**JOURNAL OF Group Analytic Society International (GASI), *Group-Analytic Contexts,* June 2016, Issue 72**

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**A Large Group in Athens**

**By Theodora Skali**

**Abstract**

The clinical material presented in this article is about the sessions of a large group that took place within a one-year postgraduate program in group dynamics, which was implemented in the period 2012-2013. The study of this material is associated with the effect of intrapsychic organization on individual relations, and with the interaction between individuals per se. Every Large group is a field in which the intrapsychic, the intersubjective and the social level constantly coexist, in the sense both of conflict and reconciliation of the participants. The large group is a self-exploration field that forces the participants to contact unseen personal sides, which may remain invisible in individual psychotherapeutic work.

**Key words**: large group, interaction process, coexistence of intrapsychic, subjective, social

**Preface**

The clinical material of this article comes from a one-year post-training program in group dynamics in which I was participating as a trainee and which was organized by the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Athens, in association withthe 1st Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Athens. The program, which lasted for seven “three-day” periods, was attended by psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers etc., who have working experience in psychiatric fields. It was structured in theoretical (lectures, theoretical presentations, sessions of theoretical process) and empirical parts (group supervision sessions, small and large group sessions).

I would like to focus on the section of the large group sessions, which in our case was more a median group session. My attention was drawn to the transition from the influence of the individual's intrapsychic organization to the relations the individual establishes, and to the interaction between the participants as a separate field of study. The large group forms a field in which individuals as object-subject, inner-outer realities, conscious-unconscious processes interact and relate. There exists in large group sessions, “in vivo” and “right here and now”, a field in which the intrapsychic, the intersubjective and the social element coexist with the individuals’ transaction, in a large scale, in the sense of continuous conflict and reconciliation. This is a field of self-exploration which may help someone understand or/and be aware of other sides of his personal development, that have not appeared in an individual psychotherapeutic process.

My first attendance at a large group was in 2008 in the United States, during the annual meeting of the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) which I am still participating in, seven years later. The size of the large group I have experienced the last seven years in AGPA and IAGP, also, concerns large groups of over 150 people. This article’s clinical material concerns a large group of about 50 people.

During these last seven years, my thoughts on large groups and, - perhaps, on the occasion of the financial, social and general political crisis that we are going through here in Greece - have focused on the concept of the Large group as a field of social representation and as a field which reveals the social unconscious. This training program was more than interesting to me for two reasons: The first reason had to do with my awareness that none of the participants had experience of participating in a large group process. The second reason had to do with my interest in the large group as a field of social conflicts and dialogue, especially knowing that most of my colleagues/participants, worked within psychiatric fields, were threatened by losing their jobs (many psychiatric centres were to be closed because of the financial crisis).

*No man is an island*

John Donne

**Introduction**

When we consider “everything to be a personal affair”, the only thing we can be aware of, if we can, is “ourselves”. In this case everything is our concern; it is as if someone is observing these *babushka dolls* and in each doll sees only himself or sides of himself. But, when we observe these dolls, which alternate in size, we may notice that they constitute series of inner connected systems, in which each part includes and is included, just like “graded systems of equal form”.

We form closed psychicsystems, with closed borderlines concerning the communication between ourselves and the outer world, unless the outer world matches with what we already know. Many anxieties result from the fact that we regard ourselves “as the centre of the world” (Agazarian, 2009).

Nevertheless, “no man is an island”. If one considers oneself not only as a subject, but simultaneously as a member of a system, one may be aware of many and different aspects of the world and may realize that one influences the world and the world influences in return. Therefore, we don't only exist as subjects, as intrapsychic organizations, but also as a part of a small group, which forms part of a larger one, etc.

The question posed in each large group is how differences can become a source of strength instead of cause of a conflict; how each and every piece of information can be organized by the subject in such a way, so that differences lead the subject to become a member of a group/system and not to be put to flight, which can happen in many ways: attacking differences; attempting to convert to one's side; viewing others as a threat and trying to “get rid” of them, etc.

Furthermore, as per R. Kaes (2007), who introduced the term “group psychic apparatus”, the psychic group is not merely formed by different parts of oneself, activated by group process; it unconsciously preexists and on this basis, the psychic apparatus is being organized, like a group imprint. It is in this manner that the relation between the subject and the group and their mutual relation exists.

Thus, in each and every group process, the group is becoming the place of negotiation and communication by means of the group psychic apparatus, in which a group association process and a large number of transference and counter-transference phenomena operate. The meeting point of associations, dreams, thoughts and wishes of every member of the group is the work of such a group process, where every member is a “voice” of the group, achieving a part in it at every moment of each group, and – one may consider – that the unconscious here can be understood by the unconscious representations, also interactively (Navrides, 2011).

Furthermore, recognizing and understanding the social unconscious, in the sense of the social nature of the mind (Bateson, 1979), which is perceiving the mind not as a relatively stable inner structure, but as a fluid, constantly transposing response to social influences, is adding one more level to group communication. Modern views speak about the social structure of the mind in the sense of constant evolution and change within constantly progressing social interactions. According to Bakhtin, no mind can remain totally independent of other subjects. Discussions arise from the relational mind and not only from the unique brain, meaning that it is defined by the limits of the minds of the persons that a subject is relating to and is being adjusted by changes in its social, cultural and communication networks. Hopper & Weinberg (2011) introduced the term “cultural unconscious”, in order to underline the significance of internalizing values, rules and other significant elements that are being interpreted as culture in a society at a particular historical moment and within a specific financial, historical, political and ideological field.

**The large group experience**

The large group formed a part, from the very beginning, of the program's structure. It created many and contradictory sentiments, varying in degree and intensity, on all levels: intrapsychic, intersubjective and social, as expected. The question of the identity of the large group was posed from the beginning: *Who/What are we? What is this group? What's its purpose? How do we define/determine ourselves in such a group? Who are the facilitators? Do we know them? Are they “friends” or “enemies”? Do they lay down the rules or not? Do we want them to be involved or not?*

Then we proceeded to question our existence in the large group: “W*hat do and don’t we say?”; “What do we keep within our small group, what within the large group and what just for ourselves as individuals?”; “How do we part from the small group in order to become members of the large group?”; “How do we re-connect with each other and in what ways?”; “What do we need?”; “What does this group mean in relation to the whole training program in its entirety?”; “Who are the facilitators of the large group?”; “Do or don’t we know them?”; Do we want them and what role do we want them to play?”*

Then the question of preference was posed: “*Do we prefer the facilitators of our small groups to those of our large group?”; “Do we prefer our small groups to our large group?”*

It is as if, all of a sudden, in the large group, we appreciated the small group's stability and safety, our small “family”.

Agonizing with cross-firing questions, especially during the two first three-day periods, and equally quickly, agonizing and cross-firing answers, in spite of the surface sense of humor, in order to explain and avoid the issues that emerge, rather than letting ourselves go and exploring them.

For this reason, laughter immediately came as a relief. By explaining, we were coming back to the subject, to the individual, to our personal system, and more obviously to our psychic safety also at the group level; there were many who played that role in the large group and “settled” the group either in an aggressive manner or by way of explanation or … (Agazarian, 2004).

Searching an exploring our sentiments that were disguised by every question and could introduce us to what we didn’t know about ourselves, both in relation to ourselves (intrapsychic process) and to us, as members of a large group, was something extremely difficult for us to do and we tended to avoid or/and form barriers through our various defense mechanisms.

The anxiety that we might “vanish” and stop being ourselves, that we may not be “seen” within the group, made us take a role in the Large group as members, often not relating to the one who spoke before us, leaving him with an “empty”, “threatened” feeling, etc. The expected outcome: threats and aggressiveness, not only on the contextual level, but also on a level of vast loneliness and “invisibility” experienced between *“me as a person”* and “*me as a member of this group”* and *“me as the voice of the group*”. It is no accident that some who were not speaking, later described their relief at having spoken, although this had seemed frightening to them before.

The above reveals the group as an intersubjective field, where the group is an instrument of transformation of the psychic reality of the members; at the same time, each member’s psyche contributes to the establishment and functioning of the psychic reality of the group. With reference to this, I associate the dreams, that often appeared in the large group of the two first three-day periods, where the dream field was connected to the somatic, the intrapsychic and the intersubjective fields, and seemed to concern the large group as a whole "case of dream polyphony” (R. Kaes), at the same time as constituting the subject’s personal area.

Nevertheless, I often remarked that dreams were arriving at moments of long “difficult” silence and gave the large group an “object”, a dream to deal with, in order to speak for its presence. There was a comforting and calm ambiance during the self-reflection of the dream. I was thinking that perhaps, it is not an accident that the voice “Lena”, who shared two such dreams, stated how stressed she felt with the large group and her verbal message was accompanied by intense physical symptoms (intense blushing, sweating, voice quivering, etc.)

And finally, on another psychic reality level, there was also the case of “John’, literally and also on a level of group dynamic, as a carrier of a function or of a symptom, as stated in the systematic approach, “John”, as representative of his own story and, at the same time, as representative of what was happening at that particular moment in the large group (there were many similar moments like this one during the two penultimate two-day periods of the large group). The way I saw and heard the “John” voice, made me consider the function he had been assigned, beyond his personal story and through the process of group bonding, in relation to diversity and acceptance of all the different participants who came from different vocational fields, almost “hostile” to each other in some cases, from different theoretical fields and – if I look back at the case of the newly established psychotherapist association – also having different motives in participating, and all the difficult emotions that accompanied this, that had remained in the background, found this person, “John”, to bring up and prematurely verbalize, even though the group as a whole wasn’t yet in a mature phase of evolution. I often found myself considering the different meaning of the “scapegoat” as introduced by Agazarian (2004), according to who the scapegoat is a “pathfinder”, prematurely introducing a change to the group for which the group system is not yet ready.

Finally, there was also the following peculiarity: The coordinators of the small groups also took part in the large group. What was their role in the group? *They were simply equal members of the group. How did we address ourselves to them? Using formal or informal language? What was the meaning of what they said? Did they speak as group leaders, as organizers of the program or as our coordinators-parents of our small groups? Did they behave as those “who are judging” us? As persons we were sharing the same anxieties? As persons in positions of authority in our professional contexts, on whom we are depending?*

We had difficulties in calling directly upon somebody to speak, in disagreeing with them, quarreling and conversing with them in equal terms. And what about the leaders of the Large group, who didn't meet them in any other activity? Did this facilitate them or not (the lack of familiarity with the two coordinators of the large group)?

According to Dalal (1998), the most essential component of the social unconscious is the internalization of social authority, in the way that our thoughts, emotions, as well as our mutual communications are organized, in the way that the social unconscious differentiates from the cultural unconscious, considering that this includes normality, the habits and the ways of viewing of a particular civilization, so deeply imprinted, they turn out to be unconscious. He defines civilization as something concerning a complete restructuring of personality and psychic economy in the process of historical change

Nevertheless, beyond the difficult aspects of the large group, there was this new experience: accompanying each other in an absurd and impersonal way (we didn't even remember or/and know the names of many of the participants). There were often voices, who expressed their surprise and awe for all the good feelings within this chaos. It was common that one of the leaders of the large group used to remind us of this aspect of the large group as “Democracy” or “KINONIA”, as per Pat de Mare, a kind of “*togetherness and amity that brings a serendipity of resources…” - “Communication as it is understood in the Greek Orthodox Church”* (Agazarian, 2013).

In such moments of the group I was thinking that this is maybe the best contribution of the large group to society: that it forms a context within which you can put (or try to put) hostile thoughts and feelings (aggression, hate, rage, etc.) in the frame of dialogue, which is very close to a “KINONIA” interaction .

**Myself in the large group**

**“I want to be myself in order to keep walking.”**

My initial thought about participating in this psychoanalytic educational training program, in particular in the large group, since I am fully qualified as a systemic psychotherapist, can be described, according to Winnicott (2003), *“as a place from and towards, without these two being determining factors. The in-between position gives you the opportunity end the space to be available for anything that happens, for creative behaviour”.*

But, in spite all the above ideas, as soon as the large group opened, I found myself organizing all my defences, as per S. H. Foulkes, *“…you are going to take over your usual role and function thorough your connection to others”*. The very first thing I found myself organising was my critical-logical self. I felt that I was participating in something like a trade union, all the others seemed to feel **unappreciated, all were complaining about the programme, the circumstances, the changes, etc. As I tried to be involved by saying something different I felt that there was no space for something else, something different, I felt something restraining me, a “politically correct psychoanalytic message”, as the psychoanalytic point of view was the only truth.**

So, first I was thinking of fleeing: *“I’ve made a mistake! I have to abandon this programme. What bad professionals they are! They only know one truth, theirs!”*  Next I was rationalizing: *“Why don’t they abandon the program, if they don’t like it? Why did they apply for this program?* Sometimes I was thinking like a mother, in a protective way: *“It is something good for them, they have to see it”* and sometime I was felt that the group was hidden behind the pleasure of a psychoanalytic dialect. Then I found myself getting angry with them, as the words became more separated from the experience we were having with each other. I was sitting there and I was watching the group choosing avoidance of the experience, instead of the exploration of the “here and now” experience. My feelings moved from anger to compassion, to contempt, etc.

But, in the end of each large group session, when we left the room and went outside, through our short exchanges (short ironic, aggressive comments or bitter jokes) and through the way we ran away (we didn’t even look at each other), I felt that the participants left the group with difficult feelings, feelings which hadn’t been expressed in the “here and now” experience of the Large group, such as: anger, rage, insecurity and a lack of self-confidence. That observation was very helpful to me, as it made me move from my personal system to the “me as a member of the group” system and to observe my behavior and the others’ in the context of the meaning of the large group.

During large group sessions it was very common - since I was very involved – to ask me questions such as: “What are you talking about?” in an aggressive manner and then there were comments about me which felt like projections. I felt very lonely. I felt constantly misunderstood, like a “Chinese” among “Europeans”. I couldn’t understand why they didn’t hear me, instead of giving explanations why didn’t they stand by me in order to explore what I was saying “here and now?” What did this mean for them and what was moved in them? In almost every session, I had to deal with such things**:** *“You are* ***intellectualizing again”, “I can’t understand you”, and “you are such a nice person, so polite”,* etc.**

I often felt despair at the way we seemed to be like **pre-kindergarten children and had a long way to go until finding out how to communicate like human beings, give space to each other, sharing thoughts and feelings without criticism,** build a sense of belonging and provide acceptance. As I was thinking of all the above as being aspects of “democracy” and “kinonia”, sometimes I felt very disappointed that people will never manage to overcome themselves and be **synchronized for the same goal and sometimes I felt compassion for those who suffered, who were too afraid, who were unable to let themselves be in the “here and now” experience, to trust themselves and the group/society. I never found myself synchronized with the group as a whole.**

A big surprise to me was the conflict about time boundaries that suddenly occurred at the end of the first Large group session between a small group leader and one of the leaders of the Large group. The large group leader interrupted her as she was talking, saying “time-up” (actually, we were out of time). She insisted on finishing what she had to say but the group leader left the room. This stirred up a lot of feelings in everyone. The echo of that incident could he heard in all the sessions of the large group, also, at least, the first two sessions of my small group (the one that argued with the leader of the large group was the leader of my small group). I was thinking about the incident in terms of “psychic bonds”, and “unconscious alliances”. I was thinking that on the level of unconscious alliances and unconscious bonds a lot of things happened: repressions, denials, dichotomies and/or rejections. Then, I realized that the moment the incident happened I felt inside me feelings of an unconscious (until then) alliance, which suggested (unwanted by me) **obedience** and loyalty to my small group leader. I thought very quickly that it wasn’t only my feeling – it was something that had to do with shared feelings in the room. I saw this incident as a spark which opened topics about the presence of the leaders of the small group (their presence in the large group had to do with “leader” or “member” issues? Could we confront them as equal members or as seniors, which we had to wheedle? Furthermore, I was thinking about the hierarchical systems in society.

An important moment of insight was when I was trying to say that John was the voice of all of us, for the participant, whom the large group had put in the middle. The reactions towards me were: *"You are such a nice person …”, “you are good at whitewashing ....",* and as I was whether to attack (fight) or withdraw (flight), one of the small group leaders, who was sitting next to me, said something similar, which at first made me feel understood by at least another member and then brought me back into the “here and now” process of the group. Then I was able to follow him in his own thoughts and feelings (he talked about the internal psychic difficulties that make people behave in the way of putting somebody in the spot). I still remember the feeling of synchronization I felt. And while a “boxed pairing” (Bion) could have happened, it did not. It was a brief moment in which I felt that he and I coexisted in the group and this synchronization feeling made me follow his thoughts and focus on the large group as a whole. My free association had to do with the “*two that seemed one*" of Winnicott (2003), but also with the theoretical concepts of Agazarian (AGPA, Boston, 2014) "*join-separation-individuation - to the group*", meaning *"connecting to the previous speaker, getting a synchronization feeling, separating from him/abandoning him, staying in yourself and offering your own to the group”.*

Another moment of insight for me was when I stated that each of the coordinators of the large group create, with their permissiveness, a containment space. Feeling this, I spoke to another member, who had spoken much earlier and had expressed feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty which prevent her speaking. I emphasized how much I had allied with her emotionally, but I did not dare to express this. One of the large group coordinators at the time, in response to what I said, commented something which made me feel again the same synchronization of feeling. Then he, after connecting with me, continued his train of thought, which was indeed in a completely different direction from what I’d said. I felt again this synchronization, I felt accompanied, and, at the same time, that “*mommy has also other children and/or her thoughts other than my own and I'm fine with it, I got my share* *and I can stay in the relationship despite differences, because I feel connected and understood* *(Greek word: kanakemeni)”.*

Last but not least, I also remember how perfectly synchronized I felt when the group attacked one of the organizers of the program, because *"this educational program does not lead to a Masters, which you had implied it would”*, etc. In the beginning of this attack I didn’t identify myself in it, because I’d not heard about this. The only thing that had been expressed from the beginning was the likelihood of a future transformation of the existing educational program to a postgraduate programme. It never crossed my mind that a psychoeducational training program of this level could be considered equal academically to a formal postgraduate program, or that my need was such. But, beyond the content, I felt *"hatred as the frustration of love",* as Pat De Mare puts it, (Agazarian, 2013) and I felt perfectly synchronized with the frustration, and disappointment felt by the majority of group members - I felt very close to other group members. I felt like Winnicott’s mother, while the baby is desperate and is crying, the mother feels baby’s despair and comforts it, and, at the same time, she can be herself, containing baby’s despair without identifying with baby’s despair (Winnicott, 2003).

After this attack the group no longer referred to the frustration and disappointment issues. Only, during the last session of the group, one of the leaders of the commented, during a difficult moment, about the group, when expressing much anger on another subject, *“I wonder what did you expect from this program, what expectations did you have?”* At that time I considered this comment irrelevant. Now, as I am thinking about it, I wonder about all those difficult feelings, which didn’t appear again. Where did anger and frustration go, anger and frustration that were expressed by the majority of group members, the deep grievance that was expressed by people working in very difficult, from the perspective of power relations that develop, professional contexts, by professionals living under the threat of losing their jobs, because of the financial crisis, professional contexts where a postgraduate diploma puts you in a better professional and occupational position.

**Group developmental phases**

Bruce Tuckman, the developmental psychologist, first used the words “forming, storming, norming, and performing”, in an article in 1965 entitled “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups”, to describe the trend in most groups as they grow and produce work. Later, he added a fifth stage that he called “adjourning”, which is now known as “mourning”.

**Developmental phases of a large group**

Very little has been written about the development phases of a large group and the goals and dynamics on which it runs. In attempting to "follow" and to capture in writing what I experienced I will highlight the following:

The goal of each group and the main purpose of the large group, is for each member to survive, develop and be transformed. When the differences between the participants are very large, because of the destabilizing experience which in this case is high, the participants as individuals and/or as members of the group close their boundaries, in order to survive the intense threat they feel. But differences are necessary for the development of systems. So, it is vital in a group to develop interaction so the members stay sufficiently open to take in the information provided and still sufficiently closed in order to process this information and so be helped in being rebuilt and changed.

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Following the literature on the developmental phases of a group, I observe the following:

**Forming:** It was obvious from the beginning that the participants in the large group were not familiar with this type of interaction. Everything seemed to be ambiguous to participants (the purpose of the group, the leaders’ role, their role, etc.) and this ambiguity was expressed constantly. As I entered a little late in the first session of the group, I found the participants presenting themselves by saying their name, their professional status and their working context. Silence prevailed immediately after. Feelings of embarrassment and anxiety were all around, although the group leaders had clarified the objectives, the roles and the procedures of the group. Then a heated discussion began concerning the room in which the large group was taking place, due to lack of any other room, which was the amphitheatre of the University of Athens Medical School, also about old roles and college life, since many of us had been medical students in the past, and during this intense discussion some of us wanted explanations, some responded with incomprehension, etc.

The initial guidance given by the head of the group was, *“You can say what you want",* was not facilitated at all. Each member struggled with internal censorship, the group as a whole also, without being aware of this. This situation made communication and dialogue between the members of the group even more complicated. In addition, there was intense stress, caused by the presence of the other, in an unconscious, repressed, unknown and not familiar way. When otherness in everyday life is not rejected and persecuted, and is dealt with through denial or accelerated appropriation of the other or is treated with the co-constructed illusion that *"we know each other"* or that "*we have met”*. Finally, each member in order to become familiar to the opposite/other, becomes “another” against itself, abandons itself and vice versa. This caused great anguish and annihilation in the participants of the group.

**Storming**: At this stage, competition prevails. Everything is under negotiation, alliances are created, divisions, conflicts, etc. So, the large group became a chaotic place, very threatening and confrontational, almost a nightmare for anyone who was unable to contain and explore this kind of experience. We were angry with the responsible trainers of the program who "*even in crisis can do educational programs"* with the one of the leaders of the group whom we "*did not like",* with the changes in organizational level, for which "*nobody cares"* for, with the words of others, whom we did not understand what he/she/they meant, etc. Everyone was trying to make his presence felt and to balance his cognitive map. Also, in this first session of the group, there were many silent members and some of them did not appear again until the next Large group sessions and it remained so until the end of all the large group sessions. This phase lasted a long time and we continued the sessions surrounded by the general confusion around us (strikes, occupations, political mobilizations, financial crisis, etc.). There was a sense of uncertainty, competition, and anger. And the way we skipped it was taking refuge in the security of “small” talk such as *“the news says that the program has failed and is going to stop" or “the leaders of the program have fought each other”, etc.*  In every way the members were leaving the "here and now" situation because of the unbearable uncertainty of the feelings they had.

**Norming:** Gradually I understood that the participants started to realize the role which each of us was taking in the large group, that the group as a whole felt that it had goals to which we looked forward, and procedures were consolidated, etc. My impression was that somehow the group regulated itself, again and again in each meeting but also globally, though often the group felt regressed - mainly when facing new data and new processes. I remember during one meeting a member, who constantly asked questions about *“What are we doing here, in this group?”, “Will it be helpful in our work? Or won’t it?”*, said in a moment of insight "*I realize now that one goal here is to see how I treat myself in a large group"*. This insight had a strong impact on me and put me in the “heart” of the group and reminded me De Mare’s saying about the “*socializing process of impersonal friendship”* (Agazarian, 2013).

**Performing:** **Integrating group** goalsor regression **(Bion’s basic assumptions: dependency-fight/flight-pairing)**

I do not know whether we reached this stage. I do not think the group managed to evolve to a performing group stage. There were of course some minor glimpses. The group meeting room wasn’t helpful since, due to its structure (it was a university auditorium), it did not facilitate the process; and the long intervals between group meetings also weren’t helpful. It seemed that while some members of the group (beyond the reasons above) could take part in the process, and could stay connected with the other group members in the "here and now", for others it was very difficult. At the end of the group sessions, another member wondered about the usefulness of the epistemology of psychoanalysis, she wondered if *"analysts are better people?...is their life better than other people?*” Ι understood this as Bion’s basic assumption “*fight/flight”*, and maybe if the lifetime of this group continued we could have worked on it.

**In conclusion**

Overall, as I am reflecting upon this experience, I am thinking of the different psychotherapeutic concepts, as they have been developed in various epistemological areas. The participants in the large group often expressed their certainty about their interpretations. I am thinking of Agazarian’s ideas about therapist’s interpretations. She says that "bad" interpretations (premature, soft, **unsubstantial**, etc.) interrupt the process by dissociating people from "here and now" process. She insists that interpretation is merely the expression of one's opinion about what the other is saying and that if, as the therapist gives an interpretation, the other looks at him like *“a surprised baby”*, then the therapist has done a meaningful interpretation. Otherwise the therapist simply expresses his/her opinion and there is always the risk that the other person will follow this opinion and not take responsibility in the "here and now" procedure and process (Agazarian & Byram, 2009).

Also I was thinking about the meaning of the words in the sense of structure, and the meaning of the speech in the sense of process. De Mare emphasizes the idea that while we make structure with words in the world, our hope is that speech establishes relations. He argues that the challenge is to move from the talk to speech and from there to "*socialization and citizenship”*.

Another related psychotherapeutic field is that of Open Dialogue Theory (Seikkula et. al., 2006), which poses the following reflection: *"How to help a person using the vocabulary of the specialist?” You are an expert when the other accepts you as such. What if the other tells you “I don’t want you as an expert”. Does he have the right to do so? Is psychotherapy something which grows only between and not from one to another, only within an authoritarian relationship, under the species of a “politically correct” epistemological hierarchy?*

Of course, I observed myself being affected and influenced within the process of the large group: from the other as strange, different and threatening, in the here and now process to the other with all of its differences. Many of my initial questions were answered, as they formed from meeting to meeting and as the process entered in the "space between" participants or/and between participants and leaders. From the perspective of a “bad leader”, we moved to the perspective of full recognition and acceptance of him in the “here and now” process. Maybe it was an attempt by us to stay with the large group or, perhaps, it was a situation of idealization while dealing with difficult feelings. Also, it could be a condition (optimistically) of acceptance of our differences.

*Finally, above and beyond all this, my big advantage was all this complex large group level I was participating in, all these “40 waves” situation, filled with the feelings, behaviors and questions I described above, that still are accompanying me in a continuous process.*

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