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WHAT CAN NEURO- PSYCHOANALYSIS AND AFFECTIVE NEUROSCIENCES ADD TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF OUR MIND?

Mário David

Psychiatrist and Group analyst of the
Portuguese Society of Group analysis
(SPGPAG)

Group analyst, Analytical Psychotherapist
and Psychiatrist

Full Member of the Portuguese Society of
Group analysis (SPGPAG)

Full Member of the Group Analytic Society
International (GASI)

Full Member of the International Society for
Neuro-Psychoanalysis (N-PSA)

Former Graduate Assistant at the Lisbon
Psychiatric Hospital Center

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Abstract: As group analysts and analytical group psychotherapists, we seek to understand how therapeutic and/or non-therapeutic groups will generate, create and express themselves through different levels of communication and interpersonal relationships, as well as at the transpersonal level (group field), which are deeply influenced and interdependent on the different personal and group matrices. The author will share with you some of his reflections on neuroscientific and neuropsychanalytic contributions and updates regarding the current understanding of the functioning of the Human Mind, contributing to a better understanding of how group processes impact Individual Minds and the interaction styles of group members, based on proposals and contributions from several authors in Neuro-Psychoanalysis and Groupanalysis. The group is nothing more than a sounding board and an amplification of interactions between Individual Minds supported by the intuitions, deductions and assessments that each of the group members exposes in verbal and non-verbal communications articulated with the individual capacities to feel, empathize, interact and, finally, to understand and recognize.

Keywords: Mental Activity, Group Field, Group Analysis, Levels of Communication, Levels of Experiencing, Affective Neurosciences, Neuro-Psychoanalysis, Group Processes.

INTRODUCTION

As group analysts or group analytic psychotherapists, we try to understand, that is, comprehend and conceive of what happens in groups, in terms of communication and relationship processes, which are expressed from the intrapersonal level through the interpersonal level to the transpersonal level, regardless of the size of the group (small, medium or large) or its purpose (experiential, therapeutic or social). Group processes are profoundly influenced and interdependent on the emergence of different personal matrices and the group matrix created throughout this same group process, whether it is therapeutic in nature or not (Cortês, 1989[2009]); Leal, 1968;1994). The processes that occur within groups are dynamic and transitory forces that are played out and organized at different levels, starting from individual subjectivity through the construction of interactive affective relationships based on the most complex and varied modes of verbal and nonverbal communication that are recognized, understood and interpreted by each of the group members, including the leader(s) or even by the group itself, as a whole.

In fact, according to the vision derived from Foulkesian thought, group analysts conceive of the existence of two fundamental dimensions in the functioning of groups: “the communication network and inter and transpersonal relationships” (Foulkes, 1957 [2014]) where individuals represent only the nodal points in such structures, with a final purpose, of constructing a “group matrix” that represents everything that gravitates around it, as “a common ground, and ultimately determines the meaning of all events, and all communications and interpretations, verbal and nonverbal, that are integrated.” (Foulkes, 1967, pp.31-34 In: Cortês, 1989[2009], pp.93-94). Within this “group matrix” the transference processes occur, as well as

mirroring, emotional resonance, empathic and encounter moments, and between the “internal interpersonal matrices” of each member, the latter, a concept developed by Maria Rita Mendes Leal (1968;1994).

As for the levels of psychic experience and the individual effects on group participants, authors such as S.H. Foulkes (1948[1990]; 1957[2014]; 1964[1964]; 1967), W.R. Bion (1948[1961]; 1962[1967]; 1967[1984]) or E. Pichon-Rivière (1971a; 1971b; 1979), they all considered that People involved in deep psychological analysis experienced two main levels of psychic experience: A) A conscious level relating to everyday experiences and B) Another underlying and quite different level, an unconscious level, the latter governed by impulses, drives and emotional forces with affective qualities. Both levels are framed by the relationships between the group members, including the group psychotherapist/group analyst, and through all the interactions that occur within the group itself.

Each member of the group becomes aware of their resistances and other difficulties (unconscious fears, atavisms, tics, etc.) related to their mostly neurotic and repetitive mental functioning in relation to certain personal issues that are problematic for them, and at the same time, they become aware of their meanings under the influence of the interactions that occur between the group members.

For those who have had experience as a participant in different types of groups (small, medium or large groups), they will have noticed the existence of different levels of communication and interpersonal and transpersonal interaction between the members present.

The people who participate immediately begin to communicate, either by exchanging glances with greater or lesser interest and punctuated by moments of silence. After some time, they begin to verbalize more or less spontaneously, generating all kinds of interactions through different channels (body postures, glances, more or less isolated speech or even through other sensory perceptions), revealing different styles of affective/emotional connection derived from “*of resonances in terms of (physical) and emotional sensations, feelings and meanings resulting from the experience of a certain family constellation brought from childhood by the individual, some of which are nothing more than archaic emotional experiences*”, and that “*The so-called “relational” deficiencies that concern primary figures of love and hate, which remain embedded in pre-verbal stages of experience, are then repeated in a “here and now”.*” (Leal, MRM, 1994; pp:77). These attitudes and styles of relationships will be repeated throughout the dynamics of the group process, as they derive from socio-family circumstances, the type of ethical/moral and school education, as well as from previous groups of belonging: the nuclear and extended family; schoolmates and youth groups, sports groups, etc.

Psychotherapeutic groups inspired by group analysis aim to function without apparent precise or defined objectives, through dialogues in free and floating association, giving priority to the personal analysis of the stories and traumas of each member of the group, as well as to the development of their relationship skills and abilities, through communication and interpersonal interaction driven by the social dimensions of their Minds and translated through their natural desires to connect and share their emotions and feelings while confronting this new situation, that of being in a group with unfamiliar or previously known people.

Essentially, they will communicate and share: sometimes their preconceptions, conceptions and perceptions conditioned by their personal, family and social matrices, sometimes everything they will perceive around this particular situation, according to their dispositions and affective and emotional states or according to latent and/or recurring desires of each one.

In the meantime, group therapists have to grasp, intuit and understand the immense motives and factors that are at play within the minds of the group members, whether through the processes of communication of explicit or conscious content (verbal or non-verbal) or through implicit communication channels or outside the field of psychological consciousness, the latter being predominantly spontaneous and less discriminating than the explicit or conscious communications, which occur between the group members and complemented by everything that the group analysts/group psychotherapists are experiencing and understanding because they are also involved in these same group processes. On the other hand, we will find group processes, which are transitory and dynamic forces, which unfold at different levels, and which are constructed through sequences of emotional and affective interaction through the most varied and complex forms of verbal and non-verbal communication (resonance, attunement, mirroring, transference moments, moments of encounter, etc.). These forms of communication are recognized, interpreted and understood by each of the members of the group, including the group analyst, or even by the group itself as a whole. In the South American tradition of group psychotherapy, the analyst and the group are integrated into the concept of the “group field”, a structure composed of psychodynamic forces of an affective nature that unfold, nourished by the permanent presence, manifest or disguised, of

instinctive forces of a nature (libidinal/sexual, aggressive or narcissistic), which are at the basis of all group processes and of their very creation. David Zimmerman (2000) described them as “forces of an affective nature and with a communicational dynamic fueled by the permanent, manifest, disguised or hidden presence of drives – libidinal, aggressive and narcissistic – that manifest themselves in the form of needs, desires, demands, envy and its derivatives, ideals, etc.” (Zimmerman, D., 2000; pp. 85) and “in every group, two contradictory forces permanently coexist in play: one tending towards group cohesion and the other towards group disintegration. Group cohesion is directly proportional to the feelings of “belonging” of each member... ”and, on the other hand, group cohesion also depends on its capacity to lose individuals and absorb many others, as well as on its continuity” (Zimmerman D., 2000; pp. 83-84).

WHAT IS THE BRAIN ACCORDING TO THE NEUROSCIENTIFIC VIEW?

Currently, those who study the Human Brain conceive of it, first and foremost, as an organ designed to carry out all types of information processing, whether it comes from the “external environment” or originating from the “body”.

The brain aims to respond to all the challenges it becomes aware of regarding its survival, it constantly makes predictions and estimates and assesses the levels of uncertainty and error that may arise when it tries to articulate all the data received through the different senses (sight, hearing, touch, etc.) plus those generated from interoceptive or proprioceptive maps, that is, the information stored internally and organized into different types of memories about past experiences. These memories will help it to better perform the necessary measurements and corrections

so that the brain can make the best choices about what to do with this same data. The brain processes information from different categories of memories, working memory, short-term memory and long-term memory, which function in different ways from each other, through procedural and/or procedural procedures, the latter functioning at non-conscious levels. In fact, most mental processes do not function at a conscious level; most of them function as automatic procedures, free from the intervention of the function of consciousness, in particular, those involved in the self-regulation of the sets of instincts and basic emotions that will support and guide all of our decisions and actions.

The Brain seeks above all an allostasis of its mental processes, as well as states of energetic homeostasis, through an ever-increasing automation of its mental processes, in particular, those processes that are carriers of positive solutions for its survival and reproductive success and as long as they imply greater energetic efficiency for its biological functioning as an organ (since it consumes around 20% of all glucose ingested daily) and so that its responses are increasingly efficient and appropriate when directed to the needs of the “Body” that it guides and on which it deeply depends for its decisions and actions. The Brain has a unique characteristic, that of being the bearer of two different natures: one physical and the other mental, which correlate and transform each other whenever necessary. Furthermore, it reveals certain abilities, such as “feeling” feelings, elaborating thoughts or anticipating, imagining or “dreaming” different types of solutions, all of them methods of supporting the resolution of problems arising from any type of conflict caused by the influence of the “environment” or when establishing any type of vital interaction, including with other Brains/Minds. For neuropsychanalytic Mark Solms,

the Mind is “the “Being” of the Brain”, (Solms, 1997, 2013; 2021), as it represents the different aspects and phenomena of Subjectivity, that is, each Mind corresponds to a Brain, which is unique and different from all Others and in which a version of a particular and unique worldview is enclosed: “the Vision of our Personal, Family and Social History”. The Mind is composed of a diversity of mental products: affective states, emotions, thoughts, intentions for action and the different implicit and procedural memories (short-term and long-term), and also a fundamental quality, self-awareness. It is experienced through two fundamental levels of consciousness: an affective self-awareness and a reflective or extended self-awareness, the latter is the basis of cognitions and metacognitions and with which we can be aware of our fantasies and thoughts as being something that can be inside or outside our Self.

Taking into consideration, the different forms of communication between brains, current neuropsychanalysts consider that they unfold and develop under three fundamental levels of Consciousness: A) An unconscious level of communication of an automatic, impulsive and affective nature, through non-verbal communication modules; B) another level of communication of a preconscious level and of an essentially emotional nature, based on the perceptive activity of the sensory functions of vision, hearing, touch and interoceptive bodily sensations; and C) Another level of communication based on expanded and self-reflective states of consciousness supported by cognitive (memory, attention, concentration, introspection, reflection) and affective (resonance, empathy, sympathy, etc.) capacities through predominantly verbal modes of communication.

As for information processing in human brains, it takes place at three distinct levels:

1) At the level of primary processing of an affective nature derived from subcortical brain activity and which is revealed through the emergence of drives (homeostatic affects), instincts (emotional affects) and reflexes (sensory affects); 2) At the level of secondary processing of the learning type, based on behavioral routines or basic emotions regulated by limbic circuits and influenced by different conditioning (classical, operant or instrumental); 3) At the level of tertiary processes of the functions of cognitive self-awareness, which are processed mainly in cortical areas, through executive cognitive functions (through thoughts and planning capabilities); through emotional regulations and ruminations elaborated in the medial prefrontal areas and also through “free will”, as well as through action intentions as manifestations of higher functions of working memories (short-term) (Solms, 2015; 2021; Panksepp & Biven, 2012). All three levels of information processing are directly and indirectly influenced by each other, in a circular and retroactive manner, based on information coming from both the surrounding environment (the World) through different sensory channels and from the Internal Environment (the Body) where they are recorded in different ways through all types of interoceptive, exteroceptive and proprioceptive maps or images.

This information has among itself certain attributes of agency and valence of an affective nature, in the form of positive or negative categories, which inform us as sensations related to the qualities of pleasure or displeasure (Solms; 2015, 2021; Panksepp & Biven; 2012).

WHAT IS MENTAL ACTIVITY FOR? WHAT IS THINKING?

Mental activity emerges as an intrinsic regulatory system for brain function, where the various forms of short-term and long-term memories are accessed through different levels of self-awareness, either through affective self-awareness, which concerns the current contents of consciousness, that is, everything that is within the field of focal attention and background sensations; or through the influence of reflective or expanded self-awareness, which is the basis of all phenomena of cognition and metacognition.

Mental activity is based on representations of experiences guided by affective records expressed either through emotions (behaviors) or through feelings (self-perceptions), which are the basis for the emergence of our intentions and decisions, with the aim of improving the suitability and effectiveness of any type of action to be developed. These actions are represented either by motor actions or movements, or through verbalizations.

Mental activity aims to resolve all types of inconsistencies, contradictions, uncertainties and errors that are being generated at every moment in our Mind, as we need to successively evaluate and reevaluate everything that is necessary in order to make the best decision in light of the different options that will arise from the enormous amounts of information that are organized in the different types of mental maps, on data coming from the external environment (exteroceptive) or from the brain itself (interoceptive) and from the “Body” itself (proprioceptive) which are based on data provided by the various sensory systems and by long-term non-declarative memories.

In these non-declarative memories, information about previous facts and events and about some of the automated procedures and pre-established behavior programs

are stored and organized, such as drives, instincts, reflexes, and other conditioned (and unconditioned) behaviors related to early automatic learning, involved in the so-called “imprinting” of mental development. We continue to think as long as we need to make new, additional corrections through increasingly higher levels of evaluation, planning and decision-making, with the help of the different levels of self-reflective consciousness in order to reassess and optimize the best responses and solutions to any of the issues raised. The purpose is to make new calculations, estimates and predictions with the aim of resolving any inconsistencies, reducing levels of uncertainty or reducing possible errors to a minimum.

It turns out that most of our mental functioning is not accessible to the conscious levels of the functioning of the Mind because the neural processes are extremely fast and operate in automated procedural modes emerging from lower brain areas. Only we access these non-conscious levels, through indirect means and through very simple portions of information related to affective qualities (positive or negative) essentially translated in terms of feelings of pleasure or displeasure about the information generated.

HOW ARE THOUGHTS PROCESSED?

Based on the classic Freudian proposal on the functioning of the Mind, under the designation of “Mental Apparatus” or “Psyché”, it is considered that the processing of information takes place essentially at two levels: A) A primary level that mainly uses iconic signs and images derived from sensory perceptions of Objects, described as a functional or dynamic unconscious level which corresponds to the functioning of various structures and systems that are at the base of drives (homeostatic affects),

instincts (emotional affects) or reflexes (sensory affects), being they, schemes or programs already automated or in the process of automation or still subject to corrective measures (reformulation); B) A secondary level that is supported by verbal signals, symbolic concepts or abstractions, which corresponds to pre-conscious/conscious levels of mental functioning, and which refer essentially to the functioning of working and declarative (verbalizable) memories and also of the executive areas of the brain. (Solms, 2013, 2015)

According to the neuropsychanalytic model, the act of thinking comes from the so-called “Ego work” on the information that emerges from the functional or dynamic unconscious level whenever any reformulation (correction) or reduction of the defensive system (defensive barrier) occurs. According to the proposals of neuropsychologist and neuropsychanalytic Mark Solms (2013, 2015), there is an unconscious part, which consists of responding to the impositions and demands of instinctive life, as well as to the signals and meanings derived from affections and bodily sensations, and a conscious part that unfolds in a more or less automated way. Thus, the Ego tries to provide responses/solutions to these basic demands following some principles, such as regulating the levels of pleasure/displeasure with the purpose of achieving and maintaining homeostasis in this same “Psychic Apparatus” or “Psyché”.

According to psychoanalytic authors, thoughts emerge from a fundamental matrix where there are either undifferentiated matrices of records and reminiscences of objects that are disconnected and separate from each other, or matrices of fusional states between portions of the Ego and the countless representations coming from the External World, the latter in a potential state capable of generating powerful intimate

bonds between them. These representations about the Surrounding World will connect and constitute themselves internally through processes of identification, introjection or projections of various types, many of them through unpleasant experiences, which led Melanie Klein (1958[1991]) to consider that these original relationships would be mostly of a paranoid nature. Thus, thoughts derive from all kinds of representations, perceptions or tendencies to action, and are conditioned by the activity of defense mechanisms and, at the same time, by other mental processes that are revealed through dream activity, all kinds of endless fantasies or other forms of feeling whose origins are primary and not accessible to reflective consciousness.

Within the mental space, the precursors and substrates of thoughts are representations, perceptions or tendencies to action, which are connected to unconscious activities with the purpose of elaborating predictions and estimates that the Brain/Mind makes in order to respond to its needs for self-regulation and homeostasis between internal stimuli (the Body) and external stimuli (the Surrounding Environment) accompanied by instinctive needs and respective affective and emotional responses. These needs for biological and homeostatic regulation are not limited to the Body-Mind connection, but also respond to the impulses of attachment and social connection that can be represented by the psychic instance proposed by Tom Ormay (2012) under the name “NOS” and that is revealed through the interpersonal and transpersonal dynamics of the phenomena of communication and interaction between all members of a group.

Finally, in terms of organization, mental activity works according to two general principles: 1) The “Reality Principle” (Freud, 1895[1950]) that determines what must or must not have access to reflective or expanded

consciousness; and 2) The “Pleasure-Unpleasure Principle” or “Principle of Homeostasis” (Damásio, 2010; Solms, 2015; 2020) that regulates energy expenditure and information automation processes.

ANOTHER BASIC DIMENSION OF THE BRAIN, THE SOCIAL BRAIN

Our Brain/Mind has another fundamental dimension, that of being an eminently social Brain in which we can consider the existence of a possible interpersonal neurobiology in which there are significant correlations between interpersonal experiences and the neurobiological development of the Brain, which is capable of making changes at any stage of its development, sometimes through the so-called “critical periods or windows”, sometimes through the constant neuroplastic quality of its connections and nerve endings, in which social interactions are one of the primary sources of regulation, growth and balance between the Brain and its Mind. (Cozolino, 2006; 2010).

Currently, there is increasing interest in the study of what is called Social Feelings, in the context of 5 subcategories: Affiliation, Parent-Child Bonding, Moral Feelings, Interpersonal Stressors and Emotional Communication. All of them significantly influence the ways in which we communicate and what we communicate, and these subcategories are the most important factors for our psychic balance and mental health. They are supported by the activation of the phenomenon of empathy in situations with emotional significance and by activating, in a complementary way, intuition, a mixture of emotional resonance and attunement, together with something we call sympathy.

All this consists of the elaboration of hypotheses in each of us, about the situation of the Other based on the combination of our visceral, emotional and cognitive

information. According to H. Kohut (1984): “It is the attempt to experience someone else’s inner life while maintaining some objectivity”, that is, maintaining self-discernment of our Inner States while we are imagining the Inner Worlds of Others”. They are involved in part of the basic brain circuits that are initiated in some nuclei of the brain stem, passing through parahippocampal and fusiform areas, then heading to the thalamus and insula and finally regulated by the parietal cortex.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE IN A THERAPEUTIC GROUP SITUATION?

When in a therapeutic group situation, the members present will bring their “internal interpersonal matrices” (Mendes Leal, 1968, 1994) to the group situation and will create a “group matrix” (Foulkes, 1948[1990]), that is, they will become aware of their subjective and individual experiences alternating with the more global and total experiences that will occur within or even outside the same group and that are expressed through instinctive and affective interactions, organized into relationship styles. Furthermore, when we are in a group environment, we find ourselves in a permanent struggle between our individual and selfish interests and our social impulses, which go beyond the instincts of self-perseverance and self-regulation, also classically called “Life Intention” or “Life Principle” and the Social Instincts, such as Attachment (or Bonding) and Social Connection. The latter are organized around two principles of social behavior: The “Principle of Similarity” or “Principle of Mutual Aid” based on mutual recognition on a natural call for movements of solidarity and cooperation in the form of reciprocal and empathetic behaviors between each other and the “Principle of Divergence”, whose forces are of the opposition type that underlie the search

for and detection of all types of differences, which will drive us towards competition, conflict and all kinds of combats among us all (Solms, 2015;).

HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE IN GROUP SITUATIONS?

Any communication emerges naturally from the motivations, latent desires or intentions of the group members, with the purpose of sharing among themselves their assumptions, conceptions and perceptions derived from their personal, family and social matrices, as well as everything they are perceiving within the group processes.

We can recognize three distinct dimensions within these dynamics of communication:

- 1) Conscious Verbal and Non-Verbal Explicit Communications based on perceptions and internal representations of a varied nature and which are subject to reformulation and restructuring throughout group processes.
- 2) Implicit Communications, mainly Unconscious, of an Affective and Instinctive Nature, are much less discriminated and discriminative than the previous explicit communications, which are revealed through the movements of transference and countertransference and more interactions of an emotional and affective nature (e.g., in emotional resonance).
- 3) Interpersonal and Transpersonal Communications derived from the impacts of the content shared between the Participants regarding the internal representations organized from their personal, family and social matrices. These communications vary according to the perception, assimilation and interpretation of each of those present and are not exclusive to any of the participants, but rather result from the forces at play in the group field.

HOW DO GROUP ANALYSTS UNDERSTAND INDIVIDUAL MENTAL FUNCTIONING WITHIN GROUP DYNAMICS?

Following the lines of understanding of how People function when they are integrated into therapeutic group situations and according to the fundamental authors, S.H. Foulkes ((1948[1990]; 1957[2014]; 1964[1964]; 1967), W.R. Bion (1948[1961]; 1962[1967]; 1967[1984]), E. Pichon-Rivière (1971a; 1971b; 1979), Eduardo Luís Cortesão (1989/2009) or Earl Hopper (2003a; 2003b), we can currently affirm the existence of 5 basic levels of individual mental functioning within group dynamics. Therefore, we will have:

1) The Current Level at which the group is experienced and represented internally as a sample of a community, a part of public opinion, etc. and the leader of the group, such as a coordinator, an administrator, a leader or even an authority.

2) The Transferential Level which corresponds to the experiences of relationships with the most mature and significant objects of each of the group members and of the group itself as a whole, for example, this level is related to the descriptions of the group as a representative of the Family, of a Father or a Mother or even the other members, as representatives of siblings.

These two levels, the Current and the Transferential, refer to the structural and dynamic functioning of the relationships between social systems and the mature objective relationships in interpersonal terms between the group and its members and which correspond to an Oedipal level of the mental functioning of each of the participants.

3) Next comes the Projective Level of Mental and Embodied Images, which corresponds to a functional level of “internal” object relations of a narcissistic

and primitive type. At this level, the members of the group not only incorporate parts of their Ego into the group, but also the entire group, which will represent parts of the individual Ego of each member of the group. These embodied images can be reflected and represented by each of the members or by the group itself through certain fantasies, games and dream activities. This will correspond to a narcissistic level of functioning of the Mind of each of those present.

4) At a more abstract level, the Level of Interpersonal and Transpersonal Interactions emerges, where each individual report and represents his or her role within the group game or the network of relationships that will keep all members connected and linked to each other. These interactions emerge from an imaginary and virtual space of interaction possibilities, where each person represents his or her role or position that he or she plays in relation to the issues of struggles for supremacy/submission or acceptance/rejection, which are always present in the continuous functioning of group processes.

5) Finally, we can also identify a Primordial Level, which concerns the primordial images that emerge from a collective unconscious according to Carl Jung or from the movements of aggregation versus massification studied by Earl Hopper (Hopper, 2003a, 2003b), and which can be articulated with the fourth basic assumption within the description of Wilfred R. Bion (1948[1961]; 1962[1967]).

DISCUSSION

The analytical approach to a group involves investigating and understanding what affective and emotional reasons underlie the numerous aspects of thought and behavior disturbances that are being revealed through communications between group members and their interpersonal interactions, both within and outside the group setting.

In terms of communications, these emerge naturally from the motivations, latent desires or intentions of each member of the group with the purpose of sharing among themselves their assumptions, conceptions and perceptions derived from their personal, family and social matrices, as well as everything that they are perceiving within the group processes. We can recognize, at least three distinct dimensions within the dynamics of communications: 1) Explicit conscious verbal communications based on in the perceptions and internal representations of a varied nature originating from the personal, family and social matrices of each of those present, which are capable of reformulation and restructuring throughout the group processes. 2) Implicit communications, mainly unconscious, of an affective and instinctive nature, that are revealed through the movements of transference and countertransference and through more interactions of an emotional and affective nature (e.g., the emotional resonance within the relationships between the members of the group and in particular, towards the group leader (group analyst)). 3) Interpersonal and transpersonal communications derived from the impacts of content shared between participants, also related to internal representations organized from personal, family and social matrices. These communications vary according to the perception, assimilation and interpretation that each of those present will process, and are not exclusive to any of the participants,

but rather result from the forces at play in the group field.

For the author of the article, these last dynamics of communication are linked to psychic phenomena originating in the affective and pulsional areas of the brain of each member of the group in which each one projects into an imaginary and virtual space within themselves, the possibilities of interaction with the Others involved in this continuous process of interaction and reflection in the group.

However, the group itself behaves as a dynamic field for the expression of psychic forces, whose structure goes beyond the sum of its components, which is composed and developed through the interaction of the multiple phenomena and elements of the psyche of each member. These elements of the individual psyche can be, in terms of their nature, both intrasubjective and intersubjective, and they are interconnected through “internal relational matrices” (a concept proposed by the Portuguese group analyst Maria Rita Mendes Leal, 1968).

It turns out that our Mind unfolds within two main types of subjective realities: those that have an origin related to affections, emotions and feelings and the respective experiences at the level of the Body, and another type of subjective reality, the latter of external origin related to stimuli coming from the external environment with its multiple contexts and circumstances perceived through the five different senses. Both subjective realities will be captured through intuition, emotional contagion and resonance, and other subliminal interactions.

However, we will process psychic phenomena, simultaneously and in alternative ways, through three levels of thought processing: a) the functional or dynamic unconscious level; b) the preconscious levels and c) the self-conscious levels, through

verbal or non-verbal communications or through sequences of affective and behavioral interactions that will happen and develop through the dynamics of interpersonal and transpersonal relationships within group processes and at three levels of consciousness: 1) The unconscious and automatic level; 2) The pre-conscious level and 3) The self-reflective conscious level.

In fact, an Argentine-Mexican author named Juan Tubert-Oklander (2014) states that “individual mental functioning becomes more complex as a result of the presence of Others, as sets of references, models and sources of objects and desires, both internal and external, with which each of those present will relate in different ways, whether through experiences of total separation and divergence (phase of independence) through considerations related to issues of partial dependence, until experiencing with some of those present or with the group as a whole, moments of symbiosis alternating with feelings of isolation and strangeness, the latter referred to by some authors as “autistic moments.”

For this author, when we are in a situation of psychological analysis, the narcissistic and autistic representations of each of those present are confronted with the representations derived from the interactive dimensions of personal, family and social development, all of them supported by instinctive and affective forces that will mobilize the defenses and memories that are more or less explicit and even those of an implicit nature, in alternating movements between retreats and regressions and the movements of progression towards new knowledge and new mental elaborations (Tubert-Oklander, 2014).

Thus, in each individual, their individual experiences alternate with more global and total experiences within or even outside the group, which are expressed through instinctive

and affective interactions that are organized through relationship styles. The process of psychological analysis of each individual in a group situation will unfold at two levels of psychic experience, one level relating to conscious day-to-day experiences and another quite different level, the unconscious level, the latter governed by emotional forces and energies with affective qualities and framed both by the relationship with the group psychotherapist/group analyst, as well as by the interactions that occur within the group itself, that is, each of those present will become aware of their resistances and other difficulties (conscious fears and unconscious fears) within their neurotic and repetitive functioning in relation to the personal issues that are most problematic for them and, at the same time, each of them will become aware of what it means for them to be under the influence of the interactions that will occur with the other members of the group, where all of them, directly or indirectly, will influence each other with the aim of getting to know themselves better. Thus, each member of the group will deal with the issues of communication and relationships that arise, which are governed by primary or unconscious brain processes and subsequently elaborated by secondary mental processes, about what they are feeling in emotional terms and becoming aware of their cognitive processes, in addition to what they are perceiving and sharing within the “Group Field” and sometimes even outside of it.

The group scenario privileges what emerges from individual minds through what is shared in terms of prejudices, conceptions and personal perceptions, in the form of unconscious or conscious, implicit or explicit communications, mainly of an interpersonal and/or transpersonal nature derived from shared content about internal representations that are organized in their personal, family and social matrices and that are not exclusive

to any participant, but result from the forces at play within the “Group Field”.

We all experience these subjective and individual moments alternating with more global and total events within or even outside the group, which are expressed through instinctive and affective interactions

organized in the form of relationship styles. We interact with each other within networks of communication and relationships, expressed in the complementary forms of Feeling and Thinking and always imbued with some type of underlying desire or affection.

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