

A Teaching Experiment at the University of Rome: Theory, Method and Technique of Analytical Psychodrama

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Abstract

The article presents the experience of a teaching-encounter on psychodrama between two professorships of Sapienza- University of Rome, with the aim to introduce students enrolled at the fourth year of the Psychology's Faculty to learn in the way to point on a creative research. Psychodrama is defined from the activation of a field in which the word makes possible the play, and in which the roles taken, interacted or represented by the members of the group as "auxiliary ego" distinguished in time and space from that had in past, are taled and take a fundamental importance. Through identification and projection, the world around is re-interpreted on the inner roles of psyche, in an efficient operation of *rêverie*.

Keywords: psychodrama, word, play, *rêverie*

Introduction

Teaching people how to learn is an art. Reporting on how it happens is a difficult task, especially if one wishes to capture the spontaneity and richness of the experience. It requires a style of writing that does not attempt merely to reproduce what happened – which now no longer exists – but which preserves its traces, the signs that were left, and leaves the virgin surface intact. There is also the need to render comprehensible what took place, which was in fact a "successful" educational experiment. This account, therefore, will unfold between these two poles, and seek to combine experiential aspects with theoretical reflections.

The possibility of conducting this experiment emerged from a meeting between, on the one hand, Professors Neri and Cruciani, lecturers in *Theory and Techniques of Group Dynamics* at the Psychology Department at the University of Rome "La Sapienza", and, on the other, Luisa Mele, a teacher at the Società di Psicodramma analitico (SIPSA), who combines her practice with various teaching activities, for example at the *Coirag* training school and at the *Apeiron* centre of which she is both founder and president. The "experiential" lessons were given by her and her colleague Paola Cecchetti, also from *Apeiron*, who acted as animator and observer, and was responsible for presenting, at the end of each "session", an account of what had happened.

After this meeting a decision was made to offer fourth year psychology students their first direct experience of the problems of psychodrama, through a teaching experiment that, in the short time available, married concepts, emotions and

theoretical knowledge, and gave them the possibility of confronting various aspects of their inner life, in such a way as to guide them, through a socially shared experience, towards a form of learning orientated towards creative research.

The two professors presided over the eight “lessons” entrusted to “experts” in the field. They were in a position to listen to and share the knowledge that was circulating and, as those responsible for the overall educational project, paid special attention to completing, discussing, relating and explaining the various links between past and future teaching. Thus a conviviality of sapience and sapidity was created, at whose table one sat now as a lecturer, now as a student, while that epistemic drive Eros circulated: a table at which only true masters are able to sit.

Expressed in images, the setting for the experiment appeared as follows:

A theatre, that of the student hostel in Via De Lollis; a crowd of about two hundred students, who had enrolled for the seminar, fills the stalls right up to the stage; between the stage and the stalls, there is a row of seats for the three lecturers, then another for the observer (we shall explain her function later). A hand mike, to facilitate communication, is passed from one person to the other, all the way to the back rows; a space between the lecturers and the students that is deliberately left free. Since all the seats were taken almost immediately, the first rows are formed by female students sitting on the floor. They are given the role of the group in the psychodrama, they are asked to “play the game” – apparently because it is more convenient, but in actual fact to ensure that there is both freedom and respect of the rules. Those who do not feel like participating, it is explained, may change places.

From now on, the setting for the experience is structured thus: the large group of students, the small group of lecturers, the empty space, the smaller group of students who, in turn, express, by occupying their particular position, the desire to “put themselves on the line”. For them it will be like starting a journey towards an unknown destination, but one whose existence is guaranteed by the lecturers.

What happens within this framework, which has to be well-structured because of the short duration of the experience? The task of making the students familiar with the theory and technique of analytical psychodrama begins with an initial session during which Moreno’s autobiography, *Il profeta dello psicodramma* (The Prophet of Psychodrama) is presented. The transference of teaching work, which is necessary for learning to take place, is already underway, thanks to the enthusiasm generated by the intellectual journey undertaken by a young man born thirty-three years after Freud and, like him, Jewish, whose formation took place in early-twentieth-century cultural circles: “*At the beginning of the twentieth century, a man attempted to become God: it was in Vienna, between*

1908 and 1914”: Moreno’s paradoxical introduction of himself is perfect for firing the students’ imagination.

By introducing the inventor of psychodrama, the lecturer becomes Mozart’s magic flute, whose sound has the power to reassure the young protagonists of the journey marked by fear and by the spell of the encounter with oneself and with the Other.

From the story to the game. The acrostic of a name

After Moreno’s personality has been described and his work introduced, the students take the floor. They are asked a question that is at the heart of every question and constitutes the essence of every relationship: “What’s your name? My name is...”

They refer to their “own name” with the help of that great educator known as Poetry. Homer knew the power of a name, always given by another, when he told how Odysseus, “he who is hated by gods and men”, received his from his maternal grandfather, who, having been given it in his turn, condemned him to wandering the earth. A name, a destiny. (*The Odyssey*, Book XIX).

The reading of the acrostics by poetess Bianca Frabotta (*Terra contigua*) creates an emotional climate in which each student makes the transition from ordinary time to the inner time of creativity. From poem to poem to gain new knowledge, starting with the transformative power of the self and one’s own knowledge. Then all the students compose an acrostic using their own name in the complete silence that is imposed and necessary to achieve the right quality in the writing. The silence maintained by about two hundred people becomes galvanizing.

The students are asked who would like to read. The theatre is filled with male and female voices, tonalities, spatial effects, images, emotions. Then they are asked if any of them knows the “story”, the reasons behind the name they were given. This is their first real encounter with analytical psychodrama, with the “game” that opens the seminar: a young woman, after reading her acrostic out loud, recounts that her mother would tell her, if she asked her, while she was crouched up on her double bed, from what situation and person her name originated, as if it were a bedtime story. After communicating this, she leaves the group and, standing in the empty space, chooses someone to represent her mother; she chooses her for her big eyes and thin mouth: looks and words are primary elements in psychodrama. Her mother gave her the name of her own mother who died when she was only thirteen. Before everyone’s eyes the founding myth of all knowledge is evoked: the interrelation between life and death. This is the gist of her story: *A silent procession comes down the mountain, bringing home the body of the young woman, who has made the transition from the atavistic action of ploughing the earth to the stillness of death from cardiac arrest.* This is the individual myth that the mother passes on to the daughter, and which, to everyone’s astonishment, is passed on to the

student Community, to the spectators; thus collective and individual knowledge starts to be accumulated.

Nomen est in litura. The demise of one woman becomes the name of the other: thus female generations weave their destiny. The ploughing of that earth, which was interrupted by death, is the primordial writing of sowing so that knowledge might grow. *Litura-terra*, literature, earth scraped like wax tablets in search of a creative ethic for the writing that incorporates the individual into the Law.

In the game with the girl who functions as the “auxiliary ego”, details emerge that in the therapeutic psychodrama would be pointed out as “significant” and worthy of being examined and interpreted later. Here they are simply stressed: her grandmother’s black scarf, full of holes, that the girl still keeps and started wearing again two weeks ago; a black band that she wears in her hair... The girl chosen “as her mother” because of her similar mouth and eyes, says that she experienced great tenderness during the game; another girl, who was watching the game, associates the double bed with her childish fear that someone might be hiding under the bed, ready to ravish her, and also confesses that she still suspiciously scrutinizes the darkness under the bed before getting into it. This will also be acted-out. Games create more games. The psychodrama is brought to a close with the reading of the account written by the co-therapist, who has remained silent and outside the space allotted to the game for the entire time. Before and during the “performance”, the lecturer expounds the theory that underpins the session and the transformation of Morenian psychodrama into analytical psychodrama.

Why make so many students work on their own name by means of an acrostic? We are convinced that it is an interesting device for focusing the attention on the consonants and vowels of that name that anchors each communicating individual to his/her identity in the world, since they are phonemes that are listened to because they are pronounced by people who are loved, often, before we are born, when we are called by our own name so that we might recognize ourselves in Oneness, or rather in that unifying feature that we borrow from the other, thus turning to and realizing ourselves through the Other. This first game, as always, is surprisingly profound despite its simplicity: the name is given when the ancestor dies, according to the wishes of the primary Other, namely the mother. The premature loss is again proclaimed and lamented, but the significant is created through the name that lives on in the daughter, who by wearing that black band in her hair still appears to be in mourning. Calling that Name means embodying its “missing” aspect, to the extent of making it an object of desire, like desire for the Other. This process takes place through the female. The father is absent. The next game will show him in the form of the phantasm hidden under the bed, fantasized, and perhaps desired. The absent father is present in the Name of the symbolic father, the primal father killed by the horde, so that he might organize language. In fact, death lies at the end of

each word and at the same time is the origin of each word. Hence the first game, like the Freudian *Fort-Da*, illustrates the “on-and-off” relationship with the Other. Death, life, naming, sexuality, diversity: these would appear to be the heart of psychoanalysis, but where research is concerned everything is still an open question.

From the game to theoretical reflection and back to the game

At the beginning of every session, a report of what happened in the previous one is read aloud. It provides the starting point for presenting new information about the method, technique and theory of psychodrama. The group, which has begun to create the emotions of the game (since it is now cohesive enough to do this) through the metaphor of the story – a procession, a sequence of characters who are part of it, a “theory” – “disbands” each time it listens to the lesson, and the transference of work onto the lecturers and the individuals who have played the game once again becomes Eros at the service of learning.

“Knowing how to learn means knowing how to symbolize a conflict. Point of creation, therefore point of anxiety.”

After the identification process, which started by referring to one’s own name, we go on to examine the students’ desire to become therapists, by asking them why they decided to enrol for the Psychology course. A specific theme is never proposed in our psychodrama, since we wait for a member of the group to take the floor and for the associative chain to be set in motion. Our needs are determined by the fact that students are participating in this psychodrama for a “specific period” and within an institutional framework. During the lesson Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is presented to show how the well-known spool game (*Fort-Da*) provided the model for the game in the psychodrama, which foregoes the satisfaction of possessing the object to benefit the enactment. In the psychodrama, in fact, the students have to reckon with that symbolic castration that is at the root of the humanization process. The “mirror stage” is also presented, in which Lacan identifies a baby’s joy, at the age of about six months, at recognizing himself as an other with regard to the person who is holding him, from whom he seeks recognition through his gaze, although totally dependent. During this stage the link between individuality, otherness and groupality, which is the drive towards socialization, is established, making it possible for the psychodrama group to become a means of therapy. “Talking care” is born precisely from the impulse to invoke the other, as a support of the Other.

That is why we asked students why they wanted to become therapists, namely, to deal with their own suffering and that of the other?

The three games that reflect their choice of course do not seem improvised, but, paradigmatic and evocative as they are, appear seem to be part of a play that has already been written and simply has to be performed. But perhaps it is not just a

question of a play to be staged. Inside each one of those present there are characters struggling to emerge who, as in Pirandello's play, are searching for an author who will let them perform.

The various games are linked by a consistent thread, and a single Story emerges from the many individual stories that are acted-out. In the name game, we started with a little girl crouching on a double bed, to whom maternal suffering had been transmitted through her name; then we met another who wanted to look under the bed, in search of what is "absent" which permits primary identification. Thus, from the black of mourning we had passed to the red of desire. In implementing choices made by the Psychology Department, we are now confronted with associations that encourage participants to grow and journey through space and time, and from the mountain conjured up in the first scene we land, after negotiating many obstacles, in Vienna, a city marked by the encounter between the prophet of psychodrama, who was not afraid to declare his vocation as I-God, and the founder of psychoanalysis, who saw God as the superegoic projection of parental figures. But the psychism period is marked by the *après-coup*, and in the next game, another female student takes us all the way back to the first class at high school, when she discovered Plato, the founder of philosophy and ethics: her future, the choice of her profession sprang from reading his writings, since the one who has left the Cavern and seen Good cannot remain "*there, without wishing to descend again towards those prisoners and to participate in the labours and honours of the world*".

There seem to emerge from the games two different reasons for having chosen the Psychology Department: students either arrived there after following scientific studies that turned out to be disappointing or too difficult, or by opting for the Ideal and sublimation, which underlies the "I shall save you" of suffering, and enrolling for the psychology course directly.

The games continue at the next session, which we begin by asking if anyone has been in analysis. This time, the enactment shows a psychoanalyst and patient dealing with the announcement that the therapy is to end, which arouses anxiety and anger; an announcement that seems to herald the end of the course and of the transference of work that has taken place. Through scenes and associations that strike the most diverse emotive chords, from irony to desperation, the solitude of the analyst and that of the patient, each in their respective homes, is acted-out during the last game, while their thoughts return to the consulting room to allow the unconscious to speak to them both. However, the students' are already thinking ahead, and we find them, as graduates, asking themselves what profession they're going to choose (psychologist, psychotherapist or psychoanalyst), aware that there is always the danger of their being beguiled or deceived.

The games now give way to theoretical questions. The students query what they have seen and heard: in what does the transference, interpretation, the mode of

listening, the difference between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, between Jung and Freud consist?

Among the various themes that were dealt with, special attention was given to psychoanalytical psychodrama's lying between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. If we accept what Freud held to be essential for psychoanalysis, namely "*the acknowledgement of unconscious psychic processes, the recognition of the doctrine of resistance and repression, and taking into consideration sexuality and the Oedipus complex*", and that the ethical foundations of psychoanalysis are essential both with respect to the psychodramatist and the analyst, what is the specific nature of psychodrama?

Without claiming to be exhaustive, especially concerning a subject broadly covered by the literature, and bearing in mind that many valuable articles on the subject are featured in this magazine, here are some considerations:

The technique of dramatization was first adopted at the dawn of psychoanalysis, in the treatment of Anna O. (*Studies on Hysteria*, Breuer, 1892), but Freud and his followers opted for verbal communication in that theatrical setting in which the patient is on the couch and the therapist behind him, while Moreno chose the acting-out of affects witnessed by an audience, to achieve catharsis and change.

In psychoanalysis the attention is focused on the characters of the individual's inner theatre, while in psychodrama the characters are made to perform and given a body, voice and face through their fellow members of the group. A chain of significant is activated which, in the "talking cure" passes through the transference from patient to therapist, while in psychodrama the transference does not only affect the therapists, but also the auxiliary egos of the group, and the chain of significant also manifests through visual stimuli, operating through the concatenation and succession of the scenes.

It is the acting-out of the affects, as we have seen in the scenes played out in the theatre in Via De Lollis, that reveals the transformative function of the discoveries, whether the scenes are merely "described" during the transference or acted-out in the psychodrama. We may say that the mechanism of psychodrama transforms the story into action, thus making the affects more visible, and more easily construed.

The mechanism of psychodrama centres on the universal language of the *game* (we have seen that it is modelled on the spool game, the game of absence and presence). Winnicott wrote, in 1971, that psychoanalysis has been developed as a highly specialized form of playing in the service of communication with oneself and others, and the analyst must therefore always bear in mind and remind himself constantly of what we owe to Freud, but also what we owe to that natural and universal activity called playing.

Analytical psychodrama is not only based on playing, but on language that makes playing possible. The roles played, also interactively, and acted-out by the members of the group in relation to auxiliary egos – separate in space and

time from those played in the past, which can only be recounted – are essential elements of the game. Through identification and projection, the surrounding world is reinterpreted in the light of the internal roles of the psyche, by effectively reactivating *rêverie*.

On an epistemological level, the theory and practice of groups in the past relied solely on the categories of psychoanalysis. Today, they tend to redefine a knowledge of the Unconscious by studying the intersubjective links between various subjects of the Unconscious, links that are generated and manifested by the group. Thus we can hypothesize the subject of the Unconscious as a subject manifested through the group, through intersubjectivity. Is the psychodrama group therefore one of the means whereby the Unconscious is formed? And vice-versa, if the group is an intrapsychic structure characterized by psychic objects and by functions, are the internal groups not the model for the group links? These, among others, are the main theoretical points to have emerged from reflections on the experience.

A Direct Observation Experience. The Moses of Michelangelo

Having arrived at the halfway mark, we promoters of “transient” culture, namely culture that favors space over volume, in an age when the *horror vacui* prevails, begin to painstakingly prepare the last part of the course. The university wishes to introduce students to the Direct Observation methodology, which in analytical psychodrama performs an extremely delicate and very important function, since it teaches one how to refrain not only from action, but also (as Bion has taught us) from memory and desire, until the silence necessary to pick up the signals of mental activity is created. We have already said that an animator and an observer, whose roles are interchangeable, are always present at a psychodrama. This was not the case with our experience at the University, because of the educational nature of the experiment and because we wanted the two functions to be understood through the emotive experience. Besides we were not able to offer a true Observation experience – due to lack of time! – and we therefore decided that the function of the silent co-therapist that had not yet been explored would be experienced creatively, if not explained theoretically.

The three stages of the Observation experience, which make it extremely valid and permit it to encompass many disciplines, are presented. These stages are: 1) observing the subject without making notes, to train the eye to scrutinize the invisible; 2) writing a log as an exercise in passing from the outline of what one has observed to self-understanding, to understanding and to communication; 3) discussing the log in the working group as an exercise in heeding the evidence and to communicate and increase the understanding gained by observing the subject, through writing alone, and through the log compiled directly by each participant.

So we allow ourselves to be led by our *pulsione viatoria* (Amati) (in simple terms, the urge to be on the move) to the Church of S. Pietro in Vincoli in Rome, to encounter three giants capable of making the “horde” of students “form a group”, encircling the Preconscious and Unconscious with the structure of figurative language that is expressed through drawing, the written word, and the *jouissance* of orality. They are the bearers, almost a century later, of a message from Freud to Jones: “*I envy you because you’re visiting Rome so soon and while you are so young. Give my deepest respects to Moses and write to me about him.*”

While the students climb the “*steep steps that lead from wretched Via Cavour to the lonely square*” the narrator reads the beginning of Freud’s essay, *The Moses of Michelangelo*, written in 1913.

We have set up a rather long and complex process that uses the same observation technique that Freud applied in his study of Moses, starting with the artist’s capacity to distinguish a copy from an original by paying attention to those details omitted by the copyist, but which are indicative of the style of the original artist whose creative intelligence is evident in the depiction not only of detail but also the whole.

Freud writes: “*It seems to me that his method of inquiry (that of an art connoisseur) is closely related to the technique of psycho-analysis. It, too, is accustomed to divine secret and concealed things from unconsidered or unnoticed details, from the rubbish-heap, as it were, of our observations.*”

Freud devoted a great deal of time, possibly from 1901 to 1913 – when he decided to write the essay – to his study of Michelangelo’s *Moses*, paying particular attention to the torsion of the body and the hand resting on the Tables.

We propose something much quicker to the students, however. On the steps of the church, we distribute copies of a black and white photograph of the statue of Moses, the very same one that was published with Freud’s essay. The image is traced on a transparent sheet laid on top, and the resulting outline coloured at will. At the same time, each student describes the path followed by their gaze while tracing the statue: where it was deceived, where it fell, where it dwelt, and so forth. The drawing is accompanied by a description of the student’s emotions, associations and thoughts.

When this work is finished, each student stands before Michelangelo’s statue – a century after Freud contemplated it – in solitude and in silence, listening to and writing the words that the encounter suggests. As we leave, the original procession reforms and, instead of coming down – like Moses – from the mountain during the night, we climb up in the middle of the day to the Colle Oppio and, among the Roman ruins so beloved of Freud and used by him as archaeological metaphors of psychism, we improvise the psychodrama, after presenting all the work produced: the tracing, the associations, what was written in front of Moses.

Now everything is ready for the enactment: each member of a group of three takes on the role of Moses, Michelangelo and Freud respectively, according to what they wish to act-out, in an improvised drama that is played out through words, the body, movement and looks, between sky and earth, between past and future, by linking individual to individual, and the individual to the group. The impact of all these, mostly female, bodies who have taken the floor as the three aforementioned “founders” is explosive, and they have expressed, through the “extraordinary” enactment of a series of games, displacement, condensation and symbolization, while charged with a psychic energy that for a brief period reveals desire also through an excess of emotion, justified by the teaching project.

From the copy of Moses to the film about dreams

During the next lesson, when everyone meets up again, the walls of the theatre in Via De Lollis are covered with tapestries woven from the coloured images of Moses and the written acrostics, concise yet pregnant monographs that only the student-author can explain. They are rapid outlines, which reveal, through their diversity, the psychic world of each student. Through this particular experience the encounter with the father, bringer of law, is updated. Moses symbolically assumes the function of the Name of the Father. The photograph of the sculpture that depicts him, which is the same for everyone, is transformed, in the copies, and assumes those unique characteristics with which each person identifies: the image of a woman, of one leg, of a torso severed from the rest of the body, of a fragmented body. The unconscious image of the body, which each person has within and which can be created thanks to the enormous variety of combinations of body parts and the body as a whole, seems to depict the groupal psychic apparatus: an enormous body composed of identical bodies, but each with its own characteristics, so that everyone is able to recognize themselves.

The words each student uses to present their work confirm, as if there were any need, that there can be no interpretation unless it is of one’s blind spot. A premise that allows us to corroborate what Anzieu describes as an analogy between the group and the dream: *“Individuals go into groups in the same way that, in their sleep they enter into dreams.”*

In a subsequent lesson the dreams materialize in the theatre through the images of one of the dreams, “Sunshine Through the Rain”, in Akira Kurosawa’s film *Dreams*. A boy, in the brief period between the end of the rain and the sun coming out, goes to spy on the foxes’ wedding ceremony, despite his mother’s having forbidden him to. When he comes home, his mother gives him a ceremonial samurai sword and sends him away: he must take it back to the foxes by following the rainbow, on pain of death. The black door closes on his solitude.

The screening of the episode is followed by the students being asked, as usual, who wants to play the part of the young boy, the foxes (the “bride and bridegroom”), the procession, the trees...? We are ready for the enactment, when a lecturer offers to play the part of the ceremonial samurai sword. This is the sign that we have entered the inner theatre of the groupal psychic apparatus, revealing its function as the pre-text that determines every text. We watch the acting-out in amazement. The majority of the group are performing a stable function as trees, other continue to gratify their *pulsione viatoria* as part of the procession that has now changed from a funeral cortege (as it was in the first enactment) to a wedding procession, thanks to the presence of the foxes, sexual symbols that bind man to the primal scene in a deadly way.

A female student chooses to play the small boy, hidden between the many bodies of the group, who peeps into his parents room and overhears rhythmic sounds, sees colours and masks, and experiences primitive fantasies. The mother who told the bedtime stories becomes the mother who prevents fusion by giving the young girl a phallus with which the castration that places the individual in the social and symbolic order has to be carried out. From that moment on, the child is no longer alone but protected by a samurai of knowledge – the lecturer – and the trauma is (re)recorded as a screen memory of the primal scene and of its elaboration. This process is made possible only by the psychodrama mechanism, since it provides for role switching: the little girl, in fact, takes her mother’s place and after being the one who is excluded, becomes the one who excludes, and then reverts to her original role, “sadder but wiser”.

We cannot dwell on this further here, but one can imagine the energetic potency of the acting-out of the group’s mental contents, which lends emotions to the subject, just as the subject transfers them to other subjects through the unconscious associative chain. Does the unconscious create the dream or does the dream create the unconscious?

From the film about the dream we thus move on, at the second to last encounter before the Christmas holidays, to the film of a personal dream.

The dream

“I have to graduate by February, because my exams where held up and it brought me to a standstill. Recently I dreamt that the lecturer shook my hand and accompanied me.”

The lecturer is still the samurai and the dream took place after the game. Unable to choose the real person, namely the lecturer, in the psychodrama, she chooses a young girl because, as she says, “she relaxes me”.

A desire is realized through placing one’s hand in the hand of the Other. Thus a course ends with a degree, just as our course will come to an end: with so many students asking to do their thesis on Psychodrama – a sign that the course has worked as a form of individual research, as a “method for learning the method”.

This confirms the fact that the psychodramatic game was always interrupted before it took on any semblance of therapy, and that the observation exercise had an educational rather than therapeutic purpose, in keeping with the original aims of the project.

At the final session, each participant read their account of the journey they had completed. This produced a mythical narration, composed from the contributions of the various group members, through a secondary process that defined the space of the preconscious-conscious system, like the weft of the tapestry of verbal and visual expressions pinned on the walls of the theatre; here, cognitive learning was underpinned by emotive experience. Primal processes were transformed into content expressed in a rational form. All the discourses were rooted in culture but, at the same time, were created in relation to the position assumed by each person with respect to origins, taboos, language, the transference... and making oneself the subject of the discourse.

Conclusions

Each student was asked what is the method for learning the method.

We hope that each participant realized that knowing also means knowing oneself, and that the main point was the encounter with epistemology (does a science of knowing exist for each individual?) Via what method did our transmission of knowledge take place?

Our task was to present the theory and technique of analytical psychodrama. We have had an experience of transformative learning typical of any form of training for taking care of others. As far as method is concerned.

Various people developed relationships with each other (Kaës would speak of the “plural” category, Neri the “multiple” category) while maintaining their differences and individual characteristics through a kind of intersubjectiveness, thus embodying the following Freudian concept: “...in the psychic life of the individual the other is usually present as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an enemy and thus (...) from the very beginning, individual psychology has always been social psychology.”

The words seemed to pass from one student to another according to an associative logic that impregnated them with emotions and libidinal investments; polyphonic, superdetermined words that generated new meaning through a process that Kaes defined as “interdiscursiveness”.

Lastly, we might ask ourselves if the group functioned as a “groupal psychic apparatus”, given the link mechanism that was created (to the extent that it continued to be manifest through the personal written accounts sent to *Apeiron*) and the contribution made by individual students that permits us to conceive of a single group mind, perhaps because of the students’ “combinatorial” capacity;

students who initially were thrown together (tourists in search of psychodrama), but later were motivated by the desire to meet. What was the factor that transformed the crowd into a whole and the individuals into beneficiaries of the whole? That made them “accidental tourists” in the game, the myth, the drama of the psyche?

When the course was over, a female student sent an e-mail to *Apeiron* with an acrostic of her name and her thoughts about the course, which she had not had “the courage to share with everyone during the lesson”. We feel that her words are the best way of concluding this article:

Serenamente

Eternamente ti amai

Rosso come il fuoco bruciava il cuore

E io lo facevo ardere

Non potevo lasciarti andare

Amarti per sempre solo vivendoti

(Serenely / Eternally I loved you / Red as fire burned my heart / And I set it aflame / I could not let you go / Love you forever just by experiencing you)

Everything begins with a name, and also my name that tells a story and hides a destiny; a story that describes us and makes us all poets. An observer who, unexpectedly, was capable of capturing the voices and essential content amidst background noise and of making us more aware of the experience we had gone through. The pleasure of listening to her as she read us her account of our experience, making us hold our breath. Sharing our own memories and emotions, which aroused new emotions that were shared and established new contacts between us, we strangers who become a group before separating again and recounting the magic of this semicircle (due to lack of space) which now closes. Missed lessons that are later relived through the accounts of others, sheets of paper attached to the walls of this theatre, the eyes of the person who now sums up our experience. I almost forget I wasn't there. A passion for Psychodrama, born thanks to the brilliant idea of making a university course a real-life experience, a means of generating genuine knowledge. Pity we no longer have to run from the University all the way to Via De Lollis on a Tuesday!”

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