

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ANALYSTS*

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I shall approach the study of the subject successively from the point of view of: I., social psychology; II., unconscious dynamics of the group processes and III., the psychoanalytic approach to reactions of individuals related to their status in the international hierarchy.

Some Socio-Psychological

Aspects of Psychoanalytic Societies

Among the first followers of newly established psychoanalytic groups there were a larger proportion of non-conformists than in an ordinary group, because the acceptance of a “revolutionary ideology,” often requires an internal tendency to rebellion.

The combination of individual rebelliousness and a progressive ideology, created in the psychoanalytic group special relationships with the “out-group,” the traditionally organically oriented psychiatric establishment.

The “out-group,” attempts to destroy this group and its ideology were to be expected. The tangible effect was the relative ostracism, the marginal professional status to which the first analysts were condemned. Nevertheless, they did not abandon their newly created group, because of the strength of their non-conformism, which manifested itself as a spirit of rebellion and a feeling of being exceptional.

The history of the analytic movement shows that this progressive spirit was directed outwards as an antagonism towards the “out-group”

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with the impetus to reform it; and inwards, as an internal rebellion against psychoanalysis in the form of a heterodoxy or even more serious by against psychoanalysis, with the intent to divide or change the “in-group.”

Related to this double direction of the tendency towards rebelliousness, we describe two types of rebels who may both be called innovating: an internal and an external revolutionary.

The “internal revolutionary innovator” could be characterized as presenting a transient and partial acceptance of psychoanalysis with the latent potentiality of later on expressing his rebellion within the analytic group in various ways. This internal revolutionary innovator would constitute a threat against the cohesiveness of the group.

Extreme examples of this role can be found in dissidents like Jung or Adler. Less obvious representations of this role are analysts in whom the “return of the repressed” may be expressed in a tendency to innovate in certain details, as for example to shorten the technique or make it much more flexible (Alexander, Ferenczi), or putting the emphasis on details of the theory (cultural analysts).

The “external revolutionary innovator” could be exemplified by analysts who assert themselves antagonistically (toward the non-analytic professionals), in an opposition against everything that is not analytic, with an incapacity to establish some points of

contact or efforts to synthesize analysis and other related disciplines. They use analysis as an instrument of opposition.

In the relationships with the “out-group,” this role provokes reciprocal roles of rejection as an answer from the out-group, and increases the impression of unilateralism in theory and a certain naiveté, as general characteristics of analysts.

Analysts can get entangled with some distortions of the analytic thinking when divulging it. For instance when explaining the need to get rid of neurotic problems, an apparent evolution of ethics may happen through which the concepts of “good and evil” may be confused with “healthy and sick.” The analyst may then be perceived as the incarnation of what is expected of him: a perfect example of a good or healthy person. This projected image is incorporated by some analysts, reinforcing their own fantasies of omnipotence, acting them out in this role. Therefore the analyst presents him/herself before others as a person free of neurotic conflicts; suppressing his/her own pathology; all this brings for the analyst an internal drama of guilt because of pretending to be so.

Within the analytic group, if a number of analysts of higher status assume such a role, then a “projective atmosphere” is created whereby “the other one is sick,” when there are conflicts between its members. Candidates then withhold from analysis a good portion of their symptoms to avoid appearing as “traitors” to or “outcasts” from the ethics of “good health” provoked by their training analysts.

Unconscious Group Dynamics Characteristics

Of the Psychoanalytical Movement

In every group, it is possible to observe the “basic group assumptions” described by Bion: One of “dependency” and other of “fight and flight” beneath the surface of the “task-group” devoted to the tasks of training, doing research on therapy.

Manifestations of Bion’s basic assumption of dependency were clear at the time when several students got together around Freud.

Everyone interested in receiving analytic training in one region or area tended to get around the initiator of the movement. A small group was formed around this leader, upon whom everybody depended and for whose affection and estimation all competed, and felt jealous of the favorite one. They idealized the leader as a way of denying their envy and jealousy (he will give to everyone abundantly and in equal parts) and to deny their aggression against him (he is all good, doesn’t have “bad” or frustrating aspects).

Similar to Freud, the founder of any new analytic group may feel tempted to assume the role of the omnipotent figure, into which the group attempts to cast him. Such omnipotent role would help him to relieve him from his own uncertainties. He will proselytize, carried away by his wish to form “his” group. He may be excessively tolerant of new comers, relaxing the selection criteria of future analysts since that appears to help the group’s growth.

One might describe a symbiotic relation between the first group of students and the analyst founding that group. The founder, in his own turn, depends upon the candidates to succeed in making analysis an accepted, popular subject with future perspectives. His work may be evaluated sooner or later according to the number of his disciples. Through them he will succeed in increasing or starting an atmosphere of prestige around analysis, and indirectly around himself. He will share with the members of his group his own omnipotence fantasies, giving to them the real power to analyze, and the group will give to him the satisfaction of living the role of a very important person, whose real power may be constantly growing, thanks to the group. This would be an instrument with which to acquire really bigger power.

In this symbiotic relationship, both partners, the group of candidates and the analyst initiating the movement in that area, may finally feel themselves to be robbed, dominated, exploited by their reciprocal partner, or just the opposite deserving a very exaggerated gratitude. Either of the two partners may finally feel fear of losing the other one, together with wishing such loss, as a way of getting rid of the slavery of this dependency, and of the interminable symbolic payments for the services received.

In both partners of this symbiotic relationship (first training analyst and early candidates), there may exist a fear of a symbolic weaning, which is felt as a loss of the omnipotence mutually attributed to each other. The candidate, once he has received his title of analyst, will accept, although in part with difficulty, to cut the links with his training analyst, but will fantasize that he will have several analytic re-encounters with him. The analyst, in

turn, will see with a feeling of sorrow that is difficult to overcome, the loss of his group and of his role within it. It will be difficult to overcome, the loss of his group and of his role within it. It will be difficult for him to lose his role of leader. He would tend to accept this loss with less pain if he could yield that role to a disciple with whom the symbiotic relationship will seem to him more intense. We think that perhaps this could have been initially the case between Freud and Jung.

According to Jones, the unpleasant atmosphere among the Viennese disciples of Freud “was considerably exaggerated after the first two congresses, in which Freud’s extreme and undissimulated preference for Jung became evident.” After a time this led the discordant Viennese to get together in a common complaint against Freud. It was probably at that point that their previous mutual jealousies began to crystallize into a rebellion against Freud. Jones described with great accuracy the shift from the basic assumption of dependency toward the one of fight and flight. The mutual jealousy characteristic of the basic assumption of dependency changed into rebellion against Freud; the disciples got together in a common complaint against him. Thus, he became the “enemy,” now an internal one within the group, against whom they fought.

As Weigert said: “The separation of Adler and Jung away from Freud was partially motivated by personal problems of competition or rivalry. The resentment deepened the contrast. But Freud’s anger against his dissident disciples could also be understood on an objective basis.”

The primitive atmosphere of a group was added to the emotions of those participating in such fights. This atmosphere may explain Adler's tremendous success in the Viennese analytic society up to the point of dividing it in two halves. Within the group emotional atmosphere it was possible to form a "secret committee" to defend Freud and to decide Jung's expulsion.

We omit explicit references to the current situation in the analytic movement, but they are implicit in what we have been exposing. We will try, however, to partially fill such omission, underlining the specific aspects of the analytic group, that what makes it different from any other.

In small, new psychoanalytic groups the basic assumptions described by Bion tend to present themselves relatively undisguised even though at times kept in the background, because of the current fight against the enemy in the outside environment, which increases the cohesiveness around the task of the group. They still depend too much upon their initial leader, so much so that group phenomena like "scapegoating" and the constitution of a secret society" characterize these situations. The organization or the analytic society as a secret society, constitutes a characteristic of the psychoanalytical groups. (Abaol, M.)

In the large analytic societies the situation is different from what we described as characteristic of the initial, small group. These societies are divided into several "families." Each analytical family is formed by a training analyst, like a symbolic father

or mother, and his candidates. In each family Bion's basic assumptions may be observed. But the main fights take place between these families or clans which in their aspirations towards growth take characteristics of rival political parties trying to increase the number of their affiliates. The chiefs of each one of these families wishes to inherit the attributes of the original leader in that geographic area. They fight to obtain the total inheritance of the first leader, his symbolic scepter of prestige, or instead of it as a compromise with reality the best part of such an inheritance.

Thus the chief of each analytic "family" lives the fantasy of having replaced, taken away the role of the initial foundlings leader in that area, each chief of an analytic family, feels identified with the group's initiator. Thus they form a fraternal horde of emergent leaders, with each sibling imagining to replace the father. Therefore, reactions of rivalry and jealousy among them tend to predominate. The fights against the inheritor of the initial leader will be fragmented and multiplied into several fights against the possessors of the initial leader's functions. The chiefs will get together against the one who has the higher prestige among the candidates, or against who has the best clients or is being the current president of their association. The role of the initial leader is now fragmented in several sub roles that may be rotating among the various analytic families. The presence of the basic assumption of fight and flight may in this way be difficult to perceive because its manifestations are equivocal on account of not being addressed towards only one and the same person.

It is easier to observe the existence of emotions typical of the atmosphere of fight and flight, if we refer to the predominantly “paranoid” atmosphere of the analytic societies which Abadi has described.

It is characteristic of this “paranoid” atmosphere that everything “bad” is dissociated from the “inside” of the analytic society into the “outside” or non-analytic environment.

The paranoid atmosphere is reinforced by the power struggles already described, as part of which each chief of family uses his symbolic “children” as weapons to fight against the other families, in a Montague and Capulet atmosphere.

Each candidate is viewed as their self and at the same time as the representative of analytic father or mother. During the candidate’s personal analysis and supervision the students become like “tapped” phones that provide information GTA and supervision of what is “going o.”

An atmosphere of exaggerated of “spying” and misgivings may become predominant, in order to avoid eliciting the other analytic families anger.

The shift in the functions of power, from one “party” to another, sometimes leads to fears of revenge, expressed in fantasies of abuses of power by the “enemy” which is another reason to explain the need to be cautious in the presence of the “tapped” or intervened telephones.

The quality of “specialized barbarian” that Ostrov pointed out as characteristic of some analysts, may lead to the amplification of all these paranoid fears as soon as the slightest manifestation of hostility is perceived. Because of our professional knowledge about the unconscious we may proceed by abusing interpretations for hostile purposes, very much like the paranoiacs. This is also something quite characteristic of analytic groups.

The suspicious, fearful anxieties may sometimes become so intense that we take refuge from them in an exaggerated dependency and idealization of that which is uniting us: our special training and our common ideology. All this leads to a secondary reinforcement of some of the phenomena of the basic assumption of dependency, like a semi-divinization of Freud, of whom we quote several sentences in our rituals, like the priests quote the sacred texts. In this way we deny our guilt because of our jealousy and rivalry between the chiefs of families and because of the hostility against one’s own training analyst, against Freud and against analysis itself.

Individual Reactions Related to the Status

Within the Hierarchy:

An Analytic Approach

I share now some observations regarding some roots of the wish to become a training analyst.

At the individual level, the wish to be a training analyst may sometimes show an orientation towards power with some infantile features. It is possible that it may represent an acting out of the impulse of rivalry and envy because of the omnipotence attributed fantastically to one's own analyst, and therefore there is the purpose of acquiring that assumed omnipotence, by playing the most specific role of it. These fantasies impulses may not have been sufficiently analyzed because it might have been convenient for the development of the analytic group to have a new training analyst and also because the candidate may really meet necessary requisites to assume this role.

However, among the candidates who are finishing their studies, it is possible to observe several fantasies and emotional reactions on account of the possibility that some day they could become training analysts. Often they feel that that possibility would imply taking away the role of their own analyst. A patient who was studying medicine with the idea of becoming an analyst fantasized about the possibility of becoming someday a training analyst. She felt that this would be like taking away the scepter of prestige from her own analyst and she expressed fantasies of becoming omnipotent.

These fantasies were connected with some associations that had an exhibitionistic content in which she saw herself naked on a stage showing her breasts and provoking the sexual excitement and also the anger of all the men that were filling the theater.

While analyzing these impulses of taking away imaginary omnipotence of the analyst as an expression of her greed for acquiring the training analyst's omnipotent penis-breast,

she felt as very poor and empty of “good” things. She exclaimed “How small are my breasts!” and tended to make self depreciatory remarks that contrasted sharply with her recent omnipotent fantasies.

These fantasies of taking away the omnipotence of one’s own analyst may be the source of deep guilt feelings because of the implicit destructive greed. They may also increase fears of one’s own analyst, whose fantastic revenge is feared. Feelings of guilt and fear of attacks may inhibit almost totally the development of some candidates capable of becoming excellent training analysts, or it may lead them to a vicious circle of defying their guilt feelings and their paranoid fears of their own analyst. They may develop a proselytizing attitude that may lead them to devote themselves with an exaggerated intensity to training functions. This involves potentially the possibility of acting out the fantasies of taking away the role of one’s own training analyst and even more, this also implies the possibility that the training analyst develop complementary fantasies, feeling himself excluded and having a tendency to really take some small revenge on his former trainee.

I believe that the deep analysis of these fantasies, hidden behind the fact that in reality the candidate will perform the same profession or role of his own analyst, will bring about important benefits. Actually, avoiding the acting out of these problems may help some people who are not really interested either in treating patients or in training, not to misguide their lives into these therapeutic or educational functions.

I'll discuss now the relationships between the candidate and his own training analyst.

The double function of therapist and teacher that the analyst is performing with his candidate, has some disturbing implications.

The difficulty of the analysts to overcome the temptation to think of themselves as omnipotent was highlighted when Freud and many others repeatedly point it out as a danger. The candidate tends fantastically to believe that his own analyst is omnipotent and his analyst tends to act sometimes as if he were. Consequently, the candidate fears and envies him. The fear may lead him to feel himself as a victim of attacks or impositions from his training analyst, which most of the time of course will be imaginary.

Envy will lead him to take away from his training analyst the assumed omnipotence with the consequent increase of the fear of him. All these unconscious fantasies underlie the role of a student in his/her relationship with a teacher. They are also present in every patient towards his analyst. But for his future destiny and also for its transcendence, these fantasies have special modalities and consequences in the candidates: these fantasies acquire a certain specificity in the relationships between analysts.

The authoritarian structure of analytic societies, in which the training analysts concentrate on themselves enormous power, neglects the ideal of a democratic organization in the life of a group.

Analytic teaching is so much based upon indoctrination by transmission of the analytic knowledge already established, that it is far from the educational ideal of respect for each individual potential development by simulating it.

Increasing and keeping the spirit of conceptual conformity, avoids the constructive disagreement, the constant questioning that characterizes progress in science.

Synthesis

Ambivalence seems to be a phenomena that shows itself over and over again, infiltrating the findings at all the levels of approach that we have used in this paper. Ambivalence constitutes the backbone of the described conflicts. Ambivalence provokes guilt and leads to mutual accusations of analysts because we have lost the idealized cohesiveness, while such a loss is actually an in avoidable result of organizing a huge social unity. Ambivalence leads to several roles as a defense against aggression. Ambivalence leads analysts to react with the group mechanisms of “scapegoating” and forming a “secret society.” We encounter it when we observe the divinization of Freud, denying any hostility against him and his theory. Ambivalence stimulates projection of the bad aspects of one training analyst to another, reinforcing the fights between them and their “analytic families.” Ambivalence makes the student fear his teacher, who is felt as omnipotent, and leads the teacher to impose himself, like in an initiation ritual, over his candidate. No wonder it has been said that if ambivalence is not deeply analyzed in the future analyst, his training will become void sooner or later.

Conclusions and Suggestions

It is impossible to eliminate what is structurally aggressive in ourselves, as it is also impossible to eliminate what generates frustration in a large social organization. Death instinct, oedipal impulses, the tendency to organize as a fraternal horde, the emergence of Bion's "basic assumptions" are all essential parts of human nature, and therefore, their manifestations cannot be eliminated.

This should not lead us either to an unfounded pessimism. Within human nature and also within groups there are forces that we may use in order to integrate better our aggressive tendencies. Actually, together with Thanatos there is Eros. In the life of a group the common task is the nucleus for the so-called "work-group" that tends to relegate the basic assumptions to the background. Democratic leadership is the type of organization that provides better opportunities of performance and satisfaction to all the members of the group in their common activities.

Against this realistic background we shall now mention and discuss some ideas about possible solutions for improving relationships between psychoanalysts.

Some people have thought one solution could be to make training analysis even longer or practically interminable. We think, like Grinberg, that it is not only a matter of the length of analysis but mainly of the quality itself of the training analysis. However, we cannot expect sensational results.

One might think that the experience of participating in didactic group psychotherapy, along with giving the candidates training in this type of therapy, could teach them to know better the unconscious dynamics of groups, which would allow them to handle themselves better, with less passion, when facing emotional reactions in any group. However, they could not avoid that in the life of the analytic group, the more primitive levels of their minds may come into the foreground. The democratic orientation of reading groups and of seminars, as is described by Lieberman, implies an interesting suggestion: that of reinforcing the tasks in a group, within an atmosphere of democratic leadership. We know that the task of the group is the element that unites the members of it. In addition, democratic leadership satisfies in a larger degree the needs of the members of the group, when it is centered around the common task, that is to say, when the so-called “work-group” is prevailing. Actually, within the field of relationships between analysts it is in our common task, in our analytic work, where we mainly put our affection, our love. Eros, the adaptive function of the ego, and the more rational features of the life of the analytic group, all meet in our orientation toward the analytic work.

But we should not forget that the concept of democratic leadership was extracted from the experimentation with small groups. Perhaps it has its plain validity only in regard to that type of group. It may be that generalization of democratic leadership into bigger organizations, like the analytic societies, would be questionable as an unsounded extrapolation, from methodological point of view.

Also, the passing from an informal group at the beginning of the psychoanalytic movement to an international organization, necessarily led to a relative loss of solidarity, which in itself provokes tensions, frustrations and defensive attitudes, as part of the efforts that try to regain that solidarity.

Each one of these suggestions may seem quite limited in its efficiency and may seem to clash with the unavoidable essential imperfections of human beings.

But let us fight against pessimism, because it is also true as the Chilean poet Neruda said, that: “Man is broader than the sea and its islands, and you have to fall inside of him, like into a well, to re-emerge from the depths with a branch of secret water and of submerged truths.”

Summary

The authors studied relationships between analysts from the point of view of: I. Social psychology; II. unconscious dynamics of groups, and III. The psychoanalytic approach of some individual reactions of the members, according to their status in the analytic group.

Ambivalence is the fundamental phenomenon that they found, again and again, through all the angles of approach used in this paper. Ambivalence constitutes the backbone of the problem. It provokes guilt and it leads to reciprocal accusations among analysts for the diminution of cohesion, inescapable result of the passage from the small group to the

organized social unit. In the contacts between the “in-group” and the “out-group” it leads to splitting, projection and re-introjections of “badness.” It promotes the assumption of certain roles as a defense against aggression. It induces in the analytic group the reactions of finding a scapegoat within it and of developing attitudes of a secret society, towards its “external enemies.”

We find it again when we “divinize” Freud, as a way of denying hostility against him and his theory. It stimulates projection of “bad parts” from one didactic analyst to another, aggravating the quarrels between them and their “analytic families.” It stimulates envy of the non-didactic analysts, often paralyzing them. It is at the center of the terminal phase of training analysis. It leads the candidate to fear his analyst, felt as omnipotent, analysis. It leads the candidate to fear his analyst, felt as omnipotent, and it leads the training analyst to force himself upon his candidate like in an initiator rite as a way of controlling his hostile rebellion. It has been said, not in vain, that if ambivalence is not deeply analyzed in the future analyst, his training will be nullified, sooner or later.

We feel that relations among us are “bad” and we want to improve them. We studied this subject with the reparatory purpose of preserving analysis, a “good object,” ambivalently loved by all of us, which we feel damaged by our aggression. These guilt feelings lead us to exaggerate in fantasy the objectively disputable opinions that our quarrels: 1) may destroy analysis, 2) make human relations within the analytic group worse than those of other groups, and 3) present us as “sick and bad people” before the “out-group.”

Guilt may lead us to hope finding magically omnipotent instruments to eliminate aggression and the damage we feel it produces. The fact is that our therapeutic tools are not omnipotent and therefore we cannot change human nature. But we can use the forces available within us to integrate aggressive tendencies. Eros is besides Tanatos. In the group life, task is the core of the “work-group” and democratic leadership is the type of organization promoting a better performance and a greater satisfaction to the group.

Some suggestions about how to improve relations among analysts are discussed against this realistic background: to extend the training analysis, to analyze the pupil-master relation in the light of Kleinian theory of envy, to add analytic group psychotherapy to the personal training of candidates, to promote the practice of mental hygiene in the personal and social life of analysts, and the democratization of analytic institutions.