

The rush of political dreams in analytic group

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Abstract

The author formulates the hypothesis that the group – analytical “resounds”, at a emotional/cognitive level, also because of the deep macro – structural transformations. To bound this resonance he presents a methodical observation, about 2 years long, of two groups of analytical therapy, to notice the influences over the subjective backgrounds (especially the dreams) of the presence of strong changes or national and international socio – political crisis (for example the immigration from the Third World). He has observed how these events have influenced the inter – psychic and intra – psychic ways of disaggregation and aggregation, ways that determine new and different patterns of conceive, emotionally and cognitively, the relationships with the Other, with the diversity.

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<<taking the group seriously means taking seriously the social, then it means taking seriously the political>> (Farhad Dalal)

1. Preamble

How much and in which direction does the socio – political macro – transformations influence in the group – analytical group, either the emotional resonance and the structure of inter – personal relations among patients under therapy?

First of all, it seems appropriate to focus and express some knots that allows to frame our reflection into a particularly relevant topic, especially for the psycho – dynamic research, that is the study of interconnection between the inside world and the outside world.

In 1985 Routledge prints the volume *Using groups to help people* by Dorothy Stock Whitaker.

The excellence of the book may be considered in the richness of the operative indications that are given on the ground of group, counseling, especially for what regards the intervention in contexts of social crisis. Here’s the first, fundamental new: which relation is possible to build between macro, structural climates and contexts? How does it “resound” the group, analytical group in front of the changes inside the community?

When we talk about the community, along with Stock Whitaker, we refer to a complex synthesis, often turbulent, of psychological factors: a space and a time; but also a thought, a net of organisations and institutions, a “common feeling” related to race, culture, religion.

A context that is widely analysed in the second publishing event: the printing in 1994 in the same series of the first organic volume on the relation between social factors and group – analysis. Edited by Dennis Brown and Louis Zinkin, *The psyche and*

social world, may be considered a “revolutionary” book because the choice to face up and fill an empty space inside the same psychological reflection.

The collection of essays edited by Brown and Zinkin attacks the problem and places it in its strong characterisation: the group, its use in an analytical way, especially the group – analytical group, may respond to the necessary synthesis between the inner world and the outside reality. A choice, recently, problematised by Earl Hopper with his brave recovery of the essays of social psychology by Fromm and the frankfurters. And made even more pregnant by the effort to read the political dynamics through the group – model, for example for what regards the social conflicts, inter – ethnic and inter – group (Ettin, Filder, Cohen).

And here we are, at the bridge between the volumes and the research. By considering the analytical group the place of transformations and of the possible passage from a coercive and repetitive based matrix to a dynamic matrix, able to understand the field and the future, we have formulated the hypothesis that the group – analytical “resounds”, at a emotional/cognitive level, also because of the deep macro – structural transformations. To bound this resonance we have methodically examined, for about 2 years, two groups of analytical therapy to notice the influences over the subjective backgrounds (especially the dreams) of the presence of strong changes or national and international socio – political crisis (for example the immigration from the Third World). We also have methodically observed how these events have influenced the inter – psychic and intra – psychic ways of disaggregation and aggregation, ways that determine new and different patterns of conceive, emotionally and cognitively, the relationships with the Other, with the diversity.

2. A psychodynamic research over groups and resonance

During the first year of observation, through a first qualitative analysis of observation – protocols, of about fifty sessions of analytical groups, we have noticed – at first instance – as the events and changes at a macro – structural level have influenced the dynamical matrix inside the analytical group, letting that transpersonal level, which we have named political – environmental, arise, a level strongly related to environmental climate that are activated and/or deactivated by group process.

This first result has made even clearer the hypothesis of submitting to a “quantitative” reading of the processes of changing and of re – aggregation in analytical group through meta – analysis procedures of protocols but, especially, it has allowed to analyse – particularly in the second and third year of research – the analysis of emotional tolerance to the change and diversity into a continuous comparison between the patients and the inter – subjective Diversity, a comparison that expressed itself as emotional and cognitive ability to understand the Other and the Different which is inside and outside ourselves.

It must be also underlined that in this past three years the considered analytical groups have “gone through”, in the contexts in which they were put, two evident macro – structural transformations. The first related to the events of immigration and comparison with the foreignity, either inside the community and inside its internal groups, the second related to the dynamics of the mafia feeling, a way of mental

saturation through monistic and non – reflective codes typical of a political – environmental transpersonal in mafia contexts, mafia feeling deeply modified by the slaughters of 1992, slaughters which have strongly entered the setting of analytical group.

The rush of politic in psychotherapeutic settings allowed us to deepen some knots of the psychodynamic inter – psychic and intra – psychic relations, especially regarding a theory of mind based on a group vertex and the same psychodynamic definition of emotional resonance.

The psychotherapeutic setting, as a space anthropologically based in which conditions of suffering bring themselves up, is the mental space in which the patient may evaluate his emotional dynamic of deconstructing a saturated thought towards a thought of changing. A space in which the emotion is the thought coming to life, the possibility of a transition of the word in bodily operations: what we called *immozione* (i. e. inner-emotion).

Instead of the emotion, that recalls an *ex – movere*, to an external dimension of thought that becomes body, the *immozione* recalls an *in – movere*, to an internal motion that plays with the ambivalence between empathy and implosion. Inside the *immozione* the subject identifies his own bodily Self and proposes it to the group that shares it into a possibility to gives meaning back to the complex emotions and to their dialogue with the organisation of a thought.

The new concept of *immozione* brings our reflection back to the topics of the rush of politic into setting. A rush group – analysis, as “normal” science, decided to deal with.

Where the rush is found that is the field of revolutionary personality.

Dealing with personality diseases, Fromm proposes us to think that the ability to part from the events and to read its psychodynamic does not eliminate the involvement that produces the identification with them. To influence the events and being influenced by them, this the rush of politic into group – analytical consist in, the expression of an Ego – body which proposes itself as field – space of meeting and ambivalence (the dynamic resistance – changing).

Especially into large groups studied in Anglo – Saxon area by Hopper and Brown, the reflection on political and social dimension of the patient appears as a legitimate inclusion from the outside into a dynamic that allows the patient itself to deepen the dynamics of wilfulness and emotional resonance between social constructions and personality constructions.

The group – analytic setting does not only consent the acknowledgement of the contribution given by social to the formation of individual mind, but also the opposite motion in which the subjectivity may confront itself with the social, with a thought of polis that is the thought of coexistence and dialogue with the other, with the value of diversity.

The political thought does not work as a simple defensive organizer of the existing, on the contrary it gives the possibility of a thought that looks towards the future, that is an utopian thought, because in the absence of the place the political thought of the group is thought without place, lacking a familiar internal reference, overcoming the

same saturation of wilfulness. The politic dialogues with changing through the dichotomy resistance – transformation.

2.1 The invaded dream

Revealer of these processes inside the observed analytic – groups may be considered some dreams that we report here as a proof of this rush, leaving open the wilfulness process.

a. A thirty – five years old teacher, Sicilian, emigrant returned to her country, dreams of becoming a member of “la Lega” in southern country. In her dream the “Lega” ties her with some ropes, pulling away a renounce of her southern roots, building a mix of pain and pleasure for the lost identity (“I won’t be Sicilian anymore” says the patient).

b. A teacher from Palermo dreams of getting excited every time in TV it plays the national anthem of Mameli. He then wakes up anxious because he can’t remember any word of this anthem, nor he can remember the sound that in the first part of the dream is very different thou – more like the French national anthem – and that everybody calls anyway anthem of Mameli.

b. G. F. dreams a group that must go for a trip: “an Asian girl must give me a dress, Indian guru like, she had many but she had to look for it, wasting an hour, I lost the bus and get mad. I went in the kitchen where the black cook did not want to let me in and I was pushing to get inside anyway. There are these foreign elements, the oriental dress that must look for me: it’s me that want to look for an even more beautiful dress”.

c. M. T. a middle age lady, dreams to be in a hospital, then over a doctor’s house accurately dusting. Then “I got out, there was an open door, a bed with a mulatto girl half naked in an exciting position. It made me laugh: myself dusting. Maybe the weight of the family”.

d. G. tells the group to have dreamed to be a gypsy. A. says the same, a patient new to the group, who confirms to constantly feel like a gypsy in her family.

The double represented by a psychology of politic (psychodynamic of polis and the negation of the polis in the war) belongs to the dreams that are corollary to the collective anguish about Bosnia, dreams well spread among patients, since then the collective imaginary took possession of slaughters and bloody wars.

The social so marks a political – environmental transpersonal in which a psychology of changing proposes itself as a dynamic space in which the loss of safety determined by the rush of the Other into everyone’s mental space, allows a reconstruction of identification processes. A coercive system in which the axe subject – politic belongs to the definition itself of the group and to its possibility to put itself as the here and now of changing, as a revolutionary group – in the definition of Fromm – in which the micro – political, represented by family, may open to the macro – political, represented by social environment, a transit not morpho – genetic at all, instead a continuous proposing of what we called nomadic thought.

Just like the nomads of the desert, is forced to the motion by the overcoming of the sands, because of this it stands still, since it's always at the boundary of the desert itself.

Which scenery does identify our research? Which connections? Which epistemological and clinical implications?

The path may be synthesised in three moments: on one side we will take care of focusing the connections for a possible definition of "political mind", that is of a political thought and of the polis in clinical relation; then we will deepen the relationship between the transpersonal and the political – environmental context; finally we will open up to the birth inside the clinical group of social imaginary.

The project of this path deals with the necessity to trace epistemological boundaries to our reflection. In fact, but the answer is already clear, the connection that we try to consolidate between group – analytic group and intervention in the crisis knots related to social and political events, does not want to enlarge the codes of group – analytical wilfulness to the macro – structural systems, nor even operate into the group – analytic group with the property by this time consolidated of community and organisation psychology. On the contrary, here's the recall of Stock Whitaker's book, enlarging our proposal of a clinical psychology of community that finds in the group the instrument but also the vertex of observation and intervention.

First of all, anyway, it must be also said that the revolution proposed by Foulkes does not only regard the technique but especially the possibility of a thought different from the setting and from the intervention in it. The group vertex so becomes a way of reading the relations and the inter – psychic and intra – psychic dynamics. A lay vertex and open to developments, more than a tight box, but not for this lacking in scientific nature and coherence. This starting from a theory of the mind and of relational universes.

Finally, the epistemological objective looks to a clinical result: the necessary new context which the group – analysis looks to with always more interest. The knots of the crisis which we refer to, in fact, can not be considered if not in their species – specific dynamic. War, violence, genocide contexts, situations of mass and geographic areas coercion, coercive manipulations of imaginary and relationships, are realities which we have to deal with, preparing the new instruments to read the complex structures and to intervene on them.

Diego Napolitani writes in an essay of some years ago: <<*the existing [...] may, as experience, be told as the act of creating that world which creates you as his creator. The being is, then, the outcome of a transitional and transforming moment, which the possible eventual development of we will find out when we will be talking of symbolic order*>>.

The ability of the subject to create Umwelt is clearly the ability to find connections between the organic – functional aspects and natural environment, pointing in such connections the semantic operators that allows selective organisations and organisational selections. The mind must be then considered as a fact, as a sequence of operations realised by an observer towards his own observing.

The cognitive dominion of man, Napolitani explains, consists in this ability of making the world, in this self – making way of human organisation.

The self – making dimension of creating the world builds a network of wilfulness which amplifies itself and modifies starting from the Symbol-making dimension that events have inside a mind as fact. It is in this way that we can articulate the hypothesis of a political mind, that is a mind that builds itself by subsequent organisations and declinations of observations over inter – subjective relations, that is over the mental polis in which the relations have their own wilfulness.

The political mind expresses itself in the ability of tolerating the constant Symbol-making catastrophe. That's why Napolitani refers to the use of Bion of catastrophe and, we also say, even if implicitly, to the hypothesis of R. Thòm. In both the authors, in fact, the catastrophe is the loss of wilfulness and the constant evolution of morpho – genesis and of onto-genesis and the same Symbol-making ability.

The neotenic dimension of this communicative flow between the inside world and the outside reality confirms the procedural nature of Symbol-making configuration. The mind is political, when it overcomes the biological tie and it “extends” itself, in a Cartesian way, beyond its limits. In this way, as Diego Napolitani writes, the being <<*comprehends a sense – perceptive system and a motion by the paradigm of reflex arc [...] it can't be comprehended by these models*>> so closing the same process of symbolising to which the ability of giving meaning to the existing is one – way oriented.

At the end we may observe that the Symbol-making nature of political mind realises the connection between a subjective thought and a multi – focal subjectivity in which the relation between the context and subjective ability of wilfulness becomes an instrument to read and intervene over the same events. The macro – structural reality, then, characterises the motion of emotive investment but also the signs and symbols that rule the relationships, proposing themselves as wilfulness matrix.

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