded by many as a seminal contribution from Foulkes. Dynamic administration refers to the responsibility of the conductor of a group to set, communicate, model and promote aspects such as the values and boundaries of a group-analytic group. Although it can appear as mere common sense, Foulkes was clear from the beginning of his writing that the totality of the setting for group analysis was crucial, and that the creation and maintenance of this is a key responsibility for the group conductor. A form of this concept was already a distinctive feature of much of the

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<sup>3</sup> Hopper's (2003) examination of how groups are helpful to difficult patients, outlined on Pages 60 of this thesis in Table 2.1, notes in Item 1 that some see the supportive and containing aspects of groups as a manifestation of Winnicott's *environmental mother*. Winnicott (1960, 1969) contrasted this notion with that of *object mother*, who is available as an object with whom to relate. I am differentiating here between *ritual as context* (reflecting elements of Winnicott's environmental mother, providing an essential environment that can be taken for granted), and *ritual as process* (reflecting elements of Winnicott's object mother, providing a presence in the environment, directly aimed at the encouragement of transition).



practice of psychoanalysis as noted above, one which has continued to develop its importance in contemporary theory and practice, but given the presence of a broader, and importantly, available social context, this feature can be accessed and extended much more directly in a group rather than in an individual context. However, the introduction of the notion of dynamic administration also requires that this topic is considered in the planning and delivery of group-based teaching and learning such as this. The apparent neglect of the group perspective by the staff in this research (which includes the researcher) is almost certainly typical of many such situations, but if a formal acknowledgement is made of the importance of this perspective, then such apparent neglect will become more obvious and will require demand consideration.

### ***The group as a reflective self***

One powerful thread through the theoretical basis of psychotherapy is that of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; Holmes, 1997). If the impact of psychoanalytic psychotherapy is to enable the rearrangement of the internal world, or in other words object relationships, under the cover of the transference, then the capacity for this to happen is in no small part a result of the particular form of attachment that is a good therapeutic alliance.

Fonagy (2001) has described the importance for an infant to discover him or herself as comprehensible in the mind of another, and in Chapter Two Part One I outlined the recognition of the importance of this potential to the development of the sense of a coherent self in a child.

Therapy of a certain kind works because participants are enabled to experience a particular kind of intimate relationship different to that which they characteristically

expect. Specifically, parents will tend to reproduce in their relationships with their children the pattern of attachment that they experienced with their own parents. An intervention that has significant impact on this process is for people to undergo relationship based psychotherapy. This tends to lead to attachment patterns moving from a range of 'Insecure' classifications towards 'Secure'.

Being part of a group where there is an opportunity to reflect on one's impact on the group and the impact of the group on one's self is an elegant and effective form of preparation for relational work with patients and clients. Specifically, features such as the plasticity of experience that flow from adoption of a group-analytic perspective can enable individuals to use the resources of the group to enhance their understanding. For example, at Stratum Two and below of Matte-Blanco's hierarchy (1988), *the body of the group* can come to represent *the body of the patient*, or *the symbiotic fusion of the patient and therapist*, and reflective consideration of positions in relation to that can greatly expand the understanding that individuals and the group can accomplish through taking part. Alternately, in clinical practice, for example, the group can come to seem to be at one's shoulder or inside one's mind. All of these possibilities expand the potential of the reflective self.

### ***Allusion, metonymy and metaphor***

The focus on Freud's characteristics of the unconscious (1915) and their subsequent elaborations (Matte-Blanco, 1988; Rayner & Tuckett, 1988) has led to an appreciation of a number of contributions from linguistics, such as the concepts of allusion, metonymy and metaphor. The matrix created in the learning group can be used to make sense of these processes taking place between people working together to understand the process of relational psychotherapy.

Allusion, from the Latin *alludere*, to play with, is the process by which references are suggested, and in literature, by which the writer creates a sense of shared understanding with the reader. An appreciation of allusion enhances the capacity for reflective, relational psychotherapy, one of the core outcomes of the teaching under study, through encouraging seeing and hearing beyond what is presented; the employment of allusion is a key part of how the learning group can operate successfully, enabling play with ideas and associations; and allusion is a key aspect of the methodology, in that play with the data enables a creative appreciation of what it can represent.

The relationship between metonymy and metaphor is interesting. Metaphor can be said to talk about a concept by describing something similar to it: metonymy does the same by talking about what is contiguous to it. Regarding their use in understanding the dynamics of group interaction, it would appear that in this setting there is a kind of dialectic between the two forms, and between their alternate dominance of experience.

In the case of the learning group in the study, it is as if we got relatively overwhelmed with metonymy at the expense of metaphor. It may be that this flowed from the central place in which as tutors we put the avoidance of judgment and the promotion of free association. As in brainstorming, we were looking particularly to expand the range of possibilities of response by the students, and we were thus keen to de-emphasise as far as possible the notion of a ‘right’ answer in response to the material brought by the presenter. It seems as if this principle then rather invaded the interaction, and left us apparently unable to be firm around boundaries, with others and ourselves.

The experience of this last challenge was notably different in the next full run of the course. By this, I refer not to the next intake, which was being taught at the same time as this group, but the one that followed that, recruited after a re-structuring of the course. In that intake, the course (by then accredited by a local university) required a tutor assessment of the work of each student, to be arrived at by the marking of assignments and by the grading of students' in-class presentations, and the sessions of the semester were changed so that the presenter got not only to provide a dénouement but also to offer their formulation of the case of their patient, enhanced if appropriate by the discussion in the group. Somehow this restored a kind of balance between metaphor and metonymy, inviting first a loosening and drifting stream of free association as now, but also requiring that the fruits of that drifting are then synthesized into hypotheses and models in order to understand the patient and to conduct the therapy, and hence to learn the art and science of psychotherapy. The recognition of the different elements of metaphor and metonymy, and the need for a relationship of balance between them in practice is a major conclusion of this work.

### ***Sticky Moments***

I want to come back to these. In Chapter One, I mentioned Sticky Moments as something that drew me to this type of study, as indicators. At the most basic level, they indicate some density of dynamics. If there is space to consider the complexity held in this density, then the elaboration that can take place is a very rich and useful source of ideas.

On reflection, it seems that experience is always layered. In the case of the semester under study, there are the layers in a gradient of closeness to the clinical work presented to the learning group, from Client and Therapist, via Therapist and Group, to

Tutors, to Researcher), as well as the layers of Foulkes's Levels (1975) and Matte-Blanco's (1988) Strata.

In the light of an appreciation of various forms of layering of experience, it seems that 'Sticky Moments' will occur when there are resonances across a number of layers, with the 'Stickiest Moments' happening when the maximum number of layers are involved. These resonances can occur along a range of dimensions. An example is topic area (so a topic may be salient between patient and therapist, for the therapist, between the therapist and their peers, between the therapist and their tutors, for their tutors and between them, and for the researcher). Interpersonal processes are another example of cross-level resonance and repercussion.

### ***Transfer of form***

This concept depends on an awareness of metaphor and metonymy and the forms of relationship between them. I became aware of making a lot of observations that could be said to be about parallels, about overlaps between disciplines. Initially this was about overlaps between psychoanalysis and anthropology, particularly ethnography, and there are many examples of such links in my notes. For example,

I think there is something about using a topographical framework, interestingly like early Freud, and I'm thinking in terms of terrain to be discovered. And some of that comes from, if you like, geology and what's under the ground, and oceanography and what's under the sea, and I can explore the depths of phenomena, and it's really like mapping, the hills and valleys and the streams and rivers, and seas and then noticing topographical features, some of which begin to become familiar, to be able to look at them in more detail and to be able to look at them from different perspectives.

In this example, I am associating freely, and arriving at a metaphor for the representation of experience and behaviour that I am studying, which can also aid in the analysis and interpretation of that data. Topography is taken from mathematics and used in geography, but it has been of value in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy (particularly as a way of alluding to depth of consciousness), as well as in anthropology, where it can be used to convey the notion of depth of meaning.<sup>4</sup>

Metonymy is also important. Rather than merely finding symbols that unite previously disparate contexts (as topography does above), I also came across many examples of similarity, where by a kind of blurring process one thing could be substituted for another close by, such as the substitution of psychoanalytic for conventional listening in a research interview. Another example follows, in the form of a note from later in the same entry in my field notes:

I just had another series of thoughts about Goffman. I guess Goffman is a predecessor of Glaser and Strauss, and found a different way of doing it, more naturalistically, if you like, and it's interesting thinking of Goffman in terms of position. In a way he took a middle position as a remedial gymnast, in between patients and doctors. And then I was thinking about position as a place to be, a place to be in that I've arrived at, a place to be in the methodology of the research, but maybe it's also a place to be in that it's a place from which one can learn. It's about being able to learn and about being held in a certain kind of position. And perhaps one where the multiple layers of meaning can come together and be thought about, even if not totally linked together and explored.

Section 108.1, Paragraph 878. 27/06/2004

### ***Identity in transition***

The heart of this semester is contained in this notion. This is what comes between the two columns in Table 4.1 on Page 114, between the position summarized by questions

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<sup>4</sup> An example would be Robert Levy's (1973) study of Tahitians by a form of in-depth psychiatric interview (discussed on Page 65), which concluded amongst other things that Tahitians focus on the presentation of smooth and fragrant *surfaces* (*my emphasis*), but at the cost of the expression of personal and private *dis-ease*.

and learning edges on commencement, and that from considering the same items on ending. Even though this appears to individualise the transition, it is manifold, involving each student, all of them together, them as a reflective group, *the learning group*, the tutors and other staff, and the researcher. If pushed to express succinctly what the group does in the learning situation, it *supports, mirrors, echoes and develops identity in transition*, both individual identities and various group identities.

### ***Towards a potential form of teaching model***

I want to look now at the *task*, that is, task as described in the Reference Locator in Chapter Eight (see Table 7.2 on Page 219), that of teaching the integration of theory and practice in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. *Task* in that model is differentiated from *Clinical* and *Group* as a focus in the learning group. In other words, the overt business of the group is differentiated both from the material used to conduct that business, and from the process of doing that business. In the array of fields considered in Chapter Two Part Two on Pages 49 and 50, Teaching, Practice and Research, this is the Teaching field. As an aside, these arrays (of foci, and of fields respectively) are intended to reflect and capture both metaphor and metonymy, by allowing the recognition of both contrasts and contiguities, and hence they exemplify core components of the research methodology.

It has been argued in the study that a major underlying process which is going on in the semester, and which leads to many of the outcomes that are sought and emerge, is that of *identity in transition*. As noted above, this is a multi-level process, involving various collections of individuals and the group as a whole. For individual clinicians, to work in the clinical model (in the Clinical focus, the Practice field) requires them to take a series of steps. These are towards a more profoundly relational method of working, attending

with great care to the reported experience and behaviour of the patient, but also attending to one's own experience of being in a particular form of relationship with them.

For some taking this step, they will be moving away from more prescribed and prescriptive ways of working. I am thinking here of practitioners trained in dominant models that are very different to that espoused in the course. Examples would be the psychiatrists and other physicians trained in a western medical model, or clinical psychologists trained as scientist practitioners rigorously applying what are seen as evidenced-based treatments.

Others taking this step, such as nurses and counsellors, will be moving towards a more explicit understanding of difficulty and process from their original disciplines. Broadly, these disciplines place relatively more focus on the relationship with the client or patient, but perhaps allow less room for the intentionality of the practitioner.

For the sake of both kinds of direction in which people may be moving, it seems self-evident that there needs to be more focus on self in relationship. The group can also take a step, as a result in part of steps taken by individuals, which can convey vividly the experience of being part of a step being taken.

### ***Details of the proposed teaching model***

The group-analytically informed model of teaching psychoanalytic psychotherapy is as follows.



The model places the group as integral to the teaching and learning, and indeed to the practice of the clinical approach being taught, alongside an understanding of the individual, instead of being seen as an afterthought. This is a foundational proposition of group analysis, reflected here in a clinical teaching environment. This is, however, in contrast to some models of teaching and practice in psychoanalytic psychotherapy which do not pay similar attention to the group vertex.

This is a particular perspective on what is happening as people learn in a group. This perspective can also inform consideration of other aspects of the life of the learning group. For example, in the recruitment and selection of teachers, the forming of a teaching partnership, the setting of the curriculum, the recruitment and selection of the students, the composition of the students into a group, the structuring of the learning opportunities by allocating responsibility for presentation and discussion of topics, and in the consideration of issues of power and its impact on the learning, assessment and graduation process, in all these aspects, the perspective from the ‘group’ vertex gives breadth and depth to the understanding that is possible and to the actions and other responses to events that can flow from that understanding. Hence, these aspects represent and articulate what Bernstein (1996) construed as Curriculum (what counts as knowledge), Transmission (how learning takes place) and Evaluation (what counts as a legitimate display of learning).

This model includes Foulkes’s notion of level (from Current through Transference to Projective and Primordial Levels), and also of the social unconscious, elaborated by Elias, Dalal, Hopper and others (Dalal, 1998, 2001; Elias, 1994; Hopper, 2003a). It also acknowledges Matte-Blanco’s (1975) notion of bi-logic (that is, two logics,

asymmetrical and symmetrical occurring side by side), and his idea of strata, from the most conscious and rational down to the least conscious and rational.

These ideas form a background against which interaction in the learning group can be seen. This interaction can be used in a range of ways. It can be used as a source of understanding what is going on, or as a vehicle for modelling by the tutors, or for pointing to examples of modelling by the students, or in a range of ways between these two poles. When tutor observations of the interaction (effectively, interpretations) are made, these model both reaching an understanding and attempting to communicate that understanding. Similarly, student observations can be an opportunity for individual students to develop their making of interpretations. To some extent the same is true of the group, in as much as interpretations arising in the group are a product of the group as well as the individual who makes them.

From within the experience of the learning group, moments occur where there is some disruption to the smooth flow of interaction. These index or ‘sticky’ moments can occur when someone makes a mistake, or omits to carry out some aspect of the primary task. The research has taken these as one set of foci. In practice, these are sites for exploration, using the methodology of the research applied to *your own* experience. I emphasise *your own* because the intention is that this model of practice in teaching has contributions to offer to teachers of practice in a wide range of professional disciplines and settings. The model can inform practice, and also be available to explore the experience of practice, for the purpose of pure research, applied research, or merely as good continuing and continuous professional development.

***The question of co-facilitation***

There is no doubt in my mind that it would have been difficult if not impossible for me to evolve the practical understanding of the professional practice of teaching clinical method that I have without co-working, and without doing so over a long period of time. On the other hand and at the same time, co-working leads to the restriction of some possibilities, and there are a range of issues that must be dealt with if colleagues are to be able to co-work without task or relationship breakdown.

That the work could continue as successfully as it did without more explicit attention to the working relationship between the tutors may ironically be an indication of the strength of that relationship. Issues went unaddressed, but yet there was significant trust and cooperation for that not to impact too greatly on the outcome.

A downside of co-teaching is that the presence of a couple can be a distraction as well as a support, tending to predispose the group and the individuals within it to a more infantile or childlike position, and taking the focus towards the tutors as a parental couple. The traditional group-analytic model for conducting is for one person to undertake this role alone, although occasionally including a more junior colleague (and one acknowledged as such) as an observer. The benefit of this arrangement is that the conductor is then more able to form a couple (and to take up a range of other positions) with the group.

An alternative to these positions is to consider how it would be to proceed with one tutor. From the point of view of the research, the task of participant observation might well have become overwhelming. The bulk of the reflection on the data did not take place until after the teaching was complete, although much use was made as part of that

of the actual experience of presence and participation in the events of the semester. In addition to the absence of a colleague in the room and during the break, more use would have to have been made of private reflection by the sole tutor researcher. In the absence of other reflective space to replace these losses, it is unlikely that the researcher would have been able to manage the range of tasks involved. An alternative might be a model more akin to traditional participant observation, with a sole tutor and the researcher taking part more as a participant and observing professional researcher. This change would generate more distance and potential objectivity which would be a possible gain, but it would also lose some privileged positioning.

## ***CONCLUSION***

What can be learned as a result of this research, in relation to the two questions posed at the start of the thesis? How does the learning group operate, and how can it be investigated? In a manner that is a theme in the thesis, these two questions and the answers of each of them are linked, in a way that they seem to be adjacent.

Taking the second question first, how can the learning group be investigated, this leads mostly to methodological findings. These are in two sets: one is that there is a way of understanding groups evolved from clinical literature and of applying and using that understanding, effectively a product of this thesis, that can be used by others in research; the other is a demonstration of this understanding in operation.

To return to the first question, how does the learning group operate, this leads mostly to substantive findings. Much of these findings is in the form of elaboration and exemplification of processes of interaction, as well as consideration of their meaning and implications.

One set of these findings involves the demonstration of a group in action, with a purposefully assembled body of theory used to exemplify processes as they occur. This leads to a collection of examples or sticky moments, important both for emphasising significant process as well as for highlighting potential opportunities where the theory and analysis offer ways to help the teachers to work differently. These sticky moments include: a difficult beginning; an eruption of emotion in an hiatus; the dramatic appearance of a powerful symbol; phenomena transferred to, enacted in and managed in an allied reflective space; and disconnection from reality at an ending. These are understood respectively as illustrations: of *timelessness*, and of containment, essential to the work of the group; of how an individual can come unconsciously through a form of *symbolisation* to be the focus of and conveyor of experience for the group; of *condensation* of an array of meanings into a single instance; of how *displacement* offers potential for experience, appreciation, understanding and resolution; and, finally, of how an *absence of mutual contradiction* can, amongst other things, allow the unconscious to remain so, in this case at a cost.

A second set of findings involves the elaboration and exemplification of the potential of this approach. This includes the employment of the approach in the planning, use and understanding of learning experiences that take place in a wide range of groups, as well as the capacity in action to recognise phenomena as they occur and to know how they can be subjected to a more group-aware process of reflection.

Taking the two questions together, the research can be seen to have done three things. It theorises existing and new phenomena from a particular group perspective; it provides another level or vertex in any small group experience for consideration of phenomena;

and it invites and encourages discovery in practice, a key means to develop truly practice-based evidence-based practice.

From this summary and synthesis of findings, I am aware of the potential for both condensation and expansion of this material.

A major condensation is an enhanced and demonstrated awareness of the layered nature of experience, and the importance of considering the range of contexts that may be relevant to an understanding of that experience, such as associated fields and allied foci, generated by processes involving both metonymy and metaphor.

A major expansion of the findings is to consider their application in other learning groups, and indeed in other settings. A key question might be, do individuals and teams of staff have the capacity to explore anxiety in the performance of their primary task, to reflect on the nature and meaning of that anxiety, and to make use of that anxiety in the successful conduct of their work. This study offers a means to explore and understand whether this question can be answered in the affirmative, and if not, to deliver and evaluate interventions to make that so.

More personally, I hope I have contributed to an enhanced understanding of how the mind can learn and develop. This learning and development has been studied specifically in relation to learning to help to heal other minds, but has much wider application. In particular, I hope that I have illustrated how this learning and development can be fostered when it takes place in a certain kind of association with other like minds.

# Chapter Eleven

## A Critical Reflection on the Study

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### ***Introduction***

In this chapter, the aim is to offer a critical reflection on the study. This will involve a consideration of the conduct of the study in relation to Stewart's criteria (1998, p.17) for judging ethnographic method, followed by a consideration of the stages of the study (the design of the research, the analysis, and the discussion and conclusions). The chapter ends with an overall critique of the whole project.

### ***Preamble - the research is just what you do anyway***

It can be argued that the methodology of this research, post-Foulkesian group-analytic ethnography (or PFGAE), is actually no more than good practice in adult education. Following this argument, teachers of courses such as this would expect as a matter of routine to pay attention to the process of such a group. They would also expect to make use of any data that came from that consideration in order to maximise the outputs from the course, notably the integration by the participants of theory and practice in their professional field. As part of the drive towards this integration, it would be assumed that teachers would avail themselves of all reasonable opportunities to consider relevant data. There are also overlaps between this field and others, such as the professional supervision of trainers of people who work with people, where there are other theorisations of experience and behaviour not necessarily related to this research (Ekstein & Wallerstein, 1972; Searles, 1955). This work may not be a whole field, either being subsumed by practice in this area, or by another field all together. Set against this, what distinguishes this work is the intent, as well as the opportunity that

has been created. It is notable that without a conscious determination to take up research opportunities, they remain just that. Furthermore, the likelihood of having the time, energy and authorisation under the circumstances of normal service provision to undertake such a task is virtually zero. This is not just good professional practice.

The apparent similarity between the research approach and aspects of practice as usual also has its advantages. This kind of approach can be incorporated steadily into practice as usual, leading to minimal disruption and a resonance of the values of the research with those of the practice under investigation. If there is a harmony between local forms of practice and research, then the research is likely to embody all of Stewart's criteria. As discussed in Chapter Three on Page 94, these are *Veracity*, *Objectivity* and *Perspicacity*. The sub-headings that follow, representing tactics that may lead to the achievement of the relevant criterion, are also taken from Stewart.

### ***Veracity***

As a reminder, the pivotal question raised by veracity is, how well, with what verisimilitude, does this study succeed in its *depiction*? The following headings are tactics that can be aimed at accomplishing veracity.

#### ***Prolonged fieldwork***

My engagement with this site is very extensive. I had been closely involved, latterly as Head of Training for the Agency, for five years prior to the collection of the data, and I have remained involved (still being an associate member of teaching staff with a successor body to The Agency) at the time of writing over nine years later, a total duration of over fourteen years.



### ***Seeking out reorienting or disconfirming observations***

Because of the exploratory nature of the work and the absence of formal hypotheses, disconfirming observations *per se* do not exist. I remain very open to alternative explanations for the phenomena that I have variously described, analysed and interpreted. One consideration worth making is what would result if there was no notion of the unconscious. This would inevitably be a discordant perspective, because the research model would not have a significant overlap with the teaching model and the practice model. However, the main result would seem to be that without a body of theory to provide sensitising concepts (Malinowski, 1984/1922), the study would become merely descriptive.

### ***Good participative role relationships***

The participation in research required of participants in the group under study (the students and my colleague) was largely a passive one, specifically that they give permission for data to be collected whilst they were taking part in the teaching and learning, and for analytic work to be done on that data by the researcher outside of the teaching session. Little else was required of participants by the research in addition to the existing expectation of their participation as students in the teaching and learning. In this sense, the relationships between them and the tutors, and between them as individuals, and the complex variations on those relationships that have been the focus of this study, were a matter of concern and importance for pedagogic purposes throughout the conduct of the research. They are also considered good for research purposes, as far as is possible to assess in this context. From a comparison with a number of other intakes on this course, it did not appear at the time of the fieldwork or on subsequent reflection that there was a significant impact of the tape-recording, of the sessions and of the staff conversation in the break, on the interaction that was recorded

in these two settings, other than a passing initial self-consciousness. In accordance with experience over many years in clinical settings, this seemed to resolve rapidly.

### ***Attentiveness to speech and interactional contexts***

This is a distinguishing feature and strength of the research method, group-analytic ethnography, and would almost certainly be rapidly evident to a communication analyst in a consideration of the manner in which group analytic therapy groups are conducted. In the case of this project, the design was not such that the researcher ‘interpreted in’, sharing *research* observations with the other participants. However, *professional* observations (that is, those aimed at the performance of the primary task, the teaching and learning of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and made by the researcher in his role as tutor) were occasionally offered by both staff. These professional observations also have research value.

### ***Multiple modes of data collection***

This project had a lot of experiential richness typical of ethnographic fieldwork. Data was collected on audiotapes, in written documents, from informal conversations, from participation in the group with the other participants and outside of the group with the other tutor, from membership of the professional community and of the wider community, and from reflection on those experiences in various settings and at distances in time from the main fieldwork.

It is also important that there are many sources of data which were not considered. These are considered under ‘Respondent validation’ and ‘Feedback from outsiders’ below, because that is what these sources mainly are. These tactics are relevant to the objectivity of this study, but not to the veracity.

## ***Objectivity***

As a reminder, the pivotal questions raised by objectivity are, how well does this study transcend the perspectives of the researcher, and how well does this study transcend the perspectives of informants? The following headings are tactics aimed at accomplishing objectivity.

### ***The trail of the ethnographer's path***

It would be possible to contact my fellow participants, and to replay the audiotape recordings. These recordings were, as noted above, of all but one of the classroom sessions, and of several of the staff discussions in the break that took place in the middle of each session. Because of the personal nature of my experience of and contribution to the teaching and learning under study, the extent to which another ethnographer could collect the rest of my data is limited, although were they to fill the role of tutor, I believe that they would have much of the experience had by Judi and me.

### ***Respondent validation***

Neither raw data nor findings were checked and discussed with respondents. This is a story written by me about one group of people learning psychoanalytic psychotherapy during one semester-long class as part of their training. This is not me discovering or articulating their accounts, from a realist perspective, nor from a phenomenological perspective. It is instead an account of what I make of various types of data, including the experience of being part of the learning myself, the tape recording of the teaching, and a sequential process of description, analysis and interpretation of the events of the semester and of the data from a group-analytic ethnographic perspective.

I need to acknowledge that many may find this proposition unacceptable. Why did I not undertake corroboratory interviews with my fellow participants, given that this would have been practically possible? I remain in contact with six of the nine students and my colleague even now, and could probably locate the three students of whose whereabouts I am unsure. Put briefly, as acknowledged above, my restricted focus stems from my interest in Hollway and Jefferson's notion of *the defended subject* (2000). The idea that people can only have a limited awareness of their motivations and impulses leads to a tempered view of the value of first hand accounts.

### ***Feedback from outsiders***

Other than in supervision (monthly for the six years duration of this project), during presentations to colleagues, and when seeking comments from readings of all or part of the thesis by colleagues, this was not sought formally. I think that the complexity that follows from the range of roles that I had in this project led me to keep a close and relatively personal focus. This followed my appreciation of Wolcott's (1994) notion that anthropological doctoral study is inevitably an isolated activity because one is going to new places, and the task of originality involves some withdrawal from the world rather than contact with it.

Again, I need to acknowledge that many may find this proposition as unacceptable as that in relation to respondent validation. In my mind, I imagine a response of writers such as Hammersley (2007). This is my version of how they might conceivably respond. I can see there might be expression of concern that, in a flourish of post-modern reflexivity, I have largely substituted my own voice for that of anyone (or indeed, everyone) else, and hence have potentially done violence to a pervasive commitment to the primacy of a multiply-voiced community. In my defence, I wanted consciously and purposefully to write an almost solely personal account, reflecting the

experience from the practice field in which the group analyst and the psychoanalytic psychotherapist can neither share much of their personal experience of practice, nor count on the involvement of anyone but themselves in the making of their interventions. I have to own and stand by my own commitment to this way of thinking about professional and particularly clinical practice.

### ***Inter-rater checks on indexing and coding***

See above - this criterion is not considered applicable to this type of study. There is also only one rater. As with the previous two tactics to achieve objectivity, I know that some readers will find this unacceptable, but this is what I did.

### ***Comprehensive data archive***

The audiotapes and my notebooks are available for perusal with interpretation.

### ***Perspicacity***

As a reminder, the pivotal questions raised by perspicacity are, is this study revelatory, does this research generate insights that are also applicable to other times, other places, in the human experience, or in summary, how fundamentally does this study explain?

The following headings are tactics aimed at accomplishing perspicacity.

### ***Intense consideration of the data***

This design for this study and the study itself involve all of Stewart's tactics: inspiration and perspiration; decontextualising, memoing and recontextualising; theoretical candour; and comparisons with other ethnographies. Taking the last of these first, comparisons with other ethnographies, I came to recognise patterns of practice in the writing of a variety of apparently diverse ethnographers (Augé, 2004; Becker, 1958; Devereux, 1967; Fiske, 1997; Kondo, 1990; Malinowski, 1984/1922; Wolcott, 1994)

and others over many decades. These patterns have been familiar to me from the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and this is true in the application of my own approach to ethnography. They illustrate well the other three criteria for intense consideration of the data; inspiration and perspiration; decontextualisation, memoing and recontextualisation; and theoretical candour.

In considering inspiration and perspiration, I had to learn to work as a researcher in a way that was not rational or direct, and indeed, that at times made no sense to me at all. I am reminded here of Bion's (1950, p. 4) apparently casual remark in an account of his qualifying case as a psycho-analyst, that during the whole of the first two years of the analysis, he had great difficulty in being able to determine from his patient's reactions what validity to assign to his interpretations. Clinically, I have found acknowledgements such as this to be exceedingly liberating, and I have been able to draw on this liberation in the study. Clinically, it has often been only through perseverance, frequently without any source of hope outside of myself, that I have continued to work with some patients who eventually went on to make significant therapeutic gains. Yet at the same time, I have had experiences that range from this through to epiphanies. In this research experience, ideas, images, feelings, intuitions and thoughts have variously come to me, and I have learned to hold, contain and reflect upon these, much as I do in clinical and consulting practice. These two aspects well represent inspiration and perspiration respectively.

Decontextualisation, memoing and recontextualisation were clear features in my progress through various cycles of analysis of the data. I appreciate Stewart's notion that prolonged holding of the wholeness of a context is a feature of ethnography not shared by many other qualitative approaches. In my view, methodologies such as

grounded theory move very quickly to fragmentation and coding of data. At the same time, I do value the opportunity to focus through this tactic on particular segments of my experience, as I do in the Synchronic Analyses of Chapters Five to Nine.

Regarding theoretical candour, I have very much been open in the study to a range of explanations for what is taking place, or what can be learned from it.

### ***Exploration***

I hope it is clear from my account of the fieldwork and of the analytic process that the whole experience was one of exploration. The study has been a look below the surface and behind the scenes of a segment of psychotherapy training, which itself is a task of facilitating in trainees the capacity to explore with their patients and colleagues.

## ***Critiques of the design of the research, the execution of that design, the analysis and the conclusions***

### ***The design***

From my own perspective, this research experience was something of a golden opportunity, a gift in terms of a PhD topic area. I had considerable access to data, the generosity of my colleague and the students, warm offers of assistance from the field location (the Agency), and an extremely powerful and privileged position in terms of access to a range of perspectives. I also had the advantage of an intersection of a number of my own strong interests, in research (particularly in constructing routine practice as a form of research, or alternatively, research being closely integrated with routine practice), in the teaching of psychotherapy, and in groups (both in group analytic psychotherapy practice, as well as in group approaches to a range of forms of consultation). I should, however, be careful not to be seduced by these factors. They

made my life easier and more worthwhile, but did they achieve more than this, and did they limit what I might otherwise have done?

I consider that the research methodology, one product of this constellation of factors, has contributed a great deal to the study. From clinical and consulting experience, I know that the dynamics of consultation groups in a range of fields will be influenced in their operation (either positively or oppositionally) by the dominance of theorisations of the field where they have a role. Again, as noted above, it was the frustration that I experienced in a research consultation group with a very different theoretical orientation which led me to look for a methodology consonant with the field under study. This allowed me to reflect the nature of the task of the group which I am studying (as in the Task focus in Chapter Seven) in my approach to the research question and to the analysis of the data. It would have been possible, say, to carry out an Applied Behaviour Analysis (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968) of the data on the group in the project, but this would do a kind of violence to the understanding of the phenomena that I have worked to elaborate.

Pulling back to take a wider view of the design, there are many other ways in which the same research question, namely, *how does the learning group operate, how might it contribute to the primary task of the teaching and learning, how it might be stopped from hindering the primary task of the teaching and learning, and how might the answering of these questions might have application outside of the field in question*, could have been answered. As noted above in ‘Multiple modes of data collection’, the range of possible approaches includes: observation; surveying of participants by questionnaire; interviewing of participants as individuals, as sub-groups and as a whole group; and a range of forms of participant observation, from almost complete



observation to almost complete participation. A range of very disparate studies could be produced from this range of data, not least by a range of data-analytic techniques, from quantitative analysis, through systematized qualitative techniques to more interpretive qualitative techniques.

As noted in Chapter One, Kamberelis and Dimitriades (2005) demonstrate the complexity of the meta-discourse of qualitative research with the notion that a particular research method can have different epistemological orientations depending on the chronotope (or era) in which it is located, with the result that, for example, ‘a grounded theory study’ might have either a positivistic or a post-modern orientation (and others in between), leading to differences in results that can range in scale from minor to vast.

However, these would be other stories. This is mine. The other possibilities will have to be considered in Chapter Twelve, as future research possibilities.

### ***The execution of the design***

Broadly, I was able to carry out what I proposed, although with hindsight, it has become clear to me that, significantly among a range of other things, this study has been a research training. I set out without a methodology, and had to find the elements of one in action for a different purpose in a related field, to construct the methodology and make it my own. Within that process, I had to find and to teach myself a way of dealing with data, and of carrying out analysis through a reiterative process of thinking and writing. I had major input from my supervisors, particularly Steve Appel, but from this perspective, I was naive when I wrote the proposal as to what I really meant by some of what I said. Also, I can now carry out and report on an ethnographic study, but I couldn’t when I started this one, nor could I for some time after I started.

In the light of this, I want to argue that the execution has been successful. This is not to say that many other executions were possible, and at least some if not all of those would have been preferable to mine for some readers. Nonetheless, I came through this and learned such a lot that I can go on using myself as well as sharing it with others.

### ***The analysis***

I can see that the analysis of the data that there is, as well as the potential analyses of a mass of other data that could also have been available, could well generate a range of other perspectives. Some of these will be very different epistemologically, whilst others might share the epistemology of the study and yet, for example consider that my use of the concepts lacks understanding or rigour.

### ***The conclusions***

Critics of qualitative methodology can focus scathingly on the hypotheses found in the conclusions, but in cases such as this, it would have been difficult to know in advance what would emerge from a process of exploration. Clearly, the major conclusions involve a recognition of the value of this methodology for explorations such as this. They also involve the recognition that by using a teaching model informed by this research, teaching can be structured to facilitate the approach to learning described in this study, and learning will be enhanced and deepened.

### ***An overall critique***

As noted above when execution of the study was considered, something occurs to me that may well have been blindingly obvious to the reader, and which leads me to recognise that the task of retaining patience up to now may well have been considerable. I can see with hindsight that this study would be very much better were I to undertake it

now. This project has been my professional training as a researcher and an academic, and prior to my doing this training, in the early years of the project, and even until recently, I was not very good at it. Whether I am any good now is for others to say.

That being said, an account has emerged from the process of collection and analysis of the data of the study (as summarised in Chapter Ten), and after the reflection in this chapter, I would argue that account has yielded significant understandings of an area of professional work. The implications for this and related fields are considered next.

# Chapter Twelve

## Implications for Theory, Practice, and Research

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### ***Introduction***

In this final Chapter, the aim is to look beyond the study, at what it implies for the related domains of theory, practice and research.

### ***Implications for theory***

These include both implications for the theory underpinning the teaching and learning of clinical practice, as well as implications for the theorisation of groups.

Concerning the theory of teaching and learning, the study introduces the notion of a *group-analytically informed* model of teaching and learning. This entails the twin strands of ‘individual’ and ‘group’ that have been followed through this study, and can be seen to be present in much if not all social interaction. It can be argued that this fact requires acknowledgement by a range of future research. Although the two strands of this focus raise epistemological challenges (for example, whether the two can be considered mutually exclusive or not), experience in group-analysis and conceptual developments such as Elias’s *figurations* (see page 104) facilitate the handling of challenges.

Regarding the theorisation of groups, this is a field that is not well elaborated. This study is an example of the combination of disparate contributions (from Freud (1913/1958), Klein (1959), Bion (1961), Winnicott (1953, 1969), Lacan (1979), Foulkes (1975), Matte-Blanco (1988), Hopper (2003), Nitsun (1996) and Dalal (1998)). In the

clinical field, it has been argued that adherence to a consistent theoretical rationale *whatever that rationale* can be a reliable part of ensuring positive outcomes. This predisposes clinicians to focus on differences and to even these out. However, for researchers, there is less need for immediate concern with a service outcome, and far more a commitment to a climate of exploration. This opportunity for a broader range of theoretical bases offers the potential to capture a very wide range of factors and processes, all of which may well make future contributions to understanding.

### ***Implications for practice***

One possible grouping of these implications is threefold, into the implications of a group-analytically informed of teaching, the practice of research into group work, and the practice of research in general.

First, considering that one outcome of the research is a group-analytically informed model of teaching, with the dual foci of the individual and the group, then it seems inevitable that there is merit in considering whether existing programmes address this notion. It seems likely that there may some implicit acknowledgement of these foci in many programmes, but these could well benefit from making this acknowledgement explicit and attending to the group strand.

Second, in relation to the practice of group-analytic psychotherapy and group-analytically informed group work, it is useful to wonder whether the methodology of the research may help in the consideration of this practice, for example by extending the understanding-in-context of aspects of group interaction, through notions such as sticky moments, bi-logical depth, and an exploration behind the scenes and below the surface.

Third, there is the issue of the practice of research. Ewing (2006) has helpfully reminded us of the limitations of interview practice, or alternatively, of the profound contribution that an understanding of psychodynamics and group dynamics can make to what can seem like a straightforward research activity. In particular, I believe that this research has implications for the development of the field of *practitioner research*. Although, as I have illustrated (and not always intentionally) that there are significant challenges in developing one's own practice via research activity which makes use of practice wisdom 'local' to the field in question, I trust I have also illustrated that there can be significant gains to professional work studied in this way.

### ***Implications for research***

Here I intend to look in a more conventional way at implications for further research.

First, there are the possibilities that are raised by my own perpetration of oblivion (Augé, 2004), the research that could be based on the data that I didn't collect, the viewpoints I did not explore and the questions I didn't ask, as well as that which could have been based on data that I did collect but ignored. There is scope for other studies which make use of forms of triangulation (exploring, say, the perspective of my colleague and the students).

Second, given the awareness that has been raised by this study, of the range of ways that the group may be a significant component of successful teaching and learning, it should now be more possible for others to conduct further (including possibly prospective) studies, of, say, learning groups as well as teams and other forms of work organisation.

Third is the point raised above on the practice of research, that it seems highly fruitful to develop group-analytic ethnography as a methodology, and indeed other group-

analytically informed models. For example, it remains for someone to carry out a study of focus groups and focus-group methodology from this perspective. This would lead to a more group-analytic theorisation of the conduct of focus groups, and of the use of focus groups as a research methodology, and to a wealth of research that could ensue from these steps.

Fourth, I referred in Chapter Ten to the importance of practice-based evidence as part of the same cycle of consideration and action that includes evidence-based practice, which can then be thought of as Practice-Based-Evidence-Based Practice, or PBEBP. This point is crucial. In the field of the psychological therapies, managerial and economic pressures have combined with the self-interest of some professional groups, and have created a situation where some approaches that lend themselves particularly well to certain forms of evaluation have acquired a dominance not warranted by the evidence for their efficacy. What is needed is the construction of a strategy as described by Mace (2006), which requires that clinical research is focussed on approaches that have demonstrated promise as measured by clinician or patient report, and that all of the consequences of the introduction of evidence-based practice (both positive and negative) are taken into account in the evaluation of that practice. The closeness of the research approach in this study to usual practice, and the profound strength of the approach that is its consideration of context (and hence of the range of consequences of practices) leave it very well placed to contribute to the filling-out of the evidential cycle in the developing construction of truly evidence-based approaches to a range of professional work.

Finally, leading on from this last point, it remains to set the record straight in the clinical research literature, where psychoanalytic, group-analytic and indeed ethnographic ways

of working have been variously dismissed or ignored. There are two strands that I wish to weave here.

First, within the clinical field of psychological therapies, there have been attempts in the last decade to posit a ‘third wave’ of behavioural psychotherapy (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999), with the first being seen as the emergence of the behavioural approach (including both classical and operant conditioning), the second the re-introduction of cognition by writers such as Beck and Ellis (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979; Ellis, 1994), and the third the emergence of a recognition of the importance of individual subjectivity and meaning and challenges to what Hayes et al. term ‘the myth of healthy normality’.

Second, this strand meets another from within psychodynamic psychotherapy, that is the gradual accumulation and integration of models for research (e.g. Wampold, 2001) and findings (e.g. Shedler, 2010). Wampold has demonstrated how research models originated for the evaluation of drug treatments have failed to access and evaluate the effective components of psychotherapy, which require what Wampold has articulated as a ‘Contextual Model’. Shedler has demonstrated that although the literature is smaller than for approaches such as cognitive-behavioural therapy which are ostensibly easier to evaluate, psychodynamic and psychoanalytic psychotherapy are highly effective and that their impacts persist and increase after therapy is complete. Furthermore, in addition to evidence that the process underlying cognitive approaches may not be as proposed by the authors of those approaches (e.g. Longmore and Worrell, 2007), where these forms of psychotherapy have assumed a position of being incontrovertibly evidence-based, in fact it may be that aspects of psychodynamic and psychoanalytic



psychotherapy approaches are responsible for successful treatments in these paradigms (Shedler, 2010).

I want to conclude by arguing that proponents of psychoanalytic and group analytic epistemologies and psychotherapies have an opportunity to seize the gift offered by these and other strands, and to push forward a re-weaving of artistry and wisdom in theoretical, clinical and research domains.

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# Appendix One

Papers relating to ethics  
committee approval and  
consent to participation



# AUCKLAND FAMILY COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY CENTRE INC.

33 OWENS ROAD, EPSOM, AUCKLAND. TELEPHONE 638 7632 FAX 630 7313 Email [reception@afcp.co.nz](mailto:reception@afcp.co.nz)

**To students taking the 2000 run of Semester 4, Foundations of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy  
July 2000**

Dear Colleague,

Our names are Judy Blumenfeld Hoadley and Bill Farrell. We are undertaking some scholarly activity, carrying out a study together of the processes involved in the learning group that is this Semester, with a view to publication in a journal. In addition, Bill Farrell is undertaking research work, which it is intended will eventually be submitted for a DPsych degree at City University in London. This work has the approval of the AFCP Training Committee.

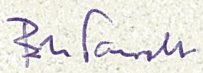
As part of this work, we would like to ask your consent to take part in these studies, as co-inquirers, in a form of co-operative inquiry. We would like to audiotape record all of the classwork of this Semester, that is, the whole of each two-hour session. For the paper, this will be a source of data to illustrate and check ideas that we have. For Bill Farrell's work, he wishes to subject the transcripts of the recordings to textual analysis. He also wants to use them, supplemented by interviews with you, to develop an ethnographic picture of the experience of all of us in this Semester.

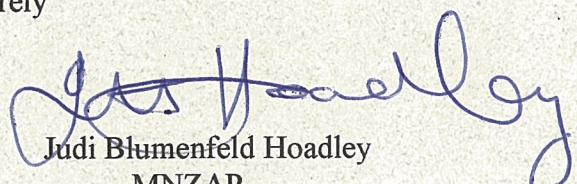
We undertake that no material will be published that could identify any individual without the explicit consent of that individual. Further, in the spirit of co-operative inquiry, we undertake to circulate some of our written material, particularly that which is intended for publication, to you prior to publication in order that you can comment or request changes.

It is important that everyone in the whole group is able to give informed consent (if they so wish) to participate in some or all of this research. Because this is a complex situation, it may take us a short time to fully establish this consent, if it is to be given. Therefore, we want to ask that you bear with us while we establish this with you, and while you assist us to evolve the necessary documentation. In the meantime, prior to full informed consent, we would like to ask you to complete the attached form, which will permit us (given appropriate agreement from everyone) to tape record the sessions for the time being. It is important that we want you to feel free to refuse to take part in this research, without fear that your freedom to participate in this course will be in any way adversely affected.

Thanks for your consideration of our request.

Yours sincerely

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Farrell  
MNZPsS  
Head of Training

  
Judi Blumenfeld Hoadley  
MNZAP  
Deputy Director



# AUCKLAND FAMILY COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY CENTRE INC.

33 OWENS ROAD, EPSOM, AUCKLAND. TELEPHONE 638 7632 FAX 630 7313 Email [reception@afcp.co.nz](mailto:reception@afcp.co.nz)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give my consent to Bill Farrell and Judi Blumenfeld Hoadley audiotaping the teaching sessions of Semester 4 of the Foundations of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Programme to be held from July 2000 – November 2000.

I understand that these tapes will be kept securely and confidentially and that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

I understand that these recordings will be used for study, research and publication purposes, but that nothing will be published which will identify me as an individual without my consent.

I understand that a further and more detailed version of this consent will be sought from me as the Semester progresses.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# ETHICS COMMITTEE

## APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

This form is to be completed in conjunction with, and after reference to, the AUTC Guidelines Version 3 (Revised September 2000).

ONLY type where indicated by instructions eg <Click here and type> TAB between fields.

Please also complete the checklist on completing an application to AUTC: see page 13 of this document.

Applications which are incomplete or not prepared in accordance with the AUTC Guidelines and the Application Check List may not be presented to AUTC.  
Please check your application for completion and relevant signatures. Also run a spell-check (you will need to REMOVE Document Protection to do this) and have the application proof-read. This will reduce delays with the processing of your application.

### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

#### A.1 Project title

An Exploration of Experiences of a Learning Group (Part of PhD Study by Bill Farrell 'An Exploration of the Impact of the Learning Group on the Development of Individual Adult Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists')

#### A.2 Applicant Name (Applicant is the PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR if the researcher is a student)

Associate Professor Stephen Appel

#### A.3 Department

Psychotherapy and Applied Psychology

#### A.4 Faculty

Health Studies

#### A.5 Complete this section only if the researcher is a student

##### A.5.1 Student Name(s)

Bill Farrell

##### A.5.2 Department

Psychotherapy and Applied Psychology

##### A.5.3 Faculty

Health Studies

##### A.5.4 Name of Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

##### A.5.5 Module code & name

Doctor of Philosophy



**A.6 Complete this section only if other investigators are involved in the project**

**A.6.1 Investigator name(s)**

<Click here and type>

**A.6.2 Investigator Organisations**

<Click here and type>

**A.7 Authorising Signatures**

SUPERVISOR (*where appropriate*): .....Date:    /    /

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: .....Date:    /    /

HOD NAME PRINTED:                   <Click here and type>

## **B. PROJECT GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **B.1 Project Duration**

#### **B.1.1 Approximate Start Date**

November 2002

#### **B.1.2 Approximate Finish Date**

November 2003

### **B.2 Does this research fall under Section 6.2 of the Guidelines? (ie involving medical interventions)**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

### **B.3 Are funds being obtained specifically for this project?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**If Yes, you must complete Section G of this form**

### **B.4 Types of persons participating as subjects**

(Delete as applicable)

#### **B.4.1 Applicant's students**

<Yes>

#### **B.4.2 Adults (20 years and above)**

<Yes>

#### **B.4.3 Legal minors (under 20 years old)**

<No>

#### **B.4.4 Persons whose capacity to consent is compromised**

<No>

#### **B.4.5 Hospital patients**

<No>

#### **B.4.6 Prisoners**

<No>

### **B.5 Does the research include the use of a questionnaire?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**If Yes, a copy is to be attached to this application form**

### **B.6 Does this research involve human remains, tissue or body fluids?**

*THE PERSONS FROM WHOM THE TISSUE OR BODY FLUIDS ARE OBTAINED ARE REGARDED AS SUBJECTS IN TERMS OF THE GUIDELINES*

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**If Yes, you must complete the National Application Form (see Guidelines)**

### **B.7 Will interviews be audio-taped or video-taped?**

<Yes> (Delete as applicable)

**If Yes, make sure there is explicit consent on the Consent Form**

### **B.8 Does this project fall into a category which may be subject to modified review by AUTECH? (ie some questionnaires)**

*REFER TO SECTION 4 OF THE AUTECH GUIDELINES*

<No> (Delete as applicable)

#### **B.8.1 If Yes, please specify**

<Click here and type>

**B.9 Is this project a clinical trial?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**B.10 Does this project have any implications with respect to the Treaty of Waitangi that could arise during or from any outcomes of this research?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**B.10.1 If Yes, please provide details of considerations.**

## **C. PROJECT DETAILS**

*DESCRIBE IN LANGUAGE WHICH IS, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, FREE FROM JARGON AND COMPREHENSIBLE TO LAY PEOPLE.*

**C.1 Aim of project: State concisely the aims and type of information sought. Give the specific hypothesis, if any, to be tested.**

I propose a qualitative exploration of some retrospective data, acquired prior to my provisional registration for my PhD. I taught a semester-long class of qualified psychotherapists and other qualified mental health professionals between July and November 2000, together with a colleague in a partner agency of AUT, as a member of staff of the agency. The aim of the class was to promote the integration of theory and practice by members of the class in their work as psychotherapists. With the ethical approval of the agency's Ethical Committee, and the informed consent of the participants, the delivery of this course was tape-recorded. I wish to explore transcripts of the tape-recordings in order to begin to develop hunches about the role of the learning group in the development of individual psychotherapists. I then plan to further explore these hunches in subsequent interviews with participants in this project. Parallel and subsequent projects are planned, for which further ethical approval will be sought separately.

**C.2 Why are you proposing this research? (ie what are its potential benefits?)**

This project is the initial part of my PhD. My aim is that the work will ultimately yield theoretical contributions to the understanding of group work and dynamics in professional development.

**C.3 Background: Provide sufficient information to place the project in perspective and to allow the project's significance to be assessed. If possible provide one or two references to the applicant's (or supervisor's) own published work in the relevant field.**

This project takes place in the context that I have described in previous work (Farrell, 1996). I have argued that the relationships that form the environment in which learning takes place are of major importance. Associate Professor Stephen Appel has also published in this field (Appel, 1999). A learning group is a group that is set up in order to facilitate learning by members of the group, and possibly by the group as a whole, depending on the design of the group. There is a continuum from a standard academic class on the one hand, to a specialised group on the other, for whom a major task is to study its own working. Examples of the latter would be a group at a Group Relations training event, or perhaps a co-operative inquiry group in research. Almost all psychotherapy trainings make use of a learning group, either implicitly or explicitly. These groups fall in the mid-range of the continuum, in that they have defined pedagogical aims and pre-determined learning outcomes, but at the same time they offer a form of group experience which is unpredictable. This form of group should not be confused with groups such as the experiential group or reflective group, where learners get to experience a client role and possibly some therapeutic benefit.

I want to undertake this study because there has been very limited systematic research focussed on the process of training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy in general, and on the group-related aspects of the learning process in particular. Also, a number of my enduring interests intersect in the area of this study (i.e. psychotherapy training, the development of reflective capacity, and group psychotherapy).

Psychotherapy training is an important field, because it enables psychotherapists and others to work with a range of intrapsychic and interpersonal difficulties, but also because it overlaps considerably with related fields (such as other professional trainings, including management education).

Proposals to regulate the practice of psychotherapy (and hence the training for practice) require the profession to be as informed as possible, including by research such as this, so as to contribute to the setting of regulations.

Finally, I believe that intermediate level psychotherapy students are particularly valuable research collaborators in view of their skills and experience, their investment in the process of training, and their core task of developing reflexive and informed practice.

Appel, S.W.D. (1999) *Psychoanalysis and Pedagogy*, Westport, Connecticut and London: Bergin and Garvey.

Farrell, W.B.F. (1996) *Training and Professional Development in the Field of Counselling Psychology*. In R. Woolfe & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*. London: Sage.

#### **C.4 Procedure:**

- a) State the approach taken to obtaining information and/or testing the hypothesis.
- b) State in practical terms what research procedures will be used, and how information will be gathered and processed.
- c) State how your data will be analysed.

*NB WHERE THE RESEARCH INVOLVES POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES, E.G. RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS, REFER TO SECTION 6.5 OF THE GUIDELINES.*

a) The approach taken is based on Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Rennie et al, 1988). Working within the University of Chicago school of symbolic interactionism, Glaser and Strauss systematised a method of developing a theory that is "grounded" in the phenomenon under investigation. This approach emphasises the theory-generative phase as opposed to the theory-verificational (or hypothesis-testing) phase of induction.

b) Data already collected are the audio-tape recordings of 14 two-hour weekly sessions of a specialised learning group. Complete or partial transcripts of these sessions will be analysed using qualitative data analysis software (N Vivo version 2.0), as described in c) below. Following an analysis of this first set of data, a series of individual interviews will be conducted with participants, subject to their continuing consent (see form). These interviews will be recorded on audio-tape, and transcribed. This second set of data will in turn be analysed to yield further discoveries. The first set of data consists of recordings of participants working together as a group, with the aim of developing the capacity of students to integrate theory and practice in their clinical work, and therefore includes some 'reflection-in-action' (Schön, 1983) as part of this task. The second set of interviews will represent a more explicit and individual process of reflection on professional and personal development.

c) Analysis of the data will consist of breaking transcripts into elements. Following Rennie et al (1988), these are passages of the transcript that stand out as conveying a main concept. Closer consideration of the element usually leads to the judgement that it contains other meanings as well. There is no standard in determining the length of an element, which may vary from a line or two to more than half a page of text. All elements will be compared and conceptualised in terms of commonalities. Each datum is placed in as many categories as possible to preserve the conceptual richness of the phenomenon. Throughout the analysis, the analyst's hunches and theoretical ideas are recorded as memoranda that are kept separate from the documents on which the categories are recorded. This recording of guiding assumptions is intended to reduce drift away from the grounding of categories in the data. As the conceptual structure develops, new data sources are selected that promise to illuminate the nature of the structure. Eventually, the new data add little to the development of new descriptive categories, at which point the categories are "saturated". The analyst increasingly draws upon the theoretical memoranda and begins to conceptualise more abstract categories that subsume the descriptive categories, yet are grounded in them. If possible, a core category is conceptualised that subsumes all other descriptive and conceptual categories. At this point, the conceptual structure is usually hierarchical, with lower-order conceptual categories serving as the properties of the core category, and descriptive categories serving as properties of the lower-order conceptual categories. The final product is an elaboration of this conceptual structure of categories, including the relationship among them, and the relationships among the categories and the data.

References:

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York, Aldine Publishing Company.

Rennie, D. L., Phillips, J. R. and Quartaro, J.K. (1988). "Grounded Theory: a promising approach for conceptualisation in psychology." *Canadian Psychology* 29(1): 139-150.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner – How Professionals Think in Action*. New York, Basic Books.

## **D. SUBJECTS**

THE AUTECH TAKES THE TERM 'SUBJECTS' TO MEAN PARTICIPANTS, CLIENTS, INFORMANTS AND PATIENTS AS WELL AS PERSONS SUBJECTED TO EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

- D.1 Who are the subjects? What criteria are to be used for selecting them? State if the subjects perceive themselves to be in any dependent relationship to the researcher (for example, students).**

The subjects are 9 students and a fellow teacher on the Foundations of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy course, 1999 intake, at Auckland Family Counselling and Psychotherapy Centre Incorporated, 33 Owens Road, Epsom. They are all qualified and experienced mental health professionals including psychotherapists, a clinical psychologist, a general practitioner, two psychiatric nurses, and a social worker. Together, they comprise a class being taught between July 2000 and November 2000 using a particular teaching method, and they were selected to take part in the research on this basis. The students were students of the investigator and his fellow teacher, and hence were in a dependent relationship with the investigator and his colleague, but this ended in November 2000. The fellow teacher is a peer of the investigator.

- D.2 Are there any potential subjects who will be excluded?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

- D.2.1 If Yes, what are the criteria for exclusion?**

<Click here and type>

- D.3 How many subjects will be selected?**

10, including the other teacher.

- D.3.1 What is the reason for selecting this number?**

It is important to study all the members of the group, if possible, for the range of perspectives that are thus available.

- D.3.2 Provide a statistical justification if appropriate.**

Not applicable

- D.3.3 How many in the control group (where applicable)?**

Not applicable

- D.4 How are the subjects to be recruited?**

The study is of data already acquired, and hence subjects are already recruited.

**If by advertisement, attach a copy to this Application Form**

- D.5 How will information about the project be given to subjects (e.g. in writing, verbally) ?**

Information was given in writing (see attached letter) and expanded verbally. Further information will be given prior to the interviews (see attached letter).

**A copy of information to be given to prospective subjects should be attached to this application.**

- D.6 Will the subjects have difficulty giving informed consent on their own behalf?(Consider physical or mental condition, age, language, legal status, or other barriers.)**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**D.6.1 If subjects are not competent to give fully informed consent, who will consent on their behalf?**

Not applicable.

**D.7 Will consent of subjects be gained in writing?**

<Yes> Consent was gained under the auspices of the organisation (AFCP) where the data was collected . A copy of the consent form is attached. (Delete as applicable)

**If Yes, attach a copy of the Consent Form which will be used.**

**D.7.1 If No, give reasons for this**

Not applicable

**D.8 State how confidentiality of information will be preserved.**

The data is stored securely. No reference will be made to anything which might enable any individual to be identified without the further prior consent of that individual.

**D.9 In the final report will there be any possibility that individuals or groups could be identified?**

. <No> (Delete as applicable)

**D.9.1 If Yes, please explain.**

<Click here and type>



## **E. OTHER PROJECT DETAILS**

### **E.1 Where will the project be conducted?**

The project has two phases, which will overlap in time - analysis of retrospective data, and analysis of data to be collected. Regarding the retrospective data, collection was carried out at Auckland Family Counselling and Psychotherapy Centre Incorporated, 33 Owens Road, Epsom, Auckland 3, and analysis will be carried out in my professional office. Collection and analysis of the second set of data will be carried out in my professional office, or, in the case of the collection of data, at the participants workplace, if they so choose.

### **E.2 Who will actually conduct the study?**

Bill Farrell.

### **E.3 Who will interact with the subjects?**

Bill Farrell.

### **E.4 What are the risks involved in the proposed research?**

Broadly, this is not a risky activity. The project involves interviewing subjects who are qualified and experienced mental health clinicians on their experience of membership of a learning group, in which considerable cohesion developed. The students collectively also had the benefit of a two year long reflective group facilitated by a highly qualified and experienced facilitator in which to process any apparently adverse aspects their learning experiences. Generally, the recollection and exploration of the experience of learning like this would on balance be expected to be a broadly positive experience, and most likely to be of value to the participants. The process of this kind of learning is highly personal, and can frequently be painful, at least for a time. However, these phenomena have a phasic nature, and when appropriately integrated through subsequent experience in personal psychotherapy, supervision, and personal reflection, can be some of the most valuable moments experienced in professional life. If residual significant unpleasant or painful experiences emerge, the researcher is a Registered Psychologist and psychotherapist with 27 years experience of clinical work and 16 years as a trainer of psychotherapists, and will be able to help subjects to find ways to deal with any unresolved issues.

#### **E.4.1 If there are risks, how is it intended these be mitigated?**

See E.4 The consent form for the second stage of the project (see attached) raises the possibility that there may be unpleasant associations raised by participating in the research, but that these may be discussed at any time with the researcher, with a view to finding ways of resolving these.

### **E.5 Is deception involved at any stage of the research?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

#### **E.5.1 If Yes, please give details**

<Click here and type>

### **E.6 Are the subjects likely to experience any discomfort (*physical, psychological, social*) or incapacity as a result of the procedures?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**E.6.1 If Yes, what qualified personnel will be available to deal with adverse consequences or physical or psychological risks?**

Not likely, but as noted above the researcher is an applied psychologist and psychotherapist with considerable experience of clinical work. Referral to a network of other colleagues can be made as appropriate.

**E.7 How much time will subjects have to give to the project?**

Up to two hours contact, with possibly some time for reflection between interviews, say, two further hours, four hours in total.

**E.8 What information on the subjects will be obtained from third parties?**

None.

**E.9 Will any identifiable information on the subjects be given to third parties?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**E.9.1 If Yes, provide details.**

<Click here and type>

**E.10 Provide details of any compensation and, where applicable, level of payment to be made to subjects.**

No compensation will be paid.

## **F. DATA**

**F.1 Who will have access to the Consent Forms?**

The Investigator and the Applicant.

**F.2 Who will have access to the data?**

The Investigator and the Applicant.

**F.3 Are there plans for future use of the data beyond those already described?**

*THE APPLICANT'S ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRIVACY ACT 1993*

No.

**F.4 How and where will the data be stored?**

In a locked filing cabinet in the Applicant's office.

**F.5 Will the data be destroyed?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**F.5.1 If Yes, how?**

<Click here and type>

**F.6 How long will the data be retained?**

*FOR YOUR PROTECTION, AUTEC RECOMMENDS THAT DATA BE RETAINED FOR AT LEAST SIX YEARS.*

For at least six years.

**F.7 How and where will the consent forms be stored?**

*AUTEC NORMALLY REQUIRES THAT THE CONSENT FORMS BE STORED IN A LOCKED CABINET ON AUT PREMISES UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SUPERVISOR.*

In a locked cabinet in the Applicant's office.

**F.8 How long will the consent forms be retained?**

*FOR YOUR PROTECTION, AUTEC RECOMMENDS THAT THE CONSENT FORMS BE STORED SEPARATELY FROM THE DATA, AND THAT THEY BE RETAINED FOR AT LEAST SIX YEARS.*

For at least six years.

**F.9 After the storage period, when the consent forms are due to be discarded, how will they be destroyed?**

By shredding.

**F.10 How will you ensure that the Consent Forms are protected from unauthorised access?**

Reliance on AUT Security Procedures.

## **G. MATERIAL RESOURCES**

**G.1 Will / Has an application for funds to support this project be / been made to a source external to AUT?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**G.1.1 If Yes, state the name of the organisation(s).**

<Click here and type>

**G.2 Will / Has the application be / been processed via the AUT Research Grants Committee?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

**G.2.1 If an AUT Research Grant has been approved please enter the account number**

<Click here and type account number>

**G.3 Is funding already available, or is it awaiting decision? (Give details)**

Not applicable.

**G.4 Explain the investigator's financial interest, if any, in the outcome of the project.**

No financial interest.

## **H. OTHER INFORMATION**

- H.1 AUTECH treats all applications independently. If you think there is relevant information from past applications or interaction with AUTECH, please indicate and append.**

I am simulatneously applying for Ethics Committee Approval for a parallel project, that is 'A Focus Group Investigation of the Experience of Attending a Reading Group'.

- H.2 Have you ever made any other related applications?**

<No> (Delete as applicable)

- H.2.1 If yes, give AUTECH application / approval number(s)**

<Click here and type>

## **I. Declaration**

The information supplied above is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have read the **current** Guidelines, Version 2 (revised January 2000), published by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee, and clearly understand my obligations and the rights of the subject, particularly in so far as obtaining freely-given informed consent is concerned.

Signature of Applicant: .....

*(In the case of student applications the signature should be that of the Supervisor)*

Signature of Student: .....

*(If a student project both the signature of the Supervisor, as the applicant, and the student are required)*

Date: .....

## **J. CHECKLIST**

### **J.1 Complete the applicable sections of the Application forms**

Section: Delete as applicable

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| A. GENERAL INFORMATION         | <Completed>   |
| B. PROJECT GENERAL INFORMATION | <Completed>   |
| B.10                           | Does this project have any implications with respect to the Treaty of Waitangi that could arise during or from any outcomes of this research? |
| <No> (Delete as applicable)    |   |

B.10.1 If Yes, please provide details of considerations.
--

**<Click here and type>**

- |                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| C. PROJECT DETAILS       | <Completed> |
| D. SUBJECTS              | <Completed> |
| E. OTHER PROJECT DETAILS | <Completed> |
| F. DATA                  | <Completed> |
| G. MATERIAL RESOURCES    | <Completed> |
| H. OTHER INFORMATION     | <Completed> |
| I. Declaration           | <Completed> |

### **J.2 Provide a copy of any Participant Information Sheet with the AUT logo with the appropriate approval wording at the end.**

<Attached> (Delete as applicable)

### **J.3 Provide a copy of any Consent Form with the AUT logo.**

<Attached> (Delete as applicable)

### **J.4 Provide a copy of any questionnaire.**

<Not applicable> (Delete as applicable)

### **J.5 Provide a copy of any advertisement for participants.**

<Attached> (Delete as applicable)

### **J.6 Provide copies of any authorisation or other documents required by the Committee.**

<Not applicable> (Delete as applicable)

### **J.7 Check all documentation for spelling and grammar.**

### **J.8 Send one (1) signed, single-sided paper copy.**

**Please note the monthly closing date for applications.** The AUTEK normally meets on the last Monday of each month (excluding January). The closing date for applications to be included in the agenda is two weeks before the meeting. Applications received after 12 noon on the agenda closing date will not be processed until the following month.

**For assistance or queries please contact the AUTEK Secretary**

# MEMORANDUM



## Academic Registry - Academic Services

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To: Stephen Appel  
From: **Madeline Banda**  
Date: 19 November 2002  
Subject: 02/157 An exploration of experiences of a learning group (part of a PhD study by Bill Farrell 'an exploration of the impact of the learning group on the development of individual adult psychoanalytic psychotherapists')

---

Dear Stephen

Your application for ethics approval was considered by AUTEK at their meeting on 11/11/02.

Your application was approved for a period of two years until 19/11/04.

You are required to submit the following to AUTEK:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given.
- A brief statement on the status of the project at the end of the period of approval or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner.
- A request for renewal of approval if the project has not been completed by the end of the period of approval.

Please note that the Committee grants ethical approval only. If management approval from an institution/organisation is required, it is your responsibility to obtain this.

The Committee wishes you well with your research.

Please include the application number and study title in all correspondence and telephone queries.

Yours sincerely

Madeline Banda  
**Executive Secretary**  
**AUTEK**

Cc:



# Farrell Consulting

Consultation – Training – Supervision – Psychotherapy

PO Box 60297  
Titirangi  
AUCKLAND 1007  
NEW ZEALAND

Rooms: 6/3a Kakariki Avenue  
Mount Eden  
AUCKLAND 4  
Tel (09) 623 1917  
Fax (09) 638 9814  
Email: [farrell@ihug.co.nz](mailto:farrell@ihug.co.nz)

December 2002

**To: Graduates from the 1999-2000 intake of The Foundations of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy at AFCP**

Dear (Forename),

I hope you are well. I'm writing now because I'm studying for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Auckland University of Technology, supervised by Steve Appel, exploring how experience in learning groups impacts on the development of individual adult psychotherapists. I want to let you know that I hope to include in my research data from the work we did together at AFCP on Semester 4 of the Foundations of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy course between July and November 2000, and to ask for your consent to continue to be involved in the project. This project received approval from the Ethics Committee at AUT at its meeting on 11 November 2002.

You will probably remember that during Semester 4 of your course (in the Spring of 2000), you gave Judi Blumenfeld Hoadley and myself your consent for us to audio-tape our teaching sessions with you on the Foundations course, and to use the data for the purposes of scholarship and research. (I'm attaching a copy of that consent form, for your information). I'm writing now to let you know where the work is going and in order to re-confirm your consent as promised, but also because I would like to interview you again as a continuation of the same study. Can I ask that you read the following information carefully? If you have any questions about this next stage of the project, the previous stage, or your invited participation in the next stage, do let me know and I will try to answer these. **If you agree to take part in the next stage, can I ask that you sign the enclosed AUT Consent Form and return it to me at the PO Box above in the enclosed envelope.**

**Bill Farrell MSc CPsychol AFBPsS MNZPsS MNZAP**  
**Registered Psychologist, Psychotherapist and Organisational Consultant**

# Farrell Consulting

Consultation – Training – Supervision – Psychotherapy

I plan to analyse the transcripts of our teaching sessions that took place in 2000 as part of my PhD, using Grounded Theory methodology as developed by Glaser and Strauss. This may well be familiar to you, but if not, it's a way of studying an area by collecting and analysing qualitative data that yields theory that is grounded in the data. I would also like to meet with you individually for between one and two hours at a time and place convenient to you in order to follow-up on hunches that emerge from this analysis. I plan to use a variation of the same methodology, to audio-tape record our individual meeting and then to carry out a Grounded Theory analysis of the transcript of that recording. Together with data from parallel studies, this will, I hope, contribute to understanding of development as a psychotherapist. If you agree to take part, I will be asking for your consent to make a tape-recording of the discussion, and to retain this recording and make a transcript of it. If you should subsequently want to withdraw from the project, then all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts or parts of them, will be destroyed. Tapes will be kept securely, and transcripts will be coded to protect identity. Nothing will be published that can identify anyone without their consent.

It is important to think about the risks and benefits of taking part in this second stage of the study. The individual interview will involve a semi-structured exploration of your experience as a participant on the course. I am interested both in your recalled experiences, as well as in your response to notions that are emerging as grounded in the data. Generally, the recollection and exploration of the experience of learning like this would on balance be expected to be broadly positive, and most likely to be of value to you. I am also aware that the process of this kind of learning is highly personal, and can frequently be difficult, at least for a time. I appreciate that you may have reactions to me as a teacher and manager that may be complex. However, I am committed to learning about these experiences with you, and undertake to do what I can to facilitate any necessary resolution of issues that may arise.

If you agree to take part, it is likely that I will try to arrange the interview to take place in early to mid 2003, at a time and place that is convenient for you. **Again, if you agree to take part in the next stage, can I ask that you sign the enclosed AUT Consent Form and return it to me at the PO Box above in the enclosed envelope.**

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Bill Farrell

**Bill Farrell MSc CPsychol AFBPsS MNZPsS MNZAP  
Registered Psychologist, Psychotherapist and Organisational Consultant**

# Farrell Consulting

Consultation – Training – Supervision – Psychotherapy

Attached:

1. Information and Consent Form from the Semester 4, 2000 delivery of The Foundations of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy
2. AUT Consent Form

Please note: Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Associate Professor Stephen Appel, Department of Psychotherapy and Applied Psychology, AUT, Private Bag 92006, Auckland, telephone (09) 307 9999 extension 7199, Email [SAppel@aut.ac.nz](mailto:SAppel@aut.ac.nz). Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Madeline Banda, [madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz](mailto:madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz), 917 9999 ext 8044.

Bill Farrell MSc CPsychol AFBPsS MNZPsS MNZAP  
Registered Psychologist, Psychotherapist and Organisational Consultant

# Consent to Participation in Research

This form is to be completed in conjunction with, and after reference to, the AUTECH Guidelines Version 3 (Revised September 2000).

ONLY type where indicated by instructions eg <Click here and type>

Title of Project: **An Exploration of Experiences of a Learning Group**

Project Supervisor: **Stephen Appel**

Researcher: **Bill Farrell**

---

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way. If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed
- I agree to take part in this research.

Participant signature: .....

Participant name: <click here and type the subject's full name>

Date: <Click here and enter date>

Project Supervisor Contact Details: The Project Supervisor is Associate Professor Stephen Appel, Department of Psychotherapy and Applied Psychology, AUT, Private Bag 92006, Auckland, telephone (09) 307 9999 extension 7199, Email [SAppel@aut.ac.nz](mailto:SAppel@aut.ac.nz).

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on** <click here and type the date ethics approval was granted> **AUTECH Reference number** <click here and type the AUTECH reference number>



# Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTC)

## FORM EA2

### RESEARCH PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

**Project Title** An exploration of experiences of a learning group (part of a PhD study by Bill Farrell 'an exploration of the impact of the learning group on the development of individual adult psychoanalytic psychotherapists')

**AUTC Reference Number** Appel 02/157

**Report Date** 8 December 2004

**AUTC Approval Expiry Date** 19 November 2004

**Applicant Name (Applicant is the PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR if the researcher is a student)**

Associate Professor Stephen Appel

**1 Is this project still in progress? YES If No, explain on following page.**

**2 What is/was estimated date of conclusion? 2006**

**3 Recruitment**

**3.1 How many participants had you hoped to recruit? 9**

**3.2 How many participants have been recruited so far? 9**

**3.3 Comment on progress of recruitment.**

No problems with recruitment

**4 Are changes to the protocol required? NO If Yes, explain.**

**5 Have there been any problems? NO If Yes, explain.**

**6 Have there been any participant withdrawals? NO If Yes, explain.**

**7 Have preliminary or final results been published or presented? NO If Yes, provide details.**

**8 If the research was terminated before completion please explain.**

Not applicable – research still in progress

- 9 Do you require an extension of ethical approval beyond the original approval duration?  
YES If Yes, explain.**

This project, together with the related project 02/158, is still ongoing, so a continuation of Ethical Approval is requested to cover this work. The work at present involves continuing analysis of the data, and writing up, which may necessitate a return to participants for the collecting of validatory evidence (rather than new data).

- 10 Any general comments?**

Send one (1) copy (single sided, clipped not stapled) of the Progress Report with any attachments to: Madeline Banda, Executive Secretary, AUTECH.

## MEMORANDUM

### Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

---

To: Stephen Appel  
From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC  
Date: 4 February 2010  
Subject: Ethics Application Number 02/157 **An exploration of experiences of a learning group (part of a PhD study ("an exploration of the impact of the learning group on the development of individual adult psychoanalytic psychotherapists"))**

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I confirm that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meetings on 11 November 2002 and 17 January 2005 approved your ethics application and a two year extension of time.

Your ethics application was approved until 17 January 2007.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the AUTEC and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely



Madeline Banda  
**Executive Secretary**  
**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: Bill Farrell

# Appendix Two

The methodology in action



## **Appendix Two**

### **The Methodology in Action**

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#### ***Introduction***

In the thesis, it has been argued that the investigation of learning group experience merits attention. A logic has been elaborated for the use of a particular integration of disciplinary frameworks to found that investigation, i.e. group-analytic ethnography. A particular learning group has been described, as have the ways in which data from the study of that group were collected, described, analysed and interpreted. Standing temporarily aside from the results of applying this research methodology to the data, it may help the reader's comprehension of the approach if the methodology can be seen at work, in a series of examples with a range of purposes (theorisation, diagnosis, professional community development, and professional self-awareness) in allied fields. Five such examples follow.

#### ***Investigation of cultural phenomena – model used to theorise***

This first example involves re-examining theoretical work, in this case by an anthropologist, with an awareness of the model that has now been elaborated. As noted previously in Chapter Two Part Two, an important feature of the discipline of ethnography is the re-examination of the work of others (Ewing, 2006; Stewart, 1998).

Stephen (1997) has used the study of cargo cults in Melanesia to elaborate the notion of *autonomous imagination*, and to attempt to liberate this from what she sees as the pathologising grip of psychoanalysis. Broadly, a cargo cult is an example of a group of

religious movements appearing in tribal societies in the wake of interaction with technologically advanced, non-native cultures. These movements focus upon obtaining the material wealth of the advanced culture through magical thinking as well as through religious rituals and practices, believing that the materials were intended for the natives by their deities and ancestors.

Stephen describes an historic example from 1941 in Papua, then an Australian colony, when a young girl reported being instructed by her god in dreams that her people had been deceived by the colonial officials and missionaries, and that the ancestors would return to drive them out. She said her god had also ordered her to preach the message that villagers must bring out of hiding the relics of the dead and highly dangerous objects used in destructive sorcery, and place them on open altars in villages to negate their lethal power. Once these revelations were made public, many people followed the injunctions, and normal social life was greatly disrupted as cultists stopped work in their gardens and spent the day in religious observances. When violence broke out, the resident magistrate imprisoned the girl, which effectively put an end to the cult.

There was also a major influenza outbreak, which severely affected the villages involved in the cult. Non-participants in the cult viewed this as the inevitable consequence of exposing the community to the fatal influence of the sorcery objects. Eventually, normal life and customs resumed. Stephen argues that even if nothing appeared to have changed, existing cultural practices could be resumed with a renewed commitment, crucially important when social cohesion and coherence are so significant because of a geographically isolated existence.

Ironically, Stephen's other work has been subject to intense and detailed criticism from anthropological colleagues (Mosko, 1997) for her use of psychoanalytic concepts. In contrast, it can be argued that in her work on Cargo Cults she takes on a very straw man in an old-fashioned and highly individualized application of psychoanalytic ideas, which she then dismisses. Had Stephen been able to avail herself of group-analytic ethnography, the phenomena she describes (including a disruption and potential renegotiation of the social order) would have been extremely amenable to consideration in these terms. For example, her description of the process and features of these group and cultural phenomena has intriguing overlap with the notion of Garland's (1982) mentioned above, that the group has to attend not only to the problem but also to the non-problem, that of how to create a milieu where members' behaviour is not met with the interactive responses that they expect.

To conclude this example, this is a case where the model has clear utility, combining the psychoanalytic possibility of opening up internal worlds, whilst also being able to encompass the social phenomena contextual to apparently individualised manifestations of change.

### ***Identicide – model used to theorise***

This second example is one where a researcher in a related field (geography) considers aspects of the destructive phenomena of war. Consideration of her data from a group-analytic ethnographic perspective enables recognition of processes also present in other contexts, such as the practice of psychotherapy, and training for that practice.

Meharg (2001) considers the deliberate destruction of cultural icons as part of the process of war as a process of *identicide*. She cites as examples the destruction of the

bridge at Mostar in former Yugoslavia, and the destruction of the Bamiyan Bhuddas on the Silk Road by the Taleban regime in Afghanistan.

From consideration of the dynamics of learning communities of staff and students and of professional associations in psychotherapy, I arrived quite separately at the notion of identicide, to capture some of the fears and phantasies experienced by many psychotherapists in training and subsequent practice, and found Meharg's work when I started researching the notion. In contrast to Meharg, my own use of this term refers to the dread amongst psychotherapists and other mental health professionals, rational or otherwise, that their professional identity will be damaged to the point of destruction in the course of professional activities, that is, clinical practice, or more particularly, training. It may be that these fears are stronger in what is a particularly small professional world, or it may be that professional worlds are always relatively small and these fears are very widespread. Whatever the case, they serve in particular to inhibit participants in training events and courses, and can be inhibiting to consultants and other group facilitators and conductors.

What this construction does is to enable the consideration of primitive phantasy in the analysis of group processes, again, making use of awareness of both inner and outer worlds.

### ***Treating Disturbances in Communication as Symptoms (Diagnostic Use)***

I am thinking here of the use of the model to make sense of disturbances in communication, analogous to the way that, for example, parapraxes in individual psychotherapy are useful as markers for underlying conflict.

An example from the study is an episode to be considered in Chapter Five (A Beginning - Session 10), which looks at the tension in the learning group as one member tries to voice the experience of regression induced in her in the Reflective Group, and one of the tutors slips to an ambiguous phrase (bringing up/up-bringing). This seems to be an instance where both Foulkes's (1975) levels (current, transference, projective and primordial) and Matte-Blanco's (1988; Rayner & Tuckett, 1988) strata (from One, exhibiting almost fully asymmetrical logic, through to Five, exhibiting fully symmetrical logic) are useful. Given that one member has apparently induced a slip in the tutor, it would seem that the projective level is almost certainly involved. However, in his consideration of Foulkes's primordial level, Usandivaras (1986) describes how one member can come to voice experience of the primordial level on behalf of the group, and the utterance in this example seems to suggest that there is something quite primordial involved here. Another way of looking at this is that the student has reflected on what they want to say, so that it is initially conscious. At the same time, her unconscious frustration with the lateness of her peers leads her to convey her irritation by the disruption to her speech. Instead of this being voiced directly, it is experienced (possibly below the level of conscious awareness) by the group.

In this case, the model is useful in enabling diagnostic consideration of the multiple levels of communication and experience that are involved in the interaction in question.

### ***Understanding Group Processes in order to Foster Group Analytic Capacity (Developmental Use)***

This is an extended example from the professional community where the main study took place. A series of processes are described. (I am using third-person passive tense here, to gain some distance from my own community). This is intended as a

demonstration of the use of the model to articulate thinking on what these processes represent, and on how the group might seek to address difficulties within these processes.

The group involved is a local branch of a national professional organisation. The group holds a monthly meeting to which all members are invited, and in addition, senior members of the group responsible for overseeing the professional development of their more junior colleagues meet five times a year. The meeting of the seniors used to follow some meetings of the wider group, but the scheduling was changed. Ostensibly, this was in order to avoid an excessively long meeting time for the senior members, so that the meeting of seniors is now held at a different place and time.

This development led to some members experiencing a split between the two groups.<sup>1</sup> Following concern at the separation, attempts were made to bridge what had become a divide, and it was agreed to hold two ‘joint’ meetings<sup>2</sup> a year. Arrangements for these meetings represent something of a compromise, in that one of them is held at the time of the meeting of the seniors, the other at the time of the regular branch meeting, but both take place in the venue used by the wider membership. At the same time, it seems very telling that the groups continue to behave as separate, and hence take it in turns to provide food for those attending rather like a home/away arrangement in team sports matches.

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<sup>1</sup> I notice that I have slipped in my thinking and language here, because rather than there being two separate groups, the senior members are in fact a sub-group of the wider group of all members of the branch. However, the slip is indicative of a process of perception that took place within the membership, such that the two entities seemed to become two separate groups.

<sup>2</sup> I wanted to write ‘joint meetings’, but in a sense all meetings of the wider group are ‘joint meetings’, in that all members are welcome to attend. It can be hard to know what to call the meetings, but the most accurate (albeit inelegant) label seems to be ‘the meetings of the wider membership at which the senior members undertake particularly to be present’.

After three years, the new convenors of the wider group had become unclear as to the purpose of the ‘joint meetings’, and wondered in the monthly meeting whether they had served their usefulness. However, members of the senior group who understood and valued the opportunity of the meetings (despite concern at their under-use) encouraged the convenors and the monthly meeting to ensure that the ‘joint meeting’ take place.

A ‘joint meeting’ took place, and the researcher attended. The list below is a catalogue of observations and themes. This list was made by the author after writing and perusal of field notes. These field notes were made just after the event, although the analysis of the description of the meeting into these elements took much longer to accomplish.

<b>Observations and themes</b>	
●	<b>confusion about the identity of the group/meeting;</b>
●	<b>a group/meeting becoming overwhelmed with anxiety;</b>
●	<b>dual relationships – some members (particular those in the senior group) are therapists and supervisors to other members (particularly those in the wider group, although also to some in the senior group), and this is never usually named when the groups meet;</b>
●	<b>an attempt to deal with difficulty by disavowal of a need (“perhaps we don’t need these meetings anymore”);</b>
●	<b>structure (unconscious or not) as impactful – because the room was set up as a large group, with one row of chairs in a circle facing each other), it easily became a large group;</b>
●	<b>this form of structure was used by a majority of members to challenge the convenors’ planned structure of the meeting (i.e. breaking into small groups</b>
●	<b>there was enactment of unfinished business from last time;</b>
●	<b>use of the group as a site for revenge or retaliation;</b>
●	<b>tension and enactment between elders may abet enactment</b>

<p>between elders and more junior members, and between more junior members;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the parallel with another (simultaneous) process (the marking of written case studies for professional society membership, the work of some people present being currently marked by other, more senior people present);</li> <li>● differences can be named after some fighting and flight;</li> <li>● multi-level connections can be named, and forcible projections reclaimed (it emerged and was named that the senior group has some of the same problems as the wider membership, such as dual relationships, as well as profound disagreement on fundamental aspects of psychotherapy);</li> <li>● dynamics from therapy play out in a large group, both helpfully (some phenomena can only be experienced in a community forum) and unhelpfully (when these dynamics should be confronted elsewhere);</li> <li>● attempting to resist the large group makes it more impactful;</li> <li>● the appearance of the previously unseen and unspoken;</li> <li>● anti-leaders - also, a re-contesting of the election (for the post of convenor of the monthly meeting);</li> <li>● another group (a regular local large group workshop) being 're-created' in this one, as a defence against the loss of that group, as well as a defence against being in this one;</li> <li>● as with use of the group for revenge or retaliation, a mirror of a previous reaction of 'the others' (so, that is what happened when the previous meeting, like this one was overwhelmed with accounts of yet another previous meeting);</li> <li>● dyads and other groupings try to take on and represent the large group or community's concern(s) (projective representation).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Table A2.1 Observations and themes from a 'joint' meeting of a local professional group</b></p>

***Analysis of the observations and themes:***

Reflecting on these observations and themes leads to the following analysis. There is apparently considerable anxiety at the beginning of the meeting, experienced and



expressed by a significant number of people present, with there being some conflict about the purpose of the meeting. It is as if there is a bid to make this a large group, and a resistance to that bid (expressed overtly at one point). It is unclear, however, if the objector actually wanted the process that had been offered (almost without response) by the convenors and their associate, that of breaking into small groups to discuss topics provided by the convenors, which were related to clinical supervision.

Dual relationships<sup>3</sup> are rife in this setting, and very likely add to the anxiety noted above, in particular since meetings like this are relatively infrequent. This may be one reason the wider group seems to have had difficulty keeping in mind the meaning and purpose of such a meeting.

The meeting has echoes of an *invasion*. These may be variously intended, experienced, or fantasized. Interestingly, these experiences take place with considerable symmetry between the parties, so senior members feel as if junior members have come in their absence and taken over their branch, and junior members experience the feeling of having their branch taken over by some people that variously they either don't know, would rather not know, or know only too well.

The meeting has the air of a *fight*, which could be portrayed as the mass against the convenors, in as much as the convenors have put forward a proposal (via another colleague who has offered facilitation) to break into small groups, and the meeting seems determined not to engage in the proposal.

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<sup>3</sup> Dual relationships refers to a situation where parties to an interaction have simultaneously more than one relationship to each other. Often, it is used to refer to the impossibility of being a therapist or indeed any clinician to someone who is also a friend or relationship partner. In this case, some people at the meeting are both colleagues to one another but also therapist and patient, or supervisor and supervisee. There are numerous other possibilities, for example, both the supervisor and therapist of a particular member may be present and relate as colleagues, possibly even unaware of their mutual involvement with their shared supervisee/patient.

The meeting also seems to contain expressions of *revenge*, in that (repeating an aspect of a previous meeting of this type) a significant sub-group of people who have been at an external event come into the group and enthuse about that external event in a way that is excluding of those who were not there. This time, it is one faction, the previous time a different faction. The repeating and perhaps retaliatory nature of this process evokes associations to a feud.

Another issue that is salient is the *leadership* of this group. In the elections for the posts of co-convenors of the Branch (and hence of the regular meetings), a couple (a man and a woman) were invited by the outgoing convening pair to put themselves forward for the posts of co-convenor. They did so, but only to discover that a powerful subgroup had nominated another couple for these positions, who were (unlike the invited pair) also relationship partners. This latter couple were subsequently elected, not least because members of the sub-group that nominated them turned up in numbers sufficient to ensure that this happened. Some of the process in the current group felt like a re-run of the election, with opposing camps (those of the invited convenors and of the subsequently elected convenors) lined up against each other

Despite the difficulties, there is apparently experience in the group of a space where people who do not usually do so can meet, and where some resolution of tensions and their enactments can take place. As part of this, a process of ‘naming and re-claiming’ goes on. People own up in the group to their own difficulties with the project and the task, with some individuals acknowledging their interest in this meeting and what it has accomplished. A key factor has clearly been the challenge to participants posed by meeting together and needing to face yet again, “What is this meeting for?”

Changing voice in order to reflect personally, I became aware at this point of a reflection in the course of writing. Writing this piece is difficult for me. One challenge is the need to refer carefully to the different groups, and indeed to define them.

However, I believe that some of the difficulty is a consequence of considering the dynamics of a situation where there are intense feelings at a primitive level, so that they cannot easily be put into words and communicated. This is a situation where there is the potential for experience of considerable envy.<sup>4</sup> I think it can be hard under such circumstances to talk about seniors and juniors, to acknowledge difference and lack.

In the course of considering this episode, I was reminded of an experience of a previous occurrence of this meeting (i.e. the first ‘joint’ meeting of the year). An account of this follows next.

At a previous meeting held one year prior to the example I have described, there also was a lack of clarity about the purpose. As a member of the senior group then, I had the feeling that my presence and identity was being disavowed, particularly by the convenors in their neglect of the opportunity represented by having all parties present. I now wonder if the determined disavowal of the difference between seniors and juniors, and of the fact that there is another group that meets and has authority over some present here, led to a feeling of invisibility for senior members. At the same time, their existence could not just be disavowed, particularly for those present for some of whom the senior members are like characters in a legend.

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<sup>4</sup> Here and elsewhere in the thesis, statements such as, “There is a great deal of anxiety”, or, “This is a situation where there is the potential for the experience of considerable envy”, reflect a particular convention in clinical and related discussions within this theoretical model. That is that such statements can be made about a group-as-a-whole. For example, many people in a group may have the feeling in question, although some may not, and in addition, an atmosphere representing the feeling may be pervasive to a participant-observer of the group.

In a conversation with a close colleague at the end of this meeting one year before, he asked what I made of it, and my mind came up with, “*one thing is inside the other*”. I arrived at that associatively, putting into words what came to mind without any particular thought of censorship.<sup>5</sup> My colleague observed that that construction was present in three of the topics discussed at the meeting: (professional registration where the government intrudes; bi-culturalism where another group are apparently becoming part of ‘us’; and in the public health system where therapists, who are seen by their colleagues in private practice from outside as privileged actually feel overwhelmed amongst others in their host organisation, and also within the community of psychotherapists where they are a minority envied for their financial and job security. Whilst the content of these three topics may very well have led to my association, “*one thing is inside the other*”, at a more general level I had picked up this sense from the meeting without necessarily thinking consciously about it. I think my association reflects a stream of experience within the group, aspects of which may be felt by a range of individuals each in their own way, but with an experience similar to my own (that is, of being in some ways taken over by the experience). There would, I believe, be considerable response if I offered my association to the group. I might, for example say to the group, “*The group, having tried to make authority vanish, has subsequently discovered that it inside the body of the meeting*”. The use of *body* would be deliberate, exploiting the ambiguity (and hence the potential metonymy) of the word, hence addressing a range of levels of possible meaning.

These levels of meaning include a relatively direct reading of the text, say, that there is authority in the meeting. This could be read either to mean that there are senior

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<sup>5</sup> Incidentally, I could do this together with this particular colleague because they are also a member of a group of colleagues with whom we have spent over a decade in a range of settings and groups communicating in this manner.

members present, or, to mean that the group does have located authority within it which it needs to stop disavowing. Looking at *body*, this is a common use of the word to refer to a group of people, but it also evokes for me the symbolism of the meeting having a physical body, inside which is has found an object seen previously as foreign to the meeting/body.

Incidentally, at this moment of writing (two years after the meeting), I have just been involved as a participant-observer in highly constructive discussions with senior colleagues about how best use can be made of the forthcoming regular meeting, due to take place again in two months time. To me, this confirmed the value of the process of deep consideration that the group has gone through concerning these meetings.

***Conclusion to consideration of developmental use:***

The dynamics and themes witnessed in the fragments of the recent history of this professional association appear intense and primitive. These have included a split, difficulty in thinking, invasion, fighting, revenge, retaliation, continued contesting of leadership, and profound difficulty in accepting differences and the envy that results. The mechanisms present in the process involve extensive use of disavowal, a highly primitive way of dealing with social difficulty.

As discussed elsewhere, interactions in the professional networks of mental health clinicians can at times be surprisingly hostile and primitive. This can be seen in part as a consequence of the need for these clinicians to be so thoughtful in their interactions with patients that they save the negative aspects of their experience for their colleagues.

Arguably, what is needed in relation to these dynamics is for professional groups to develop a capacity to experience them, as well as the tensions which they represent,

alongside a capacity to refrain from responding compulsively whilst the experience is understood. Considering the process of the Large Group, de Maré and colleagues (de Maré, Piper, & Thompson, 1991) have argued that sub-groups will inevitably form in a large group, and that they have a propensity to establish a consensual ground in the group, so that they can accept and tolerate new ideas which help the group to renew itself and to move beyond regression. This may be one amongst a number of ways that an enabled group can form, and may be what is happening here. This hypothesis can be explored in future meetings and discussions.

If the requirements for it to develop can be met, an enabled group can evolve with the social equivalent of a mind. There is some evidence in this professional community that as individual members have acquired increasing amounts of experience and training in group analysis, there is greater awareness and understanding of their perspective and contribution, and through this and other developments, the growth of a group mind is indeed taking place.

### ***Analysis of a Dream – model used to dialogue in professional self-awareness***

Next, I want to use a dream as material to illustrate choices that can be made within the approach, in relation to the analysis of a particular set of data. This is one of my own dreams, from the night of 2 December 2006. My recall of it is given below, together with some associations and comments inserted after each element. After that, I attempt to draw out analysis and interpretation of the dream, but in relation to two different but associated contexts, my personal life, and a temporary institution or community (that is, a group-analytic training course) due to be formed shortly after the dream.

***A dream, together with some associations and comments:***

My wife, my son and I were staying at what seemed to be House B (*former home from 1978-1983*).

Associations include going back, to our first home as a married couple, and the first house we owned. Oddly, my son was present, even though he was not born until several years later.

It was and it was not quite House B, and it was now the home of L (*former colleague of partner's*) and T (*former nanny*).

I think the uncertainty about whether it was or wasn't House B, for example, is a phenomenon of many dreams, and conveys the plasticity of meaning in this medium. These two (L and T) have never been a couple before. I think L and T, a likeable rogue and a nanny, stand for G and J, a man and a woman about to staff the immediately imminent course and hence to take over the house.

I was wandering around, trying to get people to be concerned about making the dinner, but without success.

A feeling of frustration, an attempt to marshal energy at a challenging point in the day. Focussing on what seemed essential, but experiencing being left alone in this by others. The Hakanoa Group<sup>6</sup> comes to mind – is this a representation of my relationship with them?

I became anxious that I didn't know where my son was.

A dramatic representation of a very basic anxiety. Also, it seems as if I have sustained a loss (and indeed, maybe occasioned one) in the course of being left alone with a task. Loss in the pursuit of a quest.

I went upstairs. The staircase was a cross between that in House B (*former home from 1978-1983*) and that in House A (*former home from 1973-1974*), (i.e. turning right at the top).

A merger between the means of ascent in two different places, in different ways both setting-out places. Getting upstairs led to simultaneous contact with experiences from different times. In this part, House A (and all it stands for) has intruded into the dream.

I went on up - I had to go through someone's room on the ground floor, that of a rather shifty young man with long black hair, and to open a semi-sealed up entrance ('So they don't use this way anymore?').

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<sup>6</sup> The Hakanoa Group is a group of seven of which I am a member, formed to provide professional development opportunities in group work, for its members and for others. It is the group that has initiated the training course which is about to start. At the time of the dream, five of its members are due to take part in the course as students, whilst I am on the staff group, together with one other member of the Hakanoa Group.

The whole dream includes a sense of going back in time. Needing to disturb someone, who seems likely to experience the disturbance quite fully. I have/had black hair – maybe this is about going back to my beginnings as I begin to ascend. This part of the dream (some of it on the ground floor) follows having gone upstairs in the previous part.

Opening the entrance involves going back to something half-closed off (so perhaps something let go of with ambivalence such as organising training, or even group analysis/the UK).

The entrance to the upstairs room was on the other side of the room to *House A*, correct for *House B*, and I realised that there was a rat in the room.

As I entered the room, it was as if I was I was coming in from the far side. Things were reversed compared to my expectations. In a way, *House A* is no longer intruding. I also spotted a threat. Smell a rat, alert oneself. It is *House B*, so I was right, but maybe it is good to stay alert.

P, a current family pet cat was there.

She gets (or rather got: she subsequently died in November 2007) everywhere. She was also very good at tracking down vermin. I feel relieved to have her assistance.

I went to look at where the rat had gone to behind the hand-basin. There was the rat, but behind it was a row of 20 or so others, and behind that rows of tiny golden Labrador dogs.

The rat very quickly disappears from view. The row of rats is scary (rather as it is to discover a rat's nest), but the tiny Labrador dogs seem very endearing, and their numerical supremacy is re-assuring. Rats becoming golden Labradors, obedient, intelligent and loving.

**Table A2.2 – A dream, together with some associations and comments**

### ***Analysis of the dream:***

As in previous examples, and as described in Chapter Three, I will use a variation on Freud's procedure (1900/1953) to address the material in this dream. This includes collecting the dreamer's associations to each of the elements of the dream, and then working to weave this expansion of ideas into an interpretation related to the dreamer and their inner world.



I want now to look at the elements of the dream in two parallel threads, one linked to my personal life, the other to my current professional situation at the time of the dream. In doing this, I am mindful of Freud's fascination with the notion of a palimpsest (1905a/1960), an arrangement of layers of parchment, which are constructed so that when they are viewed simultaneously (laid one on top of the other), they combine to convey a picture. In addition, as elsewhere in this thesis, I am making use of the notion of phenomena and experience being layered.

I want to suggest that in consideration of the dream, it is quite possible and valid to consider the material in more than one way. In this case, the two columns, personal context and current professional context, are sites for the consideration.

I will use the following Table A2-3 to illustrate this process. The left hand column contains keywords for each of the elements of the dream. The centre and right columns contain, for each element, a keyword to capture the associations arising from the dream when considered in relation to that particular context. For example, in the case of the pet cat, she represents *familiarity* (a deliberately polysemic word) in my personal reading of the dream (so, well-known, part of the family, a familiar as in witchcraft, and so on), and my supportive peers in the reading in relation to my professional pre-occupation.

<b>Dream elements considered in relation to both personal context and current professional context</b>		
<b>Dream elements</b>	<b>Personal context</b>	<b>Current Professional Context</b>
At house B	Rewind	Back at the start of my family
L and T	Care and life	Resources

Dinner	A role in my family – the challenge of leadership there	A role re-created professionally – some reflection of envy of my role
Losing my son	Current family transition (beginning at the time of the dream)	Patient in the group (dual relationships), a need to immerse myself in a professional process
Upstairs	Going up a level, the past intrudes. Moving on developmentally	Going up a level, the past intrudes The project takes off
Upstairs again	My own beginnings	My (and our) beginnings in group analysis
The room and the rat	Threat	Counter-transference to the community – holding people's fears
The pet cat	Familiarity	Resources, including my committee
Behind the hand basin	Washing as a front. The front row are rats, with puppy dogs behind.	Washing as a front. The front row are rats, with puppy dogs behind.
<b>Table A2.3 – Dream elements considered in relation to both personal context and current professional context</b>		

### ***The personal context***

I will not say a great deal here, preferring to use this context mainly as a contrast for the other, my current professional context. By linking the themes represented by the key words, there seems to be a progress in the dream, an ascent that is not straightforward, and a return to significant earlier times and figures. I think that at a deep level of my mind, I was concerned at this time for the future. A major change in our family, my son reaching adulthood, takes me back to the beginning of that family, and even further back, to periods of transition of my own. Important figures appear; in the personal context, L and T carry much less displacement than in the professional context. Having gone up a level, I am concerned at the infestation of the rat, but relieved at the presence

of the familiar cat (and the pair of them contain the complementary threat and response). As in the professional context, the washbasin with a small world behind it seems to stand for a ‘front’ of some kind. Behind that are many rats, but close behind them (or perhaps beneath the surface) are many more tiny golden Labrador dogs, in this context suggesting that the core (of our family and of my son’s identity) are sound, even if experience at the surface the surface is threatening.

### ***The current professional context***

Key elements in this are that at the time of the dream, a project to initiate group analytic training in New Zealand was about to reach fruition, when I had been deeply involved in this at as the convenor of the organising committee. My recall of dreams is better when I am sleeping more lightly than usual, as I was at the time of the dream, mainly because of the anxious anticipation of the event and all that was involved.

In this context, I think I see House B’s representation of starting family life as underlining the significance of the project, for the professional community, for individual others and for me. The couple are important, crucial to the training, but at this point not fully known as partners for us, and I had been discouraged by them in my anxious attempts to connect them up with me and my colleagues prior to their arrival. An extreme portrayal of them as a nanny and a rogue is a dramatisation of my personal response to each of them, but also captures something of my hopes for what they will bring, deep care and concern and professional nurturing, alongside vigour, challenge and stimulation.

‘Dinner’ in the professional context links to two aspects of my experience in relation to the training. First is the question of trying to interest people in a meal/something

sustaining and nurturing. Second is the lack of success. I think this element captures the way that I have had to carry the enthusiasm for this project in the face of apathy or even downright hostility from colleagues, and second is the isolation that my role has brought.

‘Losing my son’ I see in the professional context as the challenge for me of being so central to the project when I have supervisees and patients as members of the participant group. For the time of course blocks I have to hand over my professional responsibility for these people in particular and for the participant body in general for the duration of the course, not least because I have other priorities as the local coordinator.

‘Upstairs’ and ‘Upstairs again’ link for me to the repetition involved in this project, particularly in terms of the false starts, and the bureaucratic morass we had to navigate in order to gain recognition of the course, as well as moving up more than one level. I am reminded of where and why I started some of what I am involved in now, and there is an exciting sense for me of returning to places I had reached quite some time ago, but where I had not been for some time.

‘The room and the rat’, ‘The pet cat’, and ‘Behind the hand basin’ convey respectively the countertransference to the community that I hold, containing people’s fears about the project; the resources that I have to support me, namely my project committee, as well as the staff; and the complexity of what is out of sight, both the very clear threats and antagonisms very close to the surface as well as the solidity of resources further back and the importance of being able to locate those resources as required.

### ***Conclusion to consideration of a dream***

I hope I have been able to convey in this very brief consideration of a dream from two very different perspectives or contexts how the research model can contribute to the appreciation of such phenomena. The dream and what can be gained from it by analysis can be extremely valuable in my personal context, but in relation to my professional context, it can help to keep me alert and well oriented in relation to how I am seeing my fellow staff, the other participants and the challenges we all have to face.

### ***Conclusion to Appendix Two***

I trust that I have met my aim in this appendix, in other words that I have conveyed a picture of the operation and potential of the way of working as a researcher that I have evolved. Through consideration of Michelle Stephen's account of a cargo cult, Sarah Meharg's notion of warfare's appetite for identicide and cultural cannibalism, the episode from the learning group, the events in the professional community, and one of my own dreams, I have aimed to show something of how I can work with the material of experience. Initially I expand this through an associative process, bringing in other levels and perspectives, and later I distil and focus this, drawing out key notions and themes. In the chapters of Part Two of the thesis, I look first at the participants and a narrative account of the semester that is the main source of my data, and then I explore a series of five episodes in the course of that semester, making the best use I can of the methodology and methods that I have described.