

DRAWING FROM THE SITE OF ABSENCE
Observing, forgetting, and representing groups

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PhD thesis

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Carlos Sapochnik, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed

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ABSTRACT

The study considers how the practice of a participant observer making drawings from the memory of observing and participating in a group meeting assists the drawer's ongoing engagement with the group. It discusses, through psychoanalytic and critical perspectives, the performative impact of making such representations (which are not shared with the group), and examines the interdependence between intellectual, emotional, and sensual forms of engagement with a group observed, imagined and phantasized. The focus is not the retrieval of tacit or unconscious knowledge but understanding the effect of such representations as emotional enactments functioning both beyond and within a descriptive narrative account rather than illustrations to be decoded through a 'translation' of content. The drawings, made from recollections of the event, allow for the return and invention of what might have been inadvertently perceived, and then added to, erased, or displaced during depiction owing to personal, group, and cultural determinants. It is argued that the empty space thus emerging fosters reverie, reflection, and mourning, to the benefit of observer and group.

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PREFACE

The thesis describes the context of the study and the author's ontology, considering unconscious modes of thinking, leading to a systemic and psychoanalytic understanding of groups where neither individuals nor groups exist in isolation from each other. While attending to the psychic projections between group and participant observer arising from the mechanisms of transference and countertransference, the observer may notice how s/he is being used as an internal object, playing a part in the unconscious script of the group, in which the observer may have a specific role but is also another member. It will be argued that the presence of the observer appears as both an actual other and an internal interlocutor (as an Other). This dual role, rather than introducing a disturbance in the recording, produces a discontinuity (struggling to be assimilated). It offers a unique (i.e., pleasurable, exciting, risky, problematic) opportunity for the development and use of a very sensitive instrument – an intersubjective, non-linear, nonverbal dialogue within and between the group and the observer as both others (and Others) to each other. The emphasis is on memory, sensuality, and the creative potential of forgetting (repression) – as opposed to retention by wilful remembering. The purpose is to bracket rationality and foster imagination (i.e., the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images, or concepts of external objects, not present to the senses), noticing how secondary revision – described in *The interpretation of dreams* (Freud 1900) – is used as unconscious insistence rather than resistance.

Chapter 1 situates the study and describes its ontology following the theory of group functioning elaborated by Wilfred Bion, calls attention to the perceived misuse of Bion's work. It then considers the author's engagement with groups during many years of group work practice as member, consultant, therapist, and facilitator. The chapter ends with a description of preliminary fieldwork undertaken through the ethnographic observation of various organizational settings. A choice seemed necessary at this point: to present the process from the outside and assess its value by looking at the evidence derived from its application across observations undertaken by a sufficiently large number of practitioners; or to describe the process from the inside, to enter into its internal movement to grasp its uniqueness – a risk well worth taking.

Chapters 2 and 3 review a number of theories to further develop the preliminary ontology and provide the building blocks for understanding and constructing the argument. Following Bion's notions of the function of reverie and dreaming while awake, the study framed drawing as a dream-like undertaking, inevitably distorting the content, challenging certainties of explanation. Theory and practice impregnated each other,

leading to a discussion of visuality concerning the notions of the gaze and the glance, seeking to account for the existence of different concurrent viewers, active in the drawing as enigmatic addressers and addressees who emerge through the process of re-presenting the group. After considering the research approach in Chapter 4, the thesis discusses the lived process of observing, forgetting, and representing groups through a phenomenographic inquiry that consisted of making drawings from observing and participating in 118 group sessions undertaken through a full calendar year, analysed in Chapter 5.

Observing groups requires a participant observer to make meaning from inter- and intrasubjective dynamics evident in the rituals deployed by the group to manage collective working objectives, but also emotions arising from desire, nostalgia, the terror of contamination, and fear of disintegration. These themes lead in Chapter 6 to an exploration of time and absence, the trace, traumatic helplessness, enigmatic communications, and deferred action in respect of the dynamics of the group and its participant observer, returning to the second and third chapter to include further theoretical tools that appeared necessary to make sense of the material found in the phenomenography. Although the writing is presented in a sequence, the process was circular and iterative. The thesis concludes by asserting its argument through four related hypotheses and a corollary, followed by reflexions on the study and possible disseminations of the approach.

Naming a study attempts the most condensed representation of its purpose, and the title *Drawing from the site of absence* signals the ambiguity between sight and site as homonymics, pointing out that what is absent in a drawing as unrepresentable may be usefully sustained in its unrepresentability before attempting to attribute and disclose meaning, and thus lead to further thinking. *Sight* connotes the actions of glimpsing, inspecting, and taking aim, and also nouns such as perception, point of view, spectacle, vision, and apparition. *Site* alludes to locating, placing, inactivity, and home, making reference to nostalgia. Following a deconstructive approach, the study attempts to take a position while exposing – and observing, rather than integrating – the dualities at work.

1 **GROUPS – FROM OBSERVATION TO REPRESENTATION**

1.1 **OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER**

The chapter describes context and purpose of the study and then considers its implicit ontology, reviewing psychoanalytic concepts regarding the psychology of groups which will underpin the investigation. These ideas, originating in the work of Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Wilfred Bion, and others, concern the unconscious aspects of the mind, and concepts such as projections, transference, neurotic and psychotic configurations, the notions of reverie and containment, and groups as contradictory organisms. The chapter also examines the vicissitudes of learning from experience, the idea of truth, and contrasting readings of the Kantian concept of the thing-in-itself. It reviews notions of memory and forgetting, absence, and repetition; it then considers the place given by Bion to memory and desire, and the concept of free association. It also describes initial fieldwork which assumed meaning to be connoted by visual representations, an approach challenged thereafter, leading to a reframing of the initial proposition.

1.2 **CONTEXT**

The study interrogates the impact of making visual representations as a performative strategy to assist a state of mind conducive to understanding the experience of being part of a group, shifting attention from the drawings as artefacts (and any possible meanings they may connote) to the actual process of drawing them. Although the study is informed by ideas from a number of perspectives, at core it is a psychoanalytically informed exploration of the impact of the process of making visual representations of observed group meetings on a group member who is also an observer of the group.

It will be argued that the practice produces a distancing, a particular reflective space that assists regaining emotional and intellectual balance after the meetings, without reference to a search for or understanding of meaning concerning the dynamics of the event. Such emotional balancing is considered a prerequisite for any form of intellectual investigation since engagement with group experience shows that being used as an emotional object has an impact on the capacities of the participant. A systematic observation by the observer of their making of such visual representations re-centres their capacities for making sense of the experience, processing it by digesting and thus separating nutrients from waste. It can then be transformed by learning and used for growth.

For the purpose of this study, a group is defined as two or more people with a shared and explicit task (no matter how realistic, productive, or impossible); therefore it holds some (even if not exclusive) form of common identity. Hence 'all left-handed people in London' are not a group but an aggregate unless they would develop a common identity. Group members will differ widely in skills, knowledge, abilities, expertise, values, but they form an interdependent organism with its own organization. This may be an explicit structure concerning roles, lines of accountability and leadership, or the commitment to a flat arrangement which, in examination, always shows the politics of (hidden) differentiation. Furthermore, social life requires concurrent membership of several groups, at times in balance but also in conflict, increasing the complexity of group life. While the approach discussed in the study may be applied to working with any group, regardless of size and setting, the groups from which I have drawn my extensive experience in the field are those in my clinical practice of working with experiential groups as the source of my theoretical and practical reflections. I have been a group member either as a participant or in my working role of group consultant, leader of Higher Education staff teams, facilitator of experiential training groups, organizational consultant to private and public organizations, staff in group relations conferences, and couple co-therapist. The term consultant will henceforward refer to working in a consultative function in the Tavistock model of system psychodynamics across any and all of these settings. As it will be discussed, the consultant is both one more member of the group, and a different one as her/his discrete tasks are specific to the role. It must be noted that not all members must be physically present in the room for the group to address its function – presence also relies on phantasy and imagination. In fact, groups seldom are together at once yet as Bion indicated (1961: 131), it is necessary for a group to meet in a room because the conditions for study can be provided only in that way and their behaviour can then be observed. While structures and dynamics may be similar, groups are unique in the ways by which they represent and translate their preoccupations. These will vary from group to group and cannot be taken as repetitions – groups have their own ways of expressing pleasure and trauma, their own preoccupations, language(s) and attractions, that is, their singular ethics, aesthetics, and poetics. Because participants find themselves in the same location, they can see, hear, and talk to each other – even if digital media have made possible work within groups where members are geographically distant from each other and across time zones. By being physically present they may observe the detail of themselves interacting, and subtle nuances of relating may become amenable to examination. The exploration attends to the vicissitudes of a participant observer who is a member of a group in an explicit role (even if just as group member) who, after each meeting, makes uncensored drawings as iconic and/or metaphorical representations of what s/he observed in terms of participants, setting, activities – whatever may have been observed and experienced during/about the encounter. These representations are not made on location but from the recollections of the event: a drawer will inevitably introduce

non-intentional distortions of the actuality of both event and experience. The study is not concerned with the potential of drawings to disclose possible (even if contradictory) meanings but with their impact on the observer arising from the process of recording.

Given that the practice does not depend on mimesis, the level of drawing skill of the participant/observer/drawer is considered immaterial, although attention to detail (which should not be confused with accuracy) is of importance. The approach is not just ocular: what are represented are not only visual impressions but also movement, sonic, physical and gestural inflections and actions, as well as emotions without a defined form. While their visual transcription may take the shape of a realistic representation, the drawing will be iconic only to a point since the style, gesture, and form of the drawings are as relevant as their content. The method may complement visual ethnographic investigations in general and visual ethnography in particular (Pink 2006, Taussig 2009, Theron *et al.* 2011) but the purpose is neither to contribute to the production of a people-centred ethnography (Fine 2003) where evidence of a personal relationship between observer and observed guarantees the legitimacy of the ethnographic undertaking, nor to develop a theoretical ethnography, but to include the group members' unconscious contributions to the dynamics of their relating, communicated as psychic projections and registered through the experience of the unconscious perceptions of the observer. Devising a potential space for the visual manifestation of such perceptions may foster the observer's capacity for making free associations.

To stay close to the experience, such an enterprise requires 'thick descriptions' (Ryle 1968) not of the actual group but of the process inscribed in the activity of representing it by the observer as drawer rather than scribe – that is, the drawings are not viewed as coded illustrations but impressions. The approach does not aim at teasing out and exposing the narratives of groups and their members (for psychological, organizational, biographical, or any other motives) with the intention of deriving meaning from the representations, but to develop in the observer a deeper sensitivity to the group's culture – 'the signifying system through which necessarily (although not exclusively) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored' (Bal 2003: 18) – and thus to become and remain attuned to the presence of the several actual selves in the room as well as to the phantasmatic Others in each other.

Clifford Geertz proposed that 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun', and that culture is therefore those webs; its analysis is 'not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning' (1973: 5). These 'webs of significance' emerge through and amongst group members, and within the different aspects of the environment(s) from which the group differentiates itself as a distinctive cell. The task of theory, according to Geertz, is not to codify either abstractions or generalizations but to generalize within the particular, working by induction. 'Cultural theory is not predictive. Theory directs us to recover the "said" while helping us construct an interpretation that makes these "sajds" meaningful.'

(*ibid.*: 27). This 'textual turn' has been contested by Conquergood (1998: 30) because it makes it difficult to rethink or recapture culture as a set of performance practices: 'Instead of endeavouring to rescue the said from the saying, a performance paradigm struggles to recuperate the saying from the said, to put mobility, action, and agency back into play' (*ibid.*: 31). These two senses of exploring culture – as text and performance – are considered complementary rather than contradictory and are at the core of this study. They are to be investigated from observation and participation (and, in turn, observation of that participation) in the practical and emotional life of the group.

The present study draws largely from the work of Wilfred Bion, albeit as a tradition to learn from and take issue with, while acknowledging a concern about what seems a mis-use of Bion's ideas in recent organizational consultancy and group relations practice and literature. Some of Bion's concepts have become oversaturated through their repetitive application in these fields due to concrete readings of his work, leading to a trivialization of the notion of the unconscious in a group. Being a member of a group, in any role, is fraught with difficulties and anxieties. These may result in the instrumentation of a theory as means of mastery over situations where uncertainty appears (and may actually be) threatening of group survival. One such concept is the one of container and contained (Bion 1970) which has been read literally as the group being the contained and the consultant becoming the (maternal) container. But sexuality, mothering, and consultancy are more complex than an unidirectional flow would assume. A fixed notion of the container obscures considerations of power and dependency, ignoring the difference between diagnosis and process as distinct categories. The relationship container–contained, if it is to be productive must be intrasubjective and commensal rather than setting up the terms in opposition. Container and contained are equivalent to positions (Klein 1946) and not a fixed-role adjudication or a lineal transformation. A similar situation occurs with the psychotic state of mind as reflected in *basic assumption* mentality. A common topic that students of organizational consultancy struggle with is the phantasy that by the end of their training they will no longer be caught in *ba* assumption imaginings, as if the unconscious can be searched for, found, and rendered inoperative to allow for an untroubled performance as consultant. This requires an awareness of the inevitable concurrent functioning of different modes in the mind of the group – of which the consultant is a member.

As the world at large appears to fragment into an even greater number of nations, regions, and factions all acknowledging and seeking difference, the task of developing integrative approaches to the understanding of the complexities of relating to Others while working within groups of different backgrounds, sizes, and configurations (at the workplace, in management, institutions, government, politics) seems as pressing as ever. The impact of an unfair distribution of power and wealth on increasing population growth results in a waste of resources (evident in increased poverty and climate change) due to disordered development led by market forces in competition and conflict. In the

current conditions, effectiveness takes the place of efficiency. While effectiveness aims at the realisation of intended outcomes, efficiency attempts a similar result with optimal use of means with inventive simplicity, i.e., elegance. Groups (rather than individuals) may facilitate and also hinder the achievement of objectives towards common benefit.

A gravitation in current culture that will have to be considered is the *pictorial turn* (Mitchell 1994) as an affirmation of the independence of signification by visual means of representation, encouraged by the intensity of twentieth century technological developments in capturing (and hence controlling) image and sound through photography, television, computers, and social media. In the age of mechanical (digital) capturing and reproduction, it becomes even more urgent to attend to the impossibility of getting at the thing-in-itself through mimetic representation. 'Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction' (Benjamin 1973: 225).

[I]n what is often characterized as an age of 'spectacle' (Guy Debord), 'surveillance' (Foucault), and all-pervasive image making, we still do not know exactly what pictures are, what their relation to language is, how they operate on observers and on the world, how their history is to be understood, and what is to be done with or about them. (Mitchell 1994: 13)

While opening the possibility of exploration, this statement may lend itself to a perilous relativism, ignoring that the 'spectacle' refers to the domination of social relationships by images for the purpose of supporting systems of production and domination. As image-making has increasingly become technically and conceptually highly elaborate, the notion of representation in any field (media, art, science) is scotomized from its message as a practice expected to demonstrate creativity – a reified characteristic considered as the indicator of the true worth of any pursuit. Hence the epithet of 'creative' prefaces the name of any activity, whether cooking, design, writing, management, teaching, consultancy, or research if it is to be deemed of value (Sapochnik 2010). Because drawing is categorized as an artistic practice, its application may appear to offer added value by implying a creative approach. However, the practice analysed in this study makes use of drawings – as constructed visual (arte)facts rather than art – with the aim of fostering increased sensitivity to the dynamics of groups observed in a work-group (as member, therapist, organizational consultant, or manager), and thus leading to a more aware, less obstructed, freer, and seriously playful engagement with the group. Donald Winnicott (1971) linked creativity with the ability to play in any field, stating that

psychoanalysis has been developed as a highly specialized form of playing in the service of communications with oneself and others. [...] The natural thing is playing, and the highly sophisticated twentieth-century phenomenon is psychoanalysis. (1971: 48)

The method consists in the participant observer producing visual representations of those meetings without insistence on the artefacts' potential to encode significant unconsciously gathered data. While the question of how can such data be retrieved and converted into verbal language to offer intelligence on the dynamics of the event has been and continues to be a preoccupation of many organizational practitioners, such a formulation assumes that there exist hidden meanings connoted in the representations which can be brought out into mental awareness. Such description and analysis has been exhaustively pursued; there is plenty of writing on making individuals draw their experiences as a diagnostic practice, notably in interventions with children (Slough & Greenberg 1990, Thomas & Silk 1990, Shouldice & Stevenson-Hinde 1992, Malchiodi 2001, Brafman 2012) where a 'knowledgeable' agent interprets the images made by the subject (individual or group), elucidating their meaning for clinical evaluation. These images and their interpretations may be returned to the subject, as in ethnographic projects (Pink 2001, 2004, 2009; Pink *et al.* 2004), or used diagnostically, as when members of an organization are asked to produce visual statements to explore emotional determinants of their systemic working structures with the assistance of a consultant as facilitator. The use of drawing as a tool in organizational interventions has been taken up by consultants of the Tavistock Institute since the 1970s, and widely applied in organizational consultancy ever since (Nossal 2010: 79). Although these practitioners apply sensitive psychodynamic and systemic theoretical tools to explore and explain the dynamics of groups, the underlying belief appears based in an unrecognized essentialist ontology. Postulating that meaning 'exists' in the unconscious 'below the surface' with the intention of domesticating the unconscious – e.g. Halton 2004, Mersky 2008 & 2017, and my own Sapochnik 2013 – is a move away from the decentring proposed by psychoanalysis. Such readings of the images made by group members are brought to bear on the group as narrative with the intention of rendering it 'known, subjugated, communicated' (Blanchot 1995: 330). This has a parallel with the description by Cohen (2010) in respect of the misguided task of applied psychoanalytic readings of literary texts, i.e., aiming at making conscious the unconscious of the work:

Such a reading aims for a kind of epistemic victory over its object, gaining for knowledge and communication those subterranean psychic processes the work had, wittingly or not, sought to keep out of sight. Under such a gaze, the literary text becomes an object of knowledge, subject to the possessive mastery of its reader. (*ibid.*: 18)

Cohen highlights 'the elemental obscurity that conditions the analytic object' withheld from memory and knowledge, which would also apply to any form of representation that cannot be exhausted by rational decoding. Attempts at mastering the unconscious are misinformed about its object, as exemplified by the assumptions underpinning a unit of study at postgraduate level I devised and implemented with colleagues from 2009 (discussed in section 1.4.2). The approach lent itself to support the same erroneous

proposition, i.e., *meaning exists in the unconscious and a procedural strategy may bring it out into the open*, predicated on an early conception of psychoanalysis when bringing the repressed into the consciousness of the patient was deemed sufficient for the symptom to disappear. Fixed symbols were then considered representations of dynamic situations, as in the very early work of Freud (1900), later amplified by Jung (2001). A discourse about unconscious processes reified as 'the unconscious' constructs a binary opposition, yet the concept of the unconscious mind never exists in pure form independently from the conscious mind since 'each creates, preserves and negates the other' (Ogden 1989: 127). Furthermore, a scientific discourse neglects the sensual form of visual and verbal utterances because

For science, language is merely an instrument, which it chooses to make as transparent, as neutral as possible, subjugated to scientific matters (operations, hypotheses, results), which are said to exist outside it: on one side and *first of all*, the contents of the scientific message, which are everything; and on the other and *afterwards*, the verbal form entrusted with expressing these contents, which is nothing. (Barthes 1986: 4)

A psychologist may scrutinize the images drawn by the subject to identify the source of trauma (such as with children suspected as victims of violence) for evidence and diagnosis; a psychodynamic consultant to organizations, however, may ask team members to draw their own organization to assist the group in their collective interpretative engagement with their own representations to gain insight into their own organizational situation, and promote development. Although both approaches can be productive, their underlying proposition misses the visibility of the object and emphasizes a linearity in the trajectory *group > emotion > representation > decoding* where the visual representation is conceived as a term between the dynamics of the group and their meaning. However, the consultant is placed by the group in the particular position of the *subject supposed to know*, a formulation introduced by Lacan in 1961 (Evans 1996: 196) which does not designate the analyst her/himself, but a function which the analyst may come to embody in the treatment. The consultant must shake her/himself out of such a state of mind to avoid being enlisted into, and inadvertently perform in consonance with, this phantasmatic formulation. Stating that a subject has an 'unconscious' or is expected to know her/his 'unconscious', implies that the unconscious is something that can, in principle, be translated into 'conscious' knowing.

Laplanche argues persuasively that if we are to conceptualize the unconscious appropriately, it would demand not only a disruption of our grammar, but a certain dislocation of the human subject within a broader metaphysical scheme. In other words, the unconscious is what decentres the subject, making it impossible to take either the subject or the ego as a point of departure for the understanding of psychic life. The unconscious is not a 'part' of the mind, strictly speaking, since

that would once again posit the mind as a container, that is, as a structure that is not disrupted and disoriented by the unconscious. Even our efforts to 'know' the unconscious will be up-ended by what we cannot recover and cannot know. The irrecoverable and unknowable constitute us essentially, and they mark a certain limit to our capacity for cognitive mastery. (Butler 2014: 119)

This study is not intended as an empirical undertaking towards devising a method for decoding group dynamics but as an exploration seeking to understand the impact of, and potential for, the consultant/therapist making representations of the group towards disrupting her/his conscription into and collusion with the role of the subject supposed to know. The inquiry examines material generated through a phenomenography derived from an extended single case study – resulting in the self-reflexive investigation of an investigation. Such an enterprise requires unpacking its assumptions.

1.3 GROUPS – AN ONTOLOGY

All practice is implicitly underpinned by a theory or viewpoint. The assumptions underpinning the study give expression to its ontology, i.e., what the researcher takes the world to be. They also imply an epistemology – how its subject can be known. These assumptions are considered below and, as in every argument structure, they are warrants or principles that justify the connection between claim and evidence (Andrews & Mitchell 2001); their principles also constitute a claim and are, therefore, open to contestation. The two spellings of *fantasy* (naming what is not a reality but a product of the imagination) and *phantasy* (an unconscious process) have been kept distinct through the study and are addressed in section 2.2.

1.3.1 CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS THINKING

Learning is the process by which a subject (purposely or unintentionally) gains an understanding or skill which can be summoned as required and applied to familiar or new situations. Epistemology has traditionally differentiated between types of knowledge, such as a procedural kind or competence in *knowing-how* (riding a bicycle, going to a place), and a propositional kind in *knowing-that* (cats are mammals, $2 + 5 = 7$) (Ryle 1949). The mental process required, albeit in different ways, is the capacity to think, that is, to 'imagine, conceive in the mind; consider, meditate, remember; intend, wish, desire' (*Onl. Etym. Dict.*) to develop the ability to reason, understand, and learn. This emphasizes a conscious approach to thinking, evident in the *that*-clauses expressing propositional knowledge (knows *that* cats are mammals, does not know *that* Mallorca is in Spain). Propositional knowledge can be further differentiated according to its source. Non-empirical or *a priori* knowledge is possible independently of (prior to) any experience, and only requires the use of reason, such as knowing logical truths ($A \neq B$) or abstract claims

(ethics). Empirical or *a posteriori* knowledge is possible only subsequent to sense experiences – and it will include the use of reason. Knowing requires thinking, that is, directing attention towards an object or event, which is always *about something* being re-presented in the mind.

The idea of representation in one of its many senses is what this idea of aboutness captures. It is because thought has this peculiar distance from the world that it can get things wrong, imagine, distort, fantasize, remember things past, envision the future; that sceptics can question whether the world exists at all. (Cavell 2003: 804–5)

Knowledge is not necessarily conscious. Polanyi (1966) described *tacit knowledge* as that knowledge which ‘we do not know we know’. Forensic representations (the classical identikit) are a typical example, where the knowledge possessed can be captured by a ‘community of practice’, allowing access to data that was perceived yet could not be immediately recalled. Tacit knowledge cannot be fully retrieved, and even the most complete, explicit account will retain knowledge which remains unrecalled and undisclosed. Thinking does not only happen within the awareness of the thinker at a conscious level but also at other strata, awake and asleep, as demonstrated by dreaming and by the phenomenon of incubation, where a problem that has been struggled with finds an answer at a moment in which the mind is not engaged in its solution. Yet knowledge is not just an individual phenomenon as the knower becomes socialized into the norms of the culture of the group without being fully aware that this will establish normative ideas of truth and falsity, i.e., how things ‘really’ are, what constitutes acceptable knowledge, and what does not and therefore cannot be thought (and hence known) because it is regulated by an inflexible view of what can be considered true. But there is also another kind of non-conscious thinking: the dynamic unconscious described by Freud and Breuer (1895). The unconscious has no objective existence subject to methods of inquiry accepted by quantitative science. The structures of study are intersubjective constructs, yet

the assumption of there being an unconscious enables us to construct a successful procedure by which we can exert an effective influence upon the course of conscious processes ... at any given moment consciousness includes only a small content, so that the greater part of what we call conscious knowledge must in any case be for very considerable periods of time in a state of latency, that is to say, of being psychically unconscious. (Freud 1915: 167)

The value of the concept of the unconscious dimension of the mind has been its decentring of human consciousness. While Western philosophy had conceived of the mind as a unified apparatus, Freud pointed to the non-consistent nature of the mind, its components in constant conflict, and the purpose of clinical psychoanalysis being to provide the analysand with the experience of their unconscious internal conflicts and

thus foster development. Bion (1965: 38) proposed that the mind grows when exposed to truth, which it needs in the same way as the organism needs food. In Freud's topographical model formulated in 1900, the mind is differentiated into a number of subsystems in relation to each other which can be treated as points in a physical space. It distinguishes between three systems: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious, which have their own function, and boundaries between them to inhibit and control transposition from one to another. At any one time awareness of oneself and of the world is confined to a very restricted area, as if shining the narrow beam of a torchlight in the midst of darkness. The *conscious* is one's awareness of what can be perceived, i.e., exclusively here-and-now matters. However, one can direct the beam to areas of darkness which are not immediately present to one's awareness of events elsewhere and at other times but which share the qualities of the conscious. This second level is the *preconscious*, or thoughts that are not conscious at a particular moment but which are available to recall because they can be brought into consciousness. It also happens that some of the awareness in the conscious (and preconscious) falls out of sight. The energy necessary to keep it in the conscious is withdrawn. This is the gateway which Freud had termed the 'censor' and later developed as a theory of *repression* (1915), that is, an impediment for particular thoughts to return to the conscious – and energy is now dedicated to keep them away.

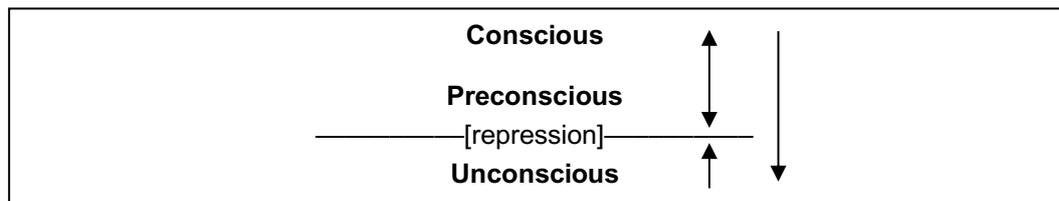


Fig. 1

This third level is the *unconscious*, which can be inferred from those activities that we do not consciously initiate and appear to flow out of us, as in parapraxes (slips of the tongue) or dreams. It is an area of which we have no self-awareness, that is, we are conscious of it yet we do not have self-consciousness of it – we can be conscious of our slip of the tongue, but it is produced by a part of ourselves that is outside our management (Symington 1986: 135). We may believe that our actions are entirely determined by volition and then realize the contribution of unconscious processes alongside our conscious efforts. Unconscious processes are related to neither time nor place. This means that some unconscious communications (such as symptoms) may be associated in the present with places or situations which have happened elsewhere or at any time in the past, yet these primitive experiences can make their presence felt also in the here-and-now.

The unconscious is the true psychological reality; *in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely*

presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs. (Freud 1900: 613)

It is important to remark on the mistake of attributing substantiality to the unconscious, which can then be analysed, scotomized, interpreted, explained, theorized (i.e., it can be taken possession of), when in fact what might be understood and interpreted (translated) are the unconscious determinants of enactments (as actions or imaginations). The notion of the unconscious itself (an adjective rather than a noun) is not amenable to interpretation because it is phenomenal; if it is considered noumenal, it is only to explore its fictional narratives rather than factual (real) characteristics. For Lacan,

the unconscious is a discourse. Freud is not the first to have discovered the unconscious, but the first to have discovered the essential fact that the unconscious speaks: in slips of the tongue, in dreams, in the symbolic language of the symptoms. The unconscious is not simply a forgotten or rejected bag of instincts, but an indestructible infantile desire whose repression means that it has become symbolically unrecognizable, since it is articulated through rhetorical displacements (object substitutions). [...] and *a discourse that is radically intersubjective.* (Felman 1987: 123)

In the subsequent structural model described in *The Ego and the Id* (Freud 1923), behaviour was considered as resulting from the need to control discharge of tension. Hence if hungry, we take action by providing ourselves with food, and pleasure is obtained by the reduction of (instinctual) tension, as it happens with hunger or the sexual drive. This agency by which we perceive the environment, and regulate and manage our discharge of energy, Freud called the *ego*. The ego is in the boundary between the self and the environment or reality. Like all boundaries, it is part of reality (the outside) but also reflects the organism it envelops, like a skin. It registers and processes stimuli from both the outer world and from within. It has no energy of its own, as all the energy derives from the internal world, or the instinctual, which Freud called the *id* (meaning the 'it'). We are born governed only by the id, and the process of maturation forms and separates the ego from the id. The third term in the structural model is the *superego*, which arises out of the ego, the id, and the parental image – and takes the ego to task for failing to be an (ego) ideal. The id is ruled by the *pleasure principle* (immediate gratification, tension discharge) while the ego is ruled by three masters: the id, the superego, and reality. The *reality principle*, which modifies the pleasure principle, seeks to satisfy it in a roundabout way, postponing attainment according to the conditions imposed by the outside world.

Discussing the concept of the *imaginary*, Lacan pointed to the intrinsic visual nature of the unconscious (Žižek 2006: 93 ff.). It does not refer to fantasy but to the crucial role that actual images have in the animal kingdom, including human beings. Animals are far more aggressive towards their own species than toward any other (Lorenz 1963: 15). What matters is the visual size of the adversary – the other is

considered the same as oneself, operating on the same principles. So the other either is or it is not a threat, but there is no recognition of the other operating on different principles than one's own. One grasps other's motives only on the basis of one's own – if one is feeling attacked, the other must be attacking; if one is starving, the other must be motivated by hunger. There is no recognition of limits of what can be done to a rival, because there is a passion to destroy the other (who is like oneself) before one is destroyed (Fink 2005: 554–60). When a young lion moves away from the recent kill it is not out of respect for its elders but because the older lions leave it no choice. And there are no limits in the imaginary dimension – an animal stops feeding only when it is satiated, regardless of whether there are other hungry animals of the same species around. There are no morals. This can be seen in childhood – when a child loves, it happens without bounds; when s/he hates, hatred knows no limits. There is no ambivalence – hatred and passion (for the mother, for instance) can follow each other without any remorse. But also, when there is no difference between one's ego and the ego of the other, one may experience their feelings as one's own, and one's feelings as theirs.

With the onset of the Oedipus complex – proposed by Freud in a letter to Fliess of 15/10/1897 – the unconscious function comes into being and, therefore, the possibility of ambivalence and mixed feelings. There are now two distinct 'others': the other whom one needs to compete with and vanquish, and the other to honour and respect. Limits are represented by rules and the superego takes shape – we internalize the voice of our parents as the voice of our conscience. This is the moment when the symbolic dimension develops, creating a distance between one's ego and that of the other. I cease to experience the other as myself and vice versa. We are now irremediably distinct, and the new Other may have motives different from my own. This new Other is opaque, while the previous other (because s/he was just like me) was transparent. At a later stage, when a child internalizes a prohibition against ill-treating its siblings or against possessing the parent of the opposite sex, repression occurs. That is, wishes do not disappear altogether but continue to exist in the unconscious area of the mind and to exert a certain influence (Fink 2005: 566). However, what has been repressed keeps coming back in bungled actions such as parapraxes – 'an act whose explicit goal is not attained; instead this goal turns out to have been replaced by another one.' (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973: 300) –, dreams, and forgetting to do something we wished or expected to do.

Thinking is a purposeful activity but necessarily in a conscious sense. Respecting the economy of the system requires the development of hallucinations, as when the child is frightened by the absence of the mother and fantasizes her presence – like the thirsty traveller seeing a mirage. The genius of Freud has been to propose a theory of the emotional field that has been contested, adapted, and further developed, but that remains one of the crucial creative acts of the history of Western thought. Yet, in the long British empiricist tradition it produces discomfort, not unlike the one that Kleinian clinicians and

theoreticians experience when confronted with the positions of Lacanian practitioners. The work of Freud, Klein, Bion, and Winnicott is of particular interest, as it is that of Lacan in relation to the concept of desire.

Bion (1967) proposed that in the psychotic mode of thinking the ego, mediating in the conflict between the id and the external world, withdraws itself from a part of reality. That is, contact with reality is masked by the dominance of an omnipotent phantasy that is intended to destroy either reality or the awareness of it. The lack of an Oedipal conflict (i.e., the absence of an awareness of the existence of a third between infant and (m)other) does not allow the development of the symbolic dimension and the subject remains in the imaginary register. Hence, in concrete thinking mode, symbols are felt to *equate* to that which they symbolize; the psychotic feels imprisoned in a state of mind s/he has achieved, and unable to escape from it because s/he feels the apparatus of awareness of reality lacking, which is both the key to escape, and the freedom into which to escape. A hatred of reality, internal and external, is extended to all that makes for awareness of it and thus omnipotence and omniscience replace the capacity to learn from experience.

1.3.2 UNCONSCIOUS PROCESSES

Through her psychoanalytic work with children Klein (1946) identified two positions which she proposed everyone goes through from very early in life. One is the *paranoid-schizoid position*, when the infant's disowned emotions are split and lodged in imagos of 'good' objects, while hatred and unwanted emotions are projected out into representations of the infant's 'bad' objects. In effect, when the mother is experienced as frustrating, the infant's anger is projected into her and she is felt to be a menacing bad object. Conversely, when the mother is experienced as gratifying, the infant's love is projected into her and she is felt to be an idealized good object. These figures are experienced as two very separate and distinct mothers. The other stage is the *depressive position*, which occurs when the child realizes that the two mothers (the good object that nourishes, and the bad object that frustrates), are aspects of one and the same mother. This realization that things are neither black nor white brings about sadness and remorse. The part-object personifications of the paranoid-schizoid position are based on the needs of the self, while the depressive position is focused on the needs and survival of the object.

The two positions are not developmental stages and will tend to recur through life. As we grow up, these earlier perceptions do not disappear but are overlaid by more mature perceptions, more in consonance with reality. Klein noticed that children she worked with gave her roles in this process of personification (Klein 1929) and proposed the existence of a mechanism she called *projective identification*. This is an interpersonal event, that is, it requires two people, one of whom has feelings of pleasure and displeasure, that is, internal stimuli that predominate over external stimuli which are dealt

with by treating them as if they originate from the outside (Freud 1920: 29). The strategy followed by the psychic apparatus is to (unconsciously) split them into good and bad objects and project them out into another person who, (also unconsciously) resonates with and feels the feelings of the first.

Projections – first described by Freud (1900) and further elaborated by Klein 1946, Bion 1962, Racker 1982, Laplanche 1999, and others – are thus transferred to an other as unconscious communications. This applies also to groups, whereby the group unconsciously project (transfer) their emotional collective state of mind onto the observer who is inevitably given (and takes up) the role of a particular object in the mind of the group. The observer then experiences feelings which, though apparently belonging to her/him, are an unconscious response, i.e., her/his countertransference to the (unconscious) projections received. Transference and countertransference are not mechanical, as the observer also has the capacity for projection. Differentiating countertransference from one's own transference is one of the skills developed through the experience of undergoing psychoanalysis. Bion considered projective identification an unconscious communication, initially between the infant and the mother, and later on with others. Ogden (1992: 4) has described projective identification as the experience of being included into somebody else's phantasy. It can be imagined that a person A splits his/her feelings and projects them out into a person B. Person A could be compared to the director and one of the principal actors in the interpersonal enactment of his/her internal object relationship. Person B, who receives the projections, becomes an unwitting actor in the same drama, and projective identification is the process by which B is given stage directions for her/his particular role.

If things work well at the beginning of life, the mother anticipates the needs of the infant (say, nourishment or comfort) and provides these as the need arises. This resembles the narrative of the Garden of Eden where the first human beings were in a state of grace or bliss where they did not experience, or were not aware of, any needs because they were permanently satisfied. However, at some point when the infant feels hunger, there may be a delay until the breast appears. This is the Fall: a moment of great anxiety, as hunger is felt as a threat of annihilation. The rage and hatred, which the infant experiences as a result of its fear, have to be evacuated and are projected out. The no-breast thus comes into existence for the infant as a bad object. But also, to sustain the horror of this lacking, rejecting, frustrating absence of the breast (which is experienced as an attack), the infant phantasizes the existence of a good breast to offer solace, hope, and the promise of satisfaction. The equilibrium may be re-established until hunger reasserts itself over the phantasy of fulfilment. Kleinian thinking has been criticized for its emphasis on the primacy of these two representations, the 'good' and the 'bad' breast, which may divide our universe into absolute good and bad, when in fact they constitute interdependent terms – both are a fantasy and neither exists in isolation from the other.

The infant gets its feeding and life goes on, but at times it will experience anxieties, about hunger, or wind, or being alone, or remembering how frightened s/he was, and will project into the mother the dread and fear of annihilation that these experiences evoked. Bion named β -elements these primitive unconscious impulses that the infant feels as undigestible concrete things, undifferentiated between inanimate or psychic objects, which cannot be thought and can only be evacuated. If the mother can receive these projections and process them, to return them in a modified form, the infant will thrive and develop. When a mother, without being even aware that this is what she is doing, soothes and cares for her child, making the infant feel at ease by the quality of her contact, she enters into a state that Bion called *reverie* (SOD: a state of delight, a day dream or musing state – from the French *rêve*: dream). Bion asserted that through *reverie* the mother is able to return to the infant sense impressions and emotional happenings, transforming them into digested α -elements, now available to be converted into memories, dream-thoughts (that is, the visual material and symbolic representations that appear in dreams) and, if further developed, into thoughts (Bion 1962: 7). It should be noted that β - and α -elements were only theoretical hypotheses that Bion proposed, as required to explain the disturbances of thinking. Bion stated that

reverie is that state of mind that is open to the reception of any 'objects' from the loved object and is therefore capable of the reception of the infant's projective identifications whether they are felt by the infant to be good or bad. (1962: 36)

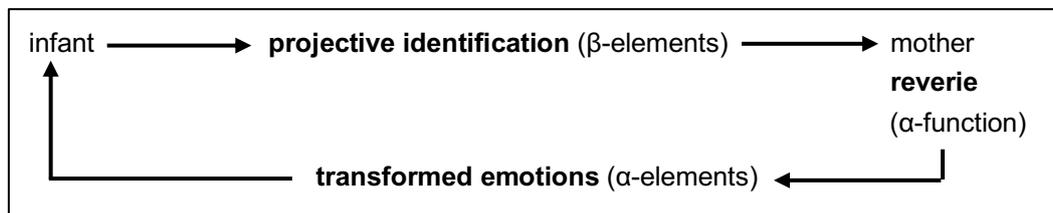


Fig. 2

If the mother is able to introject and emotionally process those emotions that the infant is unable to digest and has projected into her, she has the potential to transform the child's distressed parts through the process of *reverie*, returning them to the infant in a less overwhelming form, which the infant can then manage by itself. Bion stated that

the infant projects a part of its psyche, namely, its bad feelings, into a good breast. Thence, in due course they are removed and re-introjected. During their sojourn in the good breast they are felt to have been modified in such a way that the object that is re-introjected has become tolerable to the infant's psyche. (1962: 90)

and proposed to use as a model the idea of a *container*, into which the object is projected, and which Bion designated as the *contained*. This sequence of *projection – introjection – reverie – communication* is what is known as containment. As this cycle

is repeated, the infant gradually learns to think by itself and becomes able to contain its own distress without being overwhelmed, and gradually learns to think of the mother as a good object.

However, at times the process may go wrong, either because of the infant, the mother, or both. The infant may withhold its projections due to a variety of reasons, such as hatred and envy of the mother's capacity for retaining a comfortable state of mind although experiencing the infant's feelings, or fear that the mother may steal the infant's experience, or by feeling humiliated by the mother's capacity to contain needs which the infant cannot manage by itself. These could take the child to suppress its needs, avoid dependency, and develop a false self-containment. Conversely, the mother may be unable to introject the child's projections due to unavailability due to external circumstances, or through envy of the child, depression, resentment, or disgust. Or she may be so vulnerable that the child's projected anxieties are far too overwhelming for her to contain, and she may project her own anxieties into the child. If the mother is unreceptive, or she cannot tolerate these projections, 'the infant is reduced to continued projective identification carried out with increasing force and frequency. The increased force seems to denude the projection from its penumbra of meaning' (Bion 1967: 115), and it becomes fit only for evacuation. The child would feel that its projection of a frightening experience such as fear of dying, which has not been accepted by the mother, is not re-introjected as fear of dying made tolerable, but as a *nameless dread*.

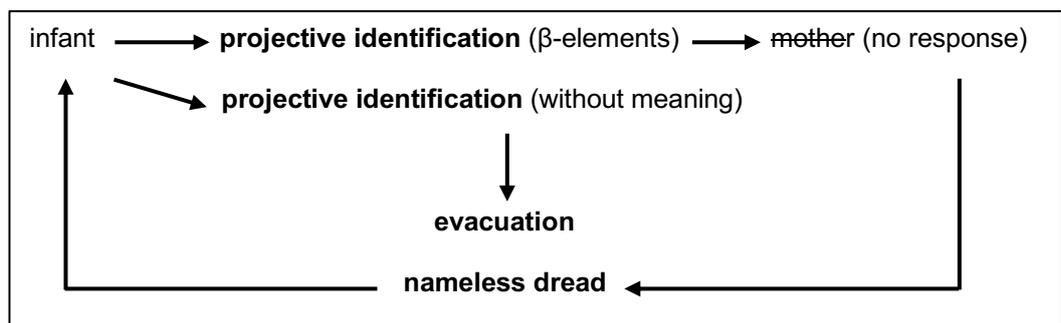


Fig. 3

Denial of the use of projective identification, either by the refusal of the mother to serve as repository of the infant's feelings, or by the hatred and envy of the [infant] who cannot allow the mother to exercise this function, leads to the destruction of the link between infant and breast and consequently of the impulse to be curious on which all learning depends. (Bion 1967: 106–7)

Curiosity refers to the epistemophilic instinct or wish to know, the excitement originally about the sexual organs, but later about the child's own mind and, through sublimation, about the external world. The process of container/contained, which results from the communicative function of projective identification, can be experienced as nourishing by both mother and infant, and assists their respective growth and learning. The contained grows as it becomes better able to encompass the full complexity of the emotional

situation from where it derives. The container develops as it becomes better able to 'dream' and transform the experience of the contained. The two terms are interrelated and do not hold their meaning independently.

Bion represented the contained with the symbol ♂ and the container with ♀, which does not mean that the relationship is sexual – they just designate a link. When they are denuded of emotion they diminish in vitality, but when permeated by emotion they change in a manner usually described as growth. Neither the container nor the contained are static entities but living processes. The relationship container/contained is not just positive (creative) as the associations with maternal reverie may appear to imply. The two may be destructive of each other. For instance, the container may become destructive to the contained resulting in a restriction of what can be thought, or the contained may destroy the container.

For example, a nightmare may be thought of as a dream in which the dream-thought [the unconscious material of the dream] (the contained) is so disturbing that the capacity for dreaming (the container) breaks down and the dreamer awakens in fear. [...] Similarly, play disruptions represent instances where unconscious thoughts overwhelm the capacity for playing. (Ogden 2004: 1359)

'A word contains a meaning; conversely, a meaning can contain a word – which may or may not be discovered. The relationship is established by the nature of the link' (Bion 1970: 106). Bion stated that the link between container and contained may be

- *Commensal*: when the two share a third object to the advantage of all three, such as the link between a mother (container) and infant (contained) sharing mental growth (the third term, even if immaterial) for the benefit of the three.
- *Symbiotic*: when one depends on the other for mutual advantage, such as in the relationship of a group and its leader.
- *Parasitic*: where one depends on the other to produce a third, which is destructive of all three, such as when a person becomes so angry that they end up stammering – language is the *container*, anger is the *contained*, and the incoherence, which destroys communication, is the third (Bion 1970: 95).

Bion proposed that the capacity for thinking is developed through the experience of being contained by a thinking mother, and that thinking is a development forced on the psyche by the pressure of thoughts, that is, *it is the development of thoughts that requires an instrument or apparatus to cope with them*, rather than the other way round. Paradoxically, hatred of emotions leads to an intensification of emotions, and therefore to an increasing need for more powerful defences. 'These attacks on the linking function of emotion lead to an overprominence in the psychotic part of the personality of links which appear to be logical, almost mathematical, but never emotionally reasonable' (Bion 1967: 108–9). The psychotic personality, as described by Bion, results from an experience of

failure in the containing function and is characterized by an experience of fragmentation, a feeling of being trapped in one's mind, attacking awareness, thinking, and feeling, with manic searches for a container, hatred of emotions and learning, rigid beliefs, omnipotence, and omniscience. Mental health is a balance between the two states through a capacity for flexibility, as in the case of the ability to move between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions (Klein 1946). Bion's point was that anxieties that may be effectively managed by the individual are unconsciously pooled by the members of a group and amplified, resulting in the potential for the group to function as a psychotic mind. Through the use of psychoanalytic enquiry informed by the work of Winnicott, Bion, and researchers on infant observation such as Rustin (1989) and others, it may be possible to ascertain dynamics by which the group gives expression to the drive for mastery of work (Arnaud & Guinchard 2006). Work (i.e. as an action done to achieve a purpose or result) is experienced as both an external (social) and internal (emotional) obligation (evident in its compulsive character) due to the need to sublimate instinctual drives such as aggression or sexuality, diverting the energy of the biological impulse from its immediate goal to a socially acceptable one. Beyond any practical outcomes, work has a great symbolic value because of its contribution to the functioning of the psychic apparatus – we do not work only to bring about the outcome of our efforts, but those efforts have a particular role in regulating and upholding homeostasis in the mind (Freud 1920).

Forever caught in the conflict between belonging to a tradition (the sacred) and the need to destroy it (through play) ultimately leading towards renewal, adaptation, and survival, work plays an important part in the alleviation of the psychic burden of the positions identified by Klein (1935) by offering the means of repairing damaged internal 'objects'. The dynamics do not emerge from the outside but from the interaction of internal (repressed unconscious pressure) and external conditions. The difficulty derives from the biological imperative concerning the aversion to uncertainty – in the struggle for survival, herds and individuals must be able to recognize instantly the difference between friend and foe, to respond with either fight or flight, which paradoxically weakens the human capacity for elaboration and thinking leading to an appropriate (i.e., whole object-seeking, strategy-devising) response. To reduce this tension the group seeks homeostasis, but the result, although economical as far as alleviating anxiety (e.g. shooting the messenger to erase bad news), will not be so in respect of its task of learning and development), which can only be addressed by engaging with and tolerating frustration, and the anxiety arising from uncertainty.

1.3.3 GROUPS AS COMPLEX ORGANISMS

Freud (1921) proposed that groups diminish their members' intelligence and heighten their emotions. The organization of any other social enterprise does not occur solely out

of an economy of means (a problem–solution model) but is determined by tradition (memory) delineating the boundaries of what can be conceived, and impacted upon by ‘social defences’ against emotions that the work and/or its context may generate (Jaques 1953, Menzies Lyth 1988). Hence, understanding group and organizational functioning requires more subtle tools than a descriptive/analytic approach to organizational functioning. These tools should be sufficiently permeable to register the anxieties generated by external and internal pressures making up the emotional life of the group (Bion 1961). Morgan (1997: 246) has suggested that ‘instead of trying to enhance the rationality of organizations as an end in itself, more attention should be devoted to understanding and developing the links between the irrational and the rational, because they are part of the very same phenomenon.’ From a social constructionist perspective there is no perceived object without a perceiving subject (Berger & Luckmann 1966).

Beyond being determined by an explicit common purpose, if an assortment of individuals is to become a group, its members will unknowingly coalesce into a complex organism striving for survival. This is the deepest biological imperative to which even the task may be permanently or intermittently sacrificed, as asserted by Bion (1961). In its struggle against actual or imagined disintegration a group is usually blind to its own subversion of its primary task, that is, the task that it must undertake in order to survive as a group. Thus, a trained participant observer may assist the development of insight and the growth of the group towards becoming a self-aware and hence more efficient organization. This approach to learning and growth is explicit in established practices such as process consultation to organizations (Obholzer & Roberts 1994), role consultancy and coaching to individuals (Newton *et al.* 2006), learning environments offered by group relations conferences (Colman & Bexton 1975), and also in psychosocial research framed so that both the subject and researcher can learn (Clarke 2002). However, an observer – who is a member of the group even if in a different role – becomes the recipient of emotional communications from the group on which s/he may act or, by becoming aware of being filled up, refrain her/himself from doing so by articulating an interpretation of the dynamics of the group as seen from the outside, firstly to her/himself and then, if in consultancy role, to the group. Should the group or organization have the necessary conditions to learn from its own experience, an observer may produce a narrative that may assist the group observed, and may be useful to the field at large. However, even the mere presence of a thinking observer struggling to retain ownership of her/his mind – as opposed to becoming suffused by the mentality of the group – may offer a useful contribution to the homeostasis or internal equilibrium of the organization since, as Heisenberg (1927) had demonstrated, the presence of an observer has an inevitable impact on what is being observed.

While there exists a strong tradition of psycho-social research engaged with the notion of the unconscious, the appropriate ethical preoccupation of avoiding abusive ‘wild analysis’ interpretations of subjects and data when taking psychoanalysis out of the

clinical setting (Clarke 2002: 189) may have resulted in a state of self-censorship of the researcher's unconscious response to the subject. That may be why, when visual representations are used as a visual ethnographic strategy in research (or consultancy) practice, these images are always requested from, and produced by, the research subjects – not by the researcher. An ethnographic approach must make use of both an *emic* perspective (that is, from the point of view of a participant in the culture) and an *etic* perspective (as viewed by an external observer). Tedlock (2005) suggested that ethnographers have modified the practice of participant observation by observing their own participation, thereby connecting 'the autobiographical impulse (the gaze inward) with the ethnographic impulse (the gaze outward)':

The issue becomes not so much distance, objectivity, and neutrality as closeness, subjectivity, and engagement. This change in approach emphasizes relational over autonomous patterns, interconnectedness over independence, translucence over transparency, and dialogue and performance over monologue and reading. (Tedlock 2005: 151–2)

A group is defined as a number of persons who have come together to act upon a common task, share some common identity (whether willingly, reluctantly, or ambivalently), and know who the other members of the group are. Such a group is a sentient and therefore live organism which, alongside its concern to address its expressed purpose, is fundamentally albeit unconsciously preoccupied by, and dedicated to protecting its own survival – and these two objectives are therefore in conflict. Bion (1961) proposed the existence of two levels in the consciousness of a group: a conscious level, whereby participants join the group to satisfy an *individual need*, and an unconscious level, which he termed *group mentality*, as a pool of anonymous contributions that support the shared assumption that *members are in the group to preserve the existence of the group* – rather than to address the group's task under which the group had been formed. The conflict between individual needs and group mentality result in a *group culture*, i.e., the ways in which the group functions and organizes itself.

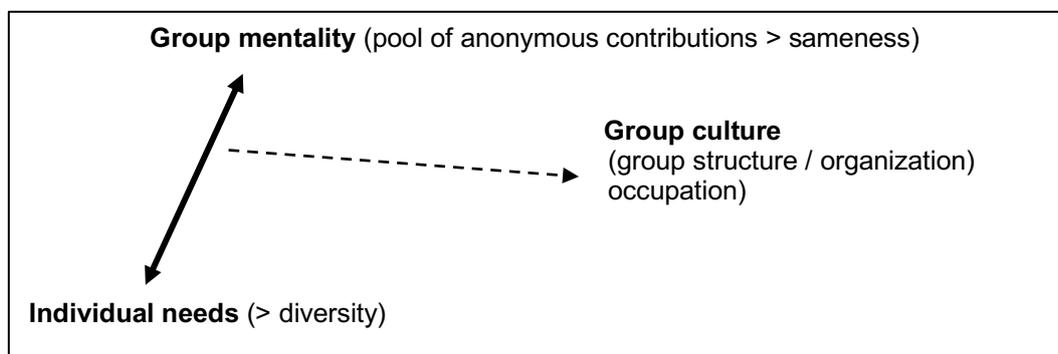


Fig. 4

Every group has a culture, determined by its mentality, that is, the sum total of the explicit and conscious as well as the anonymous and unconscious contributions of its members.

The group is also a subsystem of a larger cultural system, which impacts on its codes, modality, and state of mind; the larger system also offers protection and/or persecution, means of exchange and also controls its boundaries, providing and depriving it of sustenance. Group behaviour is determined by conscious, tacit, and unconscious processes which can be interrogated to make them explicit and gain new/further understanding on the group's culture. Paraphrasing Winnicott (1952: 99) stating that 'when you set out to study a baby, what you find is a baby and a mother', it can be asserted that an individual cannot be conceived as independent from the notion or actuality of a group. The belief in the isolated individual as the origin of the species is a *category mistake* (Ryle 1949). The first group is the family, from which the adolescent struggles to extricate her/his mind, carrying a history that will impact through acceptance and also by reaction on the shaping of a new identity. Like the family, the group is an impossible necessity, an organism (not a machine) pulsating, inexplicably capable of heroism and egoism in equal measure, perverse and moralistic to the extreme, which is both considered from the outside and observed and participated within, contributing to its functioning, by action and by inaction, by giving and withholding assent or disagreement. A group is not static but constantly performing, exchanging, asserting, denying, silencing, and stimulating itself – however rigid its boundaries, however permeable and at risk of losing shape, and/or defended and aggressive towards external influence.

The group will be seen as a contradictory creature, prone to love, rage, and indifference; and yet it will learn with pleasure and disgust, willingly, and against itself, destroying and creating itself along the way – because it knows, and it knows some of what it knows, and it also gets anxious about whatever may remind it of its precariousness. The group is, in its own mind, eternal and ephemeral, hating change and stubbornly holding fast to tradition. But it may, at times, allow its epistemophilic drive to lead, wishing to find out, at the risk of change by challenging homeostasis, or seeking a higher-order homeostasis. However, the notion of group is problematic. This investigation subscribes to the premise that, as a species, human beings are biologically and psychologically bound to their group(s) of belonging, and this inevitable membership constitutes both an opportunity and a weakness. In Bion's formulation,

the individual cannot help being a member of a group even if his membership of it consists in behaving in such a way to give reality to the idea that he does not belong to the group at all. [...] The individual is a group animal at war, not simply with the group, but with himself for being a group animal and with those aspects of his personality that constitute his 'groupishness'. (Bion 1961: 131)

If frustration is too great to bear the primacy of the reality principle, the personality develops defences whereby thoughts and thinking are placed at the service of the rigidity of knowing it all, at the expense of the ability to discriminate between true and false. Omniscience is a form of self-regulation. If the void is filled with fear of annihilation, then attacks on linking, splitting, and omnipotence can be understood as ways of surviving.

Groups function as such, even if their members are not together in the same place at the same time – ‘The processes of the system *Ucs.* are *timeless*, i.e., they are not ordered temporarily, are not altered by the passage of time; they have no reference to time at all’ (Freud 1915: 187). The reason for an observation of a group to take place in a given location, at a certain time, is simply because the actual presence of the group makes some of the phenomena described easier to observe and, should that be the intention, to bring the resulting experience to the attention of the group (Bion 1961: 168). The contribution that a participant-observer consultant can make to an organization is geared towards familiarizing it with its unconscious processes, to support the organization in becoming able to differentiate between internal and external, between neurotic and psychotic states of mind, engaging with reality, and learning from experience. This requires that the observer is able to attune to the mind of the group, noticing in her/himself, through the countertransference, ‘that numbing feeling of reality’ that Bion (1961: 149) considers evidence of being in the grip of the psychotic state of mind, in which arrogance (as a disregard for truth) is predominant (Bion 1967). Quoting Bion, Riley (2005) stated that

when the analyst is aware of arrogance in the patient, he becomes identified with that emotion since ‘to pursue the truth at no matter what cost is felt to be synonymous with a claim to a capacity for containing the discarded, split-off aspects of other personalities while retaining a balanced outlook’ (Bion 1967: 88–9). Therefore not only may arrogance in the patient be a defence against pain that is believed to be unbearable, but it is also an ongoing problem for the analyst. (Riley 2005: 2013)

Bion (1967) proposed that people who are predominantly non-psychotic still have psychotic thought mechanisms; conversely, those with psychotic personalities also have non-psychotic mechanisms and defences. However, groups will foster psychotic functioning, and Bion differentiated between a group that can manage its psychotic leanings and engage in task-oriented work (the sophisticated *Work* group), and a *basic assumptions* group, which seems to be under the assumption that people come together as a group for the purpose of preserving the group against its feared disintegration.

Participation in basic-assumption activity requires no training, experience, or mental development. It is instantaneous, inevitable and instinctive. [...] [it] makes no demands on the individual for a capacity to cooperate. (Bion 1961: 153)

It depends on the individual’s *valency* (a term Bion borrowed from chemistry) as a disposition for instantaneous involuntary combination. It is not just a fixed personal trait but a propensity to act in a particular way under certain circumstances which is appropriated and augmented by the group mentality. In Bion’s formulation, since all experience is mediated by the group (i.e., by language), individual experiences should be first considered a phenomenon of the group rather than be regarded as

determined solely by the individual. Bion identified three patterns or types of basic assumption (*ba*) behaviour:

- *Dependency (baD)*: the group is determined to have a leader, even when this is not required for the task in hand, who is expected to satisfy their needs and rescue them from the frustrations of the group. This D leader is idealized and concomitant to this *ba* are the feelings of passivity, depression and frustrated creativity.
- *Fight/Flight (baF)*: the group fights against or flies from an enemy, and can do either indifferently. The F leader is enlisted to identify the enemy, which may be within or outside the group. The concomitant feelings of *baF* are hatred, rage, and fear. It is to be noted that nowhere does Bion refer to when a group gets paralysed rather than engaging in either action, which may be due to horror rather than fear (Arya 2017, quoted in p. 58 below). The dualism is then not fight/flight but action/inaction.
- *Pairing (baP)*: the group allows or sets up two people to engage with each other as if the couple (regardless of age or gender) will bring the answer or give birth to a new idea or leader. This group is characterized by expectancy and hope. For 'hope to be sustained, it is essential that the "leader" of the group, unlike the leader of the dependent group or the fight/flight group, should be unborn' (Bion 1961: 151).

All three assumptions satisfy the need to belong and Bion highlighted two characteristics of *ba* mentality:

- 'time plays no part in it; it is a dimension of mental function that is not recognized; consequently all activities that require an awareness of time are imperfectly comprehended and tend to arouse feelings of persecution' (Bion 1961: 158). Meetings that overrun or excessive agendas that cannot be addressed are typical because the task cannot be discharged within the time constraints. 'The consequences are illustrated in the description in *Alice in Wonderland* of the Mad Hatter's tea-party – it is always four o'clock' (Bion 1967: 113).
- 'the absence of any process of development' (Bion 1961: 159). A meeting may engage in a lively discussion about action, going round in circles without being able to address the task in hand. The compensation for the lack of development 'appears to be an increase in a pleasurable feeling of vitality' (*ibid.*).

Basic assumption functioning is out of touch with reality, favouring magic solutions and omnipotent wish fulfilment. They 'occur when individuals in a group struggle to balance both aspects of their bipolar needs for belonging and independence' (Tchelebi 2017: 54). The *ba* group is an expression of psychotic states of mind, while the *Work* group, on the other hand, is necessarily concerned with reality and, therefore, has some of the characteristics Freud attributed to the ego in his discussion of the individual (Bion 1961: 127). However, rather than falling into a binary that privileges one good term and eliminates the other bad term, the task becomes finding expression for the conjunction of *W* group and *ba* phenomena towards meaning-making assisting learning and change.

After all, work mentality could not happen on its own without the basic assumptions' attempts (always insufficient) towards the elaboration of anxiety. It must be noted that, useful as the concept continues to be in the work with groups, the pairs that arise – fight/flight; pairing/dependency; me-ness/one-ness – are dualist formulations, and fight/flight – one of the most typical dynamics that emerge when a group is impacted by anxiety – assume that the group will attack or escape. And yet, Bion, with his experience as a tank commander in action, will have seen soldiers frozen, unable to either fight or flight. However, 'What is necessary is [to] find interpretations that give the group insight into what is going on; to bring the *ba* and the *W* into contact' (Bion 1961: 126). Group members believe that the group has an unconscious attitude or transference towards themselves as an individual member, and this provided the theoretical justification of Bion's approach: to analyse the unconscious transference of the group to the consultant her/himself.

1.3.4 LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

The knowing subject's gaze constructs its object as an interpretation from a variety of choices, by selecting and grouping facts appearing to have an analogy. Poincaré (2003: 27) pointed out how the *selected fact* organizes knowledge – causality is no more than two thoughts permanently conjoined. This was taken up by Bion, who stated that

the selected fact is the name of an emotional experience, the emotional experience of a sense of discovery of coherence; its significance is therefore epistemological and the relationship of selected facts must not be assumed to be logical. (Bion 1962: 73)

Furthermore, selected facts 'are the name that we give to any collection of constantly conjoined experiences that we feel temporarily to have a meaning; *then* we consider we have discovered a "fact"' (Bion 1991: 236). The concept was further developed by Britton & Steiner (1994), drawing attention to the similarity between the emergence of a 'configuration' from a selected fact and the crystallization of delusional certainty from an 'overvalued idea'. The notion of the selected fact is of relevance when representing an observation of a group – the representation is not of a reality but a selected fact, and as such only a truth in as much as it is considered to be so. Fact (from L. *facere* 'to do' but also 'to make') is not a given but a construction considered as true.

Yet it is what we hold true that changes, not truths themselves. The shift from the widely held twelfth-century idea that the earth is flat to the fifteenth-century idea that it is round is not a change in truth but in belief. (Cavell 1998: 450)

The dialectical relationship between fact and fiction will be taken up in discussing the truth value of the artefacts *qua* artefacts produced through the study, which cannot be established by measurement. 'If an observation or measurement could establish a

truth, that truth could never become untrue. Yet this happens all the time in science' (Spezzano 1993: 30).

Learning (knowing) can only arise from experience even though not all experience is conducive to knowledge – and not all knowledge is available to consciousness, as in tacit knowledge referred to in 1.3.1 above. Participant observation is the basic model from which to learn from experience in a group; it includes an active and a passive element peculiarly combined. On the active hand, experience is *trying* – a meaning that is explicit in the connected term experiment. On the passive, it is *undergoing*. When we experience something we act upon it, we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequences. We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return. The connection of these two phases measures the fruitfulness or value of the experience (Dewey 1916: 139). Based on the work of Dewey, Lewin, Piaget, James, and others, Kolb (1984) formulated a clear model of learning from experience, proposing four phases in the cyclical process of learning: experiencing, observing, theorizing, and applying. These four stages get developed and refined through successive iterations, and knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Vince (1998) wrote that part of the broad attraction of the Kolb cycle is that 'it accommodates both deductive (moving from abstract concepts to testing their implications) and inductive (concrete experience leading to reflective practice) approaches', thereby providing 'a bridge between objectivity and subjectivity, positivism and phenomenology', making 'the link between theory and practice' (*ibid.*: 306). However, Vince laments that in its original formulation 'the learning cycle appears to be rather apolitical, assuming that people are able to speak their experience in their own voice' (*ibid.*: 307). While this may be sometimes possible there is also the risk that the subjects' experience is denied and constructed by an observer as an oppressive form of relation. Kolb's model seems to imply that learning from experience always takes place from the memories of past experience, missing out on the potential of learning from the 'here and now', and that the model assumes that 'people are open to experience, not defended against it' (*ibid.*: 308). However, learning in the present is also and always learning from past action since past and present are a continuum – there is no one-way traffic, simply a reciprocity. And because the subject is always defended against learning – due to their hatred of change – heuristic devices, whether conceptual or practical, are a useful addition to a repertoire of spaces and conditions for learning.

Psychoanalysis, as a hermeneutics of suspicion, is well placed to inquire after the defensive nature of absolute certainty, extending to the necessity to be suspicious of our own suspicions. As Vince rightly observes, the notion of the unconscious is to be explored in individuals, both themselves and others, and groups, which are constituted by individuals; but direct experience needs to be seen in relation to subjectivity and not individuality (*ibid.*: 312). What we suffer or undergo is learning (and consequently, growth) itself; there is a difference between learning something that only increases

information and learning from experience, bringing about change. Experience is not risk-free as rational certainties hypothetically are, because of the contingent nature of our perceptions of reality, further complicated by the indeterminacies of language. In that respect, rationality has a defensive function against the discontinuities and uncertainties of complex situations. Hence the attitude conducive to learning and growth is alert to the pull towards rigidity in thinking and requires adopting instead the state of mind described by the poet John Keats (1817) as 'negative capability', when the enquirer is 'capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason' (Wu 2005: 1351). Keats' proposition is the antithesis of the Western philosophical tradition of dependence on the logic of identity defined by Aristotle by its three principles (what is, is / nothing can both be and not be / everything must either be or not be) which presuppose logical coherence and imply a belief in an ultimate homogenous reality. This results in the exclusion of features evoking 'impurity', such as complexity, mediation, and difference.

The process of exclusion takes place at a general, metaphysical level, at which a whole system of binary concepts (sensible–intelligible; ideal–real; internal–external; fiction–truth; nature–culture; speech–writing; activity–passivity; etc.) governing the operation of thought comes to be instituted (Lechte 1994: 106) whereby one term is foregrounded and the other vilified, their relative value depending on the particular discourse in operation. But because the unconscious is not governed by rationality, engaging with it offers a magnificent point of access to other ways of knowing, particularly if it is possible for the knower to suspend (or at least delay) interpretative judgement given the 'sheer *unconsciousness* of the unconscious' (Coltart 1986: 187). However, in practice this is threatened by the pull to a *misplaced concreteness* (Whitehead 1926: 70) resulting in the erroneous conception – as a category mistake – of attributing substantiality to the unconscious, which can then be analysed, interpreted, theorized, explained, and imputed. The enactments of analysand and analyst, or group and observer (of which a visual representation of a recollection of their engagement may be an instance) may be interpreted because of their unconscious determinants – while the unconscious itself is not available to interpretation because it is phenomenal. If considered noumenal, i.e., a thing-in-itself, it is only to explore not its reality but its fictional rather than factual characteristics. The belief that talking about unconscious motivations brings about change is mistaken because there is a limit to how far desire can be articulated in speech because of a fundamental 'incompatibility between desire and speech' (Lacan 2006: 535); it is this incompatibility which explains the irreducibility of the unconscious – i.e., the unconscious is not that which *is not known*, but that which *cannot be known*, except by its manifestations. As it will be argued later, the approach explored in this study offers the opportunity to experience the impact of the unconscious and, since there is no possibility of escaping from language, partly through pre-verbal representations. But there is

a perennial philosophical confusion over the terms 'subjective' and 'objective.' They may be used to contrast, inter alia, what is personal (belongs to a subject) as opposed to what is impersonal (does not belong to a subject); or what is mental (inner) as opposed to what is physical (outer); or what is assessable as publicly true/false (matter of fact) as opposed to what is not so assessable (matter of opinion/conjecture). (Bird 2006: 488)

Bion (1962: x) pointed out that his methods were not definitive even though he was aware that they were inadequate – he found himself in a similar position to the scientist who continues to employ a theory that s/he knows to be faulty because a better one has not yet been devised to replace it. Yet the essentialist fantasy that truth does exist in an immutable realm of forms leads to the expectation of apprehending the thing-in-itself, the object-ness of the object. Bion referred to this ineffable, immensurable, unknowable absolute fact by the sign 'O' (1965: 12 ff.) for origin or zero.

O does not fall in the domain of knowledge save incidentally; it can 'become' but it cannot be 'known'. It is darkness and formlessness but it enters the domain K [knowledge] when it has evolved to a point where it can be known, through knowledge gained through experience, and formulated in terms derived from sensuous experience; its existence is conjectured phenomenologically. (Bion 1970: 26)

The thing-in-itself is a philosophical fiction but nevertheless necessary. The primitive wish to apprehend the group, i.e., to know, interpret, explain, and possess it (to eat it up) makes it into a *noumenon*, an object or event that exists independently of human sense and/or perception, yet which can be known – even though it is unknowable as a thing-in-itself. Kant (1781) argued that the noumenal world (things-in-themselves) may exist, but it is completely unknowable through human sensation. Intuition is the means of knowledge yet the confusion is the belief in the actual existence of the object perceived independently of its being perceived. Schaper (1966) proposed that if we proceed as if things-in-themselves were real these heuristic fictions permit us to derive a set of consequences.

The Kantian answer (though not always Kant's answer) is that the consequences are immensely fruitful for purposes other than verification and confirmation of the hypothesis; they are fruitful in that they allow us to handle material which can be considered in the light of the consequences and which would otherwise remain inaccessible or insufficiently investigated. (Schaper 1966: 236)

Hence the act of drawing is positioned between meaning and experience and is, in this sense, a *performative* act (section 3.7 below), offering some (limited, temporary, incomplete) access to a consciousness of the experience. Drawing gives access to or maintains contact with phenomena and not with noumena – the group is not the reality

and the experience of the group is an approximation. Drawing is both a private and public phenomenon, like language, and it includes both the saying and the said (even if the said may be determined by the discourse of the saying). In spite of all the logocentric tendencies towards closure and truth-values, language – as text or drawing – always contradicts itself, in spite (and because) of analysis and interpretation.

1.3.5 MEMORY AND TIME

Freud, writing on the genesis of the psychic apparatus, proposed that, in its development, consciousness

learned to comprehend sensory qualities in addition to the qualities of pleasure and unpleasure which hitherto had alone been of interest to it. A special function was instituted which had periodically to search the external world, in order that its data might be familiar already if an urgent internal need should arise – the function of *attention*. Its activity meets the sense-impressions half way, instead of awaiting their appearance. At the same time, probably, a system of *notation* was introduced, whose task it was to lay down the results of this periodical activity of consciousness – a part of what we call *memory*. (Freud 1911: 220)

The Greeks had two words: *anamnesis* is the memory that passively appears without volition (we remember how ...) as distinct from the result of remembering as searching for a memory, recollecting or *mneme*. Representations of the past seem to appear to be a still image or sequence, visual, auditory, or both. Memory is recollected information about what one has seen. It involves both the mental storage of such information and the ability to retrieve what has one imagined, i.e., perceived or misperceived with the mind's eye. We draw or write a flash-back of the event. Arnheim (1969: 84) pointed out that 'memory is a much more fluid medium than perception because it is farther removed from the checks or reality.' It is not a storage mechanism, an archival location of memories, but a dynamic re-constructive process. Freud repeatedly used the term *Nachträglichkeit* (*après coup* in French, translated in English as *deferred action*) in connection with his view of psychical temporality and causality, whereby experiences, impressions, and memory-traces may be revised at a later date – 'consciousness constitutes its own past, constantly subjecting its meaning to revision' (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973: 112).

Ricoeur (2004: xv) pointed to the unsettling spectacle offered by the abuses of memory and forgetting as evident in acts of remembrance and commemoration. But what might be a just allotment of memory may be more difficult to define. Considering the notion of representing from the memory of an event as ideational thinking in the present what was experienced in the past implies a unidirectional flow from the past into the present, where the experience is actualized by giving it a sensual shape as it is brought into consciousness. But representing in the present also involves aspects of the past experience in the present context. A fuller conception will require interrogating the

tensions and ambiguities, ill-defined, contradictory – neither presence nor absence, both emotion and indifference – rather than a lost anteriority to be recovered as documentary truth. The impact of photography makes itself felt here, as the accuracy of the early technology of representation by drawing was superseded by the fullness of indexical detail afforded by the photograph which, because of the peculiar experience of mimesis it affords, tended to be construed as truthful. And in its relation to the past the photographic image allows us

to find the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment the future subsists so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it [...] It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis. (Benjamin 1931: 243)

However, a further visual turn (Mitchell 1994) may be necessary away from the minutiae captured by the lens, because to possess memories is also to be possessed by memories. While the photograph records the past and we elaborate its becoming, the act of drawing may be best conceived as a *conversation*, a key term in this study (from L. *conversare* ‘turn about jointly’ from *com-* ‘with’ + *versare* ‘to turn, convert, transform, translate’, hence ‘turn things over, with others’) which takes place at a number of internal/external levels concerning the drawer, their perceptual capacity, and their unconscious in respect of their actual and phantasized audience as interlocutor in what has been recovered, forgotten, foregrounded, abandoned, omitted, and so forth. And beyond an individual’s phenomenon, it is necessary to conceive memory as diverse institutionalized discourses within cultural practices.

As Maurice Halbwachs pointed out, ‘It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories’ (1992: 38). Yet, if memory is social and cultural, it is also performative, making the past present in ways that can be experienced, generating a knowledge of the relationship between past and present that is oftentimes troubling, other times comforting. (Plate & Smelik 2013: 2–3)

Yet forgetting should not be considered the counterpart of remembering, and Nietzsche (2013) described it as an active and positive faculty of repression serving to facilitate the assimilation of what enters consciousness:

The temporary shutting of the doors and windows of consciousness, the relief from the din and struggle accompanying the activity of the organs that serve us, whether working in mutual cooperation or antagonism; a little quiet, a little *tabula rasa*, so as to make room for the new. (*ibid.*: 43)

Using drawing as a mnemonic device, that transcribes information into a visual code so that the brain can retain aspects of its original appearance, is only a minimal aspect of the

process which only partially depends on eidetic memory (the ability to recall images, sounds, or objects in memory with precision after brief exposure). Memory as reproduction of the actual object of perception is the fantasy of a glimpse of the Real which, according to Lacan, is 'outside language and inassimilable to symbolization' (Evans 1996: 159). The drawn image is, beyond its power as an index, a symbolic representation opening the opportunity for engaging with the experience of experience. Cadava (2001) pointed out that there can be no image that is not about destruction and survival. Every image 'bears witness to the enigmatic relation between death and survival, loss and life, destruction and preservation, mourning and memory' (*ibid.*: 35).

Like the world, the image allows itself to be experienced only as what withdraws from experience. Its experience – and if it were different it would not be an experience at all – is an experience of the impossibility of experience. (*ibid.*: 36)

The traces carried by the image of an event refer to the past of the group of participants and setting, the present of the drawing of the image, and the future of its reading and the transformations that it may assist with. Looking back on them as a series we see that they are (or at least may be) full of history, time and experiences. As Benjamin explains in his early essay on the *Trauerspiel* and tragedy,

Historical time is infinite in every direction and unfulfilled at every moment. This means we cannot conceive of a single empirical event that bears a necessary relation to the time of its occurrence. For empirical events, time is nothing but a form, but, what is more important, as a form it is unfulfilled. (Benjamin 2004: 55)

How is a traumatic event – and an aspect of the group is always traumatic, i.e., a psychic wound, harmful and scarring (discussed in section 2.3) – experienced and remembered? What kind of shadow does the past cast over the present which is also anticipated? The purpose is not to represent the event for memory storage or testimony but for digestion and transformation into dream-thoughts (section 2.4), which requires some form of representation.

[In Nietzsche's view] thinking and remembering are at odds with each other such that an overly acute memory stands in the way of rigorous and self-reflexive thought that would clear the stage of the mnemonic debris that holds back its striving in new directions. (Richter 2010: 152)

However immediate, the drawing is a representation of an event in the past which is no longer present but, through its representation, continues its existence and disappearance. While discussing the writing of Benjamin on the historic index of the image, Cadava (2001: 38–9), asserted that for an image to be read – that is, to enter into legibility – it must encounter the danger of its own dissolution. The moment in which it is read oscillates between the Now of its reading and Then of its making, which cannot be separated, hence

memory is not simply a form of afterness but rather an elusive encounter between the 'after' of something that never was present and a futurity that has not yet been thought. (Richter 2010: 158)

The presence (and absence) of memory when engaging with a group is problematic and recording the event by representing it is not a way to overcome the inhibition of memory. At the end of *Attention and interpretation* (1970) Bion stated that what is required

is not the decrease of inhibition but a decrease of the impulse to inhibit; the impulse to inhibit is fundamentally envy of the growth-stimulating objects. What is to be sought is an activity that is both a restoration of god (the Mother) and the evolution of god (the formless, infinite, ineffable, non-existent), which can be found only in the state in which there is NO memory, desire, understanding. (Bion 1970: 129)

Bion's forceful dictate about the need for the psychoanalyst to work 'without memory or desire' appeared at several points through his work (Bion 1961, 1970, 1992) but may have been heeded without sufficient questioning. It betrays a dualism between mind and self or person, and it implies an impossibility because the (unconscious) mind seeks satisfaction and every group member is subject to the mirage of desire and memory, which cannot possibly be avoided: instead of disavowal they may be recognized and engaged with. In fact, there is only memory (of an earlier state, before *The Fall*) and desire for the fullness experienced and phantasized thereof. Furthermore, thoughts grasped and captured (a violent image) by recording in drawing and writing preserve and distort memory because they are always impacted by memory and desire. They are made after the event, as perception inevitably takes place before its representation. Jacques Derrida's strategy (1976) of deconstruction (the dismantling of the underlying structure of a text to expose its grounding in the central set of truth-claims around which a culture revolves) consists of taking the binary oppositions which construct the epistemological paradigm of Western philosophy and deconstruct the opposition affirmed therein. Those moments of *undecidability* open up the possibility of subverting the logical imperative. Spivak, in her preface to Derrida (1976), has described how a particular philosophical exigency drives Derrida to consider the notion of writing *under erasure*:

This is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both word and deletion. (Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary, it remains legible). [...] In examining familiar things we come to such unfamiliar conclusions that our very language is twisted and bent even as it guides us, Writing 'under erasure' is the mark of this contortion. (Spivak 1976: xiv)

The drawing preserves and distorts memory, and memory distorts the drawing. But ~~distorts~~ must be considered under erasure because the term points to the assumed existence of a perfect but inaccessible true version of the subject of the drawing.

Derrida's notion of memory [...] does not simply reproduce what is assumed, or once was assumed, simply to be present, ready to be passed on to a new generation of heirs and epigones. Rather, encouraging himself and us to learn to accept an inheritance [...] Derrida's writing works to define and perpetually to redefine the meaning of inheriting without following, the meaning of accepting without repeating, the meaning of following even by betraying, and the meaning of setting to work, an idea even while taking it in a different direction. (Richter 2010: 152–3)

The working of memory at the source of repetition will be taken up in sections 2.2 and 6.2.3 in respect of the *après coup* or deferred action.

1.4 PRELIMINARY FIELDWORK

Fraher (2004a) has described in detail the genesis of the *systems psychodynamics* approach to explaining the functioning of groups and organizations. The label was coined by Eric Miller, then director of the Tavistock Institute's Group Relations Programme (Fraher 2004b: 191), developed in the UK by the work of the Tavistock Clinic and the Tavistock Institute (Obholzer & Roberts 1994, Schein 1987a, 1987b), and in the USA by the A. K. Rice Institute. The approach integrates systemic and psychodynamic frameworks, proposing to think 'across the boundary' between the conscious and unconscious aspects of organizational life. The model guided preliminary research since it seemed to offer ethnographic practice means to complement the tools of the participant observer by including their internal (emotional) voices considered as further data to conceptualize a phenomenon observed from a rational perspective. This resulted in several outcomes, outlined below.

1.4.1 AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PROJECT

While a member of staff at the School of Art & Design at Middlesex University, between 2007 and 2009 I undertook an ethnographic study on the practice of architectural design groups to ascertain the impact of group dynamics on the emergence of workable solutions. I sought to understand the genesis of creative ideas – a particular cultural preoccupation of that time (Sapochnik 2010). The architectural teams observed worked by discussing a design project while sketching possible solutions or making diagrams, a common architectural practice, and their dialogue was both visual and verbal, each mode impacting on the other. From the perspective of groups, it was compelling to pay attention to the actors in the conversation, i.e., who was doing/showing/pointing/saying what to whom, in what sequence, with what results, not just as individual interventions but as a gestalt that seemed to require all participants to deploy themselves in what could be perceived as a variety of defined roles. Verbal exchanges of one-hour observations

of meetings of architects' groups were audio-recorded, transcribed, and explored through ethnomethodology (Sacks *et al.* 1974) and conversation analysis (Jefferson 1988, Ochs *et al.* 1996, Silverman 1997 & 1998) even if transcriptions and their coding were very time consuming.

It became noticeable that not all interventions offered design alternatives that advanced the discussion, yet some participants were active listeners and, while they only contributed minimal confirmatory remarks or exclamations, their interventions effectively supported the fluidity of turn-taking and reasoning. Speakers and listeners seemed to be a necessity of the process, and the dynamics of the group were at times a stimulant and/or a hindrance for the team to arrive at – or fail to define – what they considered a satisfactory (creative) solution. My detailed written field notes from each meeting supplemented recordings and transcriptions and were accompanied by a diagram of the layout of the room and participants. Later on, a diagram seemed insufficient and I added a single realistic drawing depicting the participants at work with the vague purpose of multilayering the exploration of the situation witnessed, heard, seen, and recorded. Furthermore, I was alerted to the existence of some form of emotional impact on the group resulting from the presence of the silent observer when, during the final meeting, the manager of a large team of architects lamented the ending of our contracted 12 one-hour observations with the unprompted statement that *the team had never had such productive meetings as when they were being observed* – even though I never uttered a word (beyond entrance and departure salutations) and no written or verbal interventions were ever provided.

Drawing has been used in a number of mixed-method research studies from a cognitive descriptive rather than interpretative bias, using conversational analysis, video, and drawing to map out what is taken to be social space in architectural design meetings (Heath & Healey 2011, Mondada 2012, Heath 2014, Saul *et al.* 2019), with a focus on the transcription rather than accuracy of interpretation of the phenomena, asserting that making drawings from a video will change the way the researcher views the video. While the original ethnographic study of architectural teams was abandoned due to lack of funding, it offered an initial setting for the use of drawings as an apparently non-intrusive means of recording (representing) the event – with an interest in the interplay of facts and imagination. It provided an opening to apparently fictional components or unexpected emphases (or omissions) of actually observed details, making a significant contribution to pondering (rather than understanding or explaining) the dynamics of the event. It was possible to observe from the few initial transcriptions that the emergence of the design solution was not just a qualitative jump evinced as a sudden revelation recorded in the verbal exchanges but a process of collective elaboration by the group members taking up a variety of roles, such as designer, critical interlocutor, listener, leader, supporter, opponent, and so forth, including the observer as an alert and silent participant – and this unpremeditated allocation of roles is explored at different points through this study.

1.4.2 AN ORGANIZATIONAL OBSERVATIONS MODULE

Since 2004 I have worked with groups at various counselling, psychotherapy, and organizational consultancy trainings where I facilitated ongoing experiential groups (between three and 30 weekly sessions over a year) as well as carrying my work as couple co-therapist and organizational consultant. The approach developed through the ethnographic study above led to the formulation in 2009 of the initial approach tested within a seminar of eight organizational consultants who met periodically to discuss their meetings recorded through drawings. This helped to develop the approach resulting in the conception and implementation of an organizational observation module, delivered between 2010 and 2018 within a number of postgraduate programmes offered by the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust in conjunction with different validating universities. These modules were informed by the readings from the work of Klein and Bion cited above and an extensive literature on infant and organizational observation (Bick 1964, Rustin 1989, Stickland & Stuart 1994, Likierman 1995, Graham 1999, Miles 1999, Skogstad 2004, and others). The method required the student to contract with an organization (to whom they must be unknown), setting up an agreed number of periodic one-hour observations. The observer then attended each observation and after each session made two drawings: *drawing A* representing the memory of perceived facts (room setting, position of participants and observer) and *drawing B* representing the observer's emotional experience of participating in that session, before writing process notes of the observation from both perspectives. Drawings and notes were then discussed within an ongoing seminar to explore the meaning connoted rather than denoted in the visual, written, and verbal communication provided in the presentation of the material. The seminar attended to unconscious communications between group and observer, and also from observer to seminar group, trying to explore projections originating in the organization, impacting on the seminar through the observer's presentation. The module was completed by writing a 3,000-word essay on the experience which – as made explicit to the organization at the contracting point – was not to be shared with the organization observed – writing and drawings were considered equivalent to personal musings and not as information that belonged to both observer and observed (this is discussed in section 4.4).

The use of drawings in these contexts led to the initial proposition (Sapochnik 2013) that *attending to the use of the researcher's emotional responsiveness as an instrument, aided by the process of her/him making visual representations (one or two free-hand drawings) from the memory of the events in which s/he is involved as an observer-participant, might provide less 'censored' data on the dynamics of the group through its unconscious interaction with the unconscious of the observer.* This formulation derived from a somewhat naïve belief in the notion of encoding and its potential for intersemiotic translation which, while not returned to the group in visual form, might

inform consultancy work and feed into the interventions made during subsequent meetings to the one recorded.

Questionnaires were set to students undertaking the same module in four different postgraduate courses over ten cohorts resulting in 70 responses. By and large, respondents valued the method's invitation for the seminar group to free associate to the visual material produced after each visit, discovering that drawings conveyed many unnoticed details of the observation of the group which would be missed in word-only written notes and spoken presentations. Drawing was felt as challenging because it was less controllable than writing, fostering playfulness in pondering on conscious and unconscious aspects of organization and observer, particularly revealing in respect of the countertransference evident in choices, presences and absences noticeable in the representation. According to the responses, the practice offered the protection of a space for musings. However, this could be easily derailed by the wish to achieve a definite reading of the observation and of the organization. Judging by the experience of my own seminars and the discussion meetings with other staff after each seminar session (the module run with up to 36 students and eight tutors), theory was often enlisted ad hoc by students and staff alike, partly to understand but also to defend against the experience of the observation and of the seminar. The practice of the two drawings encouraged participants to be attentive to detail during the observation without an intended purpose of drawing them later. Assessment of the final essays privileged the capacity to hold on to the experience rather than the production of consultant-like diagnoses of organizations.

Although the module was by and large highly successful in offering an experiential illustration of the unconscious at work in organizational settings, the study was still anchored in the assumption by staff and students that the method would provide a somewhat practical recording of the (unconscious) dynamics of the group – as perceived (filtered) by the unconscious of the observer. While the module seems to have offered a valuable experience concerning projections, parapraxes, and negations as forgetting, the rereading of the responses to the questionnaires suggested that the value of the practice was not in considering the artefacts as cyphered texts, offering data from a particular group about itself and its organizational context, but on creating a space for learning by the participant observer about the implications of their engagement with the group observed. It could also be hypothesized that, considering the statement by the team of architects described in 1.4.1 above, the experience may have had some value to some of the organizations observed. In spite of their initial or ongoing discomfort about being observed, they had provided an opportunity for learning to the postgraduate students who expressed (albeit without any detailed feedback) their gratitude on completion of the contracted observations.

1.4.3 PERSONAL PRACTICE

Since 2009 my consultancy practice has been assisted by making drawings from my experience of every group session, such as Figs. 5 and 6, below.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

These early visual representations were produced as personal records of my emotional experience of the session, occasionally looked at and discussed with co-consultants, and never shown to group members. It appeared evident from my own experience and from the responses to the module questionnaire mentioned above that the use of drawings assisted the development of freer associative capability in the observer/drawer. It must be noted that, since the images that emerge in such drawings are ostensibly anchored in the observation, they do not closely follow the fundamental rule of psychoanalysis of saying whatever comes to mind. Freud (1910) proposed three possible ways of reaching the unconscious: following the fundamental rule, the interpretation of dreams, and the interpretation of parapraxes. However, as Bion pointed out, a rigid search for truths because of the fear of uncertainty results in a 'failure to observe and is intensified by the inability to appreciate the significance of observation' (1970: 125). The objective of this investigation is to understand how the activity (observing / waiting / drawing) may disrupt the misleading operations of longed-for certainty. The terms *disrupt* (breaking apart), *interrupt* and *corrupt* (contaminate, impair the purity of) share the second part of the term and imply a creative disordering, a disturbance undoing the continuity of the process by which rigidity is established and upheld as knowledge. As Childers suggests in respect of research,

the intertwining of theory and methodology via an analytics of disruption as quasi-methodology permeates the analytic approach and persuades me to privilege disruptions in the data rather than casting them aside in favour of coherent narratives [...] to bear witness to the disruptions, contradictions, and unsettling movement always at work in the data. What I offer next then might be [...] a 'witness-report' of this experience and a mapping of how an analytics of disruption was engaged throughout the interpretive process. (Childers 2012: 755)

The practice of using drawings in the manner described to advance a disruption of the totalizing fantasy of 'knowing' a group appears as a rather devious aid in the exploration of a falsifiable and never completely verifiable theoretical proposition. Perhaps this is where fact and fiction come together. The drawing constructs a fiction (from L. *factio* 'a fashioning or feigning'). Such propositions are not factual but fictional. Yet fact is also 'something made'. The study calls for a number of approaches and Barthes differentiated multidisciplinary from interdisciplinary approaches.

In order to do interdisciplinary work, it is not enough to take a 'subject' (a theme) and arrange two or three sciences around it. Interdisciplinary study consists of creating a new object that belongs to no one. (Barthes 1986: 72)

It will be necessary to consider what is made visible, what is omitted, who sees what, who is blind to what, and how seeing, knowing, power, and unconscious determinants are interrelated. The answers will also imply an ideological position in respect of what is allowed, and what will be censored (by the practitioner, the group, culture at large).

This study weaves its exploration from the fields of psychoanalysis, anthropology, deconstruction, visual rhetoric, performativity, and translation which 'others' both source and target language by asking: who speaks—who listens, who writes—who reads, who draws—who looks?

1.5 RESEARCH DIRECTION

Framing the investigation on the impact of the practice and its potential for the disruption of the 'irritable reaching after fact and reason' as suggested by Keats (1817), the main question of the study may be formulated as

How does the practice of a participant observer, representing (visually, from memory) their experience of a group meeting, assist to disrupt certainty?

Theoretical sources relevant to the study will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 without descriptive intent but with the aim to engage with them in conversation. The method of investigation will be discussed in Chapter 4, where it will be necessary to consider the ethical dimension of the practice concerning whether the visual artefacts produced may or must not be shared with the groups observed in order to protect both observer and observed.

2 A CONVERSATION WITH PSYCHOANALYTIC SOURCES

2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The chapter considers psychoanalytic theories concerning the problematic nature of boundaries, traumatic aspects of the relationship of a member with a group, examining the notion of open systems, the difference between the related terms 'phantasy' and 'fantasy', libidinal and destructive impulses, trauma and excess and their enjoyment, primitive phantasies in respect of the body of the mother, sexuality, desire, and hate. Following from Laplanche's theory of general seduction and the primitive nature of enigmatic messages that underpin the concept of the *après coup*, it appraises Freud's exposition of group psychology and his take on the notion of the herd. It then considers the dynamics of enactment in respect of the group and Bion's notion of transformation and 'digestion'. It also addresses the nature of playing and playfulness and its representation as enactment while offering a holding environment. The chapter then addresses aspects of the dream-like quality of group life, particularly in respect of Bion's notion of *dreaming while awake*, and the vicissitudes of loss and mourning.

2.2 REGARDING THE TERRIFYING OTHER

Regard means 'attention to or concern for something' (but also 'liking') from OF *regarder* 'to watch', from *re-* 'back' (also expressing intensive force) + *garder* 'to guard'. This contradiction between devotion and surveillance is active in the fantasy and reality of the group, organized around the notion of a boundary between group and the system within which it has a place and from which it derives its identity, but also between group and members, and amongst members themselves. A productive boundary must be adequately permeable to allow exchanges between the environment and the group and thus allow itself to survive as an *open system* (Lewin 1947), a characteristic of living organisms similar to a cell that survives by exchanges with its environment, protected and regulated by a permeable boundary. This must also be sufficiently impermeable for the group not to lose its shape arising from internal and external pressures, thus avoiding fragmentation or intrusion – 'protection against stimuli is almost a more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli' (Freud 1920: 27). In the frightening (and longed for) individual pull to merge with the group, boundaries dissolve – creating fear and disgust through lack of differentiation – while identity is conferred and strengthened by belonging to the group through the conscious and unconscious (both defensive and productive) allocation of roles. While groups can be and are indeed productive – as

families, organizations, institutions, societies – what follows refers to a phantasmatic aspect of the group as organism. Everyday language opposes fantasy to reality but psychoanalytic theory does not consider reality an unproblematic given or single objectively correct way of perceiving, but something constructed. While the term *fantasy* refers only to formulations we are conscious of, such as fictional story-telling or daydreams, Freud recognized the existence of unconscious imaginings. The English translators of his work adopted the special spelling of the word as *phantasy* in order to differentiate the psychoanalytical significance of the term as denoting predominantly or entirely unconscious mental content, which may or may not become conscious. Isaacs (1948) pointed out that, in the beginning, Freud was particularly concerned with libidinal desires which cannot operate in the mind without phantasy, but later studies by him and other clinicians have also included destructive impulses and pointed out that phantasies serve various purposes beyond wish-fulfilment such as denial, reassurance, omnipotent control, reparation, and so forth. Laplanche & Pontalis (1973) have defined phantasy as

an imaginary scene in which the subject is a protagonist, representing the fulfilment of a wish (in the last analysis, an unconscious wish) in a manner that is distorted to a greater or lesser extent by defensive processes. (*ibid.*: 314)

Isaacs (1948: n. p.) stated 'The world of phantasy shows the same protean and kaleidoscopic changes as the contents of a dream.' Freud proposed that, in the beginning of mental life, 'whatever was thought of (wished for) was simply presented in a hallucinatory manner, just as still happens to-day with our dream-thoughts every night [as an] attempt at satisfaction by hallucination' (Freud 1911: 219).

It seems, rather, that the child's avidity for its earliest nourishment is altogether insatiable, that it never gets over the pain of losing its mother's breast. [...] The fear of being poisoned is also probably connected with the withdrawal of the breast. Poison is nourishment that makes one ill. Perhaps children trace back their early illnesses too to this frustration. (Freud 1933: 122)

These primary phantasies are representatives of the earliest impulses of desire and aggressiveness and become expressed in and dealt with through mental processes removed from conscious relational thinking, as determined by the logic of emotion. At a later period in the life of the individual, they may under certain conditions become expressed in words (Isaacs 1948) or as visual images and their representations – and some of our dreams are evidence that we can live those emotions through in visual terms alone. Freud indicated that

We learn that what becomes conscious in [visual thinking] is as a rule only the concrete subject-matter of the thought, and that the relations between the various elements of this subject-matter, which is what specially characterizes thoughts, cannot be given visual expression. Thinking in pictures is, therefore, only a very

incomplete form of becoming conscious. In some way, too, it stands nearer to unconscious processes than does thinking in words, and it is unquestionably older than the latter both ontogenetically and phylogenetically. (Freud 1923: 21)

Phantasies are the primary content of unconscious mental processes: through external experience they are elaborated and capable of expression, but they do not depend solely upon external experience for their existence. For instance, although phantasies are not dependent upon words, under certain conditions they may be capable of expression in words. Early phantasies are experienced in sensations; later, they take the form of visual images and dramatic representations (Isaacs 1948). 'One of Freud's earliest discoveries was that in the unconscious, memories and phantasies are not distinguished' (Spillius 2001: 361). Like his work on dreams, Freud's idea of phantasy is closely bound up with the development of his topographical model of the mind (Freud 1900, Sandler *et al.* 1997) (described in section 1.3.1) leading him to differentiate primary and secondary processes. Freud defined the secondary process as the rational thinking of ordinary logic, while he conceived the primary process as 'a much more peculiar system of logic, characteristic of the system unconscious, in which opposites are equated, there is no sense of time, no negation, no conflict' (Spillius 2001: 362). And though Freud considered that some unconscious phantasies might be unconscious all along, he proposed that

most phantasies originated as conscious or preconscious daydreams and might subsequently be repressed [...] If phantasies are further repressed into the system unconscious, they become subject to the peculiar logic of the primary process and from their position in the system unconscious they may become indistinguishable from memories and may also find their way into dreams, symptoms, symptomatic acts, further preconscious and conscious phantasies, and other drive derivatives. (Spillius 2001: 362)

In effect, phantasy-formation and dream-formation are parallel processes since both involve transformation of primary unconscious content into a disguised form. Klein thought otherwise and proposed that unconscious phantasies are the primary unconscious content, and dreams are their transformation. Freud foregrounded the unconscious wish, with dreams and phantasies as disguised derivatives, while Klein privileged unconscious phantasy as a basic mental activity present in rudimentary form from birth onwards and essential for mental growth, even if it may also be used defensively. In Kleinian thinking, phantasies and external reality have a reciprocal impact because actual external events are experienced as filtered and modified by pre-existing phantasies, and phantasies may be modified by the experience of events.

In dreaming, in creativity, in all experiencing there is a constant and often uncomfortable mixture of logic and illogic. Further, unconscious phantasy is the mainspring of both creativity and destructiveness. It gives meaning to the external world and richness to the internal world. [...] in current Kleinian thought it

is assumed that some unconscious phantasies about infantile experience are never formally articulated in words, though words may be the means unconsciously used to communicate them by evoking them in an external person. (Spillius 2001: 366)

The analysis of the material in Chapter 5 suggests that while visual representations may derive from primal phantasies, 'unconscious all along', of the primal scene, castration, and seduction, they also underlie dreams and deep bodily unconscious phantasies of a pre-verbal nature, both creative and destructive, including the expression of internal objects mobilized by the experience of participating in the group. According to Evans (1996: 61), Lacan recognized Freud's formulations on the relevance of phantasy and its visual quality in staging desire, emphasizing its protective function by comparing the phantasy scene to a frozen image on a cinema screen, as when a film may be stopped to avoid showing a traumatic scene which follows.

Thus, in two 1896 letters to Fliess (1985: 187–90, 207–14), Freud portrayed the individual as a series of 'successive registrations' representing 'the psychic achievement of successive epochs of life. At the boundary between two such epochs a translation of the psychic material must take place.' But a pathological reaction, Freud continues, may interfere with this psychic development; such a reaction constitutes 'a failure of translation – this is what is clinically known as "repression". The motive for it is always a release of the unpleasure that would be generated by a translation; it is as though this unpleasure provokes a disturbance of thought that does not permit the work of translation.' (Mahony 2001: 837)

Drawings of the group session are considered manifestations of phantasy as quasi-psychotic hallucinations evoked by the perception of the external event and the dynamics of the group – whether as direct experience and/or projected into the observer – partly available to consciousness and partly repressed. Not all of the perceived has come into language (see 3.5 below); and these representations of phantasies are both inventions and imaginations, and it is their translation into visual (i.e., non-verbal) representations that undoes their hallucinatory dream-like quality as they become explicit as a dream (section 2.5 below). The non-verbal components do not refer to the image as a whole, which can itself be further represented through words, but to (present and absent) aspects of the image not consciously managed, whether as primary process or by secondary revision.

As mentioned in 1.3.3 above, Bion proposed that neurotic and psychotic aspects of the mind in a group operate not as binary oppositions but in succession or concurrently; they also support each other. What is described below does not expose a pathology but a modus operandi: the group, just like the internal/external (m)other, is a source of both nourishment and trauma for its members in whom at times it fosters a primitive and regressed state of mind. Laplanche's theory of primal seduction (1970,

1999) asserted that Freud's abandonment of his seduction theory resulted in the loss of a particular model of trauma and its temporal functioning. Freud termed this concept *Nachträglichkeit* (translated as *après coup* in French and by Strachey as *deferred action*), which Laplanche (1999) translated as *afterwardsness*. This refers to a 'primary traumatic inscription' that is excessive and hence remains unassimilated, to be reactivated at a later moment. Its enigmatic sexual meaning is then 'precipitated out' and becomes subject to reinscription and/or repression. There are three different usages: the first one simply means 'later'. The second one implies a movement from past to future – something is deposited in the individual, which is only activated later on, based on the model of the seduction theory where the trauma is constituted in two stages (Laplanche compares this to a delayed action bomb). The third meaning implies that something is perceived but only takes on meaning retrospectively. The three conceptions of the *après coup* propose neither a reactivation nor a reconstruction of the earlier inscription, but a retroactive giving of shape. It is this third meaning, the one least present in Freud, which was picked up by Lacan and developed by Laplanche.

'The primal situation is one in which a newborn child, an infant in the etymological sense of the word (*in-fans*: speechless), is confronted with the adult world' (Laplanche 1987: 89–90, cited by Fletcher 2007: 1249). In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud (1905) had pointed out that a child's relationship with anyone responsible for the child's care provides an unending source of sexual excitation, especially so since the carer, usually the mother, herself regards the child with feelings derived from her own sexuality, treating the child lovingly as a substitute for a sexual object. Yet

[a] mother would probably be horrified if she were made aware that all her marks of affection were rousing her child's sexual instinct and preparing for its later intensity. She regards what she does as asexual, 'pure' love since, after all, she carefully avoids applying more excitations to the child's genitals than are unavoidable in nursery care. As we know, however, the sexual instinct is not only aroused by direct excitation of the genital zone. What we call affection will unfailingly show its effects one day on the genital zones as well. (Freud 1905: 223)

Laplanche argued that what was missing in Freud's account was both the category of the message from the adult, and the model of translation of that message by the infant, and that there is a profound asymmetry in the adult–infant communication.

For the adult has an unconscious and a developed sexuality, and the messages of comfort, reassurance, and love communicated to the infant are, in the strictly psychoanalytic sense, compromise formations – i.e., carriers of inhibited and unconscious sexual excitations and fantasies [phantasies] on the part of the adult. Hence they are enigmatic messages, not just because the infant lacks at

this stage an unconscious and the codes to translate them, but crucially because the adult also is unconscious of their significance. (Fletcher 2007: 1252)

Laplanche (2002) proposed that the language of the adult is enigmatic, neither due to strangeness or polysemy but because of its 'one-sided excess' that introduces a 'disequilibrium into the interior of the message' in front of the infant's need to translate it, 'both opening up to and defending against the seductive ministrations of the adult' (Fletcher 2007: 1258). This disequilibrium, which may become partly conscious through the process of psychoanalysis, is largely unconscious, and in his letter to Fliess 75 (14/11/1897) Freud concluded that autoanalysis is an impossibility, as otherwise there would be no illness. Laplanche asserted that the analysis can only take place within the relationship to an other, because the small human being arises as a sexual (and neurotic) being through a primordial relationship with an other (Laplanche 2012: 82). Furthermore, the presence of an other in the group (i.e., any group member, including the observer) 'provokes transference', that is to say, neither 'causes' nor 'suggests' it, this provocation is unintentional and takes place when archaic adult–infant asymmetries happen to coalesce, and the enigmatic share in the other's message becomes operative (Laplanche 1999). In 'Group psychology and the analysis of the ego', Freud asserted that 'In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent' (Freud 1921: 69), that the group breaches boundaries, and that such a breach is traumatic. That breach may not necessarily take place in reality but it is (as in the psychotic mind) experienced as such since individuals in the group are brought under conditions which allow them to throw off the repression of unconscious instincts. Sentiments and acts are experienced as contagious in terms of repression or exaltation. Freud remarked that

by the mere fact that he forms part of an organized group, a man descends several rungs in the ladder of civilisation. [...] Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian – that is, a creature acting by instinct. He possesses the spontaneity, the violence, the ferocity, and also the enthusiasm and heroism of primitive beings. (1921: 77)

Freud also proposed that *the group thinks in images*, which appear by association as in states of free imagination, without any check in reality, hence knowing neither doubt nor uncertainty, being ruled by the strength of its wishes and affects. Quoting from and commenting on the work of Le Bon (1895), Trotter (1916), and McDougall (1920), Freud described how under the phenomenon of suggestion a group will coalesce as if by emotional contagion and, while accepting that groups are 'capable of high achievements in the shape of abnegation, unselfishness, and devotion to an ideal', Freud observed that

when individuals come together in a group all their individual inhibitions fall away and all the cruel, brutal and destructive instincts, which lie dormant in individuals as relics of a primitive epoch, are stirred up to find free gratification. (1921: 79)

A group is an obedient herd, which could never live without a leader. It has such a thirst for obedience that it submits instinctively to anyone who appoints himself its master. Bion (1961) extended this to include the unconscious dynamics whereby it is the group itself which selects, favours, or follows the apparently self-appointed leader who will further the group's affects, oftentimes even leading away and against the group's explicit objectives. The remarkable result of the formation of a group is the

exaltation or intensification of emotion produced in every member whereby emotions are stirred in the group to a pitch that they seldom or never attain under other conditions; and it is a pleasurable experience for those who are concerned to surrender themselves so unreservedly to their passions and thus to become merged in the group and to lose the sense of the limits of their individuality. (Freud 1921: 84)

The group merges as directed by a (primitive) libidinal pull. Libido, Freud clarifies, is a term taken from the theory of the emotions to refer to the energy of those instincts 'which have to do with all that may be comprised under the word "love" [...] with sexual union as its aim' (*ibid.*: 90). While this may be the case between the sexes, in group settings these instincts are diverted or prevented from reaching their aim and still preserving their original nature. In effect, the essence of the group rests in its libidinal ties

also to be found in the phenomenon of panic, which [...] arises if a [...] group becomes disintegrated. The mutual ties have ceased to exist, and a gigantic and senseless dread is set free. (*ibid.*: 95–6)

As evidenced by clinical psychoanalysis, every lasting intimate emotional relation leaves 'a sediment of feelings of aversion and hostility, which have first to be eliminated by repression' (*ibid.*: 101). Trotter (1916) described the mental phenomena occurring in groups as a herd instinct towards gregariousness, innate in human beings and other animal species, as primary (and hence irreducible) as those of self-preservation, nutrition, and sex. Paradoxically, opposition to the herd is as good as separation from it, and hence anxiously avoided. Freud set out to correct Trotter's pronouncement that man is a herd animal and asserted that man is a horde animal, an individual creature in a horde led by a chief, referring to his own writing on the development of totemism and the psychology of the group is the oldest human psychology. 'A group impresses the individual with a sense of unlimited power and of insurmountable peril' (Freud 1921: 84–5), and this phantasy is a paradox at the root of the group as a traumatogenic event, to defend against feeling *helplessness*. This is a term Freud (1926) used to denote a state of total dependency on an other for the satisfaction of the most basic needs such as hunger and thirst. It is, in the adult, the blueprint of the traumatic situation at the origin of anxiety. Helplessness, by such total dependence of the infant on its mother, implies the mother's omnipotence, structuring the psyche towards the relationship with the other. 'Within the framework of

the theory of anxiety, helplessness becomes the prototype of the traumatic situation' (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973: 190).

2.3 TRAUMA AND EXCESS

Freud indicated that trauma results from 'an overwhelming event that breaches the subject's protective shield, with catastrophic results for the mind (2015: 1454). It is

basically in excess, an overload charge on the mind, linked with the bodily exigencies of the drives whose derivatives have to be sent back to the unconscious because their free expression forbids psychic organisation. (Green 1998: 660)

Trauma refers to a tear or breach of a more or less unified surface shredded by the impact of a force stronger than the tension holding the surface; it is not simply a loss of continuity as it initiates various degrees of disorganization that the surface incorporates to remain operational. They are not exceptional; 'traumatic, penetrating, and unravelling phenomena, usually associated with disorganization, are always present in psychic organization' (Scarfone 2017: 25). While the theory of generalized seduction can easily account for specific cases of seduction, be they perverse or innocent (and sexuality is never fully mature, as it always carries the primitive), in all cases the seduction – whether infantile, perverse, or generalized – takes the form of a traumatic event. Scarfone (2017) suggested that not all traumas are the same and while some may have a structuring function, others will 'tear apart, disorganize, paralyze, and disorient' (*ibid.*: 26). The Sexual can be of either kind, either as an implantation, if it is of the structuring kind, or an intromission if it belongs to the second, deleterious form of seduction. In either case, Freud (1895, 1920) asserted that trauma is always a matter of unpreparedness:

The ego, when taken by surprise, experiences terror (*Schriek*) and is unable to mobilize the defence mechanisms that could have allowed for the absorption of the impact without tearing the psychic fabric apart. (Scarfone 2017: 26)

However, the Sexual, even when transmitted in optimal conditions, still exists as trauma, even if, unlike massive shocks due to accidents or war, the trauma of implantation

does not present itself in spectacular episodes; it is a trauma that happens in at least two stages, neither of which, taken separately, is traumatic in itself. It is only through the process of *après-coup* (*Nachträglichkeit*, Strachey's 'deferred action') that the traumatic effect is obtained. (*ibid.*: 27)

Freud stated that 'we are never so defenceless against suffering as when we love, never so helplessly unhappy as when we have lost our love object or its love' (1930: 82). The group is an intruder, a foreign body of which the member wants to rid her/himself because it is the intromission of an untranslatable message because it is bound to

(partially) fail, and such failure, Freud wrote, 'is what is known clinically as "repression"' (Masson 1985: 208).

The translational concept of repression is a most important one in that it means that repression is not a mechanical 'hiding away' of meanings in some obscure mental space; rather, it is a failure to integrate parts of communication about which no meaning can be found that fits the set of meanings already achieved, and that has coagulated, so to speak, into a somewhat coherent picture called the ego or the self. Far from being just a defence, repression has a structuring role for the psychic personality, as it rests on both the meanings achieved and owned (ego or self) and the failings thereof (the repressed unconscious). (Scarfone 2017: 38)

Emery (2000) has described what he termed the *ecstasy of trauma* as a 'disorganizing and flooding transgressive superabundance that dislocates the subject from subjectivity'. This provokes both fear and attraction in the phantasy of group life, exposing an excess which is intimate – as *jouissance*, an excess pleasure that, when transgressing the limit to how much pleasure one can bear, turns into pain. *Jouissance* is a kind of painful pleasure, a mixture of suffering and unbound energies. The ecstasy of trauma

works through the temporalities and spacings of deferred action under the force of back action. What was 'seen' is other and more than what any perceptual system of storage and retrieval can accommodate both within the time of the event and the space of the one who takes himself or herself to be the one who is recollecting the having been. (Emery 2000: 818)

The individual does not exist in isolation; if the group is to survive, members must not differentiate excessively and lose cohesion, or become unable to differentiate and lose discrete functions and identity. The existence of an other on whom the individual depends but over whom s/he has no control determines the ambivalent relationship towards and within the group. As Bion (1961: 131) stated, 'man is at war with himself for being a group animal and with those aspects of his personality that constitute his groupishness.' However, perceiving the difference between external and imagined events is problematic. Freud maintained that by the interposition of word-presentations the individual's internal thought processes are made into perceptions:

It is like a demonstration of the theorem that all knowledge has its origin in external perception. When a hypercathexis of the process of thinking takes place, thoughts are *actually* perceived – as if they came from without – and are consequently held to be true. (Freud 1923: 23)

Exploring the driver of attraction to the group, beyond the practical necessity whereby individual survival depends on group life, will expose aversion, and the dyad

attraction/aversion will require consideration. Kristeva (1982), calling attention to 'the inexpressible, heterogeneous, radical otherness of cultural life' (Lechte 1994: 141), pointed out how human beings break away from their mother in order to develop into individuals, but also how they come together in order to commune and love. However, and in order to become autonomous, the child must break out of its identification with the breast by 'abjecting' its mother, and the maternal body thus becomes what is off-limits. The infant must move from an initial identification with the mother's nourishing breast to an identification with its own birth, to an identification with an abjected and threatening mother. But the abject is disgusting,

It makes you want to vomit. It is what is on the border, what doesn't respect borders. It is neither one nor the other, undecidable. [...] The abject is what threatens identity; it is neither good nor evil, subject nor object, ego nor unconscious, but something that threatens these very distinctions. (Oliver 1991: 48)

Group members have a transference to the group as both the primeval pleasure provider (the body of the mother) and, at the same time, the seat of frightening incestuous phantasies. Incest (as a symbiotic relationship) is disavowed because of the repulsion of excess, which also designates attraction – 'the attraction if not the horror of everything that is more than is' (Nancy 2013: 53). De Beauvoir (1949) wrote that disgust and horror are

psychic mechanisms that protect the male subject against the memory of an archaic maternal power and of his mother as carnal being and hence of his own mortality, of his own birth – 'an event that he repudiates with all his strength' (p. 221). Man refuses 'to regard his mother as carnal,' says Beauvoir, and he therefore 'transfigures and assimilates her to one of the pure images of motherhood.' In short, 'If he is anxious to believe her pure and chaste, it is [...] because of his refusal to see her as a body' (p. 165), for that would mean seeing himself as a body instead of 'like a pure Idea, like the One, the All, the Absolute Spirit' (p. 164). (Zerilli 1992: 129)

While the above emphasizes the male relationship to the maternal, it is also valid for the female subject, as the unconscious does not distinguish on the basis of gender. This is where the allure and fear of incest has a hold as the expression of a tantalizing polymorphous sexuality where imagination shows its ambivalence. Real maturation and resulting growth derive not just from renunciation of incestuous goals but by an exploration of its imperative, as repulsive and attractive, one being a condition of the other. Furthermore, the group as a sexual organism will inevitably threaten (and therefore torment) infantile aspects of the sexuality of its members. The fear and attraction of ravishment of and by the group is inscribed in the longing for excess where boundaries cease and total merger is experienced as real. Excess is defined as 'an amount of

something that is more than necessary, permitted, or desirable' (*M-W Onl. Dict.* 2019). Such feelings run too close to the wish and fear of contravening the taboo through transgression of the Law. However, 'the transgression does not deny the taboo but transcends it and completes it' (Bataille 1962: 63). Groups structure reality and re-present their desire transformed into action. A group is necessarily transgressive since it imposes its phantasmatic presences (and absences) on its members. These may be observed when making contact with innermost dreams and phantasies. Re-presentations of the group as the locus of such imaginations may offer insights beyond a collective expression of the wish (fantasy) of making sense, arriving at O (the ineffable or group-in-itself), reaching the kernel while in the gaze of the (m)other, an impossible tension that may be ignored but cannot be resolved.

Initially, the mother governs the infant's body – what goes in and what comes out. Thus, the child's drives are regulated in relation to the mother's body. Freud identified – for both male and female – the body of the mother as home (the place where we all have been), and hence as originally familiar (*heimlich*), but which in time changes, becomes unfamiliar (*unheimlich*) – and hence inhabits the undecidable space of the *uncanny* (Freud 1919) – and is eventually repudiated. But abjection is different from uncanniness and more violent, since 'abjection is elaborated by a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory' (Kristeva 1982: 5). Because 'it does not respect borders, positions, rules', the object 'disturbs identity, system, order' (*ibid.*: 4). 'The object is the violence of mourning for an "object" that has always already been lost' (*ibid.*: 15). The object does not have, properly speaking, a definable object.

The object is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-ject, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest for desire. What is object is not my correlative which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more detached and autonomous. The object has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to *I*. (*ibid.*: 1)

And, therefore,

whereas fear generates the desire to flee, horror that has been generated from disgust results in an inability to move, a passivity, that means that the only option is to face it. [...] abjection highlights the ambivalent nature of disgust, which for the main part is something that we do our utmost to reject, but which also captivates our interest. [Kristeva's] theory then is not only about the unconscious process of signification but a theory about a cultural need to seek out horror. (Arya 2017: 59)

It must be noted that, in parallel with the violence, there is an ecstasy, an *enchanted* pleasure to be derived from dwelling in the powerful emotions produced by the group, desired and loathed (as body of the mother). An ambivalence is evident in the etymology of enchantment as 'casting a magic spell', from L. *incantare*, from *in-* 'upon, into' +

cantare 'to sing, celebrate', which requires the (pleasurable) chanting in the merging with the voices of others as the context of the ritual offering, staying between the intelligible and the sensible. The process of abjecting assists the child to create an autonomous identity through various rituals involving cleanliness such as toilet training and washing. This enables the production of a clean and proper body but, more important, the action of cleansing itself. Hence, it may be suspected that a dimension of the practice of making drawings from the observation of groups may parallel ritual cleansing from the always intrusive contamination by the terrifying otherness of the group engaged with as a participant. Ritual, in the life of a group, has the role of purification from contamination, enabling the group to endure and bear the belonging it also craves.

To exist is to sketch oneself [...] No one would consent to live if they did not experience this desire – to open oneself to the desire of (letting oneself) being drawn to the outside. (Nancy 2013: xiii)

Yet, the desire of the group (and that of the observer who is same yet different by their dual internal/external role) provokes anxiety even if the observer feels prepared to accept the paradox that the infantile disposition of the group will (through projection mechanisms and identifications) make use of the observer as (a multifaceted) object. In Winnicott's terms, 'the baby creates the object, but the object was there waiting to be created and to become a cathected object' (1971: 119). The drawings may record relating, but because observing is only partially relational, it does not get to the stage of usage, which can only take shape in a consultancy or therapy process.

The subject says to the object: 'I destroyed you', and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: 'Hullo object!' 'I destroyed you.' 'I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.' 'While I am loving you I am all the time destroying you.' (*ibid.*: 120)

The observer must survive destruction by the group and, having survived, s/he can be used and projected upon in a freer way. And if the observer has her/his own internal and external holding environment, s/he can make use of (i.e., experience, rather than decode) unconscious communications as these appear in the drawings. That the observer must withstand her/his own destruction seems to imply psychoanalytic practice instead of an observation. This may be partly the case if the drawing method is used by a therapist or consultant, but it may also offer an indispensable awareness of such a dynamic if the observer is an ethnographer whose intent is observation rather than intervention. A clarity of role is essential both on practical and ethical grounds. As Winnicott (1971) pointed out,

The assumption is always there, in orthodox theory, that aggression is reactive to the encounter with the reality principle, whereas here it is the destructive drive that creates the quality of externality. (*ibid.*: 125)

And one of the requirements of psychodynamic observation is the awareness borne out by experience that groups benefit from the use of an observer as an object who survives destruction, who can keep to schedules and sustain witnessing unbearable interruptions brought about by overt or covert conflict, and is able to return to the following meeting. As Winnicott has pointed out,

The object is always being destroyed. This destruction becomes the unconscious backcloth for love of a real object; that is, an object outside the area of the subject's omnipotent control. Study of this problem involves a statement of the positive value of destructiveness. (*ibid.*: 126)

The observer will be exercised by an apprehension about the experience of violence in the group – regardless of having undergone psychoanalysis (which would hopefully assist her/him to understand the experience of being used as an object (Winnicott 1971) – which is one of the vicissitudes of the role. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud (1920) indicated the distance between a traumatic event and our experience of it.

This is why, Blanchot explains, 'we are not contemporaries of the disaster' (1995: 6); it remains 'unexperienced. It is what escapes the very possibility of experience' (*ibid.*: 7). In the long run, he goes on to suggest, the disaster is perhaps our own passivity to the disaster: we experience what we experience in the mode of forgetting. (Cadava 2001: 52)

The instinctual drive to feeding (from the body of the mother) involves both passive and active components, and the notion of digestion (a bodily mechanism over which the individual has minimal awareness and control, and which may or may not be productive or pleasurable) proposes a somatic metaphor about the processing of experience. Its synonyms (assimilation, absorption, taking in, mulling over) point to the nutritive transformation of the experience towards thinking and understanding. Bion made use of a number of references to the digestive function in respect of the psychic apparatus, both in terms of ingestion, transformation by digestion, and evacuation, the latter referring to emotional events (β -elements) that could not be transformed into dream-thoughts, and might be made into action.

Is it possible to get nearer to describing what α does? It pays attention to the sense impression. But in order to do this the impression must be made durable. It must be transformed so that it is suitable for storage and recall. In short, it has to be submitted to α -activity, and that is impossible unless durability is conferred on the impression and is itself a part of the process by which durability is conferred. The impression must be *ideogrammatized*. That is to say, if the experience is a pain, the psyche must have a visual image of rubbing an elbow, or a tearful face, or some such. (Bion 1992: 64, italics added)

According to Klein (1937), one of the mother's roles vis-à-vis the infant is to relieve the infant's pains and fears: the infant projects her/his fears on to the breast and, if in the process of reverie the mother is able to modify them, they can be made tolerable to the infant (Bion 1962). The psychic apparatus proposes a paradox as, in Bion's words, 'it is ill-suited' for 'the task of self-knowledge' (1962: 57). An enigma is a paradox or a puzzle but also a riddle to be solved, and paraphrasing Laplanche (1987: 126) the question becomes: 'What does this group that frightens and excites me want of me? What incites me to become excited? What does it want to say to me that it doesn't know itself?' The child asks of her/himself questions not only about the child's desire but about how 'the breast, treated as part-object, is imbued with a desire and want of its own' (Butler 2014: 130). The group members may well ask: Whose desire is my desire (of the group)? (What does the group desire of me?) As group members, we may seek to master this situation by believing that it depends on our rational (conscious) choosing of our group(s),

but we would make an error if we thought we could undo the unconscious through the exercise of a radical autonomy. The unconscious is the breach in radical autonomy, and that cannot be reversed. [...] 'Our own' desires are not radically autonomous, but invariably haunted and animated by others, by what remains foreign to us, not 'of' me and yet 'of' me, and without which I could not survive. (Butler 2014: 131)

A group does not emerge out of a virgin birth but comes together within an institution or organization – a department in a larger enterprise, a component of a professional, academic, or independent learning environment, or from the need to satisfy a cultural or social function. As such, it is multidetermined and impacted by a primitive original dislocation in the organization, prior to the group, which the group inherits, covers up, and of which the group is largely unaware – being not solely internal as the emotions of (in) the group – but also systemic, i.e., social and cultural. The drawing method in observations may offer a rudimentary mode of managing (understanding) the traumatic experience of making contact with the enigmatic messages of the group in respect of its members, its context, its history. The method may also offer the potential for abreaction – 'the normal way for the subject to react to an event and to ensure that it does not keep too great a *quota of affect*' (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973: 1) – or decathexis. The traumatic event that the representations may aim to expose and obscure is the emotional noumenon of the group, managed by ritualized practices, and contributed to by the unconscious meaning of the presence of the observer as an enigmatic other – an otherness that the observer her/himself is unaware of.

In economic terms, the trauma is characterised by an influx of excitations that is excessive by the standard of the subject's tolerance and capacity to master such excitations and work them out psychically (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973: 465)

Laplanche (2012) pointed out that Freud used the term *lacunar*, meaning patchy, fragmentary, or incomplete, to refer to what must be intercalated in a context so that it ceases to be incomplete.

A dream, a story, a symptom cannot be explained by themselves, they have gaps that it is necessary to fill, finding an explanation elsewhere. Why are the wolves white in the Wolf man's dream? Why were there six, or perhaps seven?
(*ibid.*: 130)

Two models appear in rivalry: the model of the puzzle, and the one of the enigma. The model of the puzzle is an illusion of possible completeness – the truth can be found (when we shall have the last piece slotted into place, we shall have solved the problem). The enigma has a completely different structure to the puzzle. But it was not just a case of identifying an important and shocking moment as the cause of a neurosis. According to Laplanche (2012: 121), Freud proposed that the traumatic event always requires two moments to exist. There is no trauma without these two moments. An event becomes psychically traumatic only if it is the echo of another or if it does not find its echo in another. The traumatic is not in either of the two times; only with the second time is the trauma constituted as such.

The pull towards devouring the body of the mother, as an instinctual drive towards and against her body, is sexual, whereby sexual desire is experienced as the urge to fill a gap, to satisfy the human longing for grasping 'the elusive, ineffable quality of the sexual other, or to bridge the tension arc between oneself and an other' (Stein 2008: 45). The notion of excess appears in Freud as a regulative idea:

indicating the perennial striving of the organism to rid itself of excess stimuli, the sexual drive striving to unload its excess charge, obeying first the constancy principle, then the nirvana principle, and even the death drive. [...] It is the experience of being mystified by the enigma of the other's excess over oneself that creates the unconscious and sexuality (which for Laplanche are identical).
(Stein 2008: 50–51)

Sexuality constitutes an indestructible nucleus, an excess, behind our representations. It remains outside of that which can be symbolized or verbalized. Lacan calls this kernel of unsignifiable excess the 'Thing', which

is not only a phenomenon of knowing, or rather, not-knowing: it is also the lost object of desire, which must be continually refound: 'it is the prehistoric, unforgettable other', 'the forbidden object of incestuous desire, the mother', and 'the cause of the most fundamental human passion'. (Stein 2008: 52)

According to Stein (2008), the attraction to this mystifying, excessive other – and the need to make sense of this imposition – amounts to the formation of subjecthood. The

phenomenologist Alphonso Lingis mentioned Freud's frequent use of the concept of excitation in his earlier writings, stating that excess comes into being

when there is an effect disproportionate to its cause ... [in] moments when force intensifies, when a surplus builds in the machinery, when a potential upsurges, a superabundance, that then discharges. The release of this force, its dying, is felt as pleasure. (Lingis 1996: 26)

The reasons for the centrality of the experience of psychoanalysis as an open-ended endeavour are complex, but ultimately always associated to the timelessness of primary process functioning, concerning love and hate in our unconscious life. In a paper by Winnicott addressed to psychiatrists and 'even to one whose work does not in any way take him into the analytic type of relationship to patients' (1949: 74), he pointed out that sentimentality is useless as it contains a denial of hate. Hence, a participant observer, regardless of any other feelings, will hate and fear the group since the group's dynamics contain psychotic aspects of its member's minds, and anyone who participates or works with a group will find her/himself at the receiving end of a concrete way of thinking in the transference. Winnicott called attention to the impact of the patient's mind-set on the analyst and the necessity of identifying and managing hate since it mobilizes the analyst's own feelings. While the observer is neither a psychoanalyst nor the group a patient, the recognition of those feelings may assist to avoid contribution to the madness of the group. Finding their expression through noticing them in the countertransference through objective observation will assist participation since the better the practitioner knows this, the less will hate and fear be the motive determining what s/he does (*ibid.*: 69).

A main task of the analyst of any patient is to maintain objectivity in regard to all that the patient brings, and a special case of this is the analyst's need to be able to hate the patient objectively. (*ibid.*: 70)

Discussing the ways in which the analyst may express hate, Winnicott suggested that 'hate is expressed by the existence of the end of the "hour"' (*ibid.*). The participant observer may do so through the transformation of observations of fact and feelings into representations.

2.4 TRANSFORMATIONS

Reverie, described in 1. 3. 2 above, is the source for the most significant contribution of the mother to her child, a maternal capacity that is internalized and becomes part of the mental equipment of the infant, whereby an internalized relationship between container and contained becomes the source for the capacity to bear the pain of frustration, transforming it into thought. The accessibility of material to α -activity depends on the ability to tolerate frustration:

In the absence of this ability, the material cannot be digested; it remains a foreign body that must be eliminated by excretion. [...] The maternal reverie is internalized and becomes the infant's own mental capacity. Thus, this initial breast-infant relationship is the prototype of the operation of mental digestion: intolerable materials become tolerable when a flexible internal container is available. (Pelled 2007: 1512)

Bion proposed that such container is essential for development because undigested experience does not enable learning since the emotional aspect remains intolerable. This does not fall into a dualism between emotional and real, pointing to the

need for awareness of an emotional experience, similar to the need for an awareness of concrete objects that is achieved through the sense impressions, because lack of such awareness implies a deprivation of truth and truth seems to be essential for psychic health. The effect on the personality of such deprivation is analogous to the effect of physical starvation on the physique. (Bion 1962: 56)

The drawing practice offers a replay of the container-contained dynamic, developing the practitioner's ability to fall for memory and desire, that is, the L (love) and H (hate) links proposed by Bion (1963: 34–5) without giving in to the urge, fostered by the pleasure principle, to fill gaps with concepts by a quick act of understanding. This movement is necessary for communication, but it should evolve out of a disciplined observation purified of memory and desire, that is, by transformation in O:

I am concerned with developing a mode of thought which is such that a correct clinical observation can be made, for if that is achieved there is always hope for evolution of the appropriate theory. Defective observation means that a correct interpretation is an accident. (Bion 1970: 44)

Memory and desire saturate the preconceptual mental space; the already-known fills the space left for the unknown. Therefore,

the capacity to forget, the ability to eschew desire and understanding, must be regarded as essential discipline for the psychoanalyst. Failure to practise this discipline will lead to a steady deterioration in the powers of observation whose maintenance is essential. (Bion 1970: 51)

The observer does not draw only the observed subjects but her/himself as part of the group by whom s/he is used as an object. The experience of the meeting and of self in the group is registered by the senses. Bion (1970: 7) stated that psychoanalysis is only concerned with non-sensuous experience and quoted Dr Johnson to outline a dualism: 'the consolation which is drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable; that which may be derived from error must be, like its original, fallacious and fugitive.' It may be argued that such argument is constrained by the opposites of truth and error but also by a

body/mind split in conceiving the physician as dependent on sensuous experience, and the psychoanalyst as independent of experience that is not sensuous –

The physician can see and touch and smell. The realizations with which a psycho-analyst deals cannot be seen or touched; anxiety has no shape or colour, smell or sound. For convenience, I propose to use the term 'intuit' as a parallel in the psychoanalyst's domain to the physician's use of 'see', 'touch', 'smell', and 'hear'. (*ibid.*)

Anxiety, for patient, physician, psychoanalyst, group member, and observer may not have precise measurements but it has (from bearable to unbearable) intensity, it tastes, it is felt and seen in self's and other's behaviour. We cannot see anger but notice its manifestations as concomitant with the feeling, e.g. we see redness in the face, hear the change in voice pitch and volume, witness behaviour that expresses it – and all these can only be experienced by the senses. Bion's realizations unmediated by bodily experience propose an apprehension in the realm of mind, coherent with the notion of O (the core of the session or thing-in-itself) as both fullness and emptiness. Bion states that

hallucinations are *not* representations: they are things-in-themselves born of intolerance of frustration and desire. Their defects are due not to their failure to represent but to their failure to *be*. Thus we need to consider the difference between psychic and external reality. (1970: 18)

Bion's constant concern for the facts is a priority before any attempt at speculation. The first registration is pictographic (an embryonic thing-presentation). If this fails, the β -elements in the form of sensuous experiences are not transformed into visual images (primitive representations), but are felt as 'things in themselves'. The thing-in-itself is the concept Bion borrows from Kant but its meaning is quite different in this psychoanalytic context. For Bion, the thing in itself refers to 'undigested facts', non-symbolized experiences or β -elements (Green 1998: 657). It is this aspect of the digestive process where the space for reverie offered by drawing assists the understanding of those β -elements towards transformation into digested facts. Bion proposed an approach to understanding psychoanalytic practice by making use of the Grid (1963) (Fig 7 – next page), a device which he described as 'an instrument for classifying and ultimately understanding statements' (1997: 13), or as 'a convention for construing psycho-analytical phenomena. But if an analyst uses this convention he entertains a pre-conception as per his theory of thinking (1962), analogous to Kant's "empty thoughts", of which the Grid, as printed or written, is a representation' (1963: 98). The Grid is of relevance because, even if couched in a scientific or geometrical-algebraic discourse, it is presented as an 'imaginative exercise' similar to the 'activity of a musician who practises scales and exercises, not directly related to any piece of music but to the elements of which any piece of music is composed' (Bion 1963: 101), 'analogous to a ruler in physical science, formed from a matrix of theories to aid observation and not as a substitute for

	Defini- tory Hypo- theses 1	ψ 2	Nota- tion 3	Atten- tion 4	Inquiry 5	Action 6	... n
A β -elements	A1	A2				A6	
B α -elements	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	... Bn
C Dream Thoughts Dreams, Myths	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	... Cn
D Pre-conception	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	... Dn
E Conception	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	... En
F Concept	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	... Fn
G Scientific Deductive System		G2					
H Algebraic Calculus							

Fig. 7

psychoanalytically irrelevant. Therefore in any account of a session, no matter how soon it may be made after the event or by what means, memory should not be treated as more than pictorialized communication of an emotional experience. (Bion 1967: 1–2)

Bion refers to row C in the Grid as intended for ‘categories of thought which are often expressible in terms of sensuous, usually visual, images such as those appearing in dreams, myths, narratives, hallucinations’ (Bion 1977: 3).

I wished to find some category in which I could place acting out. At first it seemed helpful but it took little time to demonstrate its defects. Indeed, I can say that an early casualty in trying to use the grid is the Grid itself. Nevertheless, its use has made it easier for me to preserve a critical and yet informative, illuminating, attitude to my work. In this respect it has, as far as I am concerned, served a useful purpose which has made me think that others might find it profitable to invent and apply a grid system of their own. (*ibid.*: 6)

However, Bion’s wife Francesca recalled that ‘during the late seventies Bion used another method of re-experiencing sessions by drawing captioned caricatures of patients.

observation’ (Bion 1970: 3). The interpretation or construction produced by the psychoanalyst depends on the intuitive link between analysand and analyst. As it is constantly imperilled by deliberate attacks, its essential frailty, and ordinary fatigue, it needs to be protected and maintained. The object of the Grid is to provide a mental gymnastics tool (Bion 1977: 27). Later on, Bion (1992: 120) stated that ‘ α -function is by nature intended to make sense impressions’ and, indeed, re-visiting the session to represent it within the Grid requires making contact with the memories (actual or imagined) of visual, acoustic, and bodily experience, further transformed through the sensual bodily activity of drawing. And yet, Bion dismissed attending to memory, asserting that

Memory is born of, and only suited to, sensuous experience. As psychoanalysis is concerned with experience that is not sensuous – who supposes that anxiety has shape, colour or smell? – records based on perception of that which is sensible are records only of the

[...] It is a pity that, for obvious reasons, they cannot be published' (F. Bion 1995: n. p.). While this study is not about the psychoanalysis of an event (if such an enterprise was at all possible) it should be questioned whether the concern of psychoanalysis is non-sensuous experience. This appears contradicted by Bion's intention of re-experiencing the session, which entails making (further) contact with the ideational content of situations perceived through the sensual bodily activity of sketching them. Bion proposed that thoughts require an apparatus to cope with them, and proposed that 'thinking has to be called into existence to cope with thoughts [because] it is a development forced on the psyche by the pressure of thoughts and not the other way round' (Bion 1967: 111). Bion proposed that thoughts are imposed on the thinker by the necessity of survival and thus may be considered epistemologically preceding the existence of the thinker. It is a similar situation with images that are fostered on the observer as drawer by her/his interaction with the group. The paradox is that the images precede their representation as well as being the result of the representation of the α -elements. The danger is that the drawing may be regarded as a certainty instead of remaining a tentative hypothesis. The drawings themselves are subsidiary since the representations of

breast and the mouth are only important in so far they help to define the bridge between the two. When the 'anchors' usurp the importance which belongs to the qualities which they should be imparting to the bridge, growth is impaired. (Bion 1977: 26)

And while a drawing conveys an illusion, we must have no doubt about the reality of the illusion. Bion (1965) proposed that we can recognize in a painter's canvas the subject he has depicted, in spite of the transformation that has taken place from object to pigment, because of *invariants* which remain the same – that something which has remained unaltered and on which recognition depends.

The original experience, the realization, in the instance of the painter the subject that he paints, and in the instance of the psycho-analyst the experience of analyzing his patient, are *transformed* by painting in the one and analysis in the other into a painting and a psycho-analytic description respectively. [...]
An interpretation is a transformation; to display the invariants, an experience, felt and described in one way, is described in another. (*ibid.*: 4)

Because the subject of the drawing is not simply a mimesis of the optical experience but of the complex sensuous experience of the session, encompassing both formal description and fantasies elicited by contact with the group, the visual representation offers a transformation of the session, where meaning is challenged, increased, and lost. The drawn representations are not interpretations but, in Bion's terms of his Theory of Thinking (1967), they are *pre-conceptions*. A pre-conception represents a state of expectation and is equivalent to a variable in mathematical logic such as x in the equation $x = 3 + y$ (which represents a line in Cartesian coordinates). We may know the role of x in

the formula but not its actual value. The example Bion gives is the inborn expectation of the breast as an *a priori* knowledge (that is, knowledge that does not depend on experience) or 'empty thought'. It exists but has not as yet been filled with the experience. It is a state of emotional seeking. When this is brought into contact with a *realization*, i.e., an appropriate sense impression that approximates to the pre-conception, this mating produces a *conception*. Bion limits the term 'thought' to the mating of a pre-conception with a frustration. The model thus proposed is that of an expectation (such as by the infant for the breast) of a realization whereby the absence of what is desired makes it unavailable for satisfaction. If the capacity for toleration of frustration is sufficient the absence inside becomes a thought, and an apparatus for 'thinking' it develops.

A capacity for tolerating frustration thus enables the psyche to develop thought as a means by which the frustration that is tolerated is itself made more tolerable. (1967: 112)

What it is argued here is that the representations are embodiments of pre-conceptions concerning the emotional life of a group and, as yet, have not reached the category of thought as interpretations. While Freud asserted that the pleasure principle is a central motive for all actions, Bion expressed a different viewpoint as one of his significant modifications to Freudian theory. In effect,

whereas Freud conceives of mental activity as essentially subordinate to the pleasure principle, Bion agrees that thought can indeed be subordinate to the senses and thus to the pleasure principle, but goes on to argue that thinking also exposes an alternate principle. This innovative idea is condensed in the link symbolized as K (Knowledge), and in the transformation $K \leftrightarrow O$. This major theoretical shift could be taken due to Melanie Klein's (1928) concept of the epistemophilic instinct, as a motive force in and of itself. (Pelled 2007: 1509)

Aulagnier (2001) considered the primal activity of representation constitutive of both representations and representing agency, and named it the pictographic activity, and its product, the pictogram. Aulagnier argued that the pictographic representation is not connected to language and is an attempt to represent and find meaning through the figurative use of bodily, sensory 'images'. Aulagnier proposed that

In order to appear in the psychical field a phenomenon must be metabolized into a pictographic representation. For this metabolization to happen there must be conditions of representability. What does the pictographic activity try to represent in a pictogram? What is being represented is an encounter and the affect experienced during that encounter. (Miller 2015: 1359)

Bensmaïa (1990) has suggested that, according to Aulagnier (2001), there exists a representative core foreclosed from the self's ability to know, the effects of which make themselves felt beyond psychological pathology.

What changes in the non-psychotic, is the possibility that the I keeps of regaining possession of his or her space and mode of functioning, the possibility of forgetting these moments of ordeal or of mastering them, but only as an afterthought, by treating them as 'foreign bodies', as passing 'symptoms' whose cause can be attributed to one or another passing event. (Aulagnier 2001, cited in Bensmaïa 1990: 145)

The representations offer neither diegesis (a narrative or plot, as a construction) nor mimesis (a replication), even if they appear to do both because the narrator is her/himself narrated by the representation. The drawing is akin to an enactment, where the drawer is an accomplice to the scene making a spectacle out of oneself–herself–himself–the group. Sapisochin (2015) recommended that Freud's notion of *Agieren* be rendered in English by 'enactment' rather than 'acting out' to emphasize that the unconscious of both patient and analyst inevitably play an active part in enactment, thus giving rise to a specific transference–countertransference configuration that becomes the object of analytic listening. A further reason is that the concept of acting out belongs within a process model in which the analyst is a non-participating observer of the field in which only the patient is presumed to be active. This view has resulted in a slippage of meaning in the psychoanalytic literature whereby the term 'acting out' has come to be used in an extended sense to denote impulsive psychopathic behaviour with the aim of evacuative relief of unbearable economic levels of psychic pressure, rather than for the purposes of working through (*ibid.*: 45). The representations by the observer/drawer can be considered enactments of the group and observer in the process of thinking themselves through effecting transformations of their experience. However, here 'representation'

is really *identification*, the mystic repetition or *re-presentation* of the event. The rite produces the effect which is then not so much *shown figuratively as actually reproduced* in the action. The function of the rite, therefore, is far from being merely imitative; it causes the worshippers to participate in the sacred happening itself. (Huizinga 1950: 15)

The earliest digestive transformation effected through representation is dreaming as an aspect of the analyst's experience which can be used in his attempt to 'catch the drift' (Freud 1923: 239) of what is occurring in the analytic relationship at an unconscious level as an asymmetrical intersubjective construction of analyst and analysand which Ogden (1997: 160) denominated the *analytic third*. Making drawings from the recollection of a group meeting does not constitute a direct intervention, even though as a practice it may assist the observer's thinking (and, unconsciously, the group's perception of itself). The representations produced from the meetings are neither translations nor visual statements to be transcribed – they are merely a stage of the ritual production of such artefacts which may facilitate engagement with the group. The practice may be explored through perceived parallels with what Freud (1900) considered "the royal road to the

unconscious', i.e., dreaming, as a compromise formation and a ritual to process (digest) and make contact with the unpalatable, the unacceptable, in the traumatic encounter with the madness of any group.

2.5 DREAMING WHILE AWAKE

Freud (1900) proposed dreaming to be an energy-discharging mental activity – arising out of the conjunction of waking content (the day residue) and infantile phantasies – to protect sleep – a state which makes the formation of dreams possible because it reduces the power of the endopsychic censorship (*ibid.*: 526), and thus enabling dreaming as imaginary wish-fulfilment. A dream might be described as 'a substitute for an infantile scene modified by being transformed on to a recent experience' (*ibid.*: 546). The latent content or *dream-thoughts* is what gives the dream its meaning, and the work that transforms latent thoughts into manifest dream content Freud called *dream-work*. The manifest content is what the dreamer remembers. However, interpretation of the dream – by inference and reconstruction through exploring its network of associations – even if fruitful, can never fully undo the dream-work. As Freud indicated, 'There is at least one spot in every dream which it is unplumbable – a navel, as it were, that is its point of contact with the unknown' (*ibid.*: 111):

Yet, in spite of all this ambiguity, it is fair to say that the productions of the dream-work, which, it must be remembered, *are not made with the intention of being understood*, present no greater difficulties to their translators than do the ancient hieroglyphic scripts to those who seek to read them. (*ibid.*: 341, italics in original)

If we reflect that the means of representation in dreams are principally visual images and not words, we shall see that it is even more appropriate to compare dreams with a system of writing than with language. In fact, the interpretation of a dream is completely analogous to the decipherment of an ancient pictographic script such as Egyptian hieroglyphics. In both cases there are certain elements which are not intended to be interpreted (or read, as the case may be) but are only designed to serve as 'determinatives', that assist to establish the meaning of some other element. The ambiguity of various elements of dreams finds a parallel in these ancient systems of writing; and so too does the omission of certain relations, which have in both cases to be supplied by the context. (Freud 1913: 177)

However, as Freud pointed out, analysts may fall into a confusion when they seek the essence of dreams in their latent content, thus overlooking the distinction between the latent dream-thoughts and the dream-work.

At bottom, dreams are nothing other than a particular *form* of thinking, made possible by the condition of the state of sleep. It is the *dream-work* that creates

that form, and it alone is the essence of dreaming – the explanation of its peculiar nature. (Freud 1900: 506, footnote 2)

The dream-work is not simply more careless, more irrational, more forgetful and more incomplete than waking thought; it is completely different from it qualitatively and for that reason not immediately comparable with it. (*ibid.*: 507)

Freud proposed that four fundamental rules guide the formation of dreams. These were

1. *Displacement* – an idea is invested with intense feelings which originally belonged elsewhere. This takes place because consciousness finds the original object of these feelings unacceptable. Thus they undergo repression and appear disguised, i.e., displaced to another entity, whether object or idea. Displacement corresponds to metonymy by establishing connections between words that bind incongruous phantasies.
2. *Condensation* – thoughts that are contradictory may persist side by side, disguised as a combination of two ideas, as in metaphor.
3. *Conditions of representability* – dreams represent ideas and feelings in images. Hence, in dreams, ideas can be representations of things, and objects or situations represent feelings.
4. *Secondary revision* – the dreamer attempts to organize the dream narrative to make it intelligible as an account in words, but also to further disguise its latent content.

Dreaming appears as an inner speech that constitutes a definitive discontinuity in that there may be several (conflated or discrete) speakers: the character in the dream who had the emotions the narrator recounts, the narrator about the character (who may also be the narrator), the narrator as the holder of the emotions or perceptions described. These areas of overlap become further complicated by considering the phantasmatic Other to whom the dream is addressed, whose desire is anticipated by the dream and with whom the dreamer is in unconscious dialogue. However, a sentence, like a drawing, is hierarchical, it implies subjections, subordinations (Barthes 1975, cited in Burgin 2006: 11). The grapheme for an eye, is subordinated to a face, subordinated to a head, to a person. Furthermore, the dreamer dreams the contents of the dream as thing-presentations, which come from an agency of the self, driven by the unconscious, and a different agency of the self organizes the dream as a coherent narrative or word presentation. Neither is about elucidation of meaning but about stating, i.e., two mark-making stages, the second organized by the syntactic dimension of language. Similarly, the drawer draws the marks (thing-presentations), aiming at, but also discovering, the image-presentations. The point is not to define the drawing as an illustration of the text, as an intersemiotic translation, which can be analysed with the same semiotic tools to be applied to a text. They are not alternatives – the two semiotic codes provide a confluence of meanings that are greater than their discrete quantities brought together. They are not the sum of the meanings, they embody a different meaning; they provide approximations

(through presence and absence) which can be experienced and re-visited. It is not in their similarities but in their counterpoint, as instruments in the same orchestra, playing different parts, allowing for the other instrument, joining with it, departing, allowing the ear to follow different routes through the score. It is a polyphonic exercise.

Though it may be expected that no stylistic demand must be placed upon the praxis: it should develop as unintentionally as possible. The selection of one medium over another, or the use of the same medium are akin to the difference between writing in first- or third-person, or foregrounding or ignoring the ending. These may be all telling rhetorical choices, as the narrative shapes itself. In the end, it does not matter how much later than the event the drawing takes place, although the narrative may get refined and emphasized, either towards disclosure (this assumes meaning is being withheld, when in fact it is made) or towards secondary revision. Whatever is or is not told may point to the same core problematic of whether dreaming works as digestion or as evacuation, that is, a process tending towards discharge (Freud 1900: 537). While making sense means to bring the experience into language 'there is every reason to suspect that our memory of dreams is not only fragmentary but positively inaccurate and falsified' (*ibid.*: 512). Although clues are of significance, we might consider that a clue is obscure, resembling the notion of the marginal (Culler 1981), as in Freud's emphasis on the importance of examining the 'dregs of the world of phenomena' (1916: 27).

The absence of horizon, the enclosure, of that that is contemplated in the waking state, and, also, the character of emergence, of contrast, of stain, of its images, the intensification of its colours – that, in the final resort, our position in the dream is profoundly that of someone who does not see. (Lacan 1977: 75)

Rocha Barros (2002) has proposed that the task of interpreting could be compared to 'the work of a crypto linguist trying to decipher an unknown language, which is different from the work of a translator dealing with a foreign language, as the latter has access to the codes allowing one language to be understood and translated into another, while the former does not know the source language and aims at identifying patterns that will eventually lead to the discovery of its grammar. Hence, a word-for-word correspondence between an unknown language and a known one 'is doomed to failure because the meaning of the words depends largely on their syntactic function' (*ibid.*: 1086).

I would say that emotions exert the function of connective tissue for mental life and produce the basic links, which allow the integration of the self. For Bion the basic conflict we have to resolve is not between love and hate, but between emotion and opposition to emotion. I would like to stress that I take a different position to Bion in that I give greater importance to the representational aspect of the affective pictogram. (Rocha Barros 2002: 1087)

Freud (1900) pointed out that dreams insist with greater energy upon their right to be included among our real mental experiences in respect to their affective rather than their

ideational content. 'Analysis shows us the *ideational material has undergone displacements and substitutions, whereas the affect has remained unaltered*' (*ibid.*: 460, italics in original), and Rocha Barros (2002) has used the concept of the pictogram to refer to a very early form of mental representation of emotional experience, equivalent to the α -function proposed by Bion (1963), which by creating symbols by means of figurations for dream-thought, amounts to the first step towards thought processes. But it must be realized that

pictograms are not yet thought processes, since they are expressed in images rather than in verbal discourse and contain powerful expressive, evocative elements. A pictogram is neither choice nor free creation, but the result of the laws that govern the activity of representation. (Rocha Barros 2002: 1087)

However, the statement above seems to separate form and content, differentiating pictograms (as a proto-images) from images (as signifiers), prioritizing verbal over visual discourse as representation whereas both verbal and visual utterances embody meaning through their different means by their double function as origin and result of representation. Bion uses the concept of the *ideogram* to refer to aspects not implicit in manifest communication, as what is both manifest and latent, spoken but not articulated, images containing coded information, stored in the mind in a suitable form for recall (1992: 64).

It can take the form of 'an ideomotor activity, that is to say a way of expressing an idea without naming it' (Bion 1967: 54), 'representing an attempt to free the organism of an accretion of stimuli, or the need of the psychotic part of the personality 'for an immediate repair of an ego damaged by the excessive projective identification' (*ibid.*: 57). (López-Corvo 2003: 142)

The dream is a 'temporary psychosis' (Freud) but this restricts psychoanalysis and condemns it to being solely a theory of representation, a theory reduced to a part of psychic life [...] Freud seems to have been faced with what may be understood today as an 'epistemic conflict' between memory without recollections and memory in the form of recollection (Botella 2014: 916–7). The scene of the observation is equivalent to the day residue of a dream, which is recalled by the dreamer and used as the scene of unconscious material. Forgetting and remembering (the group as other) requires a further (second) look, hence the etymology of respect as 'look back at, consider'. The past does not reside in the original impressions but it is reconstructed in the present, and Freud paid particular attention throughout his work to those moments in which the past emerged in the present as in symptoms, dreams, and parapraxes. Forgetting requires giving up – something must be abandoned, renounced, desisted from – for clarity to emerge. All these terms point to the need for circumscription and control of unexpected understanding, as per Bion's 'without memory or desire' (1970). In Bion's formulation, memory refers to the adverse impact of wilful reminiscing, rather than uninvited

recollections, as the day residue in a dream. Hence, attending during the observation to visual details for later retrieval in drawing protects from the impact of the experience, whether remembered or suppressed when drawing the meeting. But it is

Repression, not forgetting; repression, not exclusion. Repression, as Freud says, neither repels, nor flees, nor excludes an exterior force; it contains an interior representation, laying out within itself a space of repression. (Derrida 1978: 196)

The drawing is a transcription or re-transcription that incorporates the trace of the repressed which, if not verbalized, allows a helpful detachment and possible interpellation. There are several moments against the arrow of time: making the drawing, looking at the drawing, and looking at sets of drawings together to see the unfolding of patterns or repetitions which may suggest a narrative. Re-reading written notes is a far more laborious process emphasizing the actuality of the note's account, while the drawing facilitates dreaming, and the collected drawings will open up a (graphic) narrative. Synchronicity or diachronicity must be considered concerning whether the drawing represents the past or is hallucinated as a present. The drawing, like a dream, does not record history but a story, producing

a psychological moment when something of crucial importance which had been left in a corner of the mind – not forgotten, but made meaningless – suddenly springs to life. [...] Freud refers to memories (not really forgotten, only 'never thought about') which when suddenly brought to life – by the return not of the contents of the memory, but of the 'suppressed affective impulses', the 'emotional connections' (Freud 1937: 258) – appear 'ultraclear' (Freud 1937: 266), recollected with 'abnormal sharpness'. [...] These de-realised memories [...] exist in a world unaffected by time, like sleeping beauty's forest; and yet in their dormant state they have tremendous power, since this is the stuff of repetition compulsion. (Sodré 2005: 9)

In Ogden's view, dreaming is the most important psychoanalytic function of the mind because, where there is unconscious dream-work, there is also unconscious 'understanding work' (Sandler 1976: 40). Dreaming as a manifestation of the unconscious leads to an unconscious understanding of the dream and hence not 'only dreams that are remembered and interpreted in the analytic setting or in self-analysis would accomplish psychological work' Ogden (2007: 576). Bion (1962) proposed a

radical transformation of the psychoanalytic conception of dreaming and of not being able to dream [...] Bion shifted the focus from the symbolic content of thoughts to the process of thinking, and from the symbolic meaning of dreams to the process of dreaming. [...] 'Thinking [dreaming] has to be called into existence to cope with [dream-]thoughts' (Bion 1962: 306). (Ogden 2007: 576–7)

Furthermore, Bion pointed out that dream-work is a continuous process that extends to waking life (1992: 63). While Freud used the term to mean the unconscious material transformed into dreams which had to be undone to make the dream comprehensible, Bion indicated 'that conscious material has to be subjected to dream-work to render it suitable for storing away and for thought' (Ferro 2002: 598). Bion considered dreaming as a necessity in the practice of psychoanalysis, indicating that 'the analyst must be able to dream the session' (1992: 120). Unlike dreaming while asleep, dreaming the session requires the capacity to observe oneself in that state, being able

to cultivate a capacity for dreaming while awake, and that this capacity must somehow be reconcilable with what we ordinarily conceive of as an ability for logical thought of the mathematical kind (*ibid.*: 215).

Such state of mind, referred to as reverie in the mother–infant relationship, results from a 'deep somatopsychic connection' (Civitarese 2013: 224) that is not a romanticized calming state of maternal wellbeing to be communicated as reassurance, but the digestion of the unpalatable nameless dread (Bion 1962: 309) (section 1.3.2) by both mother and infant if there is to be growth for both.

Like a dream, the drawing is speech-less and it takes a risk towards signification. A table is not a word and as such only a reference to an archetype, but in the drawing it represents a particular even if the drawing alters its proportion, position in space – even if it is distorted and it appears with only one leg. The drawing is both an account and a commentary struggling for a piece of ground. Perhaps there is an opportunity for a drawing of a drawing, as in Winnicott's *squiggle* game. The drawing borrows, presents, withdraws, and drawing must then be included as the third term which is neither speech nor writing, closer to the sensuality of the form, the trace, the gesture, the involuntary inflexion. Verbal representation is not preconsciousness, nor is drawing equivalent to unconsciousness. Drawing is the general censorship of the trace by the mark, that which is not spoken or written or drawn but exists in the form of the drawing as dream and story.

It is no accident that Freud, at the decisive moments of his itinerary, has recourse to metaphorical models which are borrowed not from spoken language or from verbal forms, nor even from phonetic writing, but from a script which is never subject, never exterior and posterior to, the spoken word. Freud invokes signs which do not transcribe living, full speech, master of itself and self-present. (Derrida 1978: 199)

Any statement (visual, oral, written) works within the confines of its norms, its linguistic structure, its generational grammar. One language, whether phonetic, visual, or written may be able to allude to desire more clearly than another. The gaze of self or other (see 3.6 below) will inevitably impact (intervene, interfere, interrupt) in the observation and its representation. The temporal flow can be further disrupted in the accounts, or in the juxtaposition (placed side by side, compared, mixed, contrasted). While the observed

may be an other, an ethnographic account is a solitary enterprise. The disturbance is a necessity, the change of code, the emphasis missing on one account yet explicit in the other. The motor of this search is 'the unconscious, unarguable but impossible to apprehend in its totality' (Laplanche 2012: 12). Given that the drawings are produced from the day residue (the session) plus the emotional vicissitudes of the participant observer (countertransference to the group, and her/his own transference), and though not all the elements of the drawing (n.) are significative, drawing (v.) as a process points (without fully aiming) at reaching signification because the advantage of the drawing as a further removed account opens the possibility for daydreaming about the event – the act of drawing has a parallel with having a dream (while awake). Referring to day-dreams, i.e., dreaming while awake, Freud (1900) stated that

Like dreams, they are wish-fulfillments; like dreams, they are based to a great extent on impressions of infantile experiences; like dreams, they benefit by a certain degree of relaxation of censorship. (*ibid.*: 492)

it is our normal thinking that is the psychical agency which approaches the content of dreams with a demand that it must be intelligible, which subjects it to a first interpretation and which consequently produces a complete misunderstanding of it. (*ibid.*: 500)

For it is demonstrably untrue that we are being carried along a purposeless stream of ideas when, in the process of interpreting a dream, we abandon reflection and allow involuntary ideas to emerge. (*ibid.*: 528)

The advantage of the drawing is in being a further removed account which opens the possibility for daydreaming about the event, where forgetting is considered not as resistance but as giving oneself up to the drawing as dream, and 'dreams make use of the present tense in the same manner and by the same right as daydreams. The present tense is the one in which wishes are represented as fulfilled' (*ibid.*: 535). Furthermore, a whole series of dreams over weeks or months may have a common ground. And in the case of two consecutive dreams they should be treated as a single whole because

it can often be observed that one takes as its central point something that is only in the periphery of the other and *vice versa*, so that their interpretations too are mutually complementary. (*ibid.*: 525)

Representing the session will have gone through distortion, but the drawing does not aim at preserving since preserving is (as Freud pointed out) unreliable. This unreliability is what makes the practice of drawing the session worthwhile – forgetting not as resistance but as giving oneself up to the act of forgetting. Freud proposed that 'dreams contain a great amount of material compressed into a briefest moment of time' (*ibid.*: 590), and the same is true of a drawing since in the single image it contains the development of the event, the multiplicity of characters and viewpoints, of viewers and subjects, as well as

being 'a slip of the tongue', a parapraxis showing involuntary traces. Furthermore, a 'dream is no pathological phenomenon; it presupposes no disturbance of psychical equilibrium; it leaves behind it no loss of efficiency (*ibid.*: 607). But the recollection of the dream can bring affect to the fore, and a dream may leave the dreamer perplexed and disturbed. So, not necessarily non-disturbing. However, if the drawing is intent on disturbance (or anything other than representation), the process will have been hijacked by the inability to stay and mourn the passing of the group's session.

2.6 ABSENCE AND MOURNING

Freud (1917) proposed a correlation between the ordinary state of *mourning* and the pathological symptom of *melancholia*. Mourning is the sorrowful reaction to loss (of a loved person, place, object or ideal), which follows its course by experiencing the absence of what was loved and gradually coming to terms with its loss. Conversely, a distinguishable feature of melancholia is an ongoing profoundly painful dejection, a refusal to accept loss by denial and mania while concurrently remaining unable to recover (from the loss of the object). While the process of mourning is an expression of Eros, melancholia points to an unbearable and unprocessable absence that may be disguised as nostalgia but which stays closer to the death instinct.

In their analysis of phonemes, Jakobson & Halle (1956) showed how linguistic phenomena may be entirely characterized in terms of the presence or absence of particular features. It may be noticed that the *Language of Psychoanalysis* (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973) has entries neither for *absence* ('state of not being present') nor *lack* ('absence, shortage, deficiency'). Lacan indicated that in the game of fort!/da! (described in Freud 1920: 14–7) a primitive phonemic opposition was related 'to the presence and absence of persons and things' (Lacan 2007, 109, n. 46), and that a word is itself

'a presence made of absence' (*Ecrits*, 65) because (i) the symbol is used in the absence of the thing and (ii) signifiers only exist insofar as they are opposed to other signifiers. Because of the mutual implication of absence and presence in the symbolic order, absence can be said to have an equally positive existence in the symbolic as presence. (Evans 1996: 1)

According to Lacan, the term *lack* is always related to desire, as that which causes desire to arise. 'It is in the absence of the object that the representation of it is formed, the source of all thought.' (Green 1975: 8). The relevance of making representations neither in the presence of the motif, nor by trying to remember its features to reproduce them, activates the potential for (accidental) absences and interpolations, allowing the unconscious to steer the drawing in a less controlled direction, always in excess by presence and absence, open to the vagaries of desire. While such a strategy requires a certain confidence in the value of the practice, an aspect that may be overlooked in the relationship between group and observer (particularly if in role as group consultant or

facilitator) is the pedagogic vertex of the relationship, whereby the consultant will be moved to lead for fear of absence, rather than just be present. The observer is not the group's psychoanalyst, yet such phantasy remains active, endowing the consultant with the persona of the *subject supposed to know*, an illusion brought about in the transference as the attribution of knowledge to the subject, a dynamic whereby the consultant falls into the phantasy of their infallibility in knowing the meaning of the dynamics of the group – and, conversely, the consultant will believe that the actual 'subject supposed to know' is the group itself.

When the analyst explains the fundamental rule of free association to the analysand, he is effectively saying; 'Come on, say anything, it will all be marvellous' (S17, 59). In other words, the analyst tells the analysand to behave as if he knew what it was all about, thereby instituting him as a subject supposed to know. (Evans 1996: 198)

As discussed in section 5.2.1 in respect of roles, the participant observer is also in a dialogue with, amongst, and against her/his different personas in role, and the utterance 'say anything as it will be meaningful in any case' is also addressed to her/himself as drawer. Moreover, the observer/drawer may be (paradoxically) under the animistic phantasy that the drawn artefact embodies the one supposed to know.

In 'On the sense of loneliness' (1963), Klein described 'the sense of being alone regardless of external circumstances, of feeling lonely even among friends or receiving love' (*ibid.*: 300), locating this feeling in nostalgia for the plenitude of the earliest union with mother, a time before differentiation whereby the infant's needs were understood without the alienation of language (Burgin 2006: 56). The psychoanalytic notions described in this chapter contribute to an understanding of why a particular site of drawing may have the potential to assist withstanding the emotional storm of being in a group, digesting the solitary emotional experience of making contact with primitive aspects of the mind in self and others, towards learning and growth. Winnicott (1965) drew attention to an aspect of the transference in which the patient is alone in the analytic session and pointed out that more had been written on the fear or wish to be alone than on the ability to be alone, and that a fundamental requirement to develop such capacity depends on having had

the experience of being alone, as an infant and small child, in the presence of mother. Thus the basis of the capacity to be alone is a paradox; it is the experience of being alone while someone else is present. (*ibid.*: 29)

This implies a 'rather special' type of relationship between the infant who is alone and the mother or carer who is 'reliably present even if represented for the moment by a cot or a pram or the general atmosphere of the immediate environment' (*ibid.*). I would propose that the atmosphere of the practice of drawing holds a similar value, enabling the observer a sojourn in the space of drawing as ritual both to remind her/himself and enact

the experience of the reverie of mothering in order to withstand the feared and desired merger with the group-in-the-mind. Winnicott postulated that, given the necessary conditions, there was in the infant a maturational tendency towards growth and differentiation, leading to an awareness of separateness and individuality gradually emerging out of a state of undifferentiation.

As the difference between the baby's awareness of 'me' and 'not-me' strengthens, many babies need a link, a way of bridging the gap that might be too much for them; this explains the existence of transitional phenomena, the use of a comforting blanket or teddy, or even a sound or thought. The transitional space in which such phenomena occur provides room for the development of play, and the ability to stand separateness is connected with it. (Johns 1996: n. p)

And this paradox of the necessity to belong to and differentiate from the group finds support when the observer draws from the site of absence, not aiming at filling up the void but inhabiting it. As Segal (1986: 91) wrote: 'only what can be adequately mourned can be adequately symbolized.' The concept of mourning will be taken up again, albeit from a different perspective, in section 3.4 and applied in section 6.2.4.

3 A CONVERSATION WITH PRACTICES OF REPRESENTATION

3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The chapter considers several practices as instances of representation, such as the use of ritual to defend from and engage with difficult aspects of experience, playing and games as activities enacted with others, the vicissitudes of language and translation in respect of the metaphysics of thought and the possibilities deriving from deconstructive readings. It then reviews notions of drawing as both action and artefact; and the purpose of image-making from the observation of the group is interrogated through a deconstructive perspective, leading to considering the other as witness, and drawings as testimony, to assist the necessary process of mourning (the impossibility of) the ideal session. It then reflects on the performative features of making visual representations from the memory of group events with the potential to construct a space for exploration of the dynamics of group and observer/drawer. The key concepts are enlisted with the intention of making connections between them and with the ideas presented in the previous chapter, thus leading to the explorative research strategy proposed in the following chapter.

3.2 GROUP AS RITUAL

One of the several meanings of the term *observation* refers to *visuality* (watching, investigating, regarding); while another connotes *ritual* (performance of a religious rite, compliance). Ritual is not simply a performance *en mases* but a network of different layers of moves enacting relationships which entail emotion and non-emotion. Baranger (2012) has pointed out that 'contemporary psychoanalysis entails no longer the study of a specific subject, but rather that of the relationship between the two participants and their joint work' (2012: 130), described as 'intersubjective'. Psychoanalytic practice has evolved from solely attending to the patient's early life and pathology to the study and understanding of the vicissitudes of the analytic dyad. The practitioner is therefore not a mere observer of psychical or material phenomena but an active participant whose task requires a 'description of observables and a hypothesis on non-observables' (Canestri 1994, quoted by Baranger 2012: 133–4). Observing the dynamics of working groups through a psychoanalytic lens requires the participant observer to engage emotionally with the life of the group of which s/he is an active participant. If the observer allows her/himself to be inhabited by the experience of the group as expressed by its rituals, the

process will inevitably produce an emotional charge; conversely, emotions will be managed by rituals.

From a psychiatric perspective, ritualized behaviour can be described as repetitive behaviour used by a person or group to prevent or manage anxiety, a typical symptom in obsessive–compulsive disorders. Most actions undertaken by a subject with OCD are unnecessary or even irrelevant as they are not focused on a task – they are therefore considered non-functional. Zor *et al.* (2009) have argued that OCD behaviour consists of short chains of functional acts bounded by long chains (up to 60%) of non-functional acts. Group behaviour will be a ritual and, as such, a strategy for both distancing and engaging with the traumatic core of experiencing engagement with the group. From a purely functional viewpoint, ritual may be considered anti-task while being an empty signifier, available to be occupied by contradictory meanings. There is a difference between dynamics that become ritualized for feelings to be avoided and those that need to be ritualized to facilitate engagement with difficult emotions and therefore assist digesting the experience. Ritual form then becomes structural, having a containing function. Both are, of course, non-exclusive, and easily confused. Klein (1946) proposed her theory of object relations where the good breast is not less a phantasy than the bad breast. Similarly, the *basic assumption* group (Bion 1961) is a form of collaboration, not less a phantasy than the *Work* group. Like the two hypothetical breasts, neither the *ba* group nor the *W* group exist without the other. Bion stated that ‘the group and the individuals in it are hopelessly committed to a developmental procedure, no matter what might have been the case with our remote ancestors’ (*ibid.*: 88–9). It is this hopelessness (as an expression of lack) that may be behind ritual as a possible useful strategy for working through the dichotomy *ba/W* group functioning. However, from the perspective of the Enlightenment and its aspiration to truth and rationality, ritual has been equated with thoughtlessness. Bell (1992) proposed that the fundamental efficacy of ritual activities lies in their ability to have people embody assumptions about their place in a larger order of things. Bell defined ritualization as a way of acting designed

to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities [...] creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’, and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors. (*ibid.*: 74)

Bell identified a number of characteristics in ritual behaviour such as formalism, traditionalism, disciplined invariance, rule governance, sacral symbolism, and performance. Van Gennep (1960) held that all rituals are rites of passage since they serve a transformative function and noted that rituals comprise three phases: (1) separation from the everyday world; (2) transition; and (3) incorporation or return to the everyday world transformed. But a regeneration involves ritual repetition and a sacrifice, namely the actual wish for and fear of surrendering individuality to the phantasy of the omnipotent group – a nucleus that Bion named as *groupishness* (Bion 1961: 131). From

a psychoanalytic perspective, ritual can be considered an obsessive mechanism to appease repressed desires and thus manage psychic conflict. Rituals might, to the degree that they aid the ego's attempt to suppress disruptive or dangerous id impulses, further the cause of adaptation or healthy maturation (Bell 1997: 15). But attention needs to be paid to the larger structure of the ceremonial as the means to observe the phantasies that the rites embody. The usefulness of the ritual resides in recognizing it as such and engaging with it beyond an evacuating catharsis. Ritualized performance is a component of the process of attaining a group's generic and specific objectives, such as the transition from emotions into representations of reality. These symbolic practices 'are tangible formulations of notions, abstractions from experience fixed in perceptible forms, concrete embodiment of ideas attitudes, judgements, longings, or beliefs' (Geertz 1973: 91).

Unlike genes, and other non-symbolic information sources, which are only models *for*, not models *of*, culture patterns have an intrinsic double aspect: they give meaning, that is, objective conceptual form, to social and psychological reality both by shaping themselves to it and by shaping it to themselves. (*ibid.*: 93)

And here is another conundrum, as ritual is not to be taken solely as a model *for*, but also a model *of* life within groups and organizations. While achieving a sense of revelation the ritual stabilizes a sense of direction:

In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world, producing thus that idiosyncratic transformation in one's sense of reality. (*ibid.*: 112)

Referencing Durkheim, Bell proposed that 'rituals are designed to arouse a passionate intensity, feelings of "effervescence", in which individuals experience something larger than themselves' (Bell 1997: 24). Having ritually engaged with the framework of meaning which religious conceptions define, in returning to the common-sense world at the end of the ritual the person is changed. Yet emotions can rise high and the group projects difficult feelings into its members. Girard (1979) has proposed that ritual, religion, society, and culture emerge from a foundation in a primal violence, describing a process 'in which desire, channelled through the ritual of an original murder, is ultimately enshrined in every social institution, including language' (Bell 1997: 16). In order to repress consciousness of both violence and desire, a human victim is seized as a scapegoat and ritually sacrificed, and group members harbour the fear and desire of being the chosen one. The ritual sacrifice is the means by which the community deflects or transfers its own madness and violence on to an other who has been made into an outsider. According to Bell, Hubert and Mauss pointed to two basic processes inherent in all forms of sacrifice – sacralization and desacralization.

An essentially profane offering is made sacred – consecrated, in effect – in order to act as a means of communication and communion between the sacred and the profane worlds. At the conclusion of the rite, however, a process of desacralization re-establishes the necessary distinctions between these two worlds that make up day-to-day reality. (Bell 1997: 26)

The central problem of ritual is 'that of expressing what cannot be thought of' (Turner 1962: 87). Beattie (1966) proposed that

a dramatic acting out of a problem may be one way of resolving it. [...] and that this dramatic assertion may be in some measure an end in itself [...] in so far as ritual is a dramatic expression it is, in some measure, its own reward.

(*ibid.*: 68–70)

The tantalizing quality of observing for both observer (looking at and seeing into) and observed (offering or permitting itself to be seen) suggests a variant or addition to the group as a ritual whereby (visually) representing it becomes part of the (de)sacralization process, establishing the group as a thing within a practice aiming at apprehending some dimension of the group-in-itself, which Bion referred to as the ultimate reality, an immeasurable 'something that occurred during the session – the absolute facts of the session [which] cannot ever be known' (Bion 1965: 17) and are based on sensuous experience. Bion proposed that the criterion for such experience is common-sense, meaning that it is 'common' to more than one sense and thus its existence is confirmed (Bion 1963: 10). A similar usage or convention is necessary to define the nature of the sense by which group phenomena are to be apprehended and illuminated. These must have

- extension in the domain of sense – what is represented must amongst other qualities be an object of sense. It must, for example, be visible or audible, certainly to the observer and presumably to the group;
- extension in the domain of myth – or metaphor, which draws on conventional expressions such as 'angry as if it were an adolescent upset with his parent'. Bion calls this the 'as if' component;
- extension in the domain of passion – 'an emotion experienced with intensity and warmth though without any suggestion of violence' (*ibid.*: 11 ff.).

Bion devised the Grid (section 2.4 above) as a method to allow sustaining the inquiry and investigate possible meanings of the vicissitudes of the psychoanalytic session. While a method does not necessarily imply a ritual, a ritual always has a method or liturgy (a particular form or set of forms according to which the ritual is conducted), which acquire significance and become established through repetition. The ritual is the enactment of each performing subject – that is, individuals/group plus observer – becoming an object for each other, and being used as such; and ritual (enacted or imagined) is called into

existence to defend the subject from the traumatic experience of the terrifying otherness of the Other. The concept of role – a necessity of any ritual – implies an emotional investiture from two complementary sources, and disaggregating them runs the risk of sanitizing their complexity. On one hand, we see the impact of the primitive archaic emotional determinants *per se* and, on the other, the relevance of differentiating the social engagement within the reality and fantasy of the characters in the performance or liturgy of the ritual. The liturgy is not the representation of the event – representing is itself the event. A contract detailing the terms of engagement amongst performers points to explicit roles (a notion amplified in section 5.2.1) as both explicit and unconscious agreements, sometimes in contradiction. Contracts are a necessity for every organization to define function, duties, attributes and thus reassuring the performer and the other participants (whether performers or spectators) for the sake of the safe continuation of the performance. In addition, ritual results from and fosters a sense of nostalgia (section 2.6) for a communally established expression of feeling.

Bleger (1967) proposed that while the analytic situation comprises phenomena which constitute a process that is studied, analysed, and interpreted, it also includes a frame, that is to say, a ‘non-process’, in the sense that it is made up of constants within whose bounds the process takes place (Bleger 1967: 511). The frame, similar to the one proposed by the analyst in the analytic treatment, refers to a strategy as ritual (such as the group’s task, rules of membership, roles and their boundaries, location and time of meetings) rather than to a technique, to be considered a meta-behaviour, within which phenomena can be distinguished as behaviour, but in reference to the frame. Bleger considered the frame the most primitive part of the personality, as the fusion ego-body-world ‘on whose immobility depend the formation, existence, and differentiation (of the ego, the object, the body image, the body, the mind, etc.)’ (*ibid.*: 514). Although Jaques (1955) considered that social institutions are (unconsciously) used as a defence against psychotic anxiety, Bleger believed them to be ‘the depository of the psychotic part of the personality, i.e., the undifferentiated and non-dissolved portion of the primitive symbiotic links’ (Bleger 1967: 514), which can be applied both to the rituals of the group sessions and the ritual of drawing them as a particular form of play, referred to from a psychoanalytic vertex in 1.2 above, and discussed in the following section from an anthropological viewpoint.

3.3 FROM PLAY TO BRICOLAGE

Huizinga (1950: 4) stated ‘Animals play, so they must be more than merely mechanical things. We play and know that we play, so we must be more than merely rational beings, for play is irrational.’ yet this overlooked that play and ritual do not exclude each other. Agamben (2007) has pointed out that play and ritual are closely linked, as evidenced in the connection between play and the sacred in ancient ceremonies, dances, ritual

combat, dance, and sport. But while play derives from the realm of the sacred, it also transforms it and even overturns it (*ibid.*: 69). From a deterministic anthropological vertex, Huizinga (1950: 7) characterized play as a voluntary activity, ignoring that groups may also play (along), determined by the script of their ritual and the unconscious pull of the group in its context, engaging with pleasure between selfless abnegation and mindless cruelty and violence (Freud 1921). There is an overlap in the allied concepts of *play* and *game*. Play refers to the enjoyable activity of toying with imagination, while game (which involves play) refers to acting within specified protocols in a pursuit or activity within rules, performed either alone or with others, involving competition in overpowering or winning by defeating the other player or players as individual or team (if the game also emphasizes cooperation). Both forms may imply (emotional or bodily) risk which will increase challenge and enjoyment. They are characterized by repetition and alternation, without excluding chance or uncertainty, which are integral to play and games. They seek to resolve and thus end a tension, whether in puzzles, athletics, or gambling. However, as soon as the rules of a game are transgressed the play collapses, and player, referee, or umpire will call a halt and reset the game to its rules. Agamben (2007: 77 ff.) stated that play has its source in the sacred and that the sacred can be defined as the consubstantial unity of myth and ritual, where the transformation in play is an illusion, as evident in its etymology, from L. *illusio*, from *in* 'at, upon' + *ludere* 'play'. Here miniaturization, another peculiarity of the drawings (see section 6.2.3), plays a part in the creation of the sacred toy, the essential character of which depends on its temporal dimension being understood in both diachronic and synchronic senses. It is not an archive document – what survives is nothing other than the human temporality that was contained therein. 'The toy is a materialization of the historicity contained in objects, extracting it by means of a particular manipulation' (*ibid.*: 71);

it makes present and renders tangible human temporality in itself, the pure differential margin between the 'once' and the 'no longer'. Seen in this light, the toy presents certain analogies with bricolage [as] the toy, too, uses 'crumbs' and 'scraps' belonging to other structural wholes (or, at any rate modified structural wholes); and the toy, too, thereby transforms old signifieds into signifiers, and vice versa. (*ibid.*: 72)

Agamben pointed out that Lévi-Strauss 'drew the opposition between ritual and play into an exemplary formula: while rites transform events into structures, play transforms structures into events' (Agamben 2007: 73).

If ritual is therefore a machine for transforming diachrony into synchrony, play, conversely, is a machine for transforming synchrony into diachrony. [...] Ritual and play appear, rather, as two tendencies operating in every society, although the one never has the effect of eliminating the other, and although one might prevail over the other to a varying degree, they always maintain a differential

margin between diachrony and synchrony. [...] we can regard ritual and play not as two distinct machines but as a single machine, a single binary system, which is articulated across two categories which cannot be isolated and across whose correlation and difference the very functioning of the system is based. (*ibid.*: 74)

Agamben (2007) has proposed a relation of both correspondence and opposition between play and ritual, in the sense that both are engaged in a relationship with the calendar and with time since 'ritual fixes and structures the calendar; play, on the other hand, though we do not yet know how and why, changes and destroys it' (*ibid.*: 77). As the ritual institutes the sacred, sacrilege is the violation or misuse of what is regarded as sacred. In developing Benjamin's thinking in 'Critique of violence' (1921) in respect of the 'dogma of the sacredness of life', Agamben (2015) indicated that the term *profanation* (depriving something of its sacred character) is best understood in relation to another term: *consecration*, meaning the making or declaring something sacred and thus leaving the sphere of human law; while profanation means restoring something for free usage of mankind. 'To profane was thus to return the things that had become subject to a state of sacred exception – things that had been consecrated – to their original context' (Durantaye 2008: 29). This conception of the relation of sacred to profane is a desacralized one because, Agamben asserted, there is nothing inherently sacred in sacred things, just as there is nothing inherently contaminated in profane ones. Hence, to profane something does not debase its nature but introduces a positive act by liberating things and practices for communal usage, a notion taken up in section 6.2.3. Derrida (1978) indicated that, besides the tension between play and history, there is also the tension between play and presence.

Play is the disruption of presence. The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain. Play is always play of absence and presence, but if it is to be thought radically, play must be conceived of before the alternative of presence and absence. Being must be conceived as presence or absence on the basis of the possibility of play and not the other way around. (Derrida 1978: 292)

While Pink *et al.* (2016), writing on their approach to research, called attention to the disruptive potential of play, noting that playfulness can be seen in the 'seamless integration of games and creative mobile apps into our everyday lives and modes of communication' (*ibid.*: 1) and, hence

the playful can be seen as an orientation to action, a mode of inquiry, a set of practices which can help to expose some of the tacit power relations in and around the rhythms of data in everyday life. Play is fundamentally a creative, political and social activity. (*ibid.*: 2)

However, Pink *et al.* were referring to gaming rather than play, and Kuntz & Guyotte (2017) have forcefully critiqued what they considered research work seduced by the normative 'rhythm of data' because it 'dwells within a *methodology-of-the-past*, aimed at legitimizing an 'inherent logic of extraction' (Kuntz 2015, cited in Kuntz & Guyotte 2017: 668), to be considered another instance of the search for the thing-in-itself as shown by misguided attempts to reach and expose the unconscious (discussed in 1.2 and 1.4.2 above). Such methodology cannot be playful since its aim is 'serious accuracy' in creating representations of the past caught in a cycle of consumption in the present as products that the methodology itself consumes. 'Play in this circumstance is unimaginative repetition: variations on a previously determined theme' (*ibid.*). These authors have proposed to effect productive interventions through inquiry through excessive playful engagements, exploring an unknown future of possibilities outside a safe (standardized) logic of representation, since

the playful action of methodologies-of-the-immanent-now does not seek to transcend the enacted moments from which they stem; they become within the contexts in which they manifest. (ibid., italics added)

Such approaches foster a disruption provoked by a 'creative methodological stammering' (Koro-Ljungberg *et al.* 2015: 617) enlarging the range of and approach to methods.

One of the characteristics of play (since all play involves inventiveness) is its affinity with *bricolage*. The French verb *bricoler* originally referred 'to some extraneous movement: a ball rebounding, a dog straying, or a horse swerving' (Lévi-Strauss 1972: 16 ff.); a *bricoleur* to someone who works with her/his hands to solve problems, using whatever is available, from a limited (even if extensive) heterogeneous repertoire originally not intended for that purpose. Lévi-Strauss employed the term *bricolage* to refer to myths and primitive ways of thought, as opposed to the method of the engineer or scientist pursuing a reflective path, devising new techniques. Yet, as Derrida (1978) has indicated, the opposite of the bricoleur is not necessarily the engineer since

If one calls bricolage the necessity of borrowing one's concepts from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is bricoleur. The engineer, whom Lévi-Strauss opposes to the bricoleur, should be the one to construct the totality of his language, syntax, and lexicon. In this sense the engineer is a myth. (Derrida 1978: 285)

Breaking up with all concepts is a theological idea and 'the odds are that the engineer is a myth produced by the bricoleur' (*ibid.*). While Lévi-Strauss understood anthropology as studying bricolage rather than being bricolage itself, Denzin & Lincoln (1994) have used bricolage as a model for social research. 'They take its central feature to be pragmatic flexibility – the use of multiple ideas, perspectives, and methods, with none privileged and none ruled out' (Hammersley 1999: 576); it is a generative concept to be considered in its relevance to the practice, particularly because it bears an uncanny resemblance to

Freud's description of the dream-work (1900) and, hence, an affinity with drawing. The different elements of the bricolage form a complicated structure similar to when the whole mass of the dream-thoughts is brought under the pressure of the dream-work, and its elements are broken into fragments and jammed together 'almost like pack-ice' (Freud 1900: 312), a striking metaphor describing

a process of deconstruction and reconstruction, or reassignment, in which the elements of the 'complicated structure' of the dream-thoughts are broken up and forced into new relationships under the organizing principle of the dream-work. As with Lévi-Strauss's bricolage, these elements retain a certain historical density subsequent to the process of recombination: they are not indifferently interchangeable units but, to paraphrase Lévi-Strauss, 'fossilized evidence of the history of an individual'. (Johnson 2012: 359-60)

Following Lévi-Strauss (1964: 12) stating that it is not that men think in myths, but that myths operate in men's minds without their being aware of the fact, Johnson argued that it is bricolage which thinks, or operates, through the bricoleur, rather than the reverse because bricoleurs are never entirely in command of their means of production (Johnson 2012: 360). The bricoleur has to turn to

an already existent set made up of tools and materials, to consider or reconsider what it contains and, finally and above all, to engage in a sort of dialogue with it and, before choosing between them, to index the possible answers which the whole set can offer to his problem. (Lévi-Strauss 1964: 18)

Similarly, the drawer is impacted on by event, memory, body gestures, medium, and unconscious communications; and engage with whatever images may be at hand. Derrida called attention to how the 'overabundance of the signifier, its supplementary character, is thus the result of a finitude, that is to say, the result of a lack which must be supplemented' (1978: 290). Spivak (1976: xx) pointed out that for Derrida all knowledge, whether one is aware of it or not, is a sort of bricolage in opposition to the myth of engineering. Like all 'useful' words, 'bricolage' must also be placed under 'erasure'. For it can only be defined by its opposite – 'engineering', and quotes Derrida's statement that without that track of writing under erasure, the ultratranscendental text [bricolage under erasure] would so closely resemble the pre-critical text [bricolage plain and simple] as to be indistinguishable from it. The implications of the concept of bricolage for an understanding of the practice will be taken up in sections 5.2.3. and 6.2.2.

3.4 DECONSTRUCTION AND TESTIMONY

The concept of deconstruction highlights aporias and undecidables. Derrida has called attention to the metaphysics of Western thought as determined by dualisms. The drawing as utterance exposes a certain impurity, a trace of a fundamentally hesitant gesture, an

incomplete affirmation in spite of its appearance as visible utterance hence apparently evident yet requiring more than one definite reading. Derrida rejects the very idea of a first reading as other than as a preparation or contextualization, to be followed by

a more 'productive', fine-grained, distinctly deconstructive reading, which explores the tensions, the loose threads, the little 'openings' in the text which the classical reading tends to close over or put off as a problem for another day, which is really just a way to forget them. [...] Only after that reading, or through it, or best of all along with it, does a deconstructive reading settle in to point out the dead-ends and aporias and to make things more difficult. (Caputo 1997: 76)

The strategy of producing more than one drawing in succession from the experience of the same session has also ensued to acknowledge, engage with, and confront the wish (for certainty) to give the session one fixed meaning, because

The unconscious text is already a weave of pure traces, differences in which meaning and force are united – a text nowhere present, consisting of archives which are *always already* transcriptions. Originary prints. Everything begins with reproduction. Always already: repositories of a meaning which was never present, whose signified presence is always reconstituted by deferral, *nachträglich*, belatedly, *supplementarily*: for the *nachträglich* also means *supplementary*. The call of the supplement is primary, here, and it hollows out that which will be reconstituted by deferral as the present. The supplement, which seems to be added as a plenitude to a plenitude, is equally that which compensates for a lack. (Derrida 1978: 211–12)

Translate means both 'to remove from one place to another' and 'to turn from one language to another'. While turning implies a transformation, removing leaves an absence. Following Laplanche, Ray (2002) points out that translation

is definitionally imperfect. It entails a remainder, a necessary space of non-translation, which Laplanche calls the *à traduire* (the untranslated, or to-be-translated). The unconscious is born of the residue of the translation of the other's message, of all that remains un-symbolized. (*ibid.*: 34)

The drawing as an artefact is only an accessory to the deconstruction of the group as the object of enquiry. As in translation, it is the space that drawing leaves as an absence that has significance for reverie and fosters further working through:

The analyst's ability to continue the psychic work of the sessions between sessions will be important to the analysis and to the patient becoming able to live in the spatio-temporal world. (Birksted-Breen 2003: 1512)

Drawing the meeting of the group does not fix the seen, it only states its absence, which is 'an intermediary situation between presence (as far as intrusion) and loss (as far as

annihilation)' (Green 1975: 13). The drawing indicates an absence by the wish to hold on to the mental image of what is then depicted, and inevitably failing. This absence causes a shock by its helplessness, as 'a presence that attacks' (Faimberg 2005: 111), since 'absence is what makes the (baby in the) subject mad' (Winnicott 2005: 131). Thus drawing (v.) takes place from the site of absence, viewing the scene of the group, blind to it, and unable to make it explicit. What drawing (v.) captures is the inevitability of death, of no-longer there, and mourning returns in a different guise. Drawings A and B function on each other as supplementary traces of the vicissitudes of the group. Newman (2010) differentiates between marks (made at the time of drawing) and traces (left by something that was present)

as records of a time that has already departed in the very moment of their inscription. [...] Traces are more than marks because there is something to them that is not a matter of the perception of their qualities – that is what I am calling the dimension of absence. Their presence indicates an absence on which they depend for their very presentness. (*ibid.*: 5)

Furthermore, Newman indicated that Derrida, in his catalogue for the exhibition *Memoirs of the Blind* (1993), was not intent in providing an account of the materiality of drawing but of the relation of drawing-as-trace to 'witness' – and rather than describing or explaining drawings, Derrida told stories about them. However, his intention was not to reduce drawing to the illustration of a story

because we are not primarily concerned with drawing as image. The story arises in relation to the mark as trace, trace of absence and trace of the other: the story concerns that which withdraws from or exceeds presence, for example the other, or an event – maybe traumatic – of which sense needs to be made. (Newman 2010: 5)

In an essay on the experience of looking at photographs, Barthes (1982) articulated the two related concepts of *studium* and *punctum*. He proposed that when the image may stir the viewer, her/his emotions require a 'rational intermediary of an ethical and political culture [...] [derived] from an average effect, almost from a certain training' (p. 26) named the *studium*, through which the viewer will be interested and participate in the reception of the message. Yet there is a second element that 'will break (or punctuate) the *studium*, [...] which rises from the scene, shoots out like an arrow, and pierces me' (*ibid.*). This is the *punctum*, a wound, 'an accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me' (p. 27). The *studium* functions as a contract between creators and consumers, endowing the photograph with the functions 'to inform, to represent, to surprise, to cause to signify, to provoke desire. And [...] I recognize them with more or less pleasure: I invest them with my *studium* (which is never my delight or my pain)' (p. 28).

While Barthes did not posit a rule of connection between *studium* and *punctum*, what should be noticed is the mutual necessity of the latter (as trace) with the former (as

mark) since the *punctum* is set on interrupting and disturbing the order of the *studium*. Beyond a facile alignment with signifier and signified, *studium* and *punctum* are of relevance to understand the workings of a representation (visual or otherwise), the *punctum* bringing into perception the violent dimension of otherness, both frightening and attractive, though not necessarily at the same instant. The drawing is a *topology* (i.e., the study of geometric properties and spatial relations unaffected by the continuous change of shape or size of figures, concerned with the way in which constituent parts are interconnected) and not a *topography* (i.e., a detailed description or visual representation of the features of an area). The intrusion of the drawing and the loss that it actually invites are different categories: the former is an attribute of the drawing, while the latter is the experience of the receiver. The receiver (whoever receives the communication) may be actual or imagined (and also both), an insight which depends not on new information but – nearer to Freud's concept of *Nachträglichkeit* – on a change in interpretation of an event in the past. The missing element in the classical Freudian interpretation would be the intersubjective dimension of the event (Laplanche 2012: 105) – the survival of the message, its reviviscency, and its translation.

However, an interpretative reading of the drawing would be mining it for meaning, instead of attending to the slippage of signified and signifier to disturb the logic of the drawing as text. A deconstructive reading would work like Bion's Grid, which comments on the session but does not explain its causality. To say that the session is experienced as the quality of K (act of knowing) represents the session for further exploration but does not attempt to empty it. The interpretation thus enacts a fantasy of looking through stuff, the x-ray vision seeing the naked body under its clothing, penetrating to the vulnerable meaning as pre-existing rather than turning (a)round the session, making it available through the drawing to the dance of its construction, rather than taking it over by language, erasing the sensuous component of the experience. The image is too close to the origin and may be replaced for the words as a sign, as happens with young children who are able to draw what they know without restriction yet stop drawing as they reach school age and learn to write, replacing what was felt by written language now as culture, and will have to struggle later to access the capacity to write about feelings.

Psychoanalysis offers some parallel readings but deconstruction limits their certainty. In the end, what is understood depends on the quality of the listening, of the reading, not on the mimetic accuracy of the translation. However, the aesthetic imperative introduces a difficulty when drawings become associated with creativity and beauty (even if as an aspiration), while the writing of notes or reporting is not. Drawings are factual reports, made rather than real. Absence is enigmatic as unknown – absence rather than non-existence. But, if it is not there, what keeps it there? The navel of the dream cannot be explained. Drawing is then the site of pondering, a dance, an interaction, an interstice, its rhythm made up of sound and silence over time. Engaging with the silence of the text (not what has not been said but that which points to an omission, a lack) may be

demanding since 'there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between truth and fiction that has been cathected with affect' (Freud 1985: 264). In the holding environment of the group, the symbol may exist without premature interpretation. The group does not interpret (i.e., hypothesize) but lives the lived experience of the aspects of the observation captured (imprisoned) by the drawing. In practice, a deconstructive reading of the drawing looks like Bion's Grid – *it comments on the drawing, it does not explain the session*. To say that a session is experienced as K re-presents it for further exploration but does not attempt decoding and emptying. A deconstructive reading of the drawing, rather than an interpretative one mining it for meaning, would attend to the sliding of the signified and signifier to disturb the logic of the text/drawing. The violence of the interpretation is thus kept at a distance. Avoiding the violence that results in a ravishment of the session – possessing it, abusing it, showing it off. A deconstructive reading must also consider the unconscious of the subject(s) (group and observer) as well as its linguistic (language) vicissitudes. The research is the deconstruction as a speculation (i.e., seen from afar) of the drawing. The purpose is to create a space (site) for the sight of what is not perceived as present, although this may assume an existence withheld to be revealed while protecting the experience from closure, for it to remain open and thus vulnerable, avoiding the trimmings of certainty, its hardness, its dismissal of alternatives. Such a reading is not a code-breaker but opens up the possibility of listening and watching without translation as when enjoying a song in a language unknown. Attempts at forcing it into translation may survive but they may be noticed. The marvel of the dream cannot be explained in drawing as the sight/site of pondering.

How to conceive the silence of the drawing as text (not what has not been said, but what points to an omission, to the un-said, or unsaying)? This requires drawing an other with whom the observer has a contact, recent or distant (time lapsed is immaterial in the register of the other in the self). If the other is imagined it will depend on the existence of a transference as to whether this constitutes a dialogue or soliloquy. Physical, geographical distance is not an impediment providing there has been at some point an other whose message was unconsciously received so that the relatedness finds expression (translation) in the drawing as a

pictographic script (*Bilderschrift*), the characters of which have to be transposed individually into the language of the dreamthoughts' [...]. *Bilderschrift*: not an inscribed image but a figurative script, an image inviting not a simple, conscious, present perception of the thing itself – assuming it exists – but a reading. (Derrida 1978: 218)

That is, a reading as experiencing the drawing and associating to it, without underestimating the hiding strategies of the unconscious as what may be deferred and supplemented. In his letter to Fliess (Laplanche 2012: 54) Freud affirms that 'memory is not present as a single event and the mnemonic traces are reorganized according to new

relationships.’ Laplanche (2012) posits that this is not limited to two times but n times; the transition of one to the other is a reordering or translation. The reuse of the translation is what we call repression (*ibid.*: 55). According to Laplanche, translation is a necessity in accordance with homeostasis and quantitative equilibrium. That propensity to translation is derived from the need of the neuronal apparatus to equalize the quantities of excitement it holds in different places. A forward movement develops, a backward movement enriches the original. When we go back to the original text we search for a supplementary riches, that which has not yet been translated by the translation. *The translation both interprets and represses the original.* ‘What was seen, heard, lived, carries in itself something that must be understood après-coup, it demands a translation. Human beings are translators at heart’ (*ibid.*: 64). The drawing is the translation of an experience prior to language, or not shaped by language even if affected by the languages at work, whether verbal, visual, historical. The drawing itself is also an experience, producing a further experience because the representation is derived from the earlier experience of observing the group as a participant, as the source of the translation. What has to be noticed (and avoided) is the aspiration to normalize or domesticate the drawing, turning it into a weak translation of the (unclearly) perceived dynamics of the group, transforming the foreign (*unheimlich*) and insufficiently understood event into a homely (*heimlich*) representation, yet that relationship remains as the source of the uncanny. The possible mis-representation of the event that a drawing as translation makes is not a mistake (whether semantic or lexical) but an error (L. *errare* ‘wander, go astray’), uncertain, ambivalent.

Error is closer to equivocation and digression, to betrayal and infidelity, to Derrida’s *différance*, to the burrows and rhizomes of ‘minor literatures’ (in Deleuzian terms) – and thus to mis-readings and mistranslations. (Waisman 2006: para. 4)

A misreading which is also a gift. As Waisman indicated, ‘it does not really mean anything to say that a translation betrays or is unfaithful to the original. The question [...] is whether such a betrayal is fruitful’ (*ibid.*: para. 5); and Borges pointed out that ‘the concept of a *definitive* text belongs only to religion or fatigue’ (1996, 1: 239). Since all texts are drafts, there can be no original against which to measure the fidelity of a translation. Hence translating group experiences into drawings offers the opportunity for a creative infidelity in a re-interpretation of the observation as the source, recognizing the primacy of what Proust called ‘that perpetual error, which is “life itself”’ (quoted in De Man 1971: 1).

The preposition ‘from’ in the title *Drawing from the site of absence* indicates location (where the drawing takes place) and also points to the provenance of the construction of whatever was seen, informing, feeding, shaping, constituting it, whether material or ideal. In practice, the group is observed at the place where it meets (organization, academic institution, consulting room), and the drawing is made by

the observer in their own place, there being a lapse (a brief or temporary failure of concentration, memory, or judgement) in place and time (from hours to one or more days). The drawing becomes a *memento* (an object kept as a reminder of a person or event) and, perhaps even further, a *memento mori*, as a reminder of the inevitability of death, questioning what is alive in the drawing. Acknowledging attachment may also point to the drawing as a relic – an object surviving from an earlier time, kept as an object of reverence. In terms of technique, drawing B is partly a doodle (a rough drawing made absent-mindedly), even if also drawn with intent, wishing for the never-fully-possible freedom of drawing ‘whatever comes to mind’, since censorship is always in operation. Drawings are made on paper rather than on screen or tablet because of the vulnerable materiality of support and medium which disables the default to precede the result. The faint sound of drawing is absent in digital media (even though current software may partially imitate the drag of medium on support). There is an old-fashioned pleasure derived from the materials in use, their limited number, and the necessary skills in using them. This is not about expanding the range of medium and support but staying with the absence and the impossible satisfaction of desire for completeness.

How does one guard, regard, the invisible other when one’s self is blind?

Derrida’s response is to pose a haptic eye: ‘Can eyes manage to touch, first of all, to press together like lips?’ (2005: 2). He answers, ‘Yes, yes’: ‘I am invisibly touched by the other, without any reappropriation, which is what I earlier termed absolute mourning’ (2005: 305). Yet this ‘kiss’ is like mourning, which means that it is structured by impossibility and ‘spacing’ as well as delay. That is, this ‘kiss’ is not a simple affair between ‘one’ other and another ‘one’ other. As with all relations, the ‘kiss’ is haunted (2005: 179). (Ballif 2014: 465)

Hence writing is the very scene, the very graphic scene of mourning, of the self-life-death-other relation in and through writing (Ballif 2014: 465), and whether in writing or in drawing one leaves traces behind, ‘all graphemes are of a testamentary essence’ (Derrida 1976: 69). In spite of her/his membership, the observer is a foreigner to the group, an Other caught in the mirage of belonging, both present and absent. When one writes books or makes drawings of the group

you do not know to whom you are speaking, you invent and create silhouettes, but in the end it no longer belongs to you. Spoken or written all these gestures leave us and begin to act independently of us. Like machines or, better, like marionettes. (Derrida 2007: 32)

‘Spoken or written’ is incomplete without ‘or drawn’ – the drawing is a testament and testimony, a machine rather than a still life, a mechanism that once underway performs selflessly, evidence of a process as well as an artefact.

In the beginning, then, there is mourning – an originary mourning or melancholy that is not nostalgia for some lost presence but an affirmation that the testamentary trace and a mourning for the other is the unchanging form of our lives. Derrida will thus say in an interview from 1990: ‘I mourn therefore I am’.
(Naas 2015: 117)

For Derrida, mourning cannot be successfully completed and, therefore, can never be distinguished from melancholia. While Freud (1917) contrasted a successful mourning that eventually incorporates the lost object with a melancholy that is unable to bring about such incorporation, Derrida (1977) argued that such an incorporation is impossible and undesirable and that all mourning, because unsuccessful, must remain melancholic.

3.5 LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

While the dream-work creates a translation of the dream content (section 2.5 above), the text translated as a drawing is not the group itself but its perception – arrived at through the conjunction of direct observation, projections from the group, and phantasies by the observer. An intersemiotic translation renders such text into an equivalent narrative in a different sign system. If a verbal account of the experience of session were to be considered the original text, this would imply that the drawing is fashioned from the telling of the session rather than as a direct representation from event to paper. But there never is a direct representation because what has been witnessed is at the same time perceived (i.e., translated into meaning, that is, into language). There is no conceptualization without language, without identifying and naming. The naming gets translated in part, but there is more – the representation is a translation of the perceived into language and into a graphic image. But also some of the perceived has not come in through language. Hence the drawing is a partial translation, broadly accurate to the motif, but also partly untranslated, or translated and not decodable in the looking – because *there is more than meets the eye*, in observing, drawing, and looking at the drawn. The picture is a palimpsest of traces, consciously and unconsciously produced and noticed. Jakobson (1959: 233) distinguished three types of translation:

1. *Intralingual translation*, or rewording – an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language)
2. *Interlingual translation* or translation proper – an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language)
3. *Intersemiotic translation* or transmutation – an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems)

Jakobson pointed out that while messages may serve as adequate interpretations of code units or messages, since there is no full equivalence through translation.

Even apparent synonymy does not yield equivalence, and Jakobson shows how intralingual translation often has to resort to a combination of code units in order to fully interpret the meaning of a single unit. Hence a dictionary of so-called synonyms may give 'perfect' as a synonym for 'ideal', or 'vehicle' as a synonym for 'conveyance', but in neither case can there be said to be complete equivalence, since each unit contains within itself a set of non-transferable associations and connotations. (Bassnett 2002: 33)

Furthermore, in terms of the practice of drawing group sessions, the observer/drawer is engaging in self-translation, as s/he translates her/his own experience of the group session into a visual image. Grutman & van Bolderen (2014) pointed out that

the self-translating writer is commonly allowed to endow her work with an aura of authenticity that is rarely, if ever, granted to 'standard' translations. By routinely identifying self-translations as the work of the original authors, without accounting for any of the nuances in terms of personae alluded to above, the author's authority is transferred metonymically to the final product, which thus becomes a second original. ... self-translators are routinely given poetic license to rewrite 'their' originals (*ibid.*: 324)

This would be the case if the drawings were made under the belief that they are 'creative' manifestations (an often invoked paradigm) and, as such, necessarily 'authentic' (i.e., faithful) representations of the group session, when they can only be representations of the experience of the observer. Speed (of drawing without hesitation seeking to preserve spontaneity) is an issue not because it may or may not be faster to draw than to write a description, or because it helps to protect from corrections, but because it allows spontaneous gestures.

[According to Freud] the pleasure of manual activity can only be considered in reference to impulses sublimated after they have been invested in the body itself and bound to erogenous zones. In this perspective, manual pleasure adheres to the economic rule by which a sudden release of energy follows an accumulation phase experienced as painful. This release allows for the excitation to settle back down to its prior level. (Tisseron 1994: 30–31)

The hand's drawing gesture is an essential movement by which thought learns how to think itself through. [...] the inscriber, the subject of all this throwing and pulling also becomes its object. He is not only the one who casts out his mark – his thought – across the paper; he is also cast out by it, thus at the risk of losing his identity. (*ibid.*: 36)

The purpose of clinical psychoanalysis is not intellectual understanding through the act of translation of the ciphered codes that present themselves to view to analyst and analysand – in dreams, associations, parapraxes, and enactments – but the emotional

experience of the analysand re-living – with pleasure, puzzlement, distress, fear, anger – the instances of lost plenitude, the lack and excess that those primitive enigmas are traces of, alive in the unconscious mind. Translation, thus, not only possesses a transformative and revelatory power; it actually supersedes and eliminates the original (Guldin 2016: 79). It is a misunderstanding of the power of translation if conceived as a dualism source–target language rather than an interaction. The original is not the group (which would imply access to the group-in-itself) but the experience of the session as experienced by group and observer. Thinking in pictures is an incomplete form of becoming conscious, and the translator subverts the text and may come into contact with its own incoherence, its own subversion in the production of a metaphor which, as Freud (1954: 175) argued, was not a means of carrying meaning over from one form into another; it was rather a ‘false connection’, a failure in translation.

language will behave in ways that will relentlessly reveal one’s inability to ever have complete mastery over it. In this respect, Freud was the logical precursor to deconstruction in the keen attention it pays to what Barbara Johnson (1985: 146) has called ‘the misfires, losses, and infelicities that prevent any given language from being one’. (Quinney 2004: 116)

Noticing her efforts to translate a text by Pontalis, Quinney (2004) described how her own unconscious resistance to the text had to be explored in order to further the translation. The process of translation would be inevitably affected by misreadings and displacements of meaning resulting from the translator’s unconscious intentions. In an instance of misreading, the text ‘contains something that rouses the reader’s defenses – some information or imputation distressing to him – and which is therefore corrected by being misread so as to fit in with a repudiation or with the fulfillment of a wish’ (Freud 1901: 114). The translator does not just attend to the words in the text but also tries to communicate what is extra-linguistic, such as the response from the translator to the unconscious of the text. Translation ‘depends on consciousness, and by extension, the unconscious, to do its work’ (*ibid.*: 122), since

the translator [ignores] what signifiers are his and which ones, in the moments of distraction, or the opposite, in the abrupt transference tension with part of the text they are translating, will suddenly materialize from beneath the pen, subject as they are to the appeal of certain signifiers in the text being translated to discover them there, awkward and incongruous, in the text to come. (Peraldi 1982, quoted by Quinney 2004: 124)

The translator is not an interpreter as transmitter but a translator for the text and the act of translation itself, because translation is an open-ended process of interpretation and reinterpretation.

There is no readily accessible, stable original to fall back upon. There are only translations calling for further translations. The manifest dream-content is a translation of the latent dream-thought and its interpretation by the analyst therefore a translation of a translation. (Guldin 2016: 81)

As Barthes suggested, 'our concern must be to look at *how* texts mean, not at *what* they mean' (Sturrock 1979: 58), in addition to meaning, not instead of, and hence what seems required is

a dualistic model of the translation process: analyse the source-text surface structure down into its deep structure, make the transfer to the target language at the level of the deep structure, then restructure the message in terms of the target-language surface structure. (Robinson 2003: 13–4)

The French word for translation is *traduction*. As in other Romance languages, this usage is in turn a misreading of the Latin (Steiner 1992: 311) whereby translation is (etymologically) close to betrayal, as in the Italian *traduttore traditore*. It is also close to interpretation, that is, the objective of the translator in respect of the text. According to Bornhauser (2014) The task of the translator, rather than aspire to produce a perfect, absolute, definitive translation, would be to remain faithful to its intraducibility. The translation must put into practice

a certain infidelity to the original [or] a fidelity to the mobility, the strangeness and the radical incomprehensibility of language. [...] The relationship of the translation with the original would be, at the most, tangential: rubbing instead of overlapping, caress and abandonment instead of coincidence and restraint. (*ibid.*: 274)

Because of its non-linear and logical structure, the narrative of a dream (even after secondary revision) will be closer to poetry than to prose and therefore disruptive because of effects of substitution alongside the paradigmatic axis. Such disruption opens the way to new meanings and ways of understanding. 'Not to be able, initially, to understand poetic language, is thus the first perceptible index of its very real effects' (Lechte 1994: 141). The poetic is at work in the drawing, which at times may be or appear to be without a narrative. Like in poetic language, it is not the experience behind the drawing that concerns us but the experience of the drawing itself. Like a poem, a drawing is a representation of something it refers to but also a representation about itself doing something (see the discussion of performativity in section 3.7, below).

Poetry is language in which the signified or meaning *is the whole process of signification itself*. [...] Poetry is something that is done to us, not just said to us. The meaning of its words is closely bound up with the experience of them. (Eagleton 2007: 21)

Psychoanalysis is a narrative, ostensibly in the form of prose, like short stories and novels, which describe imaginary events and people as something feigned or invented by the imagination, i.e., a fiction 'that which is invented or imagined in the mind' (from L. *fictio* 'a fashioning or feigning', from *ingere* 'to shape, form, devise, feign'). But it is also gestural, temporal, and even ineffable because it is not concerned with too great or extreme an experience to be expressed or described in words. Like the arrow in Zen archery, it may not hit the target – but it will not miss.

While writing tells, drawing shows, but the visual utterance is unclear whether in the first or third person – 'I show X' or 'it shows X'. Who speaks in the drawing? Is the drawing a text about the object or an elocutionary act? The drawing does something, it performs an action, it signals, demonstrates, represents, exposes, informs – and hides, ignores, deforms. The wish to believe a drawing ('yes, it means this'), to take it at face value, in the effort to make sense of it, is like listening to an utterance and pondering on what was said, when, in what language, by whom, to whom. It may be determined by the need to make sense for survival but also to understand for its own pleasure, to decode, to inscribe in a known code, to be spoken to, to listen as a member of the system, to read the drawing as a message, as a communication, as having an intention, as the addressee of an intention, even if not personal, even if as one of the crowd, longing to be included. A word on its own is no message, less so a phoneme. There are minimal elements in a drawing (tree, eye), but they are not the drawing, which is a statement, an affirmation (and negation) – 'this is what it is' (and 'this is not what it is not'), it functions as a propositional language ('here you see an arm', 'this is an arm') leading to the urban myth of the painter explaining to the naïve onlooker that what was being considered and referred to as an arm was not arm but just a drawing.

Someone speaks or writes through the drawing. Semantics are in operation – the sign may be iconic (the shape of a cat), or indexical (a footprint of a cat's paw), but if a symbol is also an iconic sign then there are no symbols by themselves, they are a characteristic of particular iconic or indexical signs, if the drawing is in a representational realistic or naturalistic mode. However, a non-iconic approach to drawing (e.g. Cy Twombly) must also be considered, although for the purpose of this study, it seems less useful, as the anchors become abstractions with the risk of disregarding that the group (with its observer) is an actual event in the world.

[T]he gesture of art in general, and of drawing in particular, does not aim for a repletion or discharge of a tension but rather the opening and revival or resurgence of an intensity. (Nancy 2013: 27)

One more in the long chain of translations, this one is intersemiotic and every image, every translation is a de-formation (a disfigurement). Furthermore, the drawing opens up the possibility of disrupting the textual by the visual and, conversely, the potential of an approach to thinking that intends to disturb its own logical process. The dialectic comes into effect after the connections are made, which do not just follow a deductive process

but, fundamentally, an inductive one. Hence the need of both for reasoning to unfold. Or else it will be a well-organized empty cupboard. Or a full cupboard in which nothing can be ever found and put to use. The (de)composition of the drawing, of the past, not remembering the past but remembering the present, which is a bricolage, hence the dynamics of humiliation: there is always an Other as spectator of the violence of interpretation. Like sexuality, drawing is frightening, regarded with awe, more distant but alive in its energy, drawing as critical engagement with the material of the observation, noticing, treating something as notable, noticeable, aided or delayed by the polysemy of the drawing – a woman or a duck, two profiles or a vase. Yet woman, duck, profile, vase have greater differentiated value than the lines have different layers. To know the lexicon of graphemes, to give meaning to their juxtaposition – a sad person, or a person sad, connote different feelings.

The drawing is also an *ekphrasis* of the observation as a visualized event. Originally a Greek rhetorical exercise, ekphrasis has long been considered in a narrow sense as the literary representation of an action depicted by visual art, as a scene simultaneously frozen in time and in perpetual motion, such as Homer's wondrous description of the shield of Achilles in Book 18 of the *Iliad*. Other forms, such as *reverse ekphrasis* – the visual representation of written text – have also been proposed. It is the intersemiotic transformation (rather than translation) of what may have been experienced into its representation. In *De Pictura* (Alberti 1450), artists were invited to reconstruct images from the classical past. It proposed ekphrasis as the use of history (as historical artefact, or narrative) to address the generic spatiality of literary form. The relevance of ekphrasis as a category is the acknowledgement of the potential for a poetic representation of form, a representation which need not be in only written form but also, as a visual text, an opportunity for displacement and metaphor. This recourse to itself may be mere narcissism or acknowledgement of what may be valued in the drawing of the group, perhaps intimate knowledge or dirty secret. The secret is always in respect of the self, even if apparently disowned as part of the other – something that this other will not have access to because of repression and a not so benevolent suspicion ('no, no, really, where have you been to – through what pleasurable, unmentionable dirty places?'). But the potential value of the second (more rational, critical) reading will depend on the potential of the first intuitive, less censored one. The drawing is then to be re-read by the drawer, mistrusting its appearance, its mood, language as fact ('something made') and therefore looking for the other certainties, obscured, erased, absent, and purposely confusing and concealed, arriving at a further reading or a reading further along than the observation itself – hence drawing as distancing and getting closer. In re-reading her/his own drawings the drawer interrupts a flow of obscurity of secondary revision darkness, suspecting both signifier and signified. Drawing can then be a joke, a romp, a seriously playful articulation of a simulacrum. The drawer can write critically her/his own drawings – process, result, technique, sources, references, age, body, fears.

The drawing re-presents what was perceived (felt, seen, invented, damaged), not looking for a metaphor but allowing metonymy and metaphor to take place in the visual representation. A second drawing is necessary because the first will be too obedient and therefore unsatisfactory. Yet they will be related in the way the I Ching oracle (Wilhelm 1968) identifies the moving line leading to a second hexagram that complements the first one, adding a note of caution to the certainty of the first reading.

Symbolizing through the drawing takes the observation from the internal observation (memory) to an in-between state, neither meaningful nor meaningless but pregnant with meaning if fear does not forbid its hatching. But the drawing must be actually drawn as an artefact, not just as a visual imagination. Drawing on paper (rather than on screen) implies a set of material conditions (e.g. unerasable) which impact on the process of recording not as the formulation of a 'model *in* the mind' in respect of the construction and understanding of a narrative – but as a 'model *of* the mind' (Britton 2015). Drawing is the recognition, recording, re-presentation of an event, resisted, and desired. The sequence has several stages, first as something that cannot be said, then something that the drawer cannot say and must remain unsaid (a holocaust, an ultimate darkness). Drawing is frightening because it does not anticipate what will surface, how it will surface, if it will surface, or that it may not surface at all. Furthermore, language remains a difficulty in allowing what can be thought, as the implication of 'to surface' seems essentialist – there is 'something' below the surface – and a manipulation (drawing is done with the hand or hands) will bring it up, it may make it boil to the surface. The drawing is then a mirror view of the original, which cannot be represented. 'There was a time when I also searched for expression; now I know that my gods only grant me allusion or mention' (Borges 1961: 8). This is true of all forms of representation and can be stated as

the drawing attempts to represent what is, not what is felt
the drawing attempts to represent what is felt, not what is
the drawing does not attempt – the drawing is. Sight ≠ site

And this 'being' is the pleasure of drawing, as the marks selected are not fixed, they are recognizable but not signs, which can be frightening because the horror the drawing elicits is a re-presentation that replaces the experience, the known for the sign of the known, only generic and, according to skill, more or less accurate as a mimesis, convention, point-for-point correlation. The horror of the image as a blasphemy that disturbs, frightens, stirs up, agitates because it steals. It will be necessary to incorporate images to disturb the writing, to interrupt, intrude, distract, disorder, disorganize, interfere, stir, agitate, fluster, disconcert, unsettle the drawing. To be original it is necessary to go to the source (the term is contradictory) as both

1. earliest, primary, untouched, authentic, genuine, actual, true;

2. innovative, creative, imaginative, new novel, fresh, refreshing, unusual, unconventional, distinctive.

In opposition to the explorative use of drawing is the scientific preoccupation of technical rationality concerned with exactitude and the impossibility of arriving at meaning through the metaphor because of the belief in the existence of a concrete language that surrenders its object directly, unmediated, undisturbed. A doodle by an unskilled draughtsman or a drawing by Raffaello Sanzio carry the potential for a metaphor to be read, but there may be more unexpected possibilities in the doodle than in an exquisitely mimetically accurate drawing. To draw out that which exists, the study must struggle against the wish for determinacy enshrined in the dream of translation as a mimetic process – in the horror of the absence of meaning, the dream becomes a nightmare.

3.6 DRAWING AS VERB AND NOUN

Drawing refers to the act of dragging a medium over a surface, leaving a mark. It is distinct from painting, where the surface of the support is covered, while the support of a drawing (paper or other flat material) shows through the medium (pencil, charcoal, or pen); as well as by its use of line to represent the visual experience of space, where one surface overlaps (as in an object in front of a background) or recedes to meet another (as in the junction of wall and floor). The drawing (the artefact) shows the trace of the past – the unconscious as the site of the compulsion to repeat (Freud 1914) – left by the drawer through the process as evidence of the action of drawing. Drawing partakes of both the ephemeral in the mark and the permanence of the trace.

The trace is not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself. The trace has, properly speaking, no place, for effacement belongs to the very structure of the trace. (Derrida 1973: 156)

Unlike a photograph, a drawing is not an *analogon* of the object or scene depicted, as in the Western practice of placing the support of the drawing in between artist and motif to outline the drawing as the intersection on the support as a visual screen, between drawer and object or event as shown by Dürer's engraving (page 118). There are distinct ways of drawing, e.g.

- to study and question reality, communicating that which has been perceived – which is a depiction of the perception, not of the object perceived;
- to communicate ideas to self and others, such as an imagined object or situation (i.e., not present to the senses), as an attempt to objectify;
- to retrieve from memory something that has been seen but escapes consciousness.

Such drawings are made to take an image out of the mind and put it on paper.

The practice of drawing groups is considered akin to sketching ('making a hasty or undetailed drawing or painting as a preliminary study'), where the drawer explores her/his thinking through the aid of visualization. It is not an intentional fine art activity (seeking aesthetic expression), or illustrative but it is open to indeterminacy. Hence it does not intend to be an organized *game* but an instance of *play* (with ideas and images). While this may lead to discovery this is not its expressed aim because even though the drawer knows s/he is at play, its potential for irrational moves must be protected. Play is associated with fun, and the *fun of playing* 'resists all analysis, all logical interpretation. As a concept, it cannot be reduced to any other mental category' (Huizinga 1950: 3). The term *drawing* refers to visual representations that bridge two aspects of the perceptions of an event:

- as experienced, remembered, and recalled (descriptive mode), making use of automatic processes of perception and retrieval, and
- as imagined (inventive mode) from data derived from tacit knowledge about, and unconscious communications from, the subject.

The difference between drawing as a set of marks on a support and a drawing of something (i.e., with a referent) is that the former can only tell us about its materiality and about the drawer, while the latter tells of other than itself such as the relationship between drawer and that drawn, be it an object, person, landscape, or fantasy. Such artefacts are hybrids that play with the actual sensual data together with the emotional experience of the event, recombining them around culturally determined schemas of visual representation and, therefore, segregating, isolating, modifying, omitting, and adding meaningful components to the narrative, which does not speak for itself, and has to be made sense of. The drawing does not aim or pretend to be an accurate re-presentation of the situation witnessed, but an exercise in ekphrasis (a verbal account or evocation of a typically non-present image or object): the drawing is both a record and a construction. In 'A note on the "Mystic Writing-Pad"' (1925a), Freud was

concerned with explaining how the open perceptual present and the registered mnemonic past cooperate in experience. Consciousness is enigmatically involved with both, taking account as it does of past experience in the present situation. (Eng 1980: 136)

What the Mystic Writing-Pad records is the trace. The drawing does not record the trace itself but a trace of the trace. Derrida (1978: 226) points out that two hands are needed for the apparatus to function, as well as 'a system of gestures, a coordination of independent initiatives, an organized multiplicity of origins'.

If we imagine one hand writing upon the surface of the Mystic Writing-Pad while another periodically raises its covering sheet from the wax slab, we shall have a

concrete representation of the way in which I tried to picture the functioning of the perceptual apparatus of our mind. (Freud 1925a: 232)

The components of a drawing are not content and form (sign and signified) as all aspects of a drawing contribute to its meaning: what it shows and what it does not, what it foregrounds and what it omits, its choice of language, viewpoint, size, shape, support, medium, technique, quality of line, skill, frame or lack of it, the manner of display, whether one or a series, whether representing a still moment or a movement and a its transformation. Neither is the opposition between drawing the percept (what has been perceived while looking at the motif) or the concept (what is known about the motif from looking at it), an either/or to be accepted, as if these work in tandem. Drawings are (visual) signs and therefore not transparent – they are not an *analogon* of the object depicted, even if they appear to be so, inscribed in cultural codes of representation. 'There are certain paintings which animals could read. No animal could ever read a drawing' (Berger 2005: 51). The immediacy and speed of drawing seem to feed 'the popular mythology of the immediate communicability of drawing' (Petherbridge 2008: 33). However, drawings, like all communication systems, require that codes be learnt and shared by maker and viewer.

Broadly, there may be two kinds of drawings: those drawn in the presence of the object (or event), and those done later, from the memory of the object. Drawings may be done in the presence of the object and be constructed as if drawn without a naturalistic (illusionistic) reference to the object by taking liberties, as it were, in terms of content or form or both. Perhaps we call them artworks when the emphasis seems to be in the articulation of the experience. But even if drawn from the object the resulting visual formulation is not an equivalent because of its (smaller) size and lack of volume. Yet representations can mistakenly be taken for the object they represent. Drawings are arbitrary constructs within the confines of particular boundaries of style and graphic language within a visual culture – they are human-made artefacts, made by hand. They are therefore not just projections or passive homologues of the object: they constitute an experiment with it. Vasari (1550) described drawing not solely rooted in technique and observation, but as originating in the intellect of the artist. Because it is entirely code dependent – rather than analogic – a drawing offers unreliable evidence. Even a photograph, because of the developing technical capacity of digital processing to manipulate the medium, can no longer be taken for granted as an iconic representation.

However, the drawings referred to in this study are illusionistic in nature, that is, they suggest to the viewer (in however imprecise a form) characters and objects, whether realistic or fantasized. Drawings (particularly if they are not made by a skilled practitioner) are inevitably heterogeneous because they show the combination of a variety of representation systems. An important distinction is the difference between ideational and observational drawing. Observational drawings will have a higher level of redundancy, that is, the conventional or predictable nature of the message (Fiske 1982: 10). Ideational

drawings may be highly entropic because of their decreased informational content resulting in greater ambiguity (Eco 1989: 46), in order to allow more possible (and impossible) readings because of their 'openness', assisting the process of thinking. Ideational drawing refers to drawing ideas through conventional (given) or unconventional (invented) constructs, to explore one's mind in response to a theme, or preoccupation, or to solve a problem, or to think something through, explore possibilities, record transformations in the process by allowing the drawing and its associations to give place to further articulations. Ideational drawing has a poietic function because it does not just work linearly (syntagmatically) but across the paradigmatic axis, by substitution.

Ideational drawing, both as process and as artefact, is a thinking space – not a space where thought is re-presented but rather a space *where thinking is presenced* Rosenberg (2008: 109). It is 'thinking' and not 'thought'. When drawing is used to ideate it functions in the present tense, in the immediacy of the thinking-act. Thought, on the other hand, is of the past, in a sense concluded, settled, and in some way objectified. Ideational drawing is a form of thinking that attracts thinking. Although ideational drawing may be considered not as a form of communication but as a space where the individual can see the leaps in thinking that the act of drawing can produce (Rosenberg 2008: 123), this thinking is a reflective communication both to the drawer and to those who look at the drawing as an investigation. Drawing from a memory of the event is ideational thinking in the present in which one draws the seen (experienced) in the past. Such drawings offer a hands-on experiential process of articulation of a representation that combines (shows) what was seen, remembered, forgotten (repressed), imagined, mythologized, and known. It operates from a heterogeneous and (even if extensive) limited repertoire. The notion of noise in communication also plays a part, and the system is never stable due to disorder, chance, the exception. 'In the system, noise and message exchange roles according to the position of the observer and the action of the actor' (Serres 1982: 66). The accidents of the drawer, the medium, and the support will contribute to the form and meaning of the piece.

Because of its limited materiality, drawing has the potential to produce the most economical form of visual representation. The image drawn is not a homologue in the dimensions of the scene depicted; firstly, because it operates in two dimensions and, secondly, because with few exceptions drawings are smaller than life-size. Lévi-Strauss (1966) has pointed out that the small-scale model or the miniature may be the universal type of the work of art, having an intrinsic aesthetic quality. Furthermore, a representation always implies giving up certain dimensions of the object – volume, colour, smell, tactile impressions, and the temporal dimension. The virtue of such reduction 'diversifies our power over a homologue of the thing, and by means of it the latter can be grasped, assessed and apprehended at a glance' (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 23).

If the non-volitional aspect of a drawing is preserved – i.e., marks are not erased, but only corrected, and their spontaneity accepted – the work of secondary revision

(Freud 1900) may be recognized. Any revision is a way of hiding that which produces dislike and may be driven by (unconscious) censorship, whether personal, or projected into the observer by the subject (striving to be represented in a particular way). Inconsistencies may appear to be accidental but, suspecting that the unconscious makes no mistakes, spontaneity (and control) in mark-making can be considered at the time of exploring the drawing. Both dreaming and illustration translate words and ideas into pictures; neither can avoid the intrusion of forbidden notions through the inconstancy of censoring mechanisms. But the dream does not allow its focus to be determined by the dreamer, while the illustrations operate (mostly) through the control of consciousness, devising representations of ideas in verbal language to execute a match between the narrative and its visual representation. Hence, illustration will be concerned with composition, while ideational drawing will not – at least intentionally.

Furthermore, drawing – if done with dry techniques – is a fast activity and hence less amenable to control. If one compares the different speeds in dictating, handwriting, typing, typesetting, or carving a letter – the faster it is done, the more spontaneous (even though error-prone) the result. Drawing is open to accidents because of the inability of consciousness to sustain complete control of the neuro-muscular system. *Pentimenti* (from L. *penitire* ‘to regret’) are the traces of mistakes or changes of mind which have been reworked but not fully erased; they offer intelligence on the process if not censored by modification or deletion. Hence the immense superiority of ordinary paper and pencil over screen-based drawing software where deletion does not leave a trace. Pye (1968: 9) described two categories of workmanship: ‘workmanship of risk’ and ‘workmanship of certainty’. The former maker may be certain about her/his intention but uncertain of the result of the action, while the latter, by virtue of a trained practice, gets by and large the expected results. Drawing and writing, in this work, must be positioned as the result of risk taken in the making representations. Drawing and writing are the work of memory since when drawing a line or (hand)writing a text, the point of the pencil or the pen touches the support (canvas or paper) and the craftsman does not see the point on which the point marks; s/he is blind to this point and

what the artist has just drawn or written falls for him into the past. The ‘source-point’, the point’s point is always invisible for him. [...] drawing or writing resides [...] in a continual disappearing of the point’s point: the point’s point always escapes. [...] for those who see, there is never ‘perception’, but always ‘memory’. One does not see, one remembers. (Escoubas 2006: 206)

Drawing is an embodied response, memory considered as a corporal event. The mark is a gesture – as a neuro-muscular response to a perception; how this journey is encoded in the drawing can be noticed, and pondered upon. Gesture and sequence of gestures play a part in a drawing in a different way than in any other visual making. Just like in writing, the right-handed person tends to make the mark from left to right, partly because this is how we are used to relate to the writing/drawing space or support, and also not to

smudge the mark as the work progresses. Drawing and writing techniques are culturally determined. For instance, in Western drawing the hand sits on the paper, has physical contact with it (unless it is a large drawing, when the other hand may rest on the paper), creating a continuity object–paper–draughtsperson. In Far Eastern writing and drawing the brush is held vertically on the horizontal support, and the hand does not touch the paper. The nature of the surface or support affects the flow or speed of the mark-making, because a coarse surface will exert greater drag on the medium. The mind–body connection uses the expressive aspects of movement to increase cognitive connections and processing of emotional and visual material. Although drawing may be considered as spontaneous ‘handwriting’, precision is implied by the term ‘surgery’ (Gk. χειρουργική, done by hand) even if the drawings considered here are not laboured, or elaborated upon, and the speed of connection, perception, intellection, keeps pace with the hand gesture. This has the potential to avoid or delay censorship by not rubbing out and leaving a succession of marks superimposed, or rubbing out and leaving the traces of erasure, e.g. as in *pentimenti*. The explorative movement of the act of drawing is its definition (Derrida 1993). Furthermore, drawing happens over time, as does the act of handwriting. A drawing, unlike a painting, shows the journey of the drawer through motif and representation.

In order to recount we first make a material or mental record – OED: ‘to repeat, reiterate, recite; rehearse, get by heart, tell, relate, report, make known’, from L. *recordare* ‘remember, call to mind, think over, be mindful of’. To draw or write something we select, inevitably, and that introduces time between perceiving and selecting, and also whatever we select shapes what we are able to perceive. Moreover, the tools of recording impact on the selection and perception. If the drawer works with a soft pencil s/he will attend to tone and more general statements about the motif and its context, the play of light and shade, colour, while a hard pencil will stir her/him towards line and precise detail. Writing by hand on paper or clay, chiselled on stone, or writing on screen will also alter the account. Smooth cartridge paper will produce a different image than rough hand-made *Canson* paper where the flow of drawing or writing will be impeded or distracted. The drawer regards the motif or object in an affective manner, moved to liking and disliking both motif and representation, particularly if this fails to capture what s/he intended to show. The traces of likes and dislikes, corrections and further corrections are visible in a drawing, and tell of this difficult connection. In the context of research, emotional connection relates to the process, where thinking and feeling support each other, rather than to the outcome of inquiry. Drawing navigates an inherent indeterminacy between background and foreground:

the indeterminacy or vagueness in sketches exploits a capability of the human brain to make sense of incomplete information. This mental capacity [...] is a cultural adaptation of a visual mechanism that would have allowed our ancient ancestors to make sense of and respond to confusing or incomplete stimuli from

immediately present objects and events. (Fish 1996, cited in Prats & Garner 2006: 1–2)

The most sparse drawings can serve as convincing representations, which makes evident the fallacy of accuracy as depending on indexical correspondence. In a drawing of a remembered object/motif coincidence is illusory. A drawing entails a different view of time than the one offered by the moving image, or the proliferation of images in the era of cinema, television, computer screens, visual tablets, and smart phones. Likeness, the qualities present in a drawing regarding mimesis that convey to the viewer what the object depicted 'is' (whether face, place, thing), is never asked of a photograph. Photographs are considered evidence and can be used in court of law, to prove the details of an event. A drawing has no validity as 'reality', only as a point of view because it records an experience.

The method explored proposes observational drawing from memory as the preferred representational practice. Such practice and the interrogation of the artefacts thus produced facilitate access to tacit knowledge (held by observer and observed) about a social situation witnessed by the observer as participant. And because of their apparent simplification, drawings are enigmatic, 'drawing' us into further thinking. They are also 'that which forms the mediation between what is shown – that is to say, the space of the representation – and what is not shown, what exceeds representation' (Baas 2008: 10). To exaggerate – heighten, amplify, magnify (or reduce) – in drawing is not a mistake. Whether on purpose or unintentionally, it underlines and emphasizes calling attention to features that are experienced as being different (considerably greater or lesser) than the impression that their representation produces. It is not intentional, it becomes an emotionally guided statement. It is not final, but it is exposing, it shows our imagination as wish-fulfilment, not taking appearance at its face value. The drawings from the memory of the observation unfold the observation, make it into a (hi)story, narrate it as an event we witnessed and which our presence confirms and refutes since

man is in his actions and in his practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth. (MacIntyre 1981: 201)

Drawing gives access to poetic (metaphoric) rather than scientifically ordered concepts. The drawing is the representation of a hypothesis about the world perceived through the senses and the mind (tacit knowledge, psychoanalytic unconscious, cognitive unconscious). Visually exploring an idea with pencil in hand facilitates our imagination and encourages original thinking, flexibility, adaptability, and the ability to generate solutions to complex problems, hence the importance of sketching (tentative drawing) in design practice. Disparate elements can be brought into the image, and all link in the drawing like in the memory of a dream. The linking may or may not be explicit, made evident by language used, by gesture, by violence. Drawing offers the linking of affect

and cognition, the dualism similar to subjective and objective. It operates as a rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari 1983) expanding into fervorous non-linear connections.

Drawing is an immanence, always pointing to somewhere else – to a chain of serial development, another condition, another state, even when, as a gestural flourish it appears to have said everything in the most economical manner. (Petherbridge 2008: 37)

Even when drawing attempts to record the actuality of the event witnessed, it inevitably fails, recording only aspects of the appearances of the motif, subject, or scene. It is a discussion, a checking out, a conversation, a verification of what has been apprehended by the sensual and emotional experience of participation. The observer's responsibility is to make her/himself available 'without memory or desire' (Bion 1970: 69) first to the experience of the observation, and then to the making of its representations by writing and drawing – rather than aspiring to see things clearly and report back. The reporting has to be constructed (drafted) because it is not an automatic replica of a situation experienced, recounted by images and words. Its authorship is both personal and a social act. While the actual representation is undertaken by an individual, re-presenting is a social event, inscribed in visual and verbal language. The result cannot be explored by searching in a dictionary of symbols. It is the hermeneutic act that provokes the emergency of meaning, rather than the interpretation offered. Writing and drawing are both practices for exploration and discovery, offering a transitional space (Winnicott 1971) as an area of experience between fantasy and reality.

In the ideational drawing the drawer/writer interacts with her/himself, by responding to the visual or written text and associations produced as they appear on the paper. This aspect of the activity when working from imagination produces further associations. Furthermore, the delay between the extended moment of the observation as a participant, and the moment of the representation, affects the correspondence between the representation and its referent. In addition, the emergence of representations of motifs calls forth other motifs and their representations. In a dream, the subliminal cues which are not registered in waking life are often picked up and, like recent happenings, are incorporated in the narrative. The drawing denotes the *manifest content* of the event observed and represented, while its *latent content* is apprehended and inscribed in disguise. 'To represent causation, a dream often establishes the main sense in the large part of the dream, and the subordinate part is relegated to a smaller dream that precedes the other' (Symington 1986: 97). The dream maker is like a painter who has a message which cannot be conveyed in words, only with images. Like dream language, the language of pictures is the language of the unconscious. A most important characteristic of unconscious ideas is that they do not have words attached to them – in the unconscious there is no language. Hence dreams appear in images.

Concerning tacit knowledge as defined by Polanyi (2009) (section 1.3.1), we draw and write more than what we aware we know. Representations thus encode more

information about the object or event (and the observer) than perceived at a first reading of the representations. This requires making provision for both a psychodynamic unconscious, but also for the cognitive unconscious, a conception of the unconscious as a fundamentally adaptive system that automatically, effortlessly, and intuitively organizes experience and directs behaviour within the codes of the different cultural layers (group, institution, society). Harper, working within visual sociology, has written about images as a referent for the development of theory, since the practice

has offered the opportunity to address the postmodern critiques of ethnography and documentary photography and, in so doing, to fashion a new method based on the understanding of the social construction of the image and the need for collaboration between the subject and the photographer. (Harper 2005: 747)

In respect of the use of drawings, Harper has proposed that these allow 'a more subjective take'; elements can be left out; and interiors of objects can be invaded with cutaways (*ibid.*: 748). Culture is conceived as both text and performance. These two modes are complementary rather than contradictory and are to be investigated from observation and participation (and, in turn, observation of that participation) in the practical and emotional life of the group. Rather than aspiring (as all binaries propose) to privilege one (good) term and eradicate the other (bad) term, the issue becomes the need to understand the resulting patterns of conjunction. The relationship between the two meanings of drawing, i.e., as artefact and as action, has to be considered in that way. This is evident also in respect of groups: Bion has asserted that although basic assumptions functioning is an expression of the psychotic aspects of the personality, groups are not dysfunctional all of the time or they would cease to cohere as a group. An observer would always find evidence of the group's 'uneasy, ambivalent, but inescapable commitment to development' (Armstrong 2005b: 147). However, the emotional charge in the vicissitudes of the oscillation *ba–W* impacts on the observer. The experience observed is internalized psychically and bodily, but then lost in forgetfulness – either disowned or having become a meaningful absence. The trace of this absence might be articulated in a visual representation of the group but, since the return of the repressed is not possible as it is repressed, there ensues a productive struggle between knowing and not knowing, certainty and confusion, past and present, presence and absence. The silence or void or absence will be frightening, and the participant observer may attempt to disguise it by filling it up with the group's as well as his/her own unrelated content to be protected from the impact of the group experience. The drawer as maker and the drawer as spectator of the drawing are both same and different due to the sight (rather than site) of absence, envisaging the location of what is not, the void such as in the difficulty to remember a word, a name. The space has been preserved for the unconsciously originated utterance even though the utterance itself may be only present *in absentia* as in parapraxes. Observing is problematic as it is unclear whose appropriation it responds to. The observer ponders what s/he should record (a question addressed to an

undefined Other) or the wish to remember (or forget) some or all detail. However, an acceptance of the seen by a 'disciplined denial of memory and desire' (Bion 1970: 41) must acknowledge its impossibility as the direction and object of the gaze is inevitably driven by the observer's and group's (unconscious) desire. While observing requires witnessing by looking, Bryson (1983) has proposed a substantial difference between

the activity of the *gaze*, prolonged, contemplative, yet regarding the field of vision with a certain aloofness and disengagement, across a tranquil interval, from that of the *glance*, a furtive or sideways look whose attention is always elsewhere, which shifts to conceal its own existence, and which is capable of carrying unofficial, *sub rosa*, messages of hostility, collusion, rebellion, and lust. (Bryson 1983: 94)

These unofficial messages are to be considered as a reference to the unconscious system of the mind and the communications between observer and observed. Gaze and glance are in action in their implied dualism as well as simultaneously, in respect of the act of observing the group and also in the style of the event gazed and glanced into, onto, through the drawing. While the gaze organizes that which it perceives (as secondary process), both gaze and glance – 'in their partial blindness' – add and omit, and what is perceived is both definite and uncertain as it occurs with images in a dream. Bryson argued that, unlike the gaze, the glance 'addresses vision in the durational temporality of the viewing subject, and does not exclude the traces of the body of labour' (*ibid.*). For Bryson, the gaze eliminates time, arresting the 'flux of phenomena'. The marks that correspond to the gaze erase themselves, rendering the representation synchronic, as in the tradition of European painting, where the (canvas) support is covered over in its totality, and 'the mastery of the stroke lies in painting out the traces that brought the strokes into being' (*ibid.*). Drawing (akin to calligraphy in the Eastern tradition) exposes its diachronic nature by being a deictic expression, whose meaning depends on the context in which it is used – such as here, you, me, that one, next month. In the gaze, the body of the drawer is reduced to an optical analogy – the vanishing point of the perspective composition – while the glance is 'laden with presuppositions, with those undertones that should be called "underseens", leaving out of account the physical, physiological, socio-cultural traditions which make the glance possible' (Lyotard 1991: 11).

Both gaze and glance propose an active engagement. Mimesis (as mimetic reproduction) has a place in the conscious exploration through the gaze, the thorough observation of detail, confirming the seen (known) relationships of the components of the scene, their location in space and time, stating the reality in the perception of the experience of observing and belonging to the group, its appearance, its emotional charge, turning absence into a presence. Yet the gaze works sideways, oblique, shameful, partial, reluctant, surreptitious, uncertain of whether seeing or imagining, unable to function itself without memory or desire, obliterating or modifying perception

for insufficiently known (or totally unknown) reasons, to be experienced rather than elucidated. Neither gaze or glance lead to full meaning; though a representation will be as faithful as awareness allows, infidelity will assert itself, and transform re-presenting into an opportunity for digestion. Hence the two notions can be considered in their relationship like the two axes of language: the syntagmatic or horizontal as it unfolds in the grammar of the sentence, and the paradigmatic or the vertical in the relationship that words in the sentence enter into because of their semantic proximity to other words – hence the useful though insufficient strategy of making two drawings in confrontation, bringing two parties face to face from every observation, considered in the methodological discussion in 4.3 and reconsidered in 6.2.4.

Bryson (1983) related both glaze and glance to the act of looking at representations, but glance may be considered an active yet not direct way of attending to the perception and invention of detail while the colonial observation of the gaze is predicated on authorship, property, and certainty – whereby the observer (of the group) neglects the observed as the Other in the observation. Further reference should be made to this supplementary Other, internal to both the observer and the group, for whom the observation is unconsciously intended. However, integration can only be partial, as the glance ‘strikes at the very roots of rationalism’ (*ibid.*: 121); witnessing demands that the observer testifies to the truth of the event observed – the doings and undoings of the group addressing its task – considered from a rational standpoint. At different times a group may oscillate between productive activity and the inability to share a sense of purpose and agree a strategy in order to develop their stated aims – and yet all its members will be contributing, even if not explicitly, by cooperating in conscious and unconscious ways which may be noticed and perhaps understood (Bion 1961).

Prats & Garner (2006) have referred to the opportunity offered by ambiguity in sketching. While their argument is concerned with the role of visual representations in the design through sketching to image objects that do not yet exist, it is of relevance since ‘perception and interpretation are bound together with creation and evaluation in the shape sketching process’ (*ibid.*: 1). Two types emerged through their studies: transforming the image into the representation of something unintended, different, and new; and, conversely, transforming it into something that becomes clearer as the drawing emphasizes characteristics of the object depicted (*ibid.*: 6). But these transformations cannot be merely identified by their shape, as interpretation depends on a number of determinants, including unconscious factors. Schön (1983: 78) has defined design as a reflective conversation with the materials of a situation which, by its iterative nature, allows the practitioner to circle around certainty in the visual exploration of conjuncture. Goldschmidt (2003) called attention to the origin of drawing as a playful activity with developmental benefits, and how what is required is a special class of representational skill for inventive purposes. In the Renaissance

incomplete, partial, rapidly hand drawn images on paper that we refer to as study sketches were called 'pensieri', meaning 'thoughts' in contemporary Italian. Sketches were then, and still are today, an aid to thinking and, we maintain, under certain circumstances, *their making is thinking itself*. (*ibid.*: 80, italics added)

Goldschmidt proposed that sketching is a front edge process, rehearsing partial and rudimentary representations which can then be evaluated, transformed, modified, refined, and replaced if need be. What is unique about such a process is that it involves ill-structured problem-solving and 'it is not clear at the outset where the process is leading to, and what the end result might be' (*ibid.*: 72). While expert designers may use sketching not just to assert but to construct meaning,

before a child produces preplanned representational drawings, he or she is able to infer representational meaning from certain elements of a self-produced scribble. The nature of the attributed meaning derives from two sources: the properties or shape of the figure referred to, and *entities the child is preoccupied with*. (Goldschmidt 2003: 73, italics added)

These preoccupations are an intrinsic part of the drawing conversation where meanings are inferred, assumed, invented, noticed, forgotten, and where the drawer talks through the drawing and the drawing *talks back* (Schön 1983). While Goldschmidt and some design researchers asserted that it depends on the ability of the sketcher to read meaning into the sketch and discover new plausible interpretations of it (Goldschmidt 2003: 84), the emphasis here is on the process of talk and backtalk rather than rational meaning-making because such fuzzy, incomplete, and inaccurate rapid sketching

works in a manner somewhat similar to a Rorschach test inkblot, into which one can read meanings that are obviously derived from sources other than the inkblot. The self-generated sketch talks back, and its backtalk reflects some of the sketcher's innermost, tacit, otherwise untapped knowledge, biases, concerns, and preferences. (*ibid.*: 87)

The memory work of the psyche is expressed in a pictographic re-presentational form.

The dream-thoughts and the dream-content are presented to us like two versions of the same subject-matter in two different languages. [...] The dream-thoughts are immediately comprehensible, as soon as we have learnt them. The dream-content, on the other hand, is expressed as it were in a pictographic script. (Freud 1900: 277)

The work of an illustrator is to interpret a text through a visual code as an exercise in intersemiotic translation (section 3.5 above). An example of this practice are children's storybooks, where the author initiates the processes of signification, even though an

intelligent and imaginative illustrator may actually extend the text, providing readings that are not immediately accessible in the text itself. Conversely, there is the practice of involving a writer responding to a visual text, a sort of ekphrasis even if the text is not descriptive of the content of the first. However, both seem to be instances of intersemiotic translation, transformation, or transmutation. The intersemiotic effort produces greater clarity about the motif than either of the textual approaches separately. However, the process is not ostensibly concerned with fostering creativity, yet it fosters the potential for further discovery of aspects about the motif or the narrative (or even in the last instance, of the self) 'known and yet unthought' (Bollas 1987).

Berger (2005) suggested three distinct ways in which drawings can function. In the first one 'the lines on the paper are traces left behind by the artist's gaze which is ceaselessly leaving, going out, interrogating the strangeness, the enigma, of what is before his eyes' (*ibid.*: 47). In the second group of drawings 'the traffic goes in the opposite direction. It is now a question of bringing to the paper what is already in the mind's eye. Delivery rather than emigration' (*ibid.*: 48). The third group concerns drawings done from memory, either as notes for recording information, or 'made in order to exorcise a memory which is haunting' which 'may be sweet, sad, frightening, attractive, cruel' but also 'unbearable' (*ibid.*: 49). Drawings are narrative machines, prompting the unfolding of a story over time; as Berger (2005) proposed,

To draw is to look, to examine the spectrum of appearance. A drawing of a tree shows, not a tree, but a tree being-looked-at. Whereas the sight of a tree is registered almost instantaneously, the examination of the sight of a tree (a tree being-looked-at) not only takes minutes or hours instead of a fraction of a second, it also involves, derives from, and refers back to, much previous experience of looking. Within the instant of the sight of a tree is established a life-experience. This is how the act of drawing refuses the process of disappearances and proposes the simultaneity of a multitude of moments. (*ibid.*: 71)

Berger asked: where are we when we draw? and, rather than offering a spatial answer, he considered the time dimension of the act of drawing.

Isn't the act of drawing, as well as the drawing itself, about *becoming* rather than *being*? Isn't a drawing the polar opposite of a photo? The latter stops time, arrests it; whereas a drawing flows with it. [...] And going with it means losing ourselves... being carried away. (*ibid.*: 124)

The drawn image contains the experience of looking. A drawing is 'made', while a photograph is 'taken'. A photograph is the evidence of an encounter between event and photographer. Because a drawing questions an event's appearance, it reminds us that appearances are always a construction. We take photographs with us, we move them. A drawing, however,

forces us to stop and enter its time. A photograph is static because it has stopped time. A drawing [...] is static because it encompasses time. [...] From each glance a drawing assembles a little evidence, but it consists of the evidence of many glances which can be seen together. On the one hand there is no sight in nature as unchanging as that of a drawing or a painting. On the other hand, what is unchanging in a drawing consists of so many assembled moments that they constitute a totality rather than a fragment. The static image of a drawing [...] is the result of the opposition of two dynamic processes. Disappearances opposed by assemblage. (*ibid.*: 70–71)

Berger indicated that all drawing is done from memory, even if standing in front of the object depicted, which 'is a reminder of experiences you can only formulate and therefore only remember by drawing' (*ibid.*: 102). Commenting on Klee, Bryson (1983) referred to this temporal dimension of drawing.

The drawn line in a sense always exists in the present tense, in the time of its own unfolding, the ongoing time of a present that constantly presses forward [...] Line gives you the image together with the whole history of its becoming-image. (*ibid.*: 149–50)

What Petherbridge (2007) has called the 'systemic' dimension of drawing – i.e., its history and conventions – is always already in place before the pencil-point touches the page, both enabling and restricting the practice. Following Badiou, drawing can be conceived of as an act of purification: 'Every art develops from an impure form, and the progressive purification of this impurity shapes the history of both a particular artistic truth and of its exhaustion' (Badiou 2004, thesis 5). Badiou points to the fundamental fragility of drawing, which does not offer

a clear alternative, to be or not to be, but an obscure and paradoxical conjunction, to be and not to be. [...] A drawing is the fragmentary trace of a gesture, much more than a static result of this gesture. [...] A true Drawing is not a copy of something. It is a constructive deconstruction of something, and much more real than the initial thing. [...] Drawing is the perfect example of an intensity of weakness. (Badiou 2006: n. p.)

There is no image that does not originate in the seen, or the seen unseen, no dream without day residue providing the lexicon for creative forgery, for appropriation. It is in the meeting (coming together) of the self and its periphery that the image takes form, to protect and attack, to articulate the link. No solipsism is possible, the other-in-the-mind is partly an Other. Narcissus bent over a stream and discovered himself as the forbidden Other. Beyond the impracticality of drawing in a session, the rationale for making the drawings from the memory of the event is to avoid both the restriction on the freedom of the drawer by the subject's curious gaze concerning their expectation of

mimesis as well as the drawer's own disappointment on comparing the motif with its representation, finding it lacking, or inaccurate. It is paramount to have the freedom to phantasize rather than trying to replicate what may have been seen.

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present. [...] Rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. (Benjamin 1999: 462)

The traumatic kernel is active also in relation to any communication – an other as a recipient that subsumes any phantasmatic others across the group's landscape, as audience, viewer, interlocutor, witness, but

if a piece of writing, or a recorded image, is to stand witness, it needs someone to attest to its authenticity. Witness is connected not only with death and absence, but also with life and presence. (Newman 2010: 5)

The drawing stands for the role of the observing self even if 'taking in' the group is an impossible task akin to observing a battle, where focusing on a localized incident is unworkable – the rampage goes all around, seductive as non-consensual pornography. The memory of the traumatic event 'may be integrated through a series of associations which allows the event to be corrected – to be put in its proper place' (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973: 1) without becoming a simple elimination of its impact in the group. This is not an instance of the unconscious communication by the group but the working through of a trauma *sotto voce*, charged with unconscious content by the transference. Psychical conflict prevents the observer from full integration of the experience into her/his conscious mind, for instance by arriving at an explanation of the dynamic of the experience. Drawing after the event requires holding on to the affect of the experience and the representation becomes a supplement of looking. Longing plays a part – longing, nostalgia, melancholia, drawing the observed as mourning the absence of what is no longer there – since in melancholia the absence exists. Hence the contradictory experience of nostalgia for lost people of places charged with affect (even if apparently devoid of other connotations) as a bitter sweet feeling that is both suffered and enjoyed. Also to be considered is the erotic aspect of drawing an event as permission to observe (to look at) the primal scene. The primal scene is not primarily horrifying because of the violence it implies, but exciting to a degree that cannot be sustained – the psychic apparatus must regain homeostasis. The message is always a message to someone (to the infant by someone, the adult).

It is an interpersonal phenomenon, not intrapersonal, it takes place not in an individual but in the simultaneity of the adult and the child. The enigmatic message by the adult is in turn inhabited by his own unconscious. (Laplanche 2012: 152)

The phenomenon of drawing take place as a time of latency, between sudden insight and conscious reflection. Knowledge remains preconscious and unconscious before it can be reasoned in language.

One could describe this latency as the work of memory between the exposure and the development of a visible image. [...] first encounter – fascinated contemplation of the image and impression, or being touched; latency – the image in one's head, as an imaginary vis-à-vis the reflection; thought-image – the discussion of the image and the generation of a dialectical image within theory. (Weigel 2015: 352)

3.7 PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMATIVITY

The group as ritual unfolds in its performance of internal dynamics; those between group and context and the activity of drawing the group are to be considered an aspect of such performance, i.e., drawing (v.) as the performance of a ritual (the consultant and drawer as celebrant). Several roles emerge in the performance, to which they contribute to and shape from multiple roles (section 5.2.1). The drawing (n.) is the outcome, trace, evidence of, and offering to the performance (section 6.2.2). Disregarding possible external viewers of the drawings of the observations, a significative constellation of absences and presences of *dramatis personae* are involved in the drawing. They intervene as multiple versions of the collusion of real and imaginary actors as viewers who looks from a particular perspective – rather than only as spectators who watch without participation. They can be tentatively conceptualized (since more/different roles emerged through the phenomenography) from the literature as

- the *Drawer* as actual viewer of her/his own representation in the act of drawing, both an individual and a group member, seen and seer, who is also blind (Derrida 1993) in the act of drawing and can only look at the drawing after the event; as such the drawing is of the group as other as well as a self-portrait. But as such s/he is a delayed presence and an absence in the drawing – yet the inclusion of the drawer in the drawing can be suspected as evidence of authorization ('I know, I was there') and hence of the drawing as a first-person, singular or plural, present indicative utterance, even if the drawer is not recognizable as a likeness because the drawing carries the signature of the drawer (it is in her/his hand);

- the different manifestations of the *Viewer*, such as (following Bryson) the Optical Viewer or anatomical eye, an active receiver whose presence and position determines (and can be inferred from) the location of the vanishing point which, once established, organizes the representation of space (with the objects therein) in the picture. S/he may appear to be less problematic because her/his position may be inferred as factual and can be imagined, as depicted in Dürer's engraving (1525)

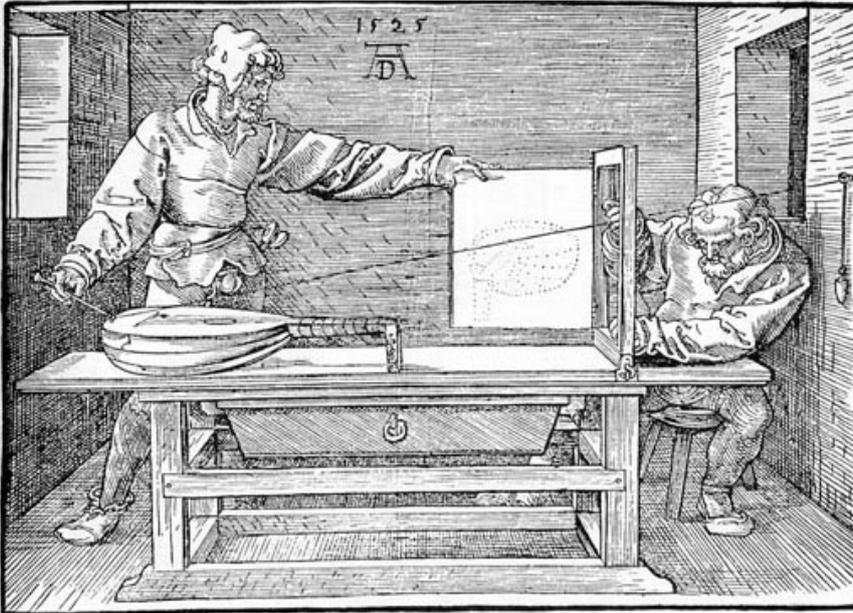


Fig. 8

alterity and the locus of the symbolic and the Law, whose existence preys on the drawing and who embodies aspects of (the drawer and) the group.

(Fig. 8), but who may only be a corporatization of a Specular Viewer (Lacan, Irigaray) as a mirror image of self, both in respect of the participant observer and the group whom the Drawer wishes (and is afraid) to represent and denounce or announce a menace and feels therefore persecuted by the Master Viewer as the phantasmatic Other of the representation for the Drawer, the Other as radical

The representation of the group constitutes a dramatic re-enactment. Tragedy is at the core of psychoanalysis, the loss or absence to be made sense of towards a liberation of sorts, the development of a *modus vivendi* with the tragedy (and opportunity) of the lack. Psychoanalysis is thus a methodological tool to sustain the exposure to the *numen*, where the treatment calls attention to the cathartic facet of any representation by which desire may be glanced (but never gazed at). The theatricality of the countertransference allows access to the script of the enactment. By a reversal, the drawing does not copy the group but the original scene of the group copies the drawing – as Borges (1976: 137) declared in respect of a particular translation of William Beckford's *Vathek* (1785): 'the original is unfaithful to the translation.' Conversely, the theatricality of the drawing points to an enjoyable excess of the representation over what is represented, an excess of the signifier over the (first order) signified. Together these make up the signified proper. Such deception, entered into in agreement with the audience, points to an uncertain ethics where truth is not veracity but a sideways glance at the problematic Real outside symbolization. Heidegger (1971) pointed to the *venture* (i.e., a risky or daring journey or undertaking) of Being as the ground of 'those beings that we ourselves are', letting beings loose into daring, that is, the venture itself. (*ibid.*: 99).

As the venture flings free what is ventured, it holds it at the same time in balance [and] sets free what is ventured, in such a way indeed that it sets free what it is flung into nothing other than a drawing toward the center. Drawing this way, the venture ever and always brings the ventured toward itself in this drawing. [...] The drawing which, as the venture, draws and touches all beings and keeps them drawing toward itself (*ibid.*: 102)

The English translation of the text above acquires a parallel meaning in the context of this study, where drawing can be read as both extraction, and (though unintended) the making of visual representations. This holds true for the notion of drawing as venture, as an incursion into an uncertain territory, a journey through which meaning may be both clarified and obscured in the impossible and objectionable search for O (the group-in-itself).

Furthermore, there is another level concerning performance: the performative function of drawing (v.) as a (visual) speech act. The drawing is not the depository of a truth, but engaging with (producing, using, contemplating) the representation of the group has a performative function. The drawing is not an allegory (a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning) but a performative utterance, an incentive, an encouragement, a pro-vocation to continue. Hence, the drawing is also a critique or commentary. At a semantic level, there are a number of different actions implied by possible oral/written uses of the term *drawing*, as shown by verbal forms (verb + conjunction) concerning

- *space* – drawing across, against, along, around, beyond, near, onto, opposite, out, past, behind, beside, between, drawing back, drawing into, drawing towards, under, up
- *states of mind* – after, at, from, through, to, upon, within/without.

Beyond *referring* to actions, utterances may be actions themselves. Austin (1962) pointed out how at a pragmatic level speech acts do not merely refer to things (nouns) or actions (verbs) but do something in the world. Hence, beyond their truth value (a *constative* view of language to be considered as a descriptive fallacy) Austin proposed that some speech acts do not describe or report – such as stating ‘I do’ (at the civil registry), or ‘I bequeath this watch to my brother’ (in a will) – but

to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it.’ (*ibid.*: 6)

Austin termed such utterances *performative*. He wondered under what conditions saying something will make it so, independently of the truth value of such propositions, and put forward different categories of performative speech acts. It is proposed that the practice of drawing groups in the context of this study may be considered equivalent to making

performative utterances. This assumes that drawing (v.) is not just a practice inscribed in visual language (the set of norms that govern the production and receipt of visual messages) but is regarded as a visual speech act, that is, making a drawing of a situation also makes it so by affirmation or negation. Drawing as a speech act 'exhorts' the drawer to act out the need (and the impossibility) of making a choice between technique (which can be described, codified, organized) and the ineffable (tacit) knowledge brought about by experience. The former is visible, the latter is formless. However,

formlessness does not entail invisibility; in other words, the choice is not to see either fully shaped forms or to see nothing, but to 'train' [...] a 'visual habitus' [...] that enables us to learn to see what, by lack of recognizable form, seems invisible. This learning process is itself translation – a translation we are all involved in. (Bal 2007: 117)

Such translation is the construction of 'a complex story, which cannot be offered as a coherent or full narrative' (*ibid.*: 121), and its formation as a process is described by the assertion. Speech refers to spoken language in particular but also to communication as a whole system of symbols – written, spoken, or expressed with bodily gestures, used to convey meaning – and drawing must be considered another form of gesture that leaves a material mark or trace. Like any proposition, a drawing may 'realistically' represent a true or false situation by depicting visually perceived facts, such as the number of people in the room, or the (non)existence of other objects, persons, or creatures, real or imaginary as they may occur in a metaphor. But, as a performative, the drawing should be considered in its potential to do something to someone. For instance, an arrow is a pictorial representation of a defensive or hunting device, but in particular contexts (as on a wall or road) it acquires a specific meaning, giving an instruction to be followed, avoided, or disregarded. While this is may be simple in the case of concrete visual statements such as directional or warning signs, there is action in the drawing of an event that connotes information on the event, its context, and its participants, not just as an informational description but as visually communicated experience. Austin (1962: 94 ff.) proposed three axes according to the function of performative speech acts:

- the *locutionary* dimension – the referential (iconic) function of the drawing, e.g. *n* people sitting in a tight circle in a large room with wide windows, observed by an other (ethnographer or group consultant) who features in the gestalt of the scene depicted even if as a different type of participant (but a participant nevertheless);
- the *illocutionary* dimension – what the drawing implies (e.g. lack of freedom as a result of the group's distribution in an unnecessarily constrained spatial arrangement) and, as such, it connects the constative and performative functions. The situation noted and depicted produces a specific effect, hence Austin pointed to illocution as the *acting force*.

- the *perlocutionary* dimension – which denotes the effect produced by the making of the drawing. Hence the drawer is also implicated as an actor who brings his/her own unquestioned or reluctant participation, selection, judgement – consciously and unconsciously – into the situation, particularly if a free-hand depiction does not aim at photographic accuracy but makes use of selection and exaggeration (as in caricature). Even photographic accuracy would also be another layer of exaggeration, though it must be noted that (unlike painting) a drawing does not lend itself to *trompe-l'oeil* – tricking the perceptual apparatus into perceiving a representation as an actual three-dimensional object.

Hence, a drawing cannot be wrong or false (i.e., *infelicitous* in Austin's terms) even if several drawings of a same situation are dissimilar in their denotations and connotations. Whether funny (promoting laughter and reflection) or poetic (aesthetic metaphors), drawings are to be considered performatives. A drawing may represent the kind of contradictions we may find hilarious (because two contrasting propositions in a joke force a change of conceptual frame in the hearer); or the unfamiliar juxtapositions within poetic images make use of the logic of the paradigmatic axis of substitution and the resulting metaphor may be experienced as beautiful ('I wandered lonely as a cloud'). The drawing *insinuates* or introduces by devious methods alternative (metaphoric/metonymic) readings (interpretations) of a scene. The referential aspect of the drawing does not necessarily provide valid and reliable data. The more accurate the mimesis of the scene (if that were possible) the more limited its potential for connotation in as far as it gives greater credence to the fact as existing rather than perceived. Whether the drawing was 'properly executed' becomes a meaningless expectation, because appropriateness can only be judged against conventions which are precisely what the production of the drawing aims to release the practitioner from.

The performative dimension of drawing is different to that of speech acts since it is not directly (or, at least, in the first instance) concerned with falsity and truth. Unlike speech, meaning in the act of drawing does not depend on sense and reference (Austin 1962: 149). A visual statement may not correspond to actual observation of fact but is not 'void'; its perlocutionary force will derive from whatever has been selected for representation, and the manner (size, colour, support, technique) in which the motif is depicted. Furthermore, its effect will derive from those real or imaginary objects and relationships the drawing selects and omits as well as displays, the gestures used in its production, and the chains of associations (literal, visual, auditive) that it may evoke. This seems a return to a classical rhetoric in appraisal of the visual object, i.e., not just a dialectic evaluation of the logical argument implicit in the image (as true or false) but the manner of its arrangement (*dispositio*) and the requisite style of its presentation (*elocutio*). In addition, were there more than one instance of viewing the drawing, the difference between first and subsequent readings will amplify the capacity to hear (see) other possibilities summoned by the representation. The perlocutionary force of the

drawing is rooted in the group as performance. A concept developed by Armstrong (2005a) in the context of organizational consultancy is of relevance to the emotional construction that the group members (including the ethnographer) bring to the group as performance: the 'organization-in-the-mind', which

is not the client's mental construct of the organization but, rather, the emotional reality of the organization that is registered in him or her, that is infecting him or her, that can be owned or disowned, displaced or projected, denied, scotomized – that can also be known but unthought. (*ibid.*: 52)

The difference between the group-in-the-mind and the group-in-itself is that the former is an emotional reality, the latter an abstraction. The drawing represents something about the construction of the group-in-the-mind – it denounces it, it protects it, it exposes it, it interrupts it. Drawing calls attention to psychic features, never formal, or only so in appearance – features which can only be noticed by identification with and belonging to the group, as countertransference phenomena. Paraphrasing Racker (1968: 17) in respect of the analytic session, the relevance of countertransference depends on the ethnographer being well identified with the group observed, so that the thoughts and feelings which emerge in her/him will be precisely those which did not find expression in the group, to be noticed in the sensations of situations experienced physically and affectively during the observation. However, these sensations must be supported by evidence, against (or aware of) the desire of being carried away by affective responses – without carefully tracing their origin in the material (*ibid.*: 19). According to Derrida's critique of speech act theory (1988), Austin had attempted to establish pertinent, pure, and rigorous oppositions. The 'long list of infelicities' which may affect the performative event always came back to an essential element in what Austin called the total context. This is the 'conscious presence of the intention of the speaking subject in the totality of the speech act' (*ibid.*: 14). As a result, performative communication becomes the communication of an intentional meaning. Departing from Austin, Butler (1993) proposed that

Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. [...] This repetition is not performed *by* a subject: this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. (Butler 1993: 95)

While performance implies enactment or doing, performativity refers to the effects of regulatory constructs. The repetition required by the practice of drawing the group contributes to the illusion of authenticity of what is not solely a subjective action but a structural interpellation in both its senses of interruption and affirmation. According to Felman (1987: 114) in describing Lacan's account of Klein's analysis of a child, a similar situation occurs in clinical psychoanalysis where the analyst's intervention does not function *constatively* (as a truth report, with respect to the reality of the situation) but

performatively (as a speech act). The success of the interpretation, its clinical efficacy, does not proceed from the accuracy of its meaning but of a linguistic structure in which meaning can be articulated and inscribed. It is then necessary to see that such interventions 'function not as simple truths but as performative speech-acts' (Felman 1982: 24).

Desire, for Lacan, designates unconscious desire. Moreover, for Lacan, during the moment at which one recognizes one's desire by naming it, one recognizes something new, something not already present in one's world. It is in this that the efficacious action of analysis – its performative dimension – is realized. (Rowan & Harper 1999: 198)

Against Austin's exclusion (from the category of speech acts) of those that are not seriously intended as such (e.g. those uttered by the speaker of a poem or an actor in a play), Derrida insisted that

intention is an inappropriate criterion since all speech acts are 'nonserious' insofar as they are conventional: they succeed only because they repeat 'coded' statements, conform 'to an iterable model', and are therefore 'identifiable in a way as "citation"'. (Berger 1987: 154)

While Derrida's critique of Austin took issue with a thought system that depends on an absolute or immutable claim, as an essential truth that guarantees meaning, words and images may indeed be performative since they have material effects, as in psychoanalysis, through the metaphor of the transference. Spivak asserted that 'Derrida demonstrates that the principle of an undecidable and/or alterable (to the point of rupture) context is the condition of possibility of every mark, written or spoken' (1980: 30), to which it should be added – *or drawn*. Austin proposed that a felicitous performative, i.e., 'doing by saying' (as when making a promise) depends upon it taking place in the proper context by the proper performer, and an infelicitous performative, i.e., someone saying 'I do' outside the wedding ceremony, cannot be eliminated from language. For Derrida, infelicity is embedded in the performative's structure and can be taken over by anyone at any time. Like language, drawings are not neutral – they bear within them the preconceptions and assumptions of a whole cultural tradition, i.e., those of the language and context of group and participant observer/drawer. Performative utterances may 'have no truth value, but have instead a force, a power of effecting, of establishing themselves as events' (Copjec 1981: 38). And while there may be infelicitous drawings outside the practice of drawing the session, it is not the drawing (n.) that should be considered a performative – or we would be ensnared by the belief of finding meanings below the surface – but the actual practice of drawing (v.) the sessions observed and forgotten, thus keeping them open to further uncertain intuitions.

4 MAPPING AN UNCERTAIN TERRAIN

4.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

Following the description of the context of the study and the review of relevant psychoanalytic ideas and notions of representation, the chapter considers strategies to address the research question; it outlines setting and method, and discusses aspects of its implementation. It concludes with an extended exploration of ethical issues raised in the study beyond the institutional ethical guidelines fully complied with.

4.2 RESEARCH METHOD AND SETTINGS

The preliminary research described in 1.4.2 above provided evidence that the practice made an impact on the observer which, together with initial readings, led to the formulation of the present study's research question:

How does the practice of a participant observer, representing (visually, from memory) their experience of a group meeting, assist to disrupt certainty?

The selection of the literature, organized and presented through Chapters 2 and 3, considered the traumatic scene of the group, the anxiety that this produces in the group (which includes the participant observer) as described by Bion, the enactment of anxiety as ritual, and the certainty that ensues as a defence affirming what is or is not, with equal conviction. The traumatic experience of the group is sustained, experienced, and represented by and through the observer towards a productive space that will, eventually, make sense. Hence, the task was to consider the impact of drawing from the site of absence, as a heuristic device equivalent to the Grid proposed by Bion (1977), and how such practice of drawing the sessions from memory may assist disrupting certainty enlisted as a defence. It was necessary to proceed in the belief that the study 'was not one thing' because drawing is also affected, like every text, by intertextuality (Kristeva 1969), since any drawn text is a reference to or quotation from other drawings and sessions, and does not exist in isolation as a closed system. The order of sequence of drawings and sessions was immaterial, since they were all linked in multiple relations, for instance, as an *après coup* of another session and drawing of the same (or even another) group. The approach refused to determine and name a fundamental substance, and thus merely cite an instance of the universal in question, splitting universals and particulars, seeking to define essences. Themes that have appeared through the research stage were not arbitrary and must be envisaged (seen and prospectively considered) as

connected within a network as rhizome rather than in the inevitable linear sequence in which they appear outlined in the writing.

As a mathematician writing on heuristics, George Pólya (2004) recommended a structure for problem-solving similar to Kolb's circle (1984), suggesting that the researcher should draw a picture of the problem in order to apply diagrammatic reasoning instead of linguistic representations since, while foregrounding a research question not to deviate from the task, there was the need to allow extraneous thoughts and disruptions of the research process itself. This was brought about by the playful aspect of drawing (section 3.3. above) fostering free associations to discover permanent and impermanent conjunctions, as several simultaneous – and even contradictory – connections were at times possible. A heuristic approach would not shy from dualisms and, as a consequence, would bring oppositions close enough to have an impact on each other and modulate the narrative. The exploration required repeated re-readings of the material until issues seemed to emerge as self-evident and, eventually, coalesce into understanding. I had to be aware of my own wish for a proximity between original hypothesis and argument in the text, articulating an approximative (and) accurate representation of my experience, without (or in spite of) claiming that such actually was the truth of the event. The purpose was to think with theory (Jackson & Mazzei 2013), rather than use it to 'frame' the work, never treating the data as neutral but as under erasure (Derrida 1976), i.e., both insufficient and necessary, a playful excess through which

the work of inquiry intervenes in normative processes of knowing and being. Such a disruption makes possible an indeterminate space in which inquiry [...] might be differently enacted. (Kuntz & Guyotte 2017: 665)

The research question was not calling for measurements but a detailed view and close inspection over an extended period since it did not ask *why* but *how*. While it did not require a comparison, it is to be expected that successive applications by different researchers in different contexts will refine and modify findings and conclusion. The approach to be followed was to be qualitative.

One undertakes qualitative research in a natural setting where the researcher is an instrument of data collection who gathers words or pictures, analyses them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language. (Creswell 1998: 14)

Rather than conceptualizing data as a potential source of information, the focus was how data moved, were experienced, and what they produced through particular to general levels of abstraction. Hence, an ethnographic approach that allowed immersion in the situation as participant observer (rather than expert) was deemed necessary since

Ethnography is best suited to the study of multiplicity, complexity, contingency, ambiguity, and indeterminacy in ways of living. It allows a researcher to choose for analytic attention specific instances of human activity and experience that show potential to illuminate conceptual issues and to stumble upon particularities of social life that alter our theoretical understandings [...] abductive ethnography embraces serendipity and allows intuition to guide the fieldwork. (Bajc 2012: 73)

The subsections that follow outline the research strategies the study engaged with, to conclude with a commentary on other methods, some of possible interest and others insufficiently considered and then rejected.

4.2.1 PHENOMENOGRAPHY

While the focus of phenomenology is the essence of the phenomenon under investigation, phenomenographic studies emphasize the experience of the phenomenon. Its description and analysis must be as complete as possible, moving through a series of iterations until the point of data saturation. As a psychological approach, it focuses on the centrality of individual experience to determine what it means

for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived, in other words, the essences or structures of the experience. (Moustakas 1994: 13)

The emerging categories and their underlying structure are logically related to one another. The method seeks a thick description, analysis and understanding of the phenomenon. The object of phenomenographic study is not the phenomenon itself but the relationship between actors and phenomenon (Bowden 2005). Phenomenology and phenomenography share an interest in the notion of intentionality. The 'phenomenological reduction' method, or approach, involves the rule of the *epoché*, the rule of description, and the rule of horizontalization (Spinelli 1989: 17–8).

- The rule of the *epoché*, or 'phenomenological bracketing', involves putting aside preconceptions about the phenomenon.
- The rule of description focuses on the need to describe, rather than explain the experience of the phenomenon.
- The rule of horizontalization involves treating all descriptions or experiences as having equal value or significance (Bruce 1994: 49).

While the concept of *epoché* demands that the researcher brackets or acknowledges personal bias, contextual assumptions, and preconceived ideas about the phenomenon in order to understand it through the description of the experience, there is a principle active through the study: the notion of the non-controllable intentionality of

unconsciousness (section 1.3.4 above). What can be eventually described is only the conscious experience of that unconscious (Symington 1986: 135), hence bracketing cannot be a straightforward guarantee of objectivity. Perspective is never ruled out as all attempts at making sense are determined by the viewpoint from where it is perceived. The intention is then to check through reflexive iterations whether the researcher is imposing meanings by looking at the looking in a self-aware manner, attempting to uncover biases, allowing for alternative meanings to appear. Crucial to the study has been the dual exploration of my own experience as participant observer drawing the sessions from the memory of the event, and my reflexive exploration of my experience as researcher of that practice.

If one, thus, assumes that the goal of the researcher's work is to understand and learn about the phenomena being studied, then research is simply a form of learning. If one assumes that research, like other learning processes, can be described by the phenomenology for human learning, it then becomes clear that the most advanced form of understanding is achieved when researchers place themselves within the context being studied. Only in this way can researchers understand the viewpoints and the behaviour, which characterizes social actors. (Flyvbjerg 2006: 236)

4.2.2 CASE STUDIES

Following from the citation above, the subject of the study (the impact of the practice) was pursued through an iterative description and understanding of my own experience of the practice, as a way of telling the story from the many angles and sources that came to view in the apprehension of facts (or their absence) as data. A case study is an extended inductive exploration of a 'bounded system' in time and place through detailed, in-depth data collection. The focus is on a situation or case that, because of its uniqueness, requires exploration as an *intrinsic case study*. Creswell (1998) pointed out that the researcher must consider whether to study multiple cases, risking to dilute the whole analysis, or a single case, losing breadth but gaining depth. Either strategy must support making generalizations to present a convincing description, identify themes, and make credible assertions. In contrast to descriptive surveys, case studies seek to attribute causal relationships, trying to uncover a relationship between the phenomenon and the context in which it occurs. 'The case study method is ideal when a *how* or *why* question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the researcher has no control' (Gray 2009: 247). The rationale for the selection of a case study approach was influenced by the need and opportunity of gaining access to the bounded system of several groups as a participant observer with a variety of roles. It is the intimate connection with empirical reality that permits the development of a testable, relevant, and valid theory (Eisenhardt 1989: 532). According to the conventional view, one cannot

generalize on the basis of an individual case and therefore single-case studies have such a total absence of control as to be of almost no scientific value (Campbell & Stanley 1966: 6). However, Flyvbjerg (2006) has argued that

One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated. (*ibid.*: 228)

4.2.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The purpose of thematic analysis, which can be used with a variety of research methods, is to 'thematize meanings' (Holloway & Todres 2003: 347); for that reason it may be considered not as a specific method but as a tool to be used across different methods (Boyatzis 1998). Because it can be applied independently of theory across a range of epistemological approaches, it provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data in rich detail. It also goes further and assists interpreting aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis 1998). However, an account of themes emerging or being discovered proposes a passive account of the process of analysis, similar to that described above (section 1. 2 in respect of the interpretation of drawings), denying the active role of the researcher in producing, identifying, selecting, and reporting on patterns and themes of interest. The essentialist language of emergence proposes

that themes 'reside' in the data, and if we just look hard enough they will 'emerge' like Venus on the half shell. If themes 'reside' anywhere, they reside in our [...] thinking about our data. (Ely *et al.* 1997: 205–6)

A theme or notion selected by the researcher as identified within the text captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and the researcher must judge what and how a theme will be singled out and named. 'The "keyness" of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures – but in terms of whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question' (Braun & Clarke 2006: 10). While there is no 'correct' method to do this, the thematizing of the data must be coherent across the whole data set. Successive readings of the data singled out and emphasized themes that were later to recede in the successive workings with the material, done in a combination of deductive and inductive ways. As a result, the approach assisted successive reformulations of the research question, always within the same generic preoccupation (how is the practitioner affected

by the practice?). Because the unpacking of the ontology was inevitably insufficient, further readings took place through the analysis and the thematizing process, and the formulations derived were kept in movement through the duration of the study. Braun & Clarke (2006) have proposed *semantic* and *latent* levels of thematic analysis, where the semantic approach would seek to describe the surface event, its form and meaning, while the latent approach attempts to identify the features that gave it that particular form and meaning (*ibid.*: 13); the method proceeds from description of semantic content to interpretation (the affect component) and theory (a defined perspective or position). From a constructionist perspective, meaning and experience are socially produced (by group and observer) and reproduced, rather than inhering within individuals (Burr 1995). In addition, writing was considered an integral component of the process, not something that just happened at the end, since the process of writing keeps the data alive. For that reason, writing – as another dimension of the experience – had to start from the beginning of the analysis rather than leaving it to the end as merely reportage.

4.3 APPLICATION – REVIEW AND REFLEXIONS

Other possible research approaches to the use of self were reviewed, such as narrative analysis (Riessman 1993, Czarniawska 1998), discourse analysis (Willig 1999, Locke 2004), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967), art-based research (McNiff 1998), creative methods (Broussine 2008), mixed methods (Creswell 2003). Other mixed qualitative approaches developed from an ethnographic sensibility were also pondered on and left behind, avoiding an endless methodological exploration. Feminist writers (Kristeva, Butler) informed the writing yet exclusively feminist methodologies were not considered. A precondition for qualitative research is that it should account for the conditions of its own production, i.e., it has to be 'unalienated'. The bias introduced by my personal conscious and unconscious characteristics as 'the researcher' had to be exposed (sex, age, ethnicity, cultural background, emigration, political viewpoint, milieu, tradition, trajectory, aversions, attractions, and so forth) as they would necessarily have an impact, which led to a phenomenographic approach. Analytic autoethnography (Anderson 2006) had seemed an early option and I would hypothesize that it has become the actual (or parallel) approach to the investigation of the topic through my experiencing self, incomplete and defended as it would inevitably be, unpacking my epistemology and ontology through the reflective use of visual representation. This called attention to the use of the self across several dimensions as a site of knowledge production and undoing, seeking 'a model for human situations and processes in which non-I is not an intruder, but a partner in difference (Ettinger 1993, cited in Pollock 2009: 5). However, it seemed essential to avoid situating

reflexivity as a confessional act, a cure for what ails us, or a practice that renders familiarity, but rather to situate practices of reflexivity as critical to exposing the

difficult and often uncomfortable task of leaving what is unfamiliar, unfamiliar.
(Pillow 2003: 177)

A distinction must be made between reflexivity and reflection – ‘to be reflective does not demand an “other”, while to be reflexive demands both an other and some self-conscious awareness of the process of self-scrutiny’ (Chiseri-Strater 1996: 130). Reflexivity proposes an ‘ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment’ (Hertz 1997: viii). It is this ongoing conversation between perceiving (the group, consultant included) and the act of representing it that is at the core of the project. As Macbeth (2001: 35) notes, ‘reflexivity is a deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of author, other, text, and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself’. Hence, the study attended to my researcher’s role(s), the research setting, and my participation in the research findings. Drawing the groups offered a reflexive fieldwork practice opening up the opportunity for delaying an interrogation of the experience – *draw before you think before you answer* – and then produce (or withhold from producing) performative interventions.

Consideration of the subsections above in the light of the research question led to a phenomenological approach in the form of a phenomenography about the production of visual representations made during a single year-long case study, interrogated through thematic analysis. The representations were drawn and kept in my studio. Corrections as attempts at secondary revision were not avoided but retained in the actual representations, becoming contributions to the visual (or written) account. Hence, the *pentimenti* or tentative marks in a drawing were not erased or deleted, and neither the crossed-out words, passages, or sequences in the writing. They became, as parapraxes, a constitutive component of the visual or written documents, preserving the awareness of the wish to correct the text preserving the instances of *negation* (Freud 1925b) as evidence of repression. Both the utterance and its deletion may point to making further meaning. The purpose of the representations was not the production of archaeological re-creations but the process of representation itself, to assist creative meditations on the subject as both observed and imagined since they were not (can never be) accurate (mimetic) renderings. Translation – the transformation between two codes – was at work in encoding the experience from both the imaginary and the symbolic of experience to the concrete and symbolic of the drawing. Technical (in)competence (though often lamented) was not a significant issue, and

I wondered what it would mean to keep all of that data in play, to keep the experience of data open, and resist the closure and reassurance promised by regulatory practices of qualitative inquiry – triangulation, negative case analysis, reflexive engagement, coding, and so on. (Childers 2012: 753)

The research followed a heuristic process intending to capture the experience and derive knowledge thereof through a systematic process. The steps taken were as follows:

1 Visual representations in a variety of media were made of all group sessions undertaken in specified settings during one calendar year (11/09/2017 – 26/11/2018). The meetings of which drawings were made through the study have been of five kinds:

- a) ongoing experiential study student groups (two different trainings – a Masters course on organizational dynamics, and a counselling training) – in my role as group facilitator;
- b) an organizational observations group seminar (one course) – in my role as tutor;
- c) regular staff meetings in Higher Education (two staff teams) – in my role as permanent member of each team;
- d) periodic consultancy meetings (one private client group) – in my role as organizational consultant;
- e) bi-weekly couple therapy sessions (three ongoing client couples) – in my role as co-therapist.

- Each session was the subject of between 2 and 4 visual representations:
- 108 sessions were represented in 2 drawings,
- 5 sessions were represented in 3 drawings,
- 5 sessions were represented in 4 drawings,
- making a total of 118 sessions represented in 251 drawings.

A phenomenological account (4.2.1 above) about the experience of drawing the session was written per each set of drawings from each session, of over 1,000 words each, totalling over 122,000 words for the year. The writing was about the experience of drawing and not about the content of the session – even if at times the anxieties elicited by the session became apparent in the text with or without factual details and the phenomenography implied a reflective space. The concern was not to make an analysis of the drawings – neither as artefacts (i.e., their style, frequency of themes and motifs) nor as representations of hidden meanings, but to tease out the effect of the activity of drawing. This could be felt at the moment of the actual production of a drawing (perhaps best described as surprise), when contemplating them (disconcert or mourning), and when remembering the drawing (as digestion) rather than the session, even though at times these two overlapped. Thus the phenomenographic writing veered towards the confessional, aiming to expose the range of emotions called forward by the actions involved rather than seeking to relate them back to an anticipated group process by considering the representations as communications connoting meanings to be translated.

The drawing sittings were written up in an average 18 paragraphs per sitting, i.e., about 2,200 entries of around 55 words each. Each entry was written in first-person singular soon after making the drawings, in most cases later on the same day. The text was separated in numbered paragraphs to facilitate retrieval. A strength of the design was that several cases, i.e., point a) to point e) above, took place concurrently over one whole year. A possible weakness was that there was only one respondent (myself),

although the year-long engagement across the different situations produced varied and rich material.

2 The resulting phenomenographic text was edited to produce a fully anonymized version, deleting all references to individuals in respect of personal and organizational issues and details, respecting spelling mistakes, as these were considered as parapraxes offering material for reflection.

3 Thematic codes (4.2.3 above) from each and every paragraph of the text as referring to the main issue described therein, were identified, resulting in 619 codes, many of them pertaining to more than a single paragraph. Some paragraphs were included under more than one code if this was felt appropriate. The active criteria were intuited rather than systematically defined; the codes were 'moved about' through trial and error.

4 Paragraphs were collated in sections under their respective codes. While some coded sections consisted of a single paragraph (\pm 50 words) from the phenomenography, most consisted of between two to five paragraphs, and each code included some 30 paragraphs (\pm 2,000 words).

5 In the search for generalizations in the practice the text collated under the 619 codes was grouped by code under four mayor overall chronological categories. These were:

D Drawing act – somewhat descriptive, concerning the praxis, the actual activity, its vicissitudes, and determinants but not fantasies. First-person statements while making the drawing, drafted in the past tense;

C Concerns or issues emerging – thinking arising out of the praxis that was somewhat a preoccupation or subject of interest. First-person statements after making the drawing, drafted in the past tense;

R Reflections on process – generalizations (and unnecessary content to be deleted). First- or third-person statements connecting before and after making the drawing, drafted in the present tense;

S Significance for practice – a higher level of abstraction about the impact of the practice. Third-person statements on the learning derived from the practice and possible applications, drafted in the future tense;

plus three in-between categories (*D/C*, *C/R*, and *R/S*).

6 Codes organized in the categories shown in point 5 above seemed both insufficiently and excessively organized within a time-line frame to capture the complexity of the process. The coded text was reorganized under 15 substantial themes in which each code shares the emotional/practical/conceptual tenor of the theme.

7 The phenomenographic text was then made into a critical narrative of the material thus obtained, attending to overall meaning, reorganized in part to follow Kolb's learning

cycle (Vince 1998). Under a broadly chronological rationale by means of an inductive sequence from particular to general, the revised argument made use of some of the 15 themes present in 6 above. The whole text was now assembled under 10 main themes, resulting in the narrative shown as Chapter 5.

The process of writing, coding, identifying generic themes, and grouping them under main headings to organize the material is of course part and parcel of the critical engagement; decisions were made without an explicit intention with respect to what seemed the coherence of the text in attending to the research question. This could be done even if weakly authorized (or at least partly assisted) by the extent of the material in length and time to protect from unthought (or at least knee-jerk) moves, but bias has been (must be) present all along the way. A number of issues became evident and were considered:

- Whether the themes identified in the analysis aimed at realizing a depth in the text – i.e., were they impositions or discoveries? When looking for startling terms, but also for repetitions, constancy, and regularities, in some instances I broke up a section if more than two themes appeared to suggest themselves. Occasionally, themes seemed too literal a rendering but I continued, expecting that the text would become streamlined and explicit.
- At times I realized that I had departed from phenomenographic writing to excuse myself for the events of the session which I had not yet been able to process. This made evident that *the practice implied no guarantee of digestion*.
- The messianic wish to be confirmed by the phantasmatic Other popped up at times. Phenomenological engagement must include as an aside (rather than description) an awareness of those phantasies.
- Conversely, I was aware of the internal judge demanding a fully accurate starting point and result; this, of course, is impossible in achievement and conclusion. While it seemed far easier to sustain an intellectual intention, actual praxis required having to accept the imperfect session, drawing, and text.

The process of making sense from the phenomenography required bracketing intended outcomes, becoming aware of my wishes, trying to be alert noticing when I was jumping to conclusions. The question seemed to be: what allows the passage from a proposition to a further one which is also a valid elaboration (how measured?) of the preceding one? When I assigned a heading, code, or theme sections to the text in the phenomenography, I searched for a key term that would come to mind when thinking of that passage, to identify a master signifier for that entry by using a free associative method – usually (but not always) a word within the text – to label the particular entry. At times I found that such a term existing in the text was not accurate enough and I would consult a thesaurus to search for another term that better represented the idea I wished to highlight. The material was re-read several times until saturation and the material was repeatedly regrouped following perceived threads or argument(s). I then reorganized the 619 codes

differently, aware that any taxonomy could only offer a temporary move as a heuristic device towards the best possible informed guess. I was aware that some of the entries were selected somewhat arbitrarily, following a hunch, hoping they would be a 'happy speculation' and that otherwise they would be picked up at the analysis stage. This was a lengthy process. Cannon (2018) pointed to the opportunity arising when

I consider what might happen if I linger with the participant – and linger with the 'data'? What might working the liminal do? [...] representation always fails, and yet, it clings to us. For me, at least, representation is a hard habit to break. The failure of representation is built in. That does not mean representation is easily abandoned. (*ibid.*: 574)

Furthermore, in line with the intention of challenging dualistic thinking, the text was grouped not only searching for commonalities but also for oppositions (e.g. truth + untrue) and several times I returned to the original text to refine the decision as to what category or theme would be most suitable. I also had to trust the choices I had made or else I would be searching endlessly for validation of every move. The iterative approach to writing the phenomenography produced saturation; later sessions became increasingly shorter. The material had to be reorganized into digestible segments (chunking); some of the entries were discarded because at that stage they seemed no longer relevant or inaccurately labelled. Further categories emerged in the writing of the sections, such as Knower and Eye, later discarded. There were also ambiguities. For example, *Identification* could be placed under *Digestion* but also under *Thinking*. The choices were eventually arbitrary, and I had to hesitate and wait for the coalescing of the code with the most appropriate heading. The material is of course organized around the literature search, which is the selected by the researcher, seeking particular notions and therefore partly constructing conclusions, inventing them in the material. A frustrated pull towards comprehensive objectivity and fool-proof analysis had to be recognized and accepted.

I realized I set trust in the fullness of the word as signified (a precise circumscribed meaning) when it became obvious as the work progressed that categories could take one form or another, and every decision was partly aleatory, rational, and also unconscious. Each selection was an interpretation of the entry and as such a translation, a representation, a transformation, and I had to trust a decision made blind, hoping that its purpose would eventually be made clear by wading through uncertainties. Bajc (2012) has usefully pointed out that the analytical process of abduction starts when we observe something surprising about a phenomenon attracting our attention.

A perceptual insight is therefore a precondition for abductive inference. Infinite possibilities can be imagined as an explanation of this discovery, so we use guessing to select the one that seems most plausible. [...] By noticing such surprising things, we derive strong intimations about reality without being fully conscious of it. These intimations, however, are not simply pure guessing; they

are based on tacit knowledge, clues, or strong intuition about what the data are communicating. [...] the cognitive process of creative thinking is discovery through doing, by working with, rather than simply observing, the empirical objects. The implication for ethnography is that a flash of insight will appear through playing with the data rather than the act of observation. [...] the abductive analytical method requires that ethnographers be comfortable in their own uncertainty of outcome. (*ibid.*: 82–3)

Towards the conclusion of the study the instruction to make two drawings was deemed irrelevant. Although it had been followed through for all observations, a single drawing A or B seemed sufficient by the end as an act of representation of the session, since both A and B were a metaphor or translation and hence the product of language. This was further confirmation that what was relevant was not the particular brief of the drawing (to draw what one observed, to draw what one experienced), but the activity itself. Drawings A and B could also contradict each other and also the experience of the session, or the silence in and of the drawing. Absence as lack of presence or as a frightening omission is of necessity also inconclusive

without further attempts to define or capture what 'data' is. These examples invite the unknown, deviant, and impossible; they deviate, transform, and link to other concepts. (Benozzo *et al.* 2013: 310)

And rightly so, or else the narrative would have been fixed and the drawing would become just an illustration with nothing left to be surprised and noticed, as the displeasure of uncertainty closes the potential for opening up from the iterative reworking of im/possibility. Furthermore,

traditional qualitative research is characterized by an effort to separate, tidy up, cut, classify, contain, clean up, and simplify data. But of course this reduces the chaotic richness of data. Instead if we begin to conceptualize data as movement, as waves and vapors, data become and happen, and we can glance at them in a completely different way. (*ibid.*: 311)

Furthermore, thick description does not necessarily mean neat and accurate – it can also be intense and messy. Faithfulness is not simply in the told but in the music of the telling, not only in the manifest but also the *liminal* ('relating to, or situated at a sensory threshold: barely perceptible or capable of eliciting a response').

I think of transcription as operating in the liminal. I consider with Benozzo, Bell, and Koro-Ljungberg (2013) that 'perhaps data is less an object than a passage between objects' (p. 310), not a seeking to get from one object to the other, but the moving about in the betweenness. (Cannon 2018: 571)

The observer cannot make meaning without inference *and* interference, since experiences brought into language are obscured by the repression of her/his own internal objects and those of the group that have been taken in, identified with, or reacted against. These can be disclosed up to a point in the *pas de deux* of both follies (consultant's and group's) working together. The observer will also discover her/his relationship and relatedness with group members and/or the group as a whole, and the difficulties (and problematic pleasures) of noticing sexuality as a voyeur, coming into contact with abjection (section 2.3). The process may afford a particular erotic (scopophilic) satisfaction of mastery and control. Perhaps this is when the process may feel unsafe unless handled by a sufficiently prepared group consultant because, even while trying to protect the other from abuse, there is no relating without the use of the other as object (Winnicott 1971) made real by the psychotic nature of concrete thinking. Attending to the ethics of engagement (these drawings will not be shown to the subjects) may not be enough with or without one's own (psycho)analysis. I found I had written: *I wonder whether I am using and abusing my sitters, including myself* – and then pondered whether drawing (i.e., phantasizing, imagining, thinking) must be unethical (i.e., unbound) if it is to be truthful.

4.4 ETHICS

The study was designed in compliance with the requirements set out by Goldsmiths Research Ethics Code of Practice (2005), the ESRC Research Ethics Framework (2014), the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009), and the Association of Social Anthropologists Ethical Guidelines (2011); and was submitted to and approved by the Goldsmiths Research Ethics Committee. The proposal described how drawings of group participants were made solely for my use as visual notes in order to ascertain the impact of visual note-making on my practice as participant observer;

- such drawings (unlike photographs) were not realistic depictions of actual subjects but representations of memories of the group observed;
- these visual notes were not shown to the groups observed as they had a purely personal associative value;
- representations of one group by which members might be identified (since their work connection with me was known by others) required that all members were fully informed about the study and provided their written consent to their public dissemination (as made explicit in the Goldsmiths Research Consent form), before those drawings could be used in presentations or publications.

The rationale in respect of the confidentiality of the representations was to protect both the group and the participant observer/drawer. If these images were to be shown to group members (or any others) they may elicit curiosity and/or displeasure, since a drawing (whether highly accurate or grossly distorted) may feel exposing or disagreeable as

a caricature. Hence, no one other than the drawer (myself) has had access to the representations made during the study. No one other than myself would know what the images might refer to because no details of persons, date, group, or location has been given. The phenomenography pertains to my own emotional experience as the drawer (on whom the impact of the practice is the actual subject of the study) and makes no reference to persons, groups, or organizations. The only images that refer to actual people that can be made public in this thesis (section 5.2), presentations, or publications have been consented to by all members of the group involved. All other drawings have been and will be kept strictly confidential and destroyed after concluding the study. However, data are not something 'that can be collected, coded and analysed; data are processes constructed by the researcher's interpretive practices' (Denzin 2013: 355). Furthermore,

data and evidence are never morally or ethically neutral. [...] the politics and political economy of evidence, also known as data, is not a question of evidence or no evidence. It is rather a question of who has the power to control the definition of evidence, who defines the kinds of materials that count as evidence, who determines what methods best produce the best forms of evidence, whose criteria and standards are used to evaluate quality evidence? (Denzin 2013: 354)

Secondly, confidentiality in respect of the representations made by the observer is also an ethical necessity to safeguard the observer/drawer from the judgement that group and others may make about drawings and drawer, and also to protect the freedom of the drawer to phantasize (and fantasize), associate, invent, and distort, as the case may be. The notion of ethical responsibility (rather than simply limited to data) remains problematic because of the potentially disturbing nature of imaginary views resulting from witnessing and participating in a meeting. While we ask for permission to take a photograph of a person (because it is considered an objective record and, as such, may be used as evidence in a court of law), a drawing is an invention, like a dream, and it would be nonsensical to ask for permission to dream or think of someone, however wild the narrative may be. The drawings from the memory of a session are equivalent to private musings by the observer/drawer on their experience, not dissimilar to the phantasies that a psychoanalytically informed supervisee may bring to supervision to understand what has been lodged or registered in the observer, as well as what may not belong to the individual or group session but to the observer her/himself, that is, the difference between countertransference and transference. While following ethical guidelines, supervisees do not seek permission from their patients to take their treatment to supervision.

As Wittgenstein (1967: 81) has remarked, there is a difference between following a rule and understanding a rule, but differences are not straightforward. The notion of the participant is somewhat ambiguous – the actual participants are both the group observed and myself as the person doing the observing and then drawing my own experience. The

participant observer is pictured in Drawing A, same as the other seen and unseen subjects. While these drawings refer to actual people, they are visual renderings of mental constructs making reference to actual features of the subjects (aspects of their appearance and the complexity of their narratives) equivalent to fictional narratives from accounts heard or situations seen. The risk of concrete thinking is to confuse a narrative (a fiction) with whatever it narrates.

At one level, the observer's cover of anonymity is blown because s/he is systematically observed and drawn by her/himself. While this may be connected to the patients' anxiety in the session, expressed in their distrust of the therapeutic process, the situation is disturbingly reminiscent of a brief science fiction story (Dell 1953) in which a scientist, perplexed by how many great historical figures had developed a mental illness and become mad, devised an optical contraption that allowed his team to actually view past events in real time. They were then able to witness private moments of many such characters and their paranoid delusions, expressed as the conviction that they were being observed. The scientists found this happened with all cases investigated and concluded, with horror, that the subjects were sensing the intrusive gaze of the scientists themselves. Heisenberg published his Uncertainty Principle (1927) stating that any experiment will inevitably result in a large enough disturbance affecting in a substantial and uncontrollable way the results gathered, which cannot then be considered absolutely accurate. And yet, those are the results from which meaning will have to be made by actively taking into account the presence of the observer as both an actual Other and an (unconscious) interlocutor. The latter, rather than just introducing a disturbance in the recording, produces a discontinuity which offers a unique opportunity for the development and use of a very sensitive instrument: an unconscious, intersubjective, non-linear dialogue within and between the group and the observer – as Other(s) to each other. I have been aware of my own concern about the potential impact of making anOther a subject of one's curiosity, attention, and desire – the Viewer is not an empty mind but one with their prejudices and judgements about what is being observed. A concern with ethics is a necessity because

Ethics lays the foundations for principles that force people to be good; it clarifies concepts, secures judgments, provides firm guardrails along the slippery slopes of factual life. It provides principles and criteria and adjudicates hard cases.

Ethics is altogether wholesome, constructive work, which is why it enjoys a good name. The deconstruction of ethics, on the other hand [...] shows that the net is already torn, is 'always already' split, all along and from the start [...] one is rather more on one's own that one likes to think, than ethics would have us think.

(Caputo 1993: 4)

If ethics is understood as a relationship between individual actions and the social norms and rules to which individuals decide to adhere or not, being ethical is thus defined as 'acting in a way that is detached from personal privileges, passions and emotions' (Ibarra-

Colado *et al.* 2006: 46). This seems a very incomplete register, as emotions go beyond considering someone with *respect* (looking at, anew), that is, *seeing* at, through, behind the other and, in the process, seeing oneself as other across a purely rational landscape. The notion of ethics is insufficient if it assures the researcher, organizational consultant, therapist, that ethical steps protect from the workings of the unconscious. The issue is not whether those images are or are not be shown because it would be an infringement of the other's mind, but that encouraging the observer to imagine and phantasize may take her/him into phantasies that may make the observer/drawer recoil with disgust at their own formulation. The opportunity to articulate them is not a vaccination but a coming to terms, particularly because the observer is also a participant, hence the study's ethical function seems protected for as long as it is confined to conscious fantasy. However, (unconscious) phantasy is always at work; the dimension of privacy that risks being violated or intruded upon is the scene of the group as it guards a primitive traumatic event in the minds of the individuals, the group, and the observer, about what may predate the session, which appears as the *après coup* (section 6.2.3 below) or appears in the session itself. Any entertaining of the image of the other is a potential intrusion, an infringement of the other's boundaries, a transgression (which an Other may be unconsciously aware of), even though thinking about an other is an inevitability and a necessity. What kind of blinding strategy does research comply with against its own intention, of not seeing the see-able? Writing an ethnographic account requires consideration of what and who the ethnographer includes and also excludes (from the site of absence). The central issue (which indeed has ethical repercussions) is the imagining and representation that goes beyond the factual (whatever was noticed) and articulates what was felt, imagined, desired, and feared as a *certainty*, a psychotic-type of confusion of emotions as reality. The one essential ethical injunction is that the group must be protected from being exposed to the (raw) feelings of the observer, infringing its members' vulnerability. But it must be remembered that

Responsibility is not a calculation to be performed. It is a relation always already integral to the world's ongoing intra-active becoming and not-becoming. It is an iterative (re)opening up to, an enabling of responsiveness. Not through the realization of some existing possibility, but through the iterative reworking of im/possibility, an ongoing rupturing, a crosscutting of topological reconfiguring of the space of response-ability. (Barad 2010: 265–6)

Frosh and Baraitser (2008) have pointed out the dangers of an approach foregrounded in constructionist and poststructuralist critiques, whereby a colonizing effect is created by expert systems that claim to produce knowledge of other subjects. But *the drawing approach does not aim at the production of knowledge but rather at the disruption of its production*. It is not a strategy to dominate and subjugate the experience of the group and control its impact on the ethnographer but 'an interactive process that creates a dialogic structure: a shared third, an opportunity to experience mutual recognition' (Benjamin

2004: 23) in order to preserve the potential for thinking unthinkable thoughts. Lapping (2013) proposed that the Lacanian perspective is similar to the relational approach in recognizing the dangers of imposing interpretations onto other subjects. However, 'in contrast to Benjamin, Lacan does not see this insight as the basis for reconceptualising recognition, but rather as necessitating an alertness to misrecognition' (Lapping 2013: 374). Lapping cited Butler to suggest that this impossibility constitutes the basis for our relation to the other in the transference: 'What emerges as enigmatic within the transference, then, is a residue of a primary situation of being overwhelmed that precedes the formation of the unconscious and of the drives' (Butler 2005: 71).

The relation to the other is here formulated as key not just to the formation of subjectivity, but also to its persistent, enigmatic, unknowability. [But, Butler suggests] it might be possible to constitute an ethical relation that does not exploit the other, by coming to recognize the other as an unknowable constituent of the self. [In comparison,] for Žižek the ethical stance is thus not to recognize or construct some commonality between subjects, but violently to disrupt individualized, humanized relations by introducing the specificity of the faceless 'thing' that had to be excluded in the constitution of my subjectivity. (Lapping 2013: 377)

One of the problems arising when using drawing as a research tool is that the 'scientific' origins of social science forbid the imaginative associative excesses of literary interpretation. The drawing in its performativity may foster an encounter with the otherness of observer and observed on one hand, but also result in a narcissistically defensive reading to protect from the shameful experience of the observation encounter, against the work of interpretation. Lapping proposed that what is at stake in research is

the attempt to keep my own desire in flow, to avoid the sedimentation of desire into a claim to know. To do this it may sometimes be necessary to stop the continual undoing, to pause and let the words [images] of the other be. (*ibid.*: 384, interpolation added).

We communicate affectively as well as discursively, precisely because of the inherent limitations of language in expressing experience. Drawing opens the opportunity for making contact with the psychic (rather than inner) reality of the group observed, of which the ethnographer is also a member. While statements in written language may make generalizations, the statement(s) of a drawing are particular to the depiction rather than exclusively to the motif depicted – they are the representation of the intersubjective (i.e., intrinsic to the relationship rather than its individual parts). Such drawing practice follows the aim 'to respect the pedagogical imperative of all pedagogy, namely, to work in view of its own redundancy' (Bennington 2000: 2), that is, *make such drawings and you will need them no longer*. As Craib (1997: 1) has put it: 'a non-psychotic theory is one which knows

its own limitations.' The verification of the value of the process is in its fecundity – if it leads nowhere it is not verified. However, if it works as the starting point of new associations (translations) leading to further thoughts and feelings, its value is confirmed. Gergen & Gergen (2014) have stated that 'performative inquiry can be especially effective in generating dialogue. This is not simply because it can be more easily understood, but because it does not declare that it is true' (*ibid.*: 220). A drawing will not merely 'reproduce' an idea in a lineal notion of translation as replication of like-for-like across different language codes but

produce an idea, a thought, sense or truth [...] that is not identifiable, recognizable or, even less, measurable – a truth first of all, and as a principle, unformed (for which, in consequence, a conformity cannot be given). (Nancy 2013: 11–12)

The participant observer's desire is as inevitable as the group's and requires coming to terms with a sense of guilt at an inevitable dis-satisfaction as the violence of an unresolved tension: 'if a subject chooses desire, he falls prey to guilt for having failed to comply with the law, but in opting for the law, he is left to mourn his desire' (Grigg 2008: 105). The ethical situation to be considered through the practice must also be a tension not to be resolved, aware of the necessity of unethical and disobedient excess at the level of phantasy and imagination which the practice may foster or, at least, must give permission for – while fully response-able to the Other.

4.5 FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON METHOD AND ETHICS

Only one group was approached to authorize me to make drawings made from our meetings. Interestingly, none of the five members expressed during or after the conclusion of the research any the wish to see, or curiosity about, the 38 drawings I had made from the sessions (eight of which are shown in p. 147–150). This had been offered when requesting their permission to make them and include them in the thesis and any further publications and presentations. I hypothesize that such homogenous lack of response was in fact a response: the representations thus imagined would be too disturbing fearing they may (would) show the group in some disagreeable way, exposing (frightening) group dynamics (rivalry, competition, sexual desire), confirming the tantalizing phantasy that the drawing discloses everything and thus blames, censures, shames, abuses – the list is endless – members and group. From my part, being aware of the possibility of having to show them if requested, required that I struggled to ignore the interference by applying in their making a professional drawer mind-set, which of course limited my freedom as conveyor or scribe of the process who would be eventually exposed. I thus enjoyed greater freedom with the other groups in the study, and expect that although they may have been unconsciously aware of the recording aspect of my gaze, this did not interfere with my or the group's task and, besides a certain unease, it

may have also registered in the group in the way described by the team of architects (p. 43), as an underlying reassurance of my attentive presence and capacity for reverie – as well as of my (persecutory) gaze as the Other of the group, which would occur in any group consultation. What would be unacceptable as unethical would be to engage in the practice furtively AND show the drawings to others, regardless of whether group members would be unknown or could not be recognized, and even more so if they were recognizable, as was the case of this particular group because names were known in the institutional context.

5 DRAWING AS BLIND PRACTICE

5.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

Following the discussion of the research method in the previous chapter, the purpose of this chapter is to derive a narrative from the detailed phenomenographic text produced from and about the process of making representations from the observations of groups – towards an inventory and classification. Codes were determined and themes coalesced by association and decantation of the material, resulting in a sort of thesaurus identifying, itemizing, and organizing the concepts arising from the phenomenography, leading to the hypotheses considered in Chapter 6.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE EXTENDED PHENOMENOGRAPHY

'To tell the truth – no, first the story' (Beckett 1959: 300)

The phenomenography was drafted in the first-person singular, present tense, to articulate the phenomenal through the description of experience, with the authorial gender given throughout as male (my own) to avoid a cumbersome strategy of gender attribution as s/he, her/himself, etc. Concerning the construction of group members, it was a constant struggle to remember that I was writing about the experience of making a representation rather than about the actual members or group depicted, because of a proclivity to confuse the represented with the representation – i.e., sign with signifier. The focus of the phenomenography was not the activities and emotional dynamics of whatever happened (or did not happen) in the group sessions – or even about what was depicted in the drawing(s) as coded versions of whatever happened in the meetings – but of what took place *after* the session through the practice of re-presenting the meeting to explore the experience, providing a productive space for reflecting about group and session.

The analysis aspired to map a topology, i.e., the way in which constituent parts are interrelated or arranged, as a method of discovery and exposition, recognizing that the researcher as subject is not situated as overview – perceptions cannot be considered from a teleological perspective since I had been an active participant. Such mapping was a further experience of the practice. The phenomenographic text was then scrutinized as described in section 4.3. Thematizing the phenomenography required confidence in the method while shunning intentionality in the expectation that a state of negative capability would lead to a broad range of notions to be weaved together in the processing of the

experience. Hence, in reading, re-reading, and coding the phenomenography I had to trust that selected facts would emerge alongside overvalued ideas (Britton & Steiner 1994). Those facts would *make* sense and *give* sense – the former is passive, the latter is active – and both are requirements of learning from experience (Dewey 1916). The narrative did not exist – i.e., it had not been formed or constructed – until the entries were edited and conjoined, suspecting a pull towards an essentialist approach in the inevitable wish for a revelation to manage and protect from the unpleasantness of uncertainty. The approach was akin to bricolage, assembling disparate elements (produced by the conjunction of group, observer, and drawing) into organized narratives. There was also an aleatory aspect where entries, through successive reordering (alphabetic, thematic, accidental), were conjoined and followed each other with partial wilful intervention, even if every categorization or ordering and eventual acceptance reflected an intention. While noticing the hope of meaning to emerge from the drawing practice – a deep-ingrained phantasy arising out of desire for knowledge and control – the analysis of the phenomenography provided the space for a conversation with the material. The sections that follow offer an organized meandering through the data. The arrangement of the material aims to sequence harmonies by a sort of poetic decision that clusters ideas in consonance and contradiction to produce a resonance leading to the hypotheses discussed in Chapter 6. Some subsections could well be placed under different headings, as cross-referencing is inevitable.

Drawings from four sample sessions

While drawing A ostensibly represents the circumstances in the room, drawing B addresses the experience of being in the group, unconstrained by the accounting as mimesis. Drawings A and B from meetings 08, 38, 84, and 93 (permission for inclusion granted in writing by all participants) are included herewith to provide an insight about the appearance of the practice, but not its effect. Showing the actual drawings will inevitably mislead because our species is led by their visual sense and the reader may be drawn to perceive the artefacts of the practice as its outcome. Hence, 'I see' is the common verbal expression used to denote understanding – the truth 'must be seen to be believed'. This biological imperative prioritizes object and quantity over process, quality and purpose. The selection of the drawings was determined by the need to obtain permission from all the members of a group for any public display of the drawings in presentations and publications. Out of this set of 19 pairs of drawings I chose pairs showing different approaches to representation such as variations of viewpoint and degree of abstraction (even if all of them are done in my preferred naturalistic style). However, as stated throughout this study, the actual drawings are unimportant. They are only a by-product of the practice as artefacts, while it is drawing *as activity* that constitutes the performative core of the practice. What had to be explored was the impact of the practice on practitioner, regardless of a description or evaluation of the artefacts produced along the way. These representations were not made purposelessly and interrogation of their meanings (and interrogation of the need to ascribe meaning) is to be implemented at later stage as described in section 6.4. The necessity to restate that the nature of the drawings is secondary to the practice itself is also discussed in that section. The four pairs of drawings (Fig. 9) in the next pages are followed by the narrative derived from the phenomenographic text, as described in section 4.4.

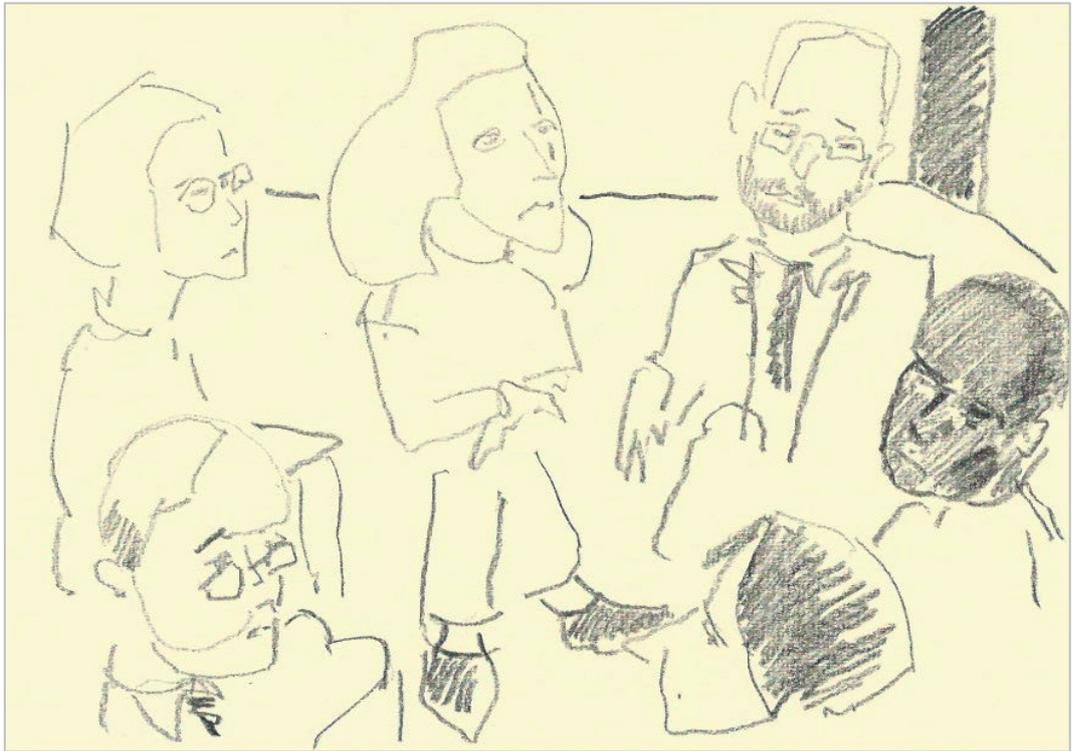


Fig. 9 – drawing 8 A

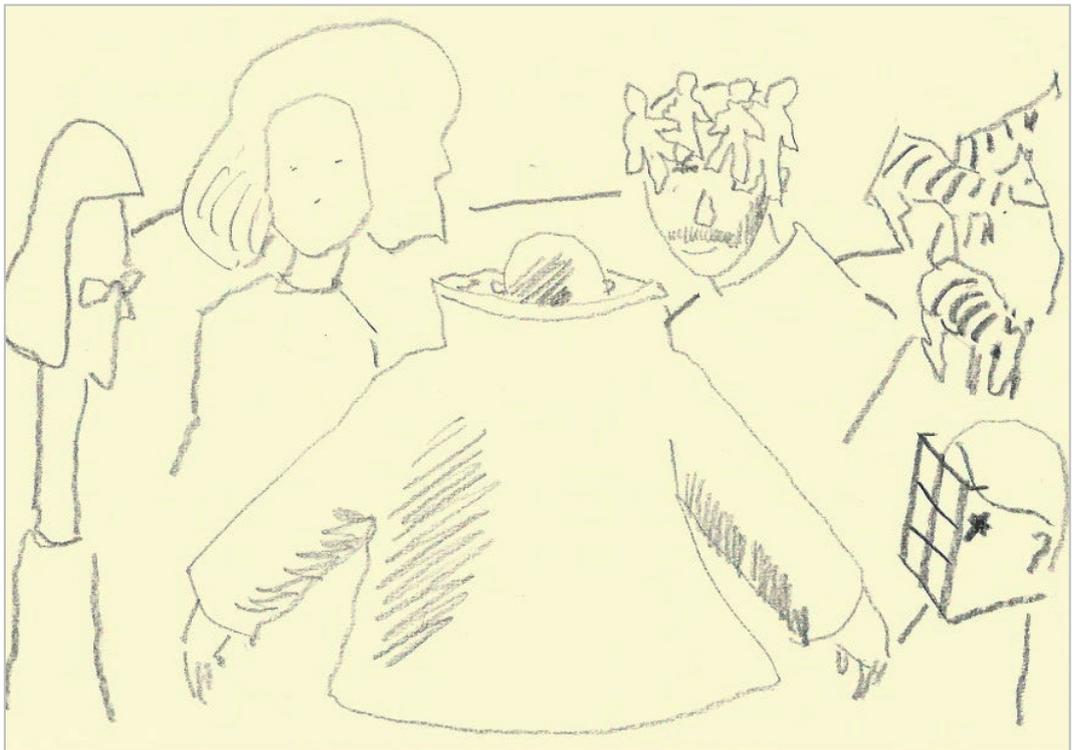


Fig. 9 – drawing 8 B



Fig. 9 – drawing 38 A



Fig. 9 – drawing 38 B



Fig. 9 – drawing 84 A

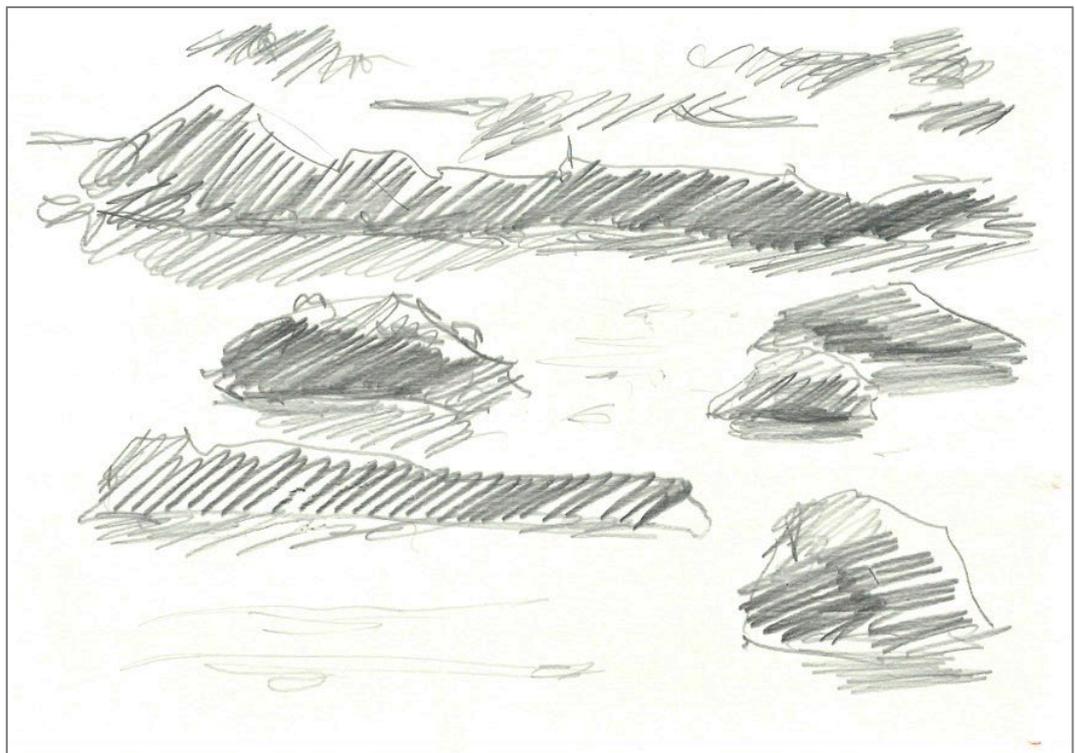


Fig. 9 – drawing 84 B



Fig. 9 – drawing 93 A



Fig. 9 – drawing 93 B

5.2.1 ROLE

Roles noticed in the material are considered distinct personas in the (dramatic) narrative where they appear as a confusion of tongues – who speaks, in whose terms, and to whom? The characters compete with each other and overlap. If psychoanalysis is concerned with undeadening, what I tried to do in recording the experience of drawing the session was to unmask the roles (the voices) taken up by aspects of the participant observer drawing the group. The draughtsperson is a necessity of the drawing, yet all roles are protagonists, regardless of the tasks inferred (and constructed) from the phenomenography. These are Observer, Viewer, Drawer, and Other in the first instance, but also further constructions as Donor and Witness.

Observer

The Observer is both a participant and an observer of all group members (her/himself included), noticing and imagining ex-changes in the group. The group consciously and unconsciously suspects that all members are observers and that each member constructs their group-in-the-mind. The Observer differs from an external observer by having entered into an explicit contract with the group – as experiential facilitator, organizational consultant, couple therapist, or trainee – making her/him a particular target and enigmatic depository of the group's projections while avoiding (or noticing) being conscripted into membership. Her/his observations of what does or does not take place in the session feed into the interventions (if any) made from the role s/he has been contracted to undertake. The Observer's representation appears in drawing A only as an appearance. The metaphors represented in drawing B are intended to describe the Observer/Drawer's experience of the session. The Drawer is the starting point, the one who sees and draws, without equality since the Viewer is a function, while the Drawer is an actor, maker, bricoleur, and intruder. Struggle as s/he might, the Drawer is unable to draw without a sophisticated or rudimentary schema, however much s/he disguises their presence behind that of the abstract notion of the Viewer.

Viewer

The Viewer begins as merely a position in space implied by the location of the picture plane as in Dürer's engraving. He is also an active presence that informs and directs the attention of the Drawer. Does the Viewer have any expectations, or is s/he simply an after-the-fact construction? Or does s/he precede the drawing as an optical device – her/his presence, position, desire? The Viewer is a practical contraption, positioned by the Drawer purportedly to miss as little as possible of the action, yet never getting close enough, being only a point in space. Although the event, the conversations, the feelings, take place in a past present and can be described as personal narratives, they are perceived by the unforgiving personification of the Viewer who sees the joint struggle of participants and group. And yet the ensuing representation may be a symptom and a

deceit. While Viewer is the generic term, the Optical Viewer is the function determined by the path of light made evident by the drawing projection in use (Dubery & Willats 1972), embodied in the picture plane as defined by perspective. The Master Viewer is an abstraction embodying the desire that dictates the orientation of the gaze. I wonder if any participant ever looks at (in the direction of) the Viewer(s), as if they knew that s/he is (they are) the Big Observer(s) of the scene, source of the gaze, and actual constructor(s) of the drawing.

Drawer

As the participant observer I am also the Drawer. I tend to start the drawing on my own image regardless of my position in the room. The familiar sequence of writing from left to right determines the direction of the trace and the glance representing the members of the group in a clockwise direction, interrogating the tacit image held by the Drawer. I wonder if the Drawer wants the Viewer to believe the drawing as a description of true feeling. I suspect that that Viewer is an Other, a phantasized Viewer, but also myself regarding the group and the drawing with the wish to impress (perhaps to frighten), to mark the Viewer, to imprint in him the seen, the thought. The characters (Drawer, Group, Viewer) are an intriguing triad, sometimes overlapping, oftentimes distinct. I am sorry for the Viewer who is and is not someone, who expects and accepts without quibble. Or perhaps s/he does not, and is not abstract but messy, dissatisfied, angry, confused. After the session I am left with no refuge, other than making the drawing of it, checking it with the Viewer, my solitary interlocutor behind whose mask I will inevitably find myself. The Viewer's is a feared sudden entrance (intrusion). An aspirational Master Viewer from whom the Observer seeks approval, only a façade, a pretence, there is always someone else behind the mask; successive de-masking seems peripherally closer but always asymptotically, getting farther away from the centre.98.06b I wonder how the Optical Viewer has been brought closer over many sessions to the spatial position of the Observer. The Optical Viewer is a strategy to make the drawing, its accident rather than its focus, a device to allow the drawing to proceed with a semblance of reality. The drawing has to be about (depict) something. The Optical Viewer moves about and looks from different places; s/he can be placed anywhere, wherever the Drawer wants to. This is not drawing from (at) an observation, but drawing following (temporality implied) an observation, which switches the position of Optical Viewer between drawings according to conscious/unconscious intention. I realize that I have control of where the Optical Viewer appears and how the drawing is framed. I cannot feign innocence.

Other

Drawing A, with its emphasis on a realistic representation of the meeting, makes the characters face the Viewer and oust her/him, or stop colluding with a fabricated anonymity. The drawing does not point to something unseen; it is already seen, including

the Observer. Why include the observer, why exclude him? The observer is always part of the group hence the two roles – as the Observer and as one of those observed – but there is the unconscious supercilious Other who does the observing for the group. At times who is whom gets rather confused – the Observer, the Drawer, the ostensive actors, the hidden roles that the actors conjure up. There is a difference between writing (drawing) a stream of consciousness and aiming (rather than directing) the writing (drawing) in a particular direction. Drawing is never done on one's own. There are three actors: myself, the subject, and the one I draw for, the phantasmatic Other who one also longs for, her/his recognition and acceptance as if the Viewer functions as an external observing eye with its own supposed agency. I have to reconcile myself to the presence of the Viewer, always hovering around, standing behind someone, prying. I do not know whether s/he is benevolent, or at least curious. The Viewer is me, and not-me (the members, the group, a parental figure, a competitor, an attacker). All the roles have a phantasmatic dimension (*phantasma* 'image, phantom, apparition; mere image, unreality'). The phantasmatic role may or may not be observed and/or depicted, like that of the Donor, thanks to whom the picture exists but who also demands participation – a snob, an Other without weight, a disdained phantom.

Donor

Several A drawings show the Observer relegated to Donor, a head near the bottom of the picture, without body while the others have theirs sketched in. The Donor seldom appears in representations of group sessions but often in those of couple therapy, where couples may be drawn relatively larger than the therapists who are usually barely sketched and relegated to the corners of the drawing in front of the excess of passion in the session. The Donor wants to be immortalized in the picture as its patron, an outsider, in spite of her/his contribution to the session, appearing only as an afterthought (depicted as within a sacred image in renaissance iconography in devotional position, half inside and half outside). The Donor seems to be an authorizing device giving, providing, surrendering something without which the picture does not get made, demanding to be included with humility and grandiosity, to become part of the narrative.

Witness

It is uncanny to witness the event and then witness oneself drawing the drawing as a claim to innocence – I know nothing, the drawing does – when in fact the drawing does not know or want, the drawing shows off absences in the session and the image. The first Witness is the Observer whose perception the Drawer attempts to represent. But there is a second moment when the Witness returns to see the drawing, and may be called to testify to truth, falsity, possible meanings. The second drawing attempts a narrative – they are a fictional text, aiming (or pretending) to show the predicament of the group. A testimony works against the wish to subvert it because it tells something that by form or

content one would have preferred to disown. I wonder about denouncing, telling on, shopping the group to an Other and then reassuring them (myself) when I come up against images I do not want to draw. A compulsion to kiss and tell, to grass on the situation of the group, is a profoundly primitive horror at the ever present phantasy of the primal scene of the group and evidence of the attraction to the violence of disclosure.

5.2.2 TECHNIQUE

Selection of support (size, colour, and texture) and drawing media (soft, hard, wet) depends partly on practical considerations that allow a fast rendition facilitating undefined shapes as well as precise marks representing details. Some drawings incorporate tone, others are exclusively in line, and some are a combination. With very few exceptions, colour is avoided because (beyond my colour-vision handicap) colour loses the artificiality of the drawing, which must be preserved. Looking at a black and white drawing is re-seeing the colour, and then losing the colour and seeing its structure. Some variations of paper texture are introduced to challenge the rigidity of the initial material choices, as a way of teasing out the constants, the invariables, requiring a large body of drawings. Choices in following the schema are also made for reasons consciously unknown.

Schema

In image-making the term refers to the links between form and function (Gombrich 1959) dependent on personal idiosyncrasies and visual culture within which a drawing is made, making possible the transformation of perceptual stimuli into a representation of the objects they refer to. Like every language, schemata vary across cultures and have to be learned, used, and developed. The schema organizes and restricts as default, making representation possible. A graffiti artist would draw on the flat; while I derive pleasure from different approaches, perspective is the core approach to which I return with relief and resignation, boredom and disillusion. Where a drawing starts seems determined partly by the medium – with media that may get rubbed and smudged I start at the top left, since Western writing and drawing share the movement of the hand left to right. But the movement top–down seems necessary where the group has a hierarchy, or when I start with the most prominent member, not necessarily the leader. With the first marks the drawing gets established as what will be stated in the style, speed, depth of mark, and my visual grammar relative to the particular group.

Caricature

A caricature is 'a picture, description, or imitation of a person or thing in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create an effect'. Drawing A begins with the faces; I notice that some people I like I have drawn with unattractive features while some I do not like are excessively attractive. The consciously felt attraction is not

evident in the drawing, but I represent a disturbing bunch of people: some are caricatures, some aim at being portraits. If I am afraid of the caricature, my drawing falls back on the trivial (two eyes, a nose, a mouth, etc.) but the sharpness is missing. Daring to indicate feeling seems a necessity, hence I do not make a caricature of the group members' features but of my feelings towards the features. I enjoy the excess as revealing and yet fun. We laugh at caricatures with vindictiveness or pleasure or amazement because they are cruel representations, and we enjoy recognizing our own cruel streak at the expense of the sitter. These drawings hound their subject, I wonder if with any sympathy. It is different and more difficult when the drawing aims at a balance, a description, which becomes an artifice for untying myself, for witnessing the undigested. Drawing B always comes close to the style of a comic, or beach postcards. It lacks the pathos of A. I am mostly unimpressed by drawings B. They are a necessity – the one I want to draw and see is A. It may be suspected as a general rule that the two drawings are a sequence in time. Time is what is referred to in comic strips, each picture freezing a moment that only makes sense through the following picture. An empty presence asserts itself between the frames.

Source

Drawing A was intended as a naturalistic representation of the seen, while drawing B was ideational drawing, seeking to avoid conscious control over the images (as content) and the way of representing them. As in a dream, the remembered experience of the session was the day residue while the unconscious of the drawer did its work by attending both to her/himself and to the session. Seeking spontaneity seemed necessary to avoid excessive control, yet to some extent it was a phantasy that energized the practice. Yet the drawings rely on the Drawer's lexicon of representations, the bricks of the schemata, although the choices of item and form (and unconscious decisions at work throughout the process) are not arbitrary. As the schema, the lexicon of sources makes possible and limits expression. The basic rule of psychoanalysis is to say the first thought that comes into the mind but 'comes into' is already an assumption that thoughts come from somewhere else – the Greek paradigm of the intervention by the gods (Padel 1992). At times I can track the sources, believing I know where things come from, where I have seen such a car, running man, sugar pot. I am borrowing the notion of the objects, even if the utterance is mine. If this is only an exercise in self-referential motifs, the Other is abandoned, given up. A drawing is an other which one wants to mimic, to play with. I am what I have drawn, whatever they represent, yet it depends on my relation to the group. I could not have thought of the motif without the session and without drawing A, now informing drawing B.

Style

The drawer will also with an expressed or covert intention mimic and appropriate schemata seen elsewhere. I am surprised by the different ways I draw the characters, partly owing to an incapacity to maintain a common approach but probably also connected with different experiences of the group and its members. Some of drawings display volume, others are on the flat in a simplified spatial approach. This is a variation I enjoy and makes me feel that the group is not a conglomerate but the conjunction of several individuals, including myself. The rendering of space in B is of a different kind. I follow perspective in A, and different conventions in B, even though my preference is always some articulation of space and distance. I like (approve of) the representation of some of the characters and feel I was unskilled in depicting others. I enjoy when different styles appear to be in use in the same drawing. It will be necessary to notice my conventions, my limitations, and accept or challenge them to expand them into new forms of representing. But then this would imply a wish for development and change that would obscure the themes that may emerge if I stay in the same style.

Skill

Drawing skill was felt insufficient and a source of frustration in spite of the value assigned to parapraxes. While I was convinced that level of skill may be irrelevant, noticing limitations is wounding when failing to articulate (by a sort of stammering) the impossible fully satisfying representation, even if this offered an opportunity to notice the feelings evoked – surprise, self-righteousness, frustration, shame, discontent, anger. I produce the most incompetent representations of faces, which I prompt myself not to abandon – mimesis as competence, always mourned. Beyond my state of mind is the *drawing's own life*, the event that emerges through it, the wish for the event not to show – to be dutiful rather than curious. I realize I would like to construct the drawing rather than making notes with images. The standard should be immaterial but it is not, and I notice I care about how well drawn, or beautiful, or inspiring they seem – wishing the drawings to be independent, when they are research artefacts. I believe and disbelieve such a position, which I find unsettling when drawing and when looking at the drawing. It is as if I collect emotions in some translated form, a formula, a representation of the emotion not of the scene, a representation of the representation of a messy experience.

5.2.3 PRACTICE

The term refers to the vicissitudes of the method through technique (medium, support, schema) and explicit or tacit rules around making, attending to the materiality of the artefact as a bricolage and outcome of a performance that follows the gaze. It may result in a *punctum* as the representational detail or gestural mark that, pricks, stings, wounds the beholder. I seem attached to my own conventions, through lack of courage or the

pretence of rigour because each drawing is a frightening jump. I may become stranded in mid-flight, unable to hold my nerve, wishing to tear the paper, give up if something we do not know has been activated by the session. Yet interpreting the drawing is an escape of sorts.

Bricolage

All forms of depiction may be conducive but an abstract representation of a group situation does not position the Viewer. I allow limited space to mark-making on its own since abstraction is already embedded in any mark, and to confer content to an abstraction seems futile and arbitrary. I follow my inclination at the time, not wanting, trying to articulate something but letting whatever comes to the page do the work. Drawing B borrows meaning by borrowing signifiers that borrow from other signifiers in a long chain of associations. I seldom make drawings in which I do not know what I am representing, as they necessarily are a bricolage of motives that return as associations and take hold, by their own accord. Bricolage implies a previous existence now transformed, taken advantage of, made into new constructions. They may be part of an image, or disconnected lines. The physical outcome is an artefact, and its materiality cannot be dismissed – the drawings are organized according to criteria, derived from the initial observation, transforming experience through translation. I must not be seduced by the artefact, or else I am no longer disinterested, becoming owner, or collector. Who does the drawing belong to – the drawer, the group, the therapists, the couple? The artificiality of the drawings is a necessity (the form that the Drawer gives them) in order to shape an emotion, to articulate the notes of a tune. The phantasy may be that something is to be apprehended without mediation, without the (m)other, without a group.

Counterpoint

The two-drawing approach has shown that neither representation is true in isolation; their interdependence concerns permission around mimesis and in relation to the role of the Viewer. Both drawings are partial but drawing A is only an introduction, a warm-up, an incitement, a provocation. Drawing A cannot be made explicit without drawing B. Accuracy is an intention of drawing A. There is a movement in the drawing both to discover (as I draw) and to first picture in the mind before putting marks down. The switch from one to the other mode is fast and continuous, and I come up against the limitations of my visual lexicon. The spirit of drawing A is a discovery. Drawing B may appear risky or inventive but it is just a compromise, a fiction, while drawing A tries to state a fact, even if inventing it. The second drawing need not be a metaphor but a fantasy, and A anticipates the fantasy of B. Drawing B allows the play of reflection or invention or hypotheses: A is the data, B the formulation. Although this is not entirely true as both drawings fulfil both functions. It may be expected that both A and B work in unison, as if B

depicts what I cannot get at in A. Like a noun plus an adjective – neither might be sufficient without the other.

Performance

Groups are a dramatic enactment or tragedy; the Observer fosters the appearance of the Viewer as the Other of the picture, as seer. The encounter of Drawer with Viewer shows antagonism, a struggle but also a relationship. The Observer observes the group and then observes her/himself (as Drawer) representing her/his experience, attempting the impossible task of disrupting the phantasy whereby the Drawer finds her/himself in the position of the one-who-knows, and the process of reflection just furnishes a reflection of the Drawer. But meaning is either not forthcoming or artificial. Drawing (n.) and drawing (v.) are in a tension that cannot be resolved, only experienced, conducive to greater understanding of the vicissitudes of the subject(s). Drawing (v.) is a performance of a performance observed. I have two roles – or three, if I consider myself the one looking over my shoulder – someone is looking at me looking at them. Drawing A is, partly or totally, a self-portrait and the other characters are actors in the play. Looking at both drawings I see signs of the disaster but also the pretence, the performance as the situation disbelieved where the drawing is another performance, truthful and/or evacuative. We look at each other while we did not do so during the group. The drawing does what the actors outwardly did not. Drawing is ritual of a kind, giving permission to see, invent, and hide the seen. The truth of the drawing and truth in drawing are different concepts. The drawing is both an artefact and a performance (for the Drawer and the looker of the drawing) in the mind of the Drawer. The theatricality of a drawing is both its interest and its demise as script.

Control

Before the start of the drawing, decisions are made concerning medium, support, and spatial arrangement of the subject group, and the position of the Viewer. Decisions are made *before* (a mental picture must exist of the seen or intuited, to be visualized); *during* (each mark calls for the next mark and the sequence also works backwards conditioning the beginning); and *after* (noticing the transition from 'about to say' to 'having said'). I notice the boy's socks, one up one down: decisions I must have half-consciously made but which are, therefore, not premeditated, decided before deciding – a tautology or impossibility. The point is not to avoid searching for motifs but to notice manipulating the drawing. The different agencies of the Drawer will be in conflict, conscious and unconscious, for a start, leisurely and hurried, skilled and unskilled, etc. I do not want to leave drawing A (the real drawing). Drawing B is the means of returning, a continuation, an intimacy which would be insufficient without A. B is a reassurance, a way of disturbing, interrupting, sanitizing the venom of drawing A. I have to exercise a certain benevolence and acceptance (*could not draw anything else or would have done so*). I have the rest of

the information for which the drawing is just a prompt. I do not hold, omit, or censor, and I take the drawing or sections of the drawing at face value. Who is in charge of the drawing? How to conceive the power of the terms of engagement, over the drawer and the drawing, trapped in the vicissitudes of the group? Transference projections may be misused to disown the drawing. Drawing seems a strategy for both getting closer and further away. No point in interpreting detail, returning to the rule of the gaze. The object needs to be allowed, same as the joyful, very much alive in the midst of destruction. Like writing that is not literature, this drawing is not art; it tells whatever happened, or could have happened, or was wished to have happened. I like the pencil which can never be fully controlled or reined in, and the effort to avoid malfunctioning is a component of the intention overall, of the wish to announce, reveal, however careless or rudimentary the utterance may be. I always feel lacking, as if the intensity, the action, the emotion is always once-removed. And I am forced to draw to feel it. Yet as I draw I do not feel but draw without seeking to re-live the session. Giving up control (the disaster, the madness of the day) is a false aspiration, I am in control against my wish to let go. Drawing B is a musing not to be taken literally, but A expects to be read as a fact. Who is in control is another question, whether me who draws, the countertransference me, the desire of the external Viewer, the Other. And I tell myself that I must let go, and draw alongside.

Gaze

The gaze as observed, remembered, invented, and recorded – from/to group members, Drawer and Observer. There are a number of registers of the phantasy and memory of the Drawer, who gazes, regards, ignores, while intruding and accepting. I can only draw what the Observer, Drawer, and Viewer see. Recognizing small details reconciles me with uncertainty, such as an expression (in)accurately depicted, because what is provoked is not a check against the memory but a reconciliation, a reunion, a coming to terms emotionally with what has been looked at yet unseen. Faces tend to become the location of meaning, as masks in a performance, and I know the expressions even if the face looks nothing like the person it represents. A persona (a character in a play) is a better description, an impersonation. The self-portrait is an anchor of the drawing at the centre of the making. I am curious about my self-portrait which I find derivative of another depiction. The tiresome gaze, the twist in the mouth, the censoring as an Other in my own expression, the look of experience and boredom.

Punctum

Either of the two drawings may have (even if not explicitly) a *punctum*, a baffling nucleus that infects and resists simplification or analysis. Sometimes it is only a part of the drawing, a moment, or even just a mark. It is not precise but a quality of the whole drawing against its denotative components. I notice the drawing of myself in the group, my eyes showing the direction of my gaze (my own representation may be where the

punctum of the drawing gets placed). *Punctum* is not a revelation in a qualitative sense, it may be distressing or a reminder of a certain impossibility, or excess. The *punctum* does not necessarily mean the centre of attention, because it may emerge after a few instants, being refused, denied, disavowed. The *punctum* in this drawing is the group member laughing at another, who looks askance. It pricks me as a mask and a face, charming and frightening, tempting and persecuting. I make a point not to look (gaze) at details during the session for later use in the drawing but am relieved when an expression feels accurate. My hand draws and I watch it, I enjoy viewing the making of the drawing, not an out-of-body experience, just an ordinary pleasure like hearing the song I hum or sing, making up the lyrics as I go, yet the tune is familiar, and I am anchored into the experience from where the song originates. One of the pleasures of the drawing is to notice when it is not contrived and emerges as a child who lets the drawing do its work. I may be in this journey for my own unsatisfiable pleasure. But something here is centred on the pleasure of the group, which defends itself against its own pleasure, which exhausts it and confuses it and misdirects it: the pleasure of the symptom.

5.2.4 REPRESENTATION

Realistic representation requires a spatial formulation, and a viewpoint is the location of the Viewer. The drawing appears as a machine for the Drawer to make a representation as a recording or as a performative. It does not matter how accurate the recording is because it organizes the narrative of presence. The drawing assures me that it happened and I noticed its features and references. There are no people here, only signifiers. And yet drawing B on its own would not be sufficient. Both A and B are required, because references are to be found in A, and B is a further transformation of the session re-presented in A. The magic of the representation is the involuntary aspect of the translation from the saying to the said (Conquergood 1998), from the mental image to its depiction. I may ignore what I wanted to state yet I must have known it or the image would not follow. The two drawings are a complement/supplement to each other. What lies outside the drawing because of being unrepresentable? Do I remember dream better if I draw it? Or if I write it? Is it just a matter of recording it, of changing it from thought to image, to representation? Drawing aims at making something visible beyond its depiction.

Mimesis

Cultural convention equates mimesis with truth, while it is only an initial intention, offering the drawing as a canvas on which the unintentional may play havoc – against the hope that the drawing will magically be true. It is easier to let the second drawing have licence to phantasize, while the first one demands (the Drawer demands) mimetic accuracy. There must be some accuracy, because it is not about inventing any drawing, for which an excuse would not be necessary, but denuding something that got dressed up. Without

accurate graphemes articulation is not possible. The reverse is also true: inaccurate graphemes are the meaningful ones. But that implies the wish to undo the drawings, to not-draw them which, in turn, points to the narcissistic phantasy that, abandoning oneself to the drawing, the drawing will speak.

Ambiguities

The drawing wishes to tell a story, while abstraction allows any reading and hence no reading. This is different from stating ambiguities, which may be imprecise but a narrative unfolds. I wonder if the ambiguities are amusing, enjoyable, laughable. And this is the potential for mis-reading visual clues, less clearly stated than words even in spite of polysemy, an ambiguity which was not contrived as design. When writing about the experience of drawing the drawing, I am looking (in the mind or actuality) at the drawing itself, and notice all that I wanted to represent but did not want to communicate – the ambivalence of the drawing by showing and hiding simultaneously. Ambivalence towards the exploration seems a key feature, that which will be disclosed as too threatening, in the meeting and in the drawing, and I am assisted by the references to actual measurable, comparable features, even if the unexpected occurs.

Intention

Intention is immaterial: the Drawer strives for both mimesis and deceit. Some aspects are intentional and conscious, trying for mimesis. Some of it is decided *a priori* and some as the drawing progresses. Nothing happens unintentionally – accidents pile up one after the other to shape the depiction, its inaccuracies also intentional and the outcome determined by the (un)control effected by the unconscious of group and Drawer. Intention is only a direction, and the drawing is its own master. The purpose may be getting rid of something that is burdensome, seeing myself regain my shape unlike the anonymous person behind the Viewer. Whatever is of importance is not volitional, and spontaneity is hailed as a hallmark of authenticity. When prevarication, decision, and the wish to confuse and seduce are just as relevant. To thrill is an aspiration, showing only part of the truth to confuse, to lead astray, to deviate. Does one draw what is, sees, feels, avoids, fears, wishes? – the list is endless.

Position

A drawing does not just start anywhere, or wherever it starts it already brings along the context where it was perceived in the first place. Making these drawings is never boring, but rather disturbing like Bion's two frightened people in the analytic room. We confuse the drawing and the person each time. I like the drawing because I have a sense of the session, it brings it back, it makes it alive, even if it also freezes the session in a particular mood or conjunction of moods. The frame of the picture is useful in that it delimits the session in the closed room, the suffocating experience where everything happens. I feel

constrained by the lack of space in a non-representational way, not a lack of space to breathe but just that the motifs are too close to each other, as if all I care about is getting them in, not their composition. The viewpoint is not accidental but the product of a combination of unconscious and conscious decisions in the effort to tell, to narrate. The potential multiplicity of viewpoints hides an omnipotent phantasy of control, giving the Viewer all positions, even if one at the time.

Illustration

There is a contradiction evident in the necessity to abandon the drawing in order to let the narrative determine the textual content of the drawing, making it tell according to a storyline that controls, approves, keeps the act within the control of logic and volition. Illustration refers to visualizing a text, shifting the mark-making practice to representation within the structure of language. I wonder if it is difficult to inhabit a drawing, to avoid fleeing from the scene perceived as taking place. Drawing B is an illustration that starts by looking for a signifier in my lexicon, a known metaphor, a drawing of archetypes, a symbol for the group, or a narrative about competition, fragmentation and the like. All of them might have been correct, but depicting them would be an illustration. It may be true that a single drawing can do both. The fundamental difference is that A attempts realist representation of the group (at which of course it fails, as the unconscious is always at work) while B dispenses with the narrative of reality and tries to delve into the poetic of the scene. Either may be more truthful than the other.

Taste

Taste (a term surprisingly absent throughout the phenomenography) is an issue hidden yet active in the unavoidable desire for pleasant artefacts but irrelevant because these drawings are about performance rather than outcome. As the Drawer, I am always trying to demonstrate something to the Viewer but also to myself. The Viewer is also the judge; s/he embodies the Law, the rules (of perspective) that make the scene possible (believable) within a particular schema (including a covert aspiration for tastefulness as added value). The tyranny of the Viewer is a construction of my own visual culture. It is difficult to restrain grandiosity in this work because it is both ordinary (I insist, as if trying to exonerate the aesthetic impulse as a narcissistic intrusion rather than a component of any action whether in the world or the mind) while extraordinary in that representation occurs, and signification exists. There is aesthetic pleasure in articulating something with accuracy, looking at a picture and understanding the experience of making it. At times I ignore the aesthetic drive, at others I deny it, but it is there because representation is enjoyable, or at least the anticipation of the effective drawing is so, rather than its clumsily effected realization. Beauty (order) is always a craving, not to be avoided but noticed. It cannot be expelled – it asserts itself – but deriving pleasure from it feels shameful. I hope to be forgiven about the session by the good taste of the drawing. Conversely, I cannot

bear the ugliness of some drawings, a vulgarity that hurts me to notice, to realize, to own.65.04 Acceptance of the limits, acceptance of my frustration, doubt of my capacity, knowing it is insufficient, that I can only see a part, draw a part of what I see, and see only a part of what there is or that which the group experiences.

5.2.5 EMOTION

What space is there in a phenomenography for the unutterable. I have to bear the discomfort of the incapacity to articulate, caught and oppressed by formlessness. Where do unwanted feelings go, how do we get rid of them? Did the session move me, or is it the drawing of the session that stirs me now. It is unclear whether this a representation of that or this moment. The drawing produces an emotional response but produces no insight. But I do not seek insight. I was moved by the session, frightened, angry, and aware of my own desire and vulnerability, an aspect of the work that is both disturbing and reassuring. This set of drawings seems rather disgusting – the unconscious mind is a messy space. All drawings are drawings of the suffering of others as experienced by the Drawer. It fills as if I am retching each drawing, not a smooth delivery but a production against my own resistance. I feel disquiet and compassion for the drawing, the Drawer, the group. If I were to listen to music after a session because it calms me down I would be none the wiser as to what happened. It seems a way of getting oneself upright after the brutality of the impact of the session. This violence may be intrinsic to groups, to consulting to groups, to the kind of thin-skinned narcissists who become group consultants.

Aggression

I feel angry as I look at the drawing and recall the group, having been caught in the projections, enacting my countertransference and eventually feeling depleted. One can assassinate the people one draws – this one I made into an alien, excessively large brain, angry look, sharp features. Some members I dislike, some intrigue me, some leave me indifferent; and such feelings I find disturbing, disrespectful, abusive, yet phantasy is abusive because it foregrounds (discloses) the fantasizer, not the object. Drawing is an excess of reality of the other things not represented. It has a cruel streak, not atmospheric ugliness or despair, but precise, in a few marks. I wish I could destroy this drawing. I am surprised at the intensity of feeling: this one seems an affront, revealing a cruel way of looking, an underlying violence. The task then is to draw the intensity.

Excitement

Attempting a visual representation may assuage the panic, like the glass of water given to someone who is having a nightmare from which they cannot wake up. There is voyeuristic excitement about the group and about myself drawing. There is an aspect of

drawing that I cannot describe, explain, or account for, an intention preceding the drawing experienced in the pit of my stomach or mouth about wanting to tell. An anticipation. Spontaneity is suspect because of the ambivalence to communicate and to repress is at work. The drawing brings the session alive – I can hear them, I see their (tacitly) known faces through the imperfections or liberties taken by my drawing. The drawing allows re-visiting experiencing again, doing so in a fuller way than before, what has been repressed, unnoticed, avoided, and missed. Witnessing their interrupted desire may assist me processing mine – as titillation, as reparation, as acknowledgement.

Company

The act of drawing offers a company of sorts in the solitary experience of being within the group. The drawing defends of the intrusion, creates a membrane, a barrier, keeps the Other(s) out, while at the same time invites them in. The drawing gives me a measure of my finitude, always a jumping into the void, a jump that paralyses and liberates, that brings me into contact and shows the absence of links. Yet the drawing is no solitary event, peopled throughout by the dialogue amongst the participants, by the Observer-cum-Drawer with the participants, and the Drawer with her/himself as internal Viewer, and with potential or phantasized external ones. The room is full of characters who come into focus and recede, turn up and disappear, endlessly, after the performance of drawing is finished. Staying with the session is to squeeze something, like a song that has a chorus, a repeated stanza that is not mere repetition. An aspect of the training of making drawings is to come to terms with one's well-trod lexicon, a palette that seldom surprises, not seeking surprise but confirmation, the hum of enchantment, as if each drawing sings with previous drawings and perceptions. The drawing is an intimate place, a site of reunion with one's objects, a feast in an empty hall. It also has a sound that continues. Repetition is fundamental to the practice as a ritual, a mystery so secret that no-one can witness it. The Drawer is its only (and forbidden) celebrant. This may be at the core of any representation: by drawing or writing about it I possess the subject. Abjection starts to get closer.

Liking

I do not dislike the drawing (and like its contradictions) but it hurts me, it upsets me. I like when I relive the experience afforded by my gaze and glance during the session. The act of drawing is what is problematic, not the drawing (artefact) which is evidence of the pulling apart. Yet I like the drawing, even if unconvincing. Should I try to draw convincingly? Convincing whom of what? I dislike my limitations, my repetitions, my style, my impossibilities, my vulgarity, my incapacity to represent. The drawings do not show anything other than myself. They are of the group as the day residue, but also about my own traumatic, repressed incidents. I want my drawings to tell me things I do not know. There must be allowance for departures and mis-representations, wanting something of

the session to have been captured, lamenting when it does not, trying to convince myself that the drawing is true even if a lie, but I am agitated by a wish to truth that I suspect is more mimesis than truth, as if only mimesis can be truth, as if against all my training and learning and sophistication I just want the fucking drawing to tell it as it was, no more no less. And it pains me when it does not, it leaves me unskilled, dejected, incapacitated.

Fear

I have a moment of horror when I complete a drawing, when I cannot (know I should not) go any further and I have to look at it, this object I have brought into being. I fear the monster, because of its ugliness, or ineffectiveness, or blandness, or pretentiousness. I sigh with relief when I am not disgusted by my expulsion, my delivery. There is horror in this drawing which I may have tried to dispel with a 'nice' drawing. But the members seem to look somewhat like cartoons or puppets, and my intention may be to put the lid on because I came into contact with the madness of a group, its members' and my own, and the horror of not being able to wake up from it. I fear drawing A on account of technique, and B on account of its potential for vacuity, for nothingness. I must have the wish to make meaning after all, not to be left in the empty space of what has not been represented. I get more frightened of the drawing than of my judgement about the quality of line and representation and the absence of the sublime. Drawing is done in the midst of fear, like writing, yet once drawn it cannot be deleted, or erased, it has taken shape and like speech one cannot take it back once blurted, while writing has a safety, certainly with digital media. The sparseness, the fullness of the scene, the close up, the imbalance frighten me, a psychotic drawing is a non-digested, unformed, artificial fake rather than a true from-the-imaginary drawing. The fear is that the outcome will be a humiliation, that what I intend to state, even if uncertain at the point of stating it, will come out garbled and looking too much like an infantile representation, painful to behold. The frequency of making drawings helps because of familiarity with the distress. What has to be digested through the process is more important than naming the pieces. The content is transformed into a representation, and the representation expected to produce a transformation.^{97.02} evidence of 'having been there' in order to have been there.¹

Shame

I draw and begin to feel embarrassed. This follows with every mark, I fear I am abusing the group member, having no right to draw her caricature, should stop and get rid of the drawing, it is not permissible to do this to someone's image. I feel ashamed. I do not know if that is my face or the face I have been given by the situation. In a way, as a therapist, for the patient one must be prepared to become the character they need to work with, against, along. There is something unbearable in witnessing the event, observing is always painful, being other to the others. Do I laugh at my sitters (meaning: not take them seriously in their suffering and difference)? I find myself constrained by my

shame and theirs and can hardly draw, do so reluctantly, invent terms and find them more or less acceptable, but not its shape. I proclaim something with the drawing, making it performative, using the drawing for a different purpose than to represent. And yet I must accept that it produces some pleasure, and only when getting to the second drawing the shame appears, like the self-satisfied man recalling when he made the party laugh by telling a joke but, on remembering how vulgar his utterance had been, he gasps and wishes himself dead.

Desire

The drawing will want to go in a direction the Drawer will resist (secondary revision), hiding the drawing's intuition. The Drawer's desire for the subject, for getting too close to the subject, is forever barred by the roles of participant, observer, consultant, therapist. There are several layers of desire – from the group and from the Observer/Drawer – inscribed in the looking, the traces, and the shame of them being noticed. Desire in drawing is an impossible expectation, driver, propeller, because the outcome is insufficient, the pleasure will not fulfil the Drawer, and it is so with every drawing. The drawing is a missed opportunity if overlaboured or insufficiently developed. There is a craving (a fantasy) that the process can be completed – that all can be said, shown, represented. Who seeks the ravishment of the drawing, the invasion, the intrusion? The Drawer will wish to intrude (I must surely do). Different types of sexuality – infantile, procreative, perverse, loving – are all mixed up. I enjoy beyond my desire, my pleasure at desiring. This strays into my argument rather than describes my experience – but argument, intention, fantasies are not separate from the experience, the experience does not expel the psychological content, the desire of the drawing – *what do drawings want?* I bracket my desire to let the desire of the group appear. The necessary conditions cannot be set up, or only partly. I look and feel embarrassed for looking at what I should not. Looking is not allowed because it is desired and resisted. I suffocate looking at this drawing. The group struggle to give to me a representation of their own desire, their capacity to understand, to witness, to remain in place, losing and regaining their stance. There is a lack of space, or the persons are too large for the room, or too close together. The fear of impending violence pervaded the exchanges. As I write *violence* desire comes to mind, the desire (to be wanted, respected, seen) that cannot be expressed. There is more desire than meets the eye, or desire meets the eye in the construction of meaning, or the eye meets desire – the desire to be desired. It is hard to draw thoughtlessly, unencumbered by desire in order to allow desire to be expressed, experienced shamefully as *jouissance*.

Excess

There is an erotic pleasure in the act of drawing, seeing, making marks, staining, stating. But eroticism is also a distraction. I am aware of the wish to be liked by the group, a

countertransferential pull, and to provide them with a nutritive experience. Looking is the only sense that makes physical contact with its subject from a distance, unlike touching, smelling, hearing, tasting. Drawing is physical, done with the mind but also with hand movements and the whole body. Drawing has a sexual nature – towards excess and creation, destruction and discharge. Any impulse is both feared and desired, imprecise by definition but the drawing must insist against resistance. But insistence is the end of spontaneity, continuing beyond the wish to stop. Never using an eraser implies an epistemological position. I am working on the basis of knowing how to draw, which I have maintained in the past is not necessary. How would the Drawer know otherwise that something is missing, or excessive. Perceiving excess requires the awareness of no-excess. If I let myself phantasize, or associate more freely, I worry that my feelings will be more intense, or too intense, or sexualized. There is not enough time to draw everything that goes on. The horror that the drawing may escape control, the hope that it may do so, depleting the tension that fuels its origination. And the injunction to limit the depiction to two drawings is both methodological and protective. Not to want more, not to get into excess. I sense that the intensity of my looking is perceived even though they do not know I make these drawings. The task then is to draw the intensity. But I do not know how to represent it – the violence of the mark, the violence of the metaphors at play. The drawings that I am after (and I must be after some kind of drawing) are not the elegant and economical ones (even though I do crave for them), but those which expose the excess to be kept under wraps, because the unconscious is excessive, and embarrassing, and excess calls repression into being.

5.2.6 THINKING

Was I thinking through making the drawing? Is drawing an intellectual (rather than practical) activity? It is the coexistence in the same drawing of the rational (understandable, decidable, defined, clear, certain) and the unbearable undecidable, which make coexistence impossible. I articulate inconclusive marks, misguided traces that tell a story other than the one I expected to tell. The impossibility of being 'open' to the phenomenon, of bracketing other thoughts, of focusing on the event as if without participants, a perfect unique solitary thing-in-itself. Themes emerge unclear how truthful or valid. I only note them, let them emerge through the drawing although there must have been decisions which were unconsciously driven but consciously complied with. It must be asked whether an Other needs to see the drawing to corroborate, validate, confirm what has (not) been 'captured' (a curious term). I make an effort to avoid the search for meaning and attend to the experience of the drawing, an exciting but rather intolerable situation. There are some drawings to be disliked as 'poor drawings', some as 'insufficient', some as 'false'. But when the connection occurs with whatever gives you access to the felicitous articulation (Austin 1962), then all is well, something is healed,

and restored. The drawing helps to repair the trauma of the event by externalizing it, by digesting it, dreaming it out. The importance of the drawing is not the purity of its meaning or even meaning at all, simply its existence, and therefore its effect. Do these drawings stand up by themselves as such? Or only when the brief is enunciated do they acquire meaning (or a significant lack of it). If a drawing is not shown, does it exist? It is not what they encode but the action of encoding, irrespective of the content – the need of a witness for an object or a place – that enables them to continue to exist.

Drawing (v.)

At what point does the drawing have an effect: when drawing it, when forgetting it, when looking at it again? One does not really look at the drawing when drawing it, but at the stopping points, the connections with the other elements on the drawing support. When I draw the elements through, I catch them, herd them, bring them together, circulate amongst them. The elements of the drawing are mine, I recognize them, own them, enjoy them. Does one enjoy the drawing (the totality) or the movements of the journey through the drawing? One never remembers with the same fondness (or dislike) all moments of a journey, but the totting up, summary, overall impression. But I realize that the impression of the session and the representation that follows are not directly or ostensibly linked, they are in two different registers. The session moves me in a particular way, the act of drawing in a different way, and I have learnt to accept the way of the drawing. Stirring it in a different direction introduces will and repression, and lack of control is both a liberation and a torture because I am at the mercy of I do not know what. Drawing protects from the impact of the session, but it also expands it, insists while interrupting some form of recollection. To re-member, to insist in participation and not giving up, the session continues to be played out in the mind of the Observer and Drawer. I feel comfortable with some drawings and not with others which seem to jar with my expectation of what I would like them to do. At times I find an otherness in my own drawing, a neglect or aggressive or lame gesture that I did not know about. Other times they feel like my own drawing syntax, to see myself in the mirror of my drawing. It is in this moment that I begin to see the action as I draw it and it happens, there is no previous image to represent. It may not be necessary to look at the drawing, drawing it is what matters. Running rather than getting somewhere. I both like and detest my drawings, but enjoy making them when I am not too frightened.

Dreaming

I may have avoided the impact of the narrative these drawings try to reflect, or process, or digest. They are not evacuations but dream-work, transforming the raw elements into α -elements to be used for dreaming. I am surprised by what I draw, always not what I intended, even if some features follow my memory of the event. Like a dream, it is not less sharp but repressed from when first perceived. Either the dream is the situation the

drawing portrays or the drawing is the dream I wake up from. Dreaming and drawing are to some extent similar, though I may appear to control the drawing. The border between stating and inventing, seeing, and hallucinating is always blurred. The second drawing as a hallucination or a manifestation of the unconscious, the first one as the day residue. Both assist to picture the dream. The intention is not to tell but to re-imagine the situation, and one's own involvement with it making a story, a narrative. We do not dream in abstractions – we may dream we think of an abstraction but it is always mediated by a representation that is a pale reflection of the intensity of the experience. It needs the other to whom one tells the dream for the dream to come alive, to reach a destination. If making a drawing is like dreaming, writing about it is like writing a dream, even if modified by secondary revision. I could try different media to emphasize different details but that would be like proposing myself to dream in a different style or language – it would be an impersonation, a pretence.

Obedience

Some drawings do not make any impact because they are obedient drawings, and a certain disobedience seems crucial. To what? Perhaps to enjoyment. The obedient drawing may be admired but it does not reveal by disruption; it informs rather than discloses. This drawing A lends itself to hypotheses and interpretations, an opening for obedient thinking. Other drawings go their own way, and it does not matter what I want as Drawer but what the Viewer sees or is shown. There is a fantasy that the drawing decides itself. It does and it does not, we both (drawing and I) go our parallel ways to make the image. Drawing B is usually unconcerned by the logic of space, while A is obedient to reality. As if these drawings were two ways of saying the same in two different conventions. The freedom not to show the drawings to the subjects seems crucial or else one engages in an obedient communication rather than an honest exploration. Perhaps drawing B is less free than I would like it to be. Striving for freedom is a distraction, yet an intention to respect. Drawing B seems to always need drawing A for the obvious to take place, before the associations can begin, and the mistake is to consider these manifestations as defences. What kind of freedom is searched for when I draw? This seems a struggle against the impossibility of expression, the phantasy of revelation. One becomes the expectant prophet, the medium of the séance. But this has been set up by definition, seeking, expecting, wishing the drawing to articulate a truth hitherto unknown or at least not yet expressed.

Madness

As I draw the eyes the pen moves to show direction and gesture, perhaps particularly in their sceptical expression. I remember in Blanchot (1981: 10) the madness of the minimal incident, an importance that cannot be fathomed, that transcends perception but remains in awareness. The group member's expression is the *punctum* of the image, eyeing me

with awe and yet taking my measure, I am not the expert they want me to be. Perhaps those who are seen as different are both victim and perpetrator, which seems to fit with the experience of the group, the tensions and rivalries, the productive discussion that also advances through the madness, the dislikes, the disagreements. I draw without conscious effort the group member I find most problematic as a dwarf, a toy, or a child, who I also perceived painfully exposed. This system has been devised to draw thoughtlessly, mindlessly, forcing the looking to let go simply working with the seeing. The quantity of and the regularity in making these drawings is similar to training in martial arts, where the aspiration is to function with no-mind, unencumbered by rationality. The protective nature of drawing, or the defensive nature of drawing.

5.2.7 TIME

Time in the event, between event and drawing, time to draw, and to write about the experience of drawing and contemplating the drawing. Drawing A is frozen in time, B is outside time. In A I appeal to remembering, in B I pretend I draw what comes to mind, as if I had the freedom to do so. The two-drawing approach introduces time. As I look at the drawing I revive the experience, and see some of the gaps between the events. Drawing B may be a translation of the obscurity or surface of A. B may then be the apotheosis of A, which is then a mere introduction, a limbering seeking the mimesis unashamedly, in order to get to the sound of the drawing. When drawing, time does not exist (right side of the brain, etc.). That suspension of time has a value for imagining the session. Imagining as developing a mental image of that formulation that still does not exist. Each drawing has two times, when the situation is observed, and when it is represented. I ponder at the mixing of marks and at the mixing of tenses: what is being stated at the moment of perception, the moment of recollection, the moment of representation. They are all present tense at the time, but not in respect of each other, as drawing is a ritual about the ritual of the group. Tenses are about the temporalities in/of the drawing, the sequence, unnoticed while observing, more evident while drawing or looking at the drawing. I notice that these drawings are drawn fast, no time to re-trace one's marks, to repent, to discard, rework. They are a challenge for immediate response, but at what point do they become insufficient or overlaboured? Difficult to decide when is a drawing is 'ready'. But the speed of the drawing I enjoy and I suspect, not wishing to waste time in drawing the drawing. Yet a drawing cannot (should not) be hurried and cannot (should not) be delayed. The drawing is complete yet in action, the movement does not stop; unlike a photograph that captures or freezes a moment, the drawing displays the action, the traces of its making.

Mark

There is a familiar voice writing (speaking) that I doubt whether to accept or reject, an issue with any mark, a tension that is only dispelled after it happened, and the mark looks back, the mark is done. This drawing is excessive throughout, it has no traces; they are all marks, little accidents. Unusually, I erased the edges of the face on both sides to redraw them. The *pentimenti* still show, although there are other forms of unseen erasure. At the moment of drawing I have and accept some brief impulses that are acted out, as if I was stammering the drawing. A mark is put on the paper and more follows, and the drawing that appears as a continuous event or unfolding or practice is made up of a multitude of jerks, of fragments, not all in the same direction but, in the end, when the drawing is completed (when and how does this happen, the end of the drawing?) it crystalizes or coalesces into an intelligible image that surrenders, provokes, makes meaning. It is a *ricercare* or structure where the circularity, the retrieval, requires taking steps back to then move forward. But I wonder about the cop-out, the pretence of the shallow mark, the difficulty of staying with the reality of one's utterance, with the poverty of one's discourse.

Trace

If there is no anchor (trace) to start recognition, the drawing does not work, hence it is the concreteness of some features that reassures me, an abstract drawing would have foregrounded expression beyond articulation. It is the conjunction of mark (as representation) with trace (as the emotional load that precedes and follows the mark) that can be noticed after the event. It is unclear what is the drawing as signification and what as trace, mark, or technique. I will now remember them forever, it feels, not merely by looking at the drawing but by being left with a trace of my emotional engagement with members and group. But now they are or seem to be masks where something is insisted upon. The mask may be truthful but limited; as no range can be inferred from the characters in the drawing, traces disappear and what is left is only the surface of the mark. When I contemplate my drawings I feel protective of the traces, as the origin of the sensations that find their way onto the paper, against the rapacious gaze of the Observer wishing to make use of the seen, to record it in a drawing, to expose it. Yet the feelings I make contact with do not derive ostensibly from the drawings but from drawing them. The drawing – the delight and pain of its traces aptly or ineptly telling, articulating, always falling short of the discerning judgemental gaze.

Memory

I draw their faces as if looking at them at the moment of drawing, making the looking and the drawing coincide. This is another advantage of drawing from memory; there is no constant checking the accuracy of the motif, daring to draw the motif seen in a continuum, synchronically, or in the diachronicity where moments (looking/drawing) are

brought closer together. The act of drawing allows staying with the session for longer, to continue to witness the session after it ended, to go on with something that has been lost which I recover and keep, even if incomplete. Time is neither erased nor stopped, but inhabited. Drawing keeps the characters present, they are inscribed more indelibly than just by remembering. Memory is a feature of this system – I remember because I draw, rather than drawing because I remembered. Looking at the drawing, as I do when I write about them, I not only remember the act of drawing but already try to do something with it, whether contemplation, interpretation, protection, or exploration. The memory of the impact of having been in the sight of the other as a wound that will not heal, hence the nostalgia and the longing. There is another memory here, the one of drawing the drawing. True contemplation happens without looking at the drawing, in which I remember the drawn and seen.

Interruption

The static drawing connotes the active session. The drawing must be still to interrupt. Interruption cancels, alters, detains the flow of time. The continued interruption the drawing proposes is what gives the drawing its vitality. But as it happens now it is the thinking about the drawing as performance that makes the drawn irrelevant but necessary, similar to ditching the concreteness of words and taking them as signs. What is salient for the images here is not their iconicity but their existence as traces of the having been there, of the having noticed or missed, remembered, or forgotten. If there is a gap between execution (violence implied) and contemplation, I may have forgotten what I was intending, for better and for worse. If I contemplate my own drawings with an interruption in between making and regarding, the result is different, and I speculate because of what I am forced to perceive and forget, to notice and disregard, to apprehend and give up. It is curious how difficult I now find believing these two drawings, to hold on to them, not to interrupt the interruption they produce – which upsets me. This is not about aesthetics as pleasure or displeasure, but having a lived experience, an insight into the Real.

Repetition

Repetition is a strategy, an insistence that does not equal lack of freedom – the freedom to repeat creates a rhythm and, as such, a possibility. Composing the drawing. Drawing and humming. I am (condemned) to repeat a way of naming, of describing, of singing and drawing that makes me or where I find that I recognize my own voice. The naming depends on learning the name, establishing a use, a habit, a convention. Drawing as a repetition leads to enchantment and boredom. The experience of the group leaves me filled up and the confusion with yesterday's group makes me doubt that the drawing is of this group or a continuation of the last, whether the subject changes or is always the same with some temporal/geographical variations. Repeating as a way or remembering.

I repeat from drawing to drawing, making the representation of difference immaterial, and hence the impact depends on the act of representing, not on the representation. The drawing is a preparation for the following encounter. When the dancer exercises a movement of the arm, the possible or still inexistent choreography is surely anticipated – the scene, the present and the future of the drawing, which is in any case drawn from memory, of the subject (room, people) and of the experience as in drawing B. Completing or abandoning the drawing are two different aspects; some areas are given up, in others one has said enough, or too much already. Time is absent in this picture, the moment of a longer moment. I am sucking my lips, or frowning, or dismissing something; I realize that I emphasize my feeling now about my feeling then, this is the *après coup* of the session, what happens to me now in looking at the drawing and wondering about what has happened before the session that they or us are not aware of. There is an *après coup* in the drawing itself, where the situation is depicted but the depiction is mobilized by an earlier fixed image (drawing) – not necessarily a situation in fluid time, but a fixed event that brings about the deferred explosion. And the drawing only makes the transition, from Scene 2 to Scene 1.

5.2.8 TRANSLATION

There is something magic in the transition from the saying to the said, as if I did not know what I wanted to say and yet I must have done or else the image would not follow. One must trust the practice and let the drawing take shape, always surprisingly different from what was expected. A certain rational approach to translation/representation seems to be operating, as if the group might be looking for a place 'in the middle' and not just a becoming, a fluidity in the oscillation between one and the other, where there is no idealized centre or combination. I feel freer in drawing A than in B, where I am trying to express something, while in A I am trying to describe. B is already a translation but as such I am concerned about the fitness of the motifs to express what I mean. A is always a surprise. But at times so is B, even if staged. A is prior to censorship (an impossibility) while B is a consequence of censorship. In A I notice, in B I interpret. The literal concrete approach of the psychotic mind in its terrifying reading of the object as the thing-in-itself, the confusion of the signifier with the signified. Drawing B has a particular validity and I wonder if it is because it was a felicitous utterance. A performative devised by the group which I then interpret.

Language

Drawing language varies. Some lines are fluid and uncomplicated while others struggle towards a drawing. I wonder about the benefit of challenging drawing conventions (projections) and attempt a range – I draw aware that I also draw 'not to disrupt'. To disrupt can also be a compulsion as secondary revision, trying to make sense

(syntactically), or trying to make no sense, shift the elocution from meaning to form, treat the act of drawing an image as indulging (censorship to be suspected) in poetic language. I see different pockets of reality where I tried to depict the seen, and some that are transformed by styling them within a (visual) language even though all the components are in a visual language, and I am curious as to why some are stylized and not others, and what this fragmentation reassembled as the drawing produces (in me, or in my perception of the event). Commenting is the necessity of the drawing, but a comment is (originally) a reading and thus fabrication. Drawing B is a critique, a crude commentary, a hitting back on their behalf. Is the central motif the real commentary and the subsequent representations an add-on as in Chinese writing where there is a radical plus other components giving a definite meaning to the picture, is there a central commentary, a master narrative for the drawing and the session? A drawing with only the radical would be insufficient. Hence the need for features in a face, unless one states the facelessness of the person.

Communication

The prison quality of the place connects with the predicament of the organization. Unclear how much of a drawing is valid – there is not enough happening, and that may be the message (as if a drawing had a message, as if it was a communication). The drawings seem an exasperated ending to an utterance ('Oh, well ...') because they happen at the end, a sort of signature of completion, a certificate of release. The shorthand with which I draw groups I have drawn before points to how irrelevant is the told; what matters is the telling, the saying rather than the said. The first drawing is a necessity to access the second – no *après coup* here, just a rehearsal always doomed to failure, valuable only as a rehearsal, not to be taken at face value.

Conversation

The drawing is a conversation with myself, a way of singing myself a tune, of being tentative, a conversation *sotto voce*, of things to do, avoid, notice, forgo. A conversation that is neither truthful or designed to obliterate truth, but a fact. I am not silent in my drawing since I, the Observer, instruct the Drawer to do this, do that, avoid such and such. The drawing is an invitation to articulate a narrative with insufficient clues. That is part of the pleasure of drawing. Drawing A protects from or facilitates drawing B. It is unclear what the two drawings do to each other, the fact one is drawn before the other seems irrelevant. There a dialogue between them, assertion and negation, proposition and confirmation, proposition and refusal. The drawings do not enquire, they state, affirm something. In spite of the Drawer, with the connivance of the Drawer, by virtue of the images intended to represent something but they convey something else, an excess rather than a lack. To increase fluidity I may avoid lifting the pencil from the paper. Would I like that? Yes, very much. Who is asking? Who is responding?

Signification

I wonder or fear that the drawing may not connote much. Denotation is not the actual issue or concern; however, connotation, which seems to be raised as an aspiration, is the justification for the existence of the drawing. Drawing B is part drawing, part illustration, as I think I had the compulsion (anxiety?) to signify. I do not know or remember what I intended, perhaps a conversation. I also described the member's permanent fumbling with her handbag on her left. Which makes me wonder again whether these drawings can only be interrogated and made sense of by me, when what is not shown comes to the fore.

References

The drawing is a record, an account of what happened there and some details that can be referred to later as fact. To some extent this drawing is a document. Drawing allows me to recover, recuperate, gather back, collect something from the session which needs no intellectual decoding. While I draw I am there, in the room, I re-see or see again what I have seen, and cannot tell the details.^{91.09} I notice my aversion to devise a new or different system, the need to work consistently in format, medium, and representation style. This drawing is not private and can be explained by an other as much as by myself, it is not pregnant with feeling. So it is not the drawing, its formulation, and conventions but something else that resonates. Who dictates, what doubling up takes place where Observer tells Drawer, not enough or too much?

Narrative

This drawing B is less complicated than A. Perhaps the poetics of B allow me to take liberties that I am barred from in A. Perhaps A is a necessity to get to the ambiguities of B. Both are then necessary and one amplifies the other, following Freud in respect of the second dream. I was struck by the importance of the narrative, not just as a portrait of the sitter, but as a depiction of the engagement of the sitters with each other. The room is full of noise, the eyes are full of shapes, the drawing selects the few shapes, it cannot select all. Narratives already exist. They derive from the scene and from previous scenes that are necessary to have been seen. If caught in the narrative, the drawing anchors itself in a narrative external to the drawing, even if internal to the group. If it avoids the narrative it becomes a product of the gaze, which constructs the event outside time, attempting to take over the Real of the group. But why a narrative, why a story to be told? Some stories are proto-stories, are the space before the story. The development is fictitious, the mood may change, time is fluid and yet irrelevant, the before and after come in any order. There is a narrative to be formulated and respected, as if the Drawer has witnessed the narrative, does not know how to tell it but does so anyway. I wonder whether I wanted yet suppressed the wish for a further narrative. As if the reality of the event is not enough and the Real cannot be accessed through the reality of that perceived or invented. Drawing B

uses two media that do not mix, or run into each other. They protect themselves from the other, or overlap without hurting each other. The media are also part of the telling.

5.2.9 TRANSFORMATION

The fantasy that the unconscious will produce a wonderful drawing is a fetishization where the drawing functions as a symptom, a compromise formation between the seen (and repressed) and what has been drawn with the visual lexicon at hand. Some drawings could be eaten, or scrubbed against one's face, one's nose, as the little blanket of one's transitional object. Some master signifiers jump into prominence during the session and find their way into the drawing without filtering. I was wondering what would be made clearer with drawing B but found myself waiting for a while, not a common occurrence, before putting pen to paper. I did not know what to draw or how to draw it. Just to place the pen and start was of lesser interest although, in retrospect, that is what I should have done. I like the way some of the participants have been drawn. There is not a matter of likeness but it is difficult to know when to stop. A definite agency performs the task of the Drawer and another (or the same) the one of the editor. Some details have been well looked at and yet a convention is used and the detail is changed, because drawing from memory allows generalizations, and particularizations, and that may or may not be of importance because the drawing is not about the true rendering of the object or subject, but the act of rendering, of enunciating, of transforming. When did I stop the drawing, at what point? When 'what one wants to say has been said' is a platitude, but a decision occurred for me to stop or end the drawing, although it may have just been a stop. The end of the drawing assumes a completion of the transformation.

Incoherence

I am surprised by the stillness and complete difference between the concerns and excitement I had before drawing, what I thought (hoped) would appear, and what starts to come out on the page. There is little or no correspondence between feeling and outcome. I dislike this as an incongruence, a slip sideways, even if I may feel curious about it. Even the spray applied to the drawing gets in one's lungs and hurts the Drawer. Perhaps one talks oneself into the drawing, a sort of sorrow for the impossibility of doing justice to the represented one has in mind who may not be the ones that one has wishes to bring to the page, and neither are the one the Drawer has managed to depict. What is left incomplete is always a statement, a falling short for a reason, even if not intentional. I delight in the incoherence, being sent up in a playful way, if playful it is. However, it is not intended as such; the drawing, by my incompetence, results in the diverse mis-presentations, although, if I were drawing actually looking at the subject I would remain within a constant language. It is in drawing from memory that the continuity is unconstrained, and a different continuity emerges.⁸

Disturbance

The eyes of the woman in the drawing disturb me because of the angle of her squint. Does she look at the female or male therapist? I wonder if I do something to the people I draw. If there is a case for the ethics of the study, it must be because if it disturbs the Drawer it would disturb the subject of the drawings – they are real people in real situations, often quite painful. There may be an underlying hope that truth will emerge from the fumbling, a trust in the unconscious as omnipotent, frightening but beautiful in its intensity, and yet I feel disturbed by what I draw, and by what I fail to draw. Drawing disturbs the desire of the drawer. Akin to the erotic countertransference, but erotic in its most primitive sense, not sexual penetration but devouring the subject, the drawing being a barrier between the Drawer's appetite and the reality of the exchange, a charm, a relief, making the surface exchange possible. The drawing may protect me, the Drawer, from experiencing the impossibility of my own desire. At the same time, it affords the pleasure of having some contact with it. Yet I look forward to the *punctum* appearing, and pierce, disturb, disrupt, interrupt, the narrative. I wonder whether I am so set in a style that this disruption (the use of drawing) needs to be further disrupted.

Digestion

This theme is about the process of transformation of my state of mind within the group, using the drawing as a contact barrier, where the experience gets digested. These drawings are the inside of a digestive tract and to expect beauty (or to consider them – or at least insist in wishing to see them as beautiful) is rather ill-conceived.^{80.05} That particular chewing that looking may provide, the chewing of the cud, returning to chew (look at) the same item, with several stomachs to go through. Some members may have been more frightened than was apparent, eating each other up, the cannibalistic urge to devour the group or/and be devoured by it. I anticipate that the drawing prefigures the digestion of a farewell, so it shows not only what has taken place but of what is expected to come next, not only a recollection but a forward thrust, and the drawing is the present of the drawing, where the Observer is, where I am, in spite of myself. I may be writing about what I experienced in the session, not in the drawing, which ceases to be a mediation, a reminder, and becomes an artifice to be used as a device for letting go, for untying myself, for digestion and witnessing the undigested. I recall events which come from engaging with the drawing. The effort must not be in getting meaning from the memory, but in generating the space where meaning erupts, takes over, suffuses the thinking about the scene. The scene has already happened – so it is about burping the Observer, not feeding him even more. I suspect I use the group for my own digestive process, for a conclusion or closing or giving up of something unclear. Drawing is both a supervision and an evacuation. Feeding, I expect, is also both, reassuring and nourishing the infant and getting rid of its distress. I experience relief. The drawing, what I discover in the drawing, digests (evacuates) the undigested. Or as an aspiration, the drawing

functions as a cleansing tool, the projections (unintentional) are (have been) experienced as a breach (in retrospect) in my armour, it is similar to emerging from a dream.

5.2.10 MOURNING

The drawing opens up a space to be confronted and mourned. The purpose of the drawing is partly to see what was there but also what was not, to rerun the event in a less traumatic spirit. At what point is the lack an absence and the inclusion an abuse? How to know the moment to stop? This is easier with drawing A, because one does not want to distract from the telling, but harder with B, because the omission may be then a lack. I find drawing B unpleasant, because of my own limitations in representing my own emotional experience of the group. Both drawings seem to lack (something), a theme the group struggled with. This may be completely hidden (if correct) to an outsider, but it implies a belief in the existing content of the drawing, the coding of the mystery message, the text below the image, amenable to discovery, and we are back to a trivial interpretation of dreams. And the fantasy that the lack can be overcome.

Absence

What does the drawing represent and omit (unlike a photograph)? The interest is the presence, not the appearance. Not all details observed of which I am conscious during the session and remember at the point of drawing get to be recorded because there is a limit to how much data I am able to hold (did x happen at that meeting or a previous one?). It proved more conducive not to identify who or what was missing when drawing not to disturb the flow of enunciation, allowing the absence to linger and become obvious. The drawing was a humming (with sound or sublingual) of the content of the meeting whereby the actual tune is not remembered like a structure, taste, or impression. Should I be paying attention to formal elements, variations, fantasies, precise details, absence of detail, like those words one has on the tip of one's tongue but cannot bring to consciousness. They are not a playful experience but a distressing emptiness – absence is painful to entertain, to allow, to accept. The drawing is a way of noticing the absences, which the drawing can only convey as intermediary. Three moments of looking: while I draw; in a pause before continuing as the impulse of the mark runs out of breath, slows down and can be held for just that long before one stops, and starts again; and when looking after having completed the drawing. I become exhausted by the intensity of looking, letting the looking be done, rather than trying to see through the debris of information, misinformation, deformation, supplements both necessary and unnecessary, and insufficient articulation. All these become an actual force, an absence that asserts its presence. There is a moment in the drawing (and in a dream) where the image has been articulated, the absence blaringly there; the rest is filling in, adding a few notes to complete the melody 09.10a, to avoid cacophonies.

Nostalgia

The prospect of drawing fills me with fear and longing, with passion and confusion. The bits I see of my own experience, or that call attention to or remind me of my experience, are both an engagement with and a move away from nostalgia. The system produces all the interlocutors: the Drawer, the Viewer, and now the writer. Nostalgia hovers over everything when I write, not necessarily when I draw. Memory, remembrance, nostalgia, precede the drawing. The group makes me feel impotent (they feel impotent), like victims of awful events. A drawing allows me to return to the room where I did not want to be, to get my mind back, to feel and name what might be as yet unnameable. The drawing offers a respite, a split-frame experience, a slow-motion recapitulation. There is something fleshless in the two drawings, yet stating whatever they state does not produce a resolution but leaves the utterance in the same vacuum as in the session. The drawing is not a solution.

Death

Death hides in the process, death by oblivion, by not being able to be alive enough, awake enough, excited enough. A drawing creates its own excitement, and Observer and Drawer jump from exciting mark to the next excitement. This requires an insistence, a stubbornness, an inflexibility to break through to the soft core. I seem to believe that the group thinks and behaves as an organism, even if contradictory – a body that recreates itself and makes itself die simultaneously by its cells reproducing and being disposed of. I seek evacuation, anticipating the pleasure and terror of death. The disaster, the catastrophe that the drawing heralds, the approximation to what has to be kept at arm's length. I close my eyes at the end of a drawing, I look away, *la petite mort* of the drawing, the drawing having exhausted the act of drawing, no different from the sexual act, always insufficient. And I have to draw again as a way of surviving the wish to stop, the despair of the end of each drawing, the wish to express it all, and the realization that all that could be expressed was an allusion or mention. It does not matter what is drawn first and what last. It only matters the gasp I proffer when the drawing is complete, exhaling, relieved that I could bring it to completion. Death emerges through the diachronic engagement, comparisons and theories, perspectives and categorizations. Suffering the drawing seems necessary, suffering its arcane obscurity, its failure of representation, its impossibility, regardless of skills. The drawing is the site (sight) of an unbearable absence, of a mourning, that the ritual of drawing keeps present, open, alive. The drawing is gone after drawn, like a gong that has been hit and when after the initial deep sound the reverberation diminishes towards inaudibility. Can one be alone with one's drawing or does the drawing point to the horror of the absence, the impossible recuperation of lost internal objects?

Censorship

Difference is insisted upon for the sake of sanity, amongst the characters, between group and Observer, amongst roles, between drawings. Some drawings are alien, others too close. If alien their narrative is suspected and rejected. If too close they feel disgusting because they are not mediated by the distance of symbolization aspiring to depict the situation in its suchness How to know the difference between what is happening or has happened and what one wants to foster or make a case for or against. The scene in A differentiates, the one in B summarizes. I am intrigued by obscuring a black silent member. My forgetting illuminates a dynamic of the group. I tell myself that my racism has no excuse and I must learn to draw black faces. I have turned the representation into a mask. The group as the orgiastic nucleus is maddening, and the drawing (as the censor) keeps it out there, as a protection policy, a deferment, a furthering device even though it may also bring me into proximity with the scene in the drawing, a scene of desire and curiosity, of sympathy and impermeability to the emotions in the room. So I have ethical, moral judgements on the practice, and struggle to show myself and show the scene. The drawing conceals, inevitably. Some of them make me feel elated, justified, vindicated. Judgement is always lurking around, the self-critical argument, the indefensible trace, the infelicitous mark like a cough during singing. Drawing B may be an offering so that I can be forgiven. Censorship must originate (or be present) in experiencing the event, in drawing it, in writing about that drawing. The surprise in the drawing seems an aspiration, whether or not it is a true drawing, when it appears without intention, and censorship is kept at a distance. Censorship is in operation in all drawings, but I am aware of a particular delight, a rejoicing, a discovery, the sensation that one was not capable of purposely drawing such detail (the *punctum*) and yet it is there.

Responsibility

The ethics of drawing an other are that we should not see and show too much, nor fail to show enough. An impossible position. I wonder whether I am using and abusing my sitters, including myself. I am sorry, I want to say it was not me – it was the drawing, yet I have to bear the brunt of (mis)representation. I drew following the drawing, not taking responsibility. Who takes responsibility for the two drawings? The group, the Drawer, the Observer, the Viewer? To whom were the drawings addressed? Although no representations or writing are shown to group members, a sporadic feeling that I do not know what I am doing by meddling with people's lives, in spite of training, co-supervision, and years of practice, reappears. Being used as an object requires resilience, support, and experience, but at that very moment I feel a cheat. The drawing allows the contradictions to surface while perceiving the truth of the session as a tempting yet an impossible aspiration, better explored through reverie. Every drawing falls short, deceives, uses the wrong grapheme from a well-established lexicon. I do not remember owing to inattention but because the Observer is out to cheat, shamefully. When the

images appear, the moment they are completed I feel dismay at how far they are from a truthful representation, not only as mimesis (mimicry, a put down) but as true to my experience. My experience cannot be captured. I feel the need to continue in hope for the redemption of this endless, rather cruel, process of testimonies. Truth will not be a reliable criterion as drawings always cover up and expose, and have to be looked at with robust and delicate concern. The truth is never really wanted, but is a stage of the truth that protects from the truth-in-itself. From the psychotic desire for the truth-in-itself, by (psychotic) omnipotence and omniscience. Perhaps that is the inevitable outcome, realizing the fantasy of telling the total truth as an impossibility. I expect that the drawing has a truthfulness through lack of intention. The written has been written for a reason, even if unknown to begin with. It requires trusting the poetry of the writing and to then hone it without disturbing it (destroying its power).

6 ARRIVING AT THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

6.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

This final chapter weaves the research findings itemized and organized in the previous chapter, now seeking an engagement with – rather than providing an answer to – the research question guiding the study:

How does the practice of a participant observer, representing (visually, from memory) their experience of a group meeting, assist to disrupt certainty?

The text connects the analysis with the theories advanced in the first three chapters to offer an argument proposed by four sequential functions as hypotheses, supported by additional readings from the literature. The study concludes by summarizing the relevance of the method to professional practices of working with/within groups.

6.2 PERCEIVED FUNCTIONS OF THE PRACTICE

The term function indicates relation of the active parts of a contraption (i.e., a device that appears strange or unnecessarily complicated) to a system. This is pertinent since it will be argued that drawing appears as a narrative-disrupting machine, not an interpretative but a performative tool, prompting a particular mode of engagement with the story represented by an observer within a group. An observer that, as

the narrator of a story, is a character amongst the others: 'the / which writes the text, it too, is never more than a paper-!'. (Burgin 1986: 72, citing Barthes 1977)

As with every mechanism, its performance implies a repetition without which the enterprise is unsustainable. The practice assists making contact with madness in observer and group as the enigmatic dimension of what has not been uttered yet seems present, noticing the pull and resistance to forgo boundaries and join in. Following the analysis of the phenomenography in the previous chapter, four distinct functions are proposed, impacting on each other even if, notwithstanding their overlaps and discontinuities), they are presented as a sequence. These are

- the way in which the making of visual representations (rather than the representations themselves) fosters a space to realize the functions below – a *performative* function;
- the actual and fantasized complexity of roles, boundaries, and procedures at work in the process of observing and representing the group, including the influence of the

- particular drawer's schema and technique, regardless of her/his skills
 - a *systemic* function;
- the emotional elaboration or processing of the traumatic aspects of the group
 - a *digestive* function;
- witnessing and sustaining loss against the certainty generated by the messianic fantasy of flawless engagement, coping with both the intrusive presence and the deadly absence of idealized group and clinician
 - a *mourning* function (the heuristic intention of the practice).

6.2.1 PERFORMATIVE FUNCTION

Hypothesis 1: The practice does 'something' to the practitioner, i.e., the participant observer makes the drawing (n.) and the space of drawing (v.) does something back.

Drawing aims at making something visible other than what it depicts, and what seems to matter is the act of depicting (the process of signification) rather than the signified itself. In 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', Derrida describes how Freud posited

two kinds of neurones: the permeable neurones (φ), which offer no resistance and thus retain no trace of impression, would be the perceptual neurones; other neurones (ψ), which would oppose contact-barriers to the quantity of excitation, would thus retain the printed trace: they 'thus afford a possibility of representing (*darzustellen*) memory'. This is the first representation, the first staging of memory. (*Darstellung* is representation in the weak sense of the word, but also frequently in the sense of visual depiction, and sometimes of theatrical performance. Our translation will vary with the inflection of the context.) Freud attributes psychical quality only to these latter neurones. They are the 'vehicles of memory and so probably of psychical processes in general' (I, 300). Memory, thus, is not a psychical property among others; it is the very essence of the psyche: resistance, and precisely, thereby, an opening to the effraction of the trace. (Derrida 1978: 200–1)

It is not the drawn artefact that brings contradictions to the surface but the act of drawing them, making and withholding utterances, and the traces or vestiges of forcible entry and absence that they summon. Drawings want their own thing; the impossibility of capture (making prisoner) of the experience is the liberating moment in which the observer not only has to remain in the extended moment of articulation of lack but also of excess (an uncontainable abundance impossible to digest), rather than the punctual memory of the session, history, and narrative of the group. Drawing begins as a fantasy of disencumbrance, an aspiration to a totalizing truth even if every drawing falls short, deceives, uses the wrong grapheme from a new or well-established lexicon. The

observer does not fail to remember or misquote due to inattention but will inevitably misrepresent since the drawings are, wholly or in part, parapraxes of group and drawer. These drawings are irrelevant as documents beyond the time (epoch, moment) of their arrival – they may invite interpretation to be responded to neither then nor later. They are not to be translated and – like the interpreter who refrains from searching in the target language for equivalences of the words that were actually uttered in the source language, and simply states what s/he thinks s/he heard – they do not attempt to produce an exact equivalence but to communicate an affect. Popular notions of translation are founded on the existence of stable meanings that can be separated from the language and the circumstances in which they arise. Since translation always implies a border, the unconscious cannot be translated because it cannot be known other than by its derivatives. Translation is an insufficient and misleading metaphor; the purpose is to question the wish for translation, to disrupt coding altogether rather than proposing better (more accurate or mimetic) readings. This presents a renunciation that is not the end but the means for new, unexpected meanings to be formulated.

The theme of a transcendental signified took shape within the horizon of an absolute pure, transparent, and unequivocal translatability. In the limits to which it is possible, or at least *appears* possible, translation practices the difference between signified and signifier. But if this difference is never pure, no more so is translation, and for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of *transformation*: a regulated transformation of one language by another, or one text by another. We will never have, and in fact have never had, to do with some 'transport' of pure signifieds from one language to another. (Derrida 2004: 334)

Writing on Barthes' approach to intertextuality, Burgin proposed that text (which could be applied also to visual representations as texts or artefacts in the case of drawing) should be seen

not as an 'object' but rather as a 'space' between the object and the reader/viewer – a space made up of endlessly proliferating meanings which have no stable point of origin, nor of closure. (Burgin 1986: 73)

In such a concept of text the boundaries enclosing the work are dissolved, and the images open continuously into other images, that is, the space of intertextuality. The translation made by the drawing as text concerns poetic language. Poetry is language that draws attention to itself, that is, where the signifier predominates over the signified. It facilitates an opening towards the as-yet unformulated. This occurs in all artistic expression, e.g. the value of a portrait is not the image's resemblance to the appearance of the sitter but the experience derived from the contemplation of an intense representation, which leads to new thoughts. For any language to be inhabited it must be permeated with lack, and

poetry is language in which the signified or meaning is *the whole process of signification itself*. [...] Poetry is something that is done to us, not just said to us. The meaning of its words is closely bound up with the experience of them. (Eagleton 2007: 21, italics in original)

In contrast, the approach to a mechanical decoding of the unconscious, rather than lending oneself to feeling modified by its contact, presupposes that the experience is already out there, and all we need to do is receive it. The focus of attention in the practice is not the experience behind the drawing conceived as a means of information, but *the experience that is the drawing*, by which the signifier (the form of the representation) exceeds the signified, and the drawing operates fully within poetic language. Poetry, in the Russian semiotician Yury Lotman's theory, activates the full body of the signifier because of its 'overcoding', that is, the overlap of distinctive systems at work in the text, i.e., rhyme, rhythm, syntax, semantics, grammar, symbolic value, and so on, and furthermore,

The text is only one of the elements of the account. The real flesh of the literary work consists of a text (a system of intratextual relations) in its relationship to extratextual reality: life, literary norms, tradition, ideas. It is impossible to conceive of a text thoroughly extracted from this network. (Lotman 1973: 43).

It is the constant interference of one system with another that is vital for the effective workings of poetic language. In this view, attending to any single variant would automatize the reader's perceptions, yet the overlap of variations disrupts automatization and thus produces aesthetic effects.

A poetic text is rich in information because each of its elements is located [...] at the intersection of several overlaid systems. [...] Each system 'defamiliarizes' the others, breaking up their regularity and throwing them into more vivid relief. [...] It is as though a poem is a constant invasion of system by system, in which one system momentarily provides the norm and another the transgression, in a constant shifting pattern. It involves a continual generating and violating of norms or expectations. (Eagleton 2007: 57)

The drawer draws what s/he will, and intention is secondary – a mirage, a delusion. There is a transformation (see Bion's notion in section 2.4), and learning may be a way of naming the consciousness of change, rather than the instrumentation of it.

It is a characteristic of poetic language that it gives us not simply the denotation of a word (what it refers to), but a whole cluster of connotations or associated meanings. It differs in this respect from legal or scientific language, which seeks to pare away surplus connotations in the name of rigorous denotation. (Eagleton 2007: 110)

What the drawer learns about is not the meaning of the representations but exposing her/himself to presences and absences. Meaning does not arise only out of the content of the frame (the narrative content of the drawing) but the vicissitudes of the practice as the frame itself (see Bleger 1967 in section 3.2). The actual triad are group (as event), observer, and representation. Hence, there are two dynamics: the drawing as the secondary revision (representation of the manifest) of the dynamic of the situation, and engagement with drawing to foster linking. The drawing (an embodiment of gesture) not only records but also institutes what is to be noticed. Following a deconstructive approach, it calls attention to obliterations and discontinuities. The process may turn the experience of the real into an aesthetic act, to make it manageable for fear of the traces the gaze may discover as passive receptor and active articulator. The act of drawing performs a tentative questioning: what do I perceive? what is this? what am I? as a sequence of questioning takes place in the act of drawing itself.

Each confirmation or denial brings you closer to the object, until finally you are, as it were, inside it: the contours you have drawn no longer marking the edges of what you have been, but the edge of what you have become. (Berger 2005: 3)

Mimetic representation aspires at the erasure of the affect of the maker, at producing meaning as a kernel that can be unearthed, revealed, exposed; while a psychoanalytic approach undermines the rationalist notion whereby knowledge might be fully grasped or mastered. But mimesis has its ambiguity, referring to getting hold of something through its likeness, on one hand as an imitation, and on the other as 'a palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived' (Tausig 1992: 16). Identity is defined as 1) 'the distinguishing character or personality of an individual' (individuality); and 2) 'the condition of being the same with something described or asserted' (*M-W Onl. Dict.* 2019). The two meanings are binary opposites that portray identity as simultaneously particular and unique to an individual but also indistinguishable by the exclusion of the context. However, paraphrasing Winnicott's dictum – 'there is no such thing as a baby' – there is no individual without a group within and from which it individuates her/himself.

Drawing the session does not offer a tool for a facile hermeneutics, a literal recording of mysterious meaning, but the active sight/site of uncertainty and associations, allowing both the consciously known and the unknown, whether as tacit or, in particular, unconscious. The unconscious is considered not as a repository or unlimited warehouse but a messy, unmeasurably vast process that, while it does not objectify, does not miss the potential for multiple, reverberating contradictory associations. The practice performs a representation of the experience of the madness of groups, being itself a representation of the madness of the group-in-the-mind of any participant, albeit with the purpose of taking distance from it, developing the capacity to 'think under fire', as Bion (1982: 287) described the experience of having to retain his mind in the midst of disturbance and bombardment. The process offers *the experience of an experience* through noticing

- 1 the experience of witnessing and participating in the group meeting;
- 2 the experience of forgetting and remembering experience 1;
- 3 the experience of representing experience 2 as both memory and construction into a visual text;
- 4 the experience of contemplating the act of representing in 3;
- 5 the experience of the silence of 4, which can be further represented, i.e., transformed into an intervention.

The material is transformed overall because it is repeated, furthered, re-produced, developed, contradicted. A digestion or transformation from β -elements into α -elements (Bion 1965) takes place in the process of representation, not seeking the emergence of meaning, but allowing the container ♀ and the contained ♂ (Bion 1970) to do their commensal work, assisting mutual growth in the intimacy (a close or warm friendship or understanding of a private nature) between the original experience, and the experience of representing it. Intimacy implies nostalgia for the intimacy of the origin; following Laplanche (1999), intimacy is traumatic – and the traumatic is intimate.

The observer/drawer is an outsider who attempts to take an imaginary observer into the room of a group struggling with unity and disintegration while working at its task, her/himself partly barred from entering by virtue of seeing the group (from outside) yet conscripted (trapped) as an insider. The group will foster conviction but uncertainty is not to be defended against and must be experienced. The mimetic representation aspires at the erasure of the affect of the maker, at producing meaning as a kernel that can be unearthed, revealed, exposed. This is exemplified by the street draughtsman whose work is commissioned on impulse by the passer-by wishing to acquire the product of a 'creative' mimesis while hoping for recognition of self in the drawing. Yet this is followed by disappointment because the result is a representation that cannot disclose identity, with the relief that the sitter's kernel was not exposed, as if it were abstractable and could be taken out, brought out into the light like a rabbit from the hat, surprised, frightened, and alive. How much must the process be refined, shedding unnecessary detail? Burgin (1986: 86) has described how Barthes, in order to write a truthful text, had to be minimal and avoid artifice yet, as he reduced the text to its essence, it lost the pathos he wanted to convey, and so had to return to artifice to be truthful. Such is the case with drawing, also an artifice that depends on the necessary marks to tell the story of its traces.

Without knowledge of something's significance or possible consequences we cannot be innocent. A state of bliss is an impossibility because the Fall has taken place and we know it before and after, all the time. The notion of truth follows (does not pre-date) that of untruth. The affirmation does not happen by itself – it is not even an affirmation but a mere description of just how things are. But as soon as falsity appears, truth is required, that which is not-untrue. Whether the drawing does or does not show a truth of the group in the session is immaterial. The relevance is in the stating of the true/untrue tension, of positing the struggle, the contradiction for which there is no

resolution. In terms of the drawing the issue is one of accuracy. This can be conceived at two levels: an accuracy of appearance (mimesis or similarity) and one of communication. The truth value of the utterance, and the equivalence of the feelings connoted by the representation as being true to the feelings connoted by the memory of the session. As Derrida writes in his reading of de Man, the memory under consideration

is not essentially oriented toward the past, toward a past present deemed to have really and previously existed. Memory stays with traces, in order to 'preserve' them, but traces of a past that has never been present, traces which themselves never occupy the form of presence and always remain, as it were, to come.
(Derrida 1989: 58)

Derrida (1976) pointed out the work of such dialectical images – which Benjamin (1999) sought to differentiate from the archaic, mythical, or eternal images of stillness – as subject to illumination from within, interrupted, and thus arrested in their functioning, following a 'dialectical optic that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday' (Benjamin 1929: 237). In effect,

while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. — Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language.
(Benjamin 1999: 462)

Taussig (2009) proposed that the point of anthropology is to be cast outside of oneself, losing one's moorings, 'translating this experience into new terms that do not dissolve the mystery of the new and the unknown into the certainties of the known' (*ibid.*: 271–2). It thus becomes possible to witness by means of drawing the picture, not just as record but as engagement. The drawing is partly an ekphrasis, partly an invention, partly a translation. Or a reverse ekphrasis. Ekphrasis would apply to all transformation from visual to verbal as intersemiotic translation or 'transmutation' (Jakobson 1959: 233). The intersemiotic transmutation allows for selection, additions, omissions as, otherwise, it is a mere description of the text in the source language. Meaning does not precede translation, but is constructed and reconstructed through the process of communication. The relationship between sign and signified is not determined mechanically but it is a social construct and hence a matter of convention, inevitably inexact.

Understanding may come to be shared, but it cannot be identical. This fundamental epistemological uncertainty, this requirement that every utterance be accompanied by some hermeneutic move on the part of the reader or listener, is a source of innovation and creativity as well as error and failure. Translation makes this uncertainty explicit. [...] [and] is a prompt to reflexivity, an invitation to

negotiation, to ask why we mean what we do and whether and in what terms that could or should possibly mean anything to anybody else. (Freeman 2009: 9–11)

From a psychoanalytic perspective, Laplanche argued that translating does not simply mean putting into language or giving meaning 'but is to be seen as a mental integration process which proceeds on an affective and imaginative, for the most part Unconscious level' (Heenen-Wolff 2013: 441). Following Laplanche, processing the experience of being with the group is facilitated by the seductive offer made by the drawing space ('draw anything') re-activating the enigmatic offer of psychoanalysis (see Laplanche (2002) in section 2.2). It does not invite a new translation assuming the work of α -function. Refraining from drawing during the event avoids the drawing becoming a straightforward interpretation (as a reply or response of equivalences) to the enigmatic questions posed by the group scene. The drawing space is only an opportunity, not a treatment for meaning making. Laplanche indicated that

we hold fast to the distinction between *reconstruction* in the analysis (a joint task of the analysand and the analyst) and *construction*, or a 'new version' of self, which may result from the analysis, but as an operation of the analysand alone. (Laplanche 1992: 443)

Drawing as an intrasubjective event introduces a break akin to the Lacanian *cut*, that is, the practice of the analyst *qua* Other of interrupting the session to mark or stress a particular moment in the discourse of the analysand.

The analyst, for his part, slices (*tranche*). What he says is a cut, namely, has some of the characteristics of writing, except for the fact that in his case he equivocates in the orthography. He writes differently so that thanks to the orthography, to a different way of writing, he makes ring out something other than what is said, than what is said with the intention of saying [...] (Lacan, Seminar XXV, quoted in Chattopadhyay 2018: 3)

The cut induces a break with intention-driven conscious thinking and opens up the possibility of noticing the movements of the unconscious. Presence is therefore deferred by the working of *différance*, which

refers to the (active *and* passive) movement that consists in deferring by means of delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour, postponement, reserving. In this sense, *différance* is not preceded by the originary and indivisible unity of a present possibility that I could reserve, like an expenditure that I would put off calculatedly or for reasons of economy. What defers presence, on the contrary, is the very basis on which presence is announced or desired in what represents it, its sign, its trace. (Derrida 1981: 7)

This introduces a break or disruption related, although not necessarily reducible, to a range of other effects, such as parody, displacement, and resignification. The purpose is 'resignification not-yet'. The purpose of that disruption is to locate

the promising marginal text, to disclose its undecidable moment, to pry it loose with the positive lever of the signifier; to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it; to dismantle in order to reconstitute what is always already inscribed. (Spivak in Derrida 1976: lxxvii)

Bion suggested that 'the Grid could serve to provide a mental climbing frame on which the psycho-analyst could exercise his mental muscles' (1977: 31). It is to be noted that a climbing frame is a playground apparatus, where exercising goes hand in hand with playing, alone and with others. But Bion warned that the Grid is to be used in the process of preparation, and 'not as a substitute for observation or psycho-analysis but as a prelude to it' (*ibid.*). The same applies to the use of drawing in the practice of working with groups, alert to the sensually seductive nature of images.

Baudrillard has written challengingly on the implication for today of fascination and the image. He argues that in the postmodern 'society of consumption', one consumes no longer objects but codes. In this situation the distinction between 'the real' and the 'illusory' is finally collapsed and is replaced by the 'hyperreality of simulation'. In hyperreality, the abolition of distance that Benjamin spoke of as the decay of aura ushered in by mechanical reproduction reaches the point of no return with the advent of electronic media. There is now no distance that would permit a scene to unfold. Instead of scene, spectacle, prospect, perspective, we find the *obscene*, where everything is brought to us in close-up, as in a pornographic movie. (Abbas 1989: 60)

Hence the performative function of the practice is *per se* insufficient as an argument for its value. Drawing the group permits the scene to unfold in as much as the act of drawing (v.) is itself a performance of a performance observed – a performative not accidental but systemic, i.e., structural to the practice.

6.2.2 SYSTEMIC FUNCTION

Hypothesis 2: The practice calls attention to the multiplicity of roles within the activities of the group, but also to the unnoticed roles embodied by the participant observer/drawer.

For a group to thrive it must operate as an *open system* (section 2.2 above) which requires a boundary or skin differentiating what is internal to the system from what is external, permeable enough to allow nutritive stuff in and unwanted stuff out, but

sufficiently impermeable to exclude what may be toxic or unwanted, regulating the traffic between the two domains, and requiring a differentiation of roles. This implies that

the appropriate perspective for examining the relationship between the enterprise and the individuals who supply roles within it – and indeed, whose role-taking gives the enterprise its existence – is an inter-systemic perspective: it is a relationship between the enterprise as a system and individuals (and groupings of individuals) as systems. (Miller 1993: 18)

The notion of role is understood as the 'part or character one takes', from F. *rôle* 'part played by a person in life', literally 'roll (of paper) on which an actor's part is written', meaning 'function performed characteristically by someone' in a specific system. Role in a classical sense refers to the set of behavioural and attitudinal expectations and demands directed at those who occupy a certain social position. A role is a contract or agreement between a system and a role-holder, about who s/he is, what s/he does and why, and to whom. It can be voluntary and hence explicit, or involuntary. Roles can also be unconsciously bestowed and accepted, exchanged, shifted, denied – they are actual and also phantasized by role-holder and social context. They imply some form of contracted belonging to a group and organization, and an inevitable conflict emerges because

the single individual who joins a group is in a dilemma. He wishes to be part of the group and at the same time to remain a separate, unique individual. He wants to participate, yet observe; to relate, yet not become the Other; to join, but to preserve his skills as an individual [...] to establish his uniqueness while maintaining his relatedness to others. (Turquet 1985: 85)

While this is true of every group member of any group, it is of relevance in respect of the observer (organizational consultant, group facilitator, or therapist) because a meta-system becomes obvious concerning the differentiation of the roles taking place within the overall role of the observer her/himself (section 5. 2. 1). Roles play against and alongside each other, pulling and being pulled by the dynamics between observer and group. By extension, and beyond any particular roles noticed, this calls attention to the impact of role on the observer. Exposing this disarray assists disrupting the unitary notion of the observer since s/he may then notice her/himself through the process of acting and observing her/his own actions and those of the group from different perspectives, and with different even if contradictory purposes. Questioning the wholesome-ness of the observer shows that roles are not only to be perceived in the group but also in the observing function. This is supported by the particular nature of the role since the observer wants to demonstrate her/his perception to her/himself – and this doubling up is not a rhetorical trope but an actual unfolding of roles. Her/his belief in the integrity of their presence avoids the conflict of realizing that s/he is just occupying (being attributed) a variety of roles in respect of the system of the group. Having learnt this through her/his

own psychoanalysis and life experience, the observer may be aware of this fissure, the unbridgeable gap between her/his ego-ideal and perception of self. The drawer thus repositions the optical viewer from drawing to drawing to show her/him as to maintain the illusion of wholeness – a game of mirrors, of deceptions. The Drawer will wish to control the Viewer because the Viewer is *me*, and *not-me* (the members, the group, a parental figure, a competitor, an ally). This outing of the Viewer is a relief, so that it can be entertained – in both senses of ‘considered’ and ‘amused’ – and thus distracted but also noticed and included even if as a ‘disdained phantom’ with the wish to impress (to frighten), to mark the Viewer, to imprint in her/him the seen, the thought, even if any single view is incomplete given that the location of the Viewer can be changed at will.

The characters (Drawer, Group, Viewer) are an intriguing triad, sometimes overlapping, oftentimes distinct. They are referred to as actual characters because they are not a virtual notion in the mind but have a materiality, and produce different outcomes. The Drawer wants the Viewer to believe, to see, to witness what s/he presents as true. The doubling of Observer-as-Drawer-and-Viewer disaggregates the action because Observer as Drawer makes representations to satisfy the unsatisfiable desire of the Viewer and also to confuse her/him. What belongs to the observer and what to the group? That is – when is countertransference simply the drawer’s unacknowledged transference? The debunking of roles seem to ease up the struggle for understanding the dynamics of the group from theoretical perspectives by separating the roles as those that have agency and those that require a passive engagement (Dewey 1916) allowing the session to do something to the observer who at the same time has an unacknowledged role as consultant, facilitator, or therapist. Remaining curious to the play of roles is a long-term undertaking rather than an immediate recipe for results.

Drawing the group takes the form of bricolage (section 3.3), appropriating whatever is at hand if deemed useful (whether it springs from the observer or the group), transforming its original purpose (meaning) into a different discourse, recast or modified by visual translation. The issue is not the accuracy of the translation but the act of translation itself, given that the practice is a set of performances that constitute the master performance where meaning does not disappear but becomes another reading from alternative combinations. The purpose of the practice is to defer and differ. ‘The bricoleur may not ever complete his purpose but he always puts something of himself in it’ (Levi-Strauss 1972: 21), transforming it even if anxious about the literal incorporation of forms (and their meanings) from sources known and unknown. The practice assists group and observer to understand their dynamics of engagement, the changes, frustrations, fantasies, aspirations and impossibilities, differentiating between doing and perceiving, and how they influence each other. Thus the different roles suggest the (im)possibility of a dialogue since there is always someone else behind each mask, and successive de-maskings bring them peripherally closer but always asymptotically, farther away from the centre. Some roles are corporeal, others are abstractions, such as the

Master Viewer embodying the desire that dictates the orientation of the gaze towards whatever is regarded in the session. A drawing may be limited to line rendering (with minimal tone suggested by shading) and the Viewer will still read the drawing and interpret what it proposes. While the materials (support, medium) and the schema participate in the making (and not just the form) of the representation, as well as the schema under which the visual language is constructed, they need to be noticed in the mechanics of the process as machine. We do not consciously recall and then draw, but remember because we have drawn – images are mnemonic tools, and the sequence is not to see, hear, and then represent, but to represent and then see and hear (what is un-known). Furthermore, drawings are not isolated artefacts; the practice constitutes them into a chain or series that calls attention to the act of narrating beyond specific narratives. Technique, for instance, contributes to foster less calculated and deliberate representations by keeping conscious intention at bay through fast mark-making.

The position (geographical, metaphorical) of the observer is also of relevance, but there are at least two observers: a) the one who observes the scene and whose viewpoint is represented through any of the several projection systems available (Dubery & Willats 1972); and b) the one who makes the drawing. The motif may be high above the presumed spectator as in the images depicted on the ceilings of buildings, or drawn as if seen from above. The position of the observer as Donor seems a narrative device as described by Barthes (1977: 110) in respect of the authorial voice, e.g. when a narrative is written in the first-person but their position is not disclosed. Yet, unlike writing, a drawing may be simultaneously in the first- and third-person, as in the case of a self-portrait, to be suspected in any drawing regardless of motif. While the position of the observer may be accurately plotted in a perspective drawing as determined by viewpoint and parallax, this is not feasible in a non-perspective representation such as in a mixed system (Dubery & Willats 1972). This does not mean that there is no observer but that the reference to the Observer has been omitted. A drawing always has an observer as other than the viewer, and both do the looking. Drawings are particular pictures because they are not proposing iconic similarities through colour. Hence, an animal may confuse a painting with the object it represents, but it could never do that with a drawing (Berger 2005: 51).

While Western handwriting does not change the meaning of the text, in calligraphy and drawing (and the Chinese pictogram has the same root for both concepts) the handwriting is the gesture of the text. Any representation of experience, and any thought for that matter, cannot be formulated without a referent, that is, language in the first instance, and a schema or visual language in the case of a visual representation, but

‘everyday language’ is not innocent or neutral. It is the language of Western metaphysics, and it carries with it not only a considerable number of presuppositions of all types, but also presuppositions inseparable from

metaphysics, which, although little attended to, are knotted into a system.
(Derrida 2004: 333)

The observer perceives from a theoretical position, a language, and a history of her/himself and of the group. Yet s/he needs to get close enough to the group (its madness), and suspect that any re-presentation will be a compromise and, as such, a meaningful deceit – avoiding an interpretation representing the session as experience rather than as a timeline. This points to the ethical imperative of exposing the privileged position of the Master Viewer, that is, the dominance of the object by the subject, i.e., group by observer. The issue of caricature as parody and its conflict with making responsible (ethical) representations of a group plays a part, as inhibitor and stimulant. The drawer's response to her/his own excessive representations as observer is to be noticed and lived with as evidence of the emotional upheaval or sanitization of the event. Because a dualism will be inherently at work in the practice, whatever is noticed calls attention to its absent opposite as that which is being obscured. But the mimesis offered by a drawing is very different to that of painting or photography. Concerning format, Benjamin argued that

paintings are 'longitudinal sections' and seem to contain things, while drawings and graphic works are 'transverse sections' that are 'symbolic' in that they 'contain signs'. While some drawings are made to be seen held up, others only make sense in a horizontal position, which is like that of texts to be read.
(Benjamin 1917, quoted in Newman 2010: 7)

A painting is always displayed vertically, even if painted horizontally (e.g. Jackson Pollock, Antoni Tàpies), while drawings (unless large and/or and in a painterly medium such as charcoal, pastel or crayon) are made by the drawer sitting or standing by a horizontal or angled surface, and are usually shown within cabinets of drawings and only vertically when reified as works of art displayed in crowded public settings. This points to connections between drawing the group and writing, from which we can infer that, rather than implying a spectator, such drawings develop a narrative and anticipate a reader.

Schema and technique are enlisted towards repression as well as disclosure, and the issue of skill is hostage to idealization, to the aspiration of producing artefacts appreciated by others. While this unacknowledged expectation may be abandoned because of the purpose of the practice, it still remains a narcissistic wound, yet a useful reminder that, beyond the group and the drawing, the drawer was (is) seeking attention. Noticing this foregrounds the group and, therefore, the frame of mind conducive to sound(er) clinical engagement. The Donor function enacts a phantasy of power whereby the creativity of the Drawer can only take place through ministering by the self-ingratiating Donor who feels an outsider wishing for active participation in the melee. The observer is alone with the group but the room is full of others of the observer and the group (individually and collectively). This is also in evidence in literary texts, e.g.

A perplexing feature of Beckett's post–World War II novels is their narrators' strange perception that a voice (or such voices) encroaches on their speech, usurping its agency. [...] the 'I' abdicates authority over his speech entirely, claiming to do nothing but 'quote' his 'ancient voice in me not mine'. In so doing he gives full expression to the first-person dyad that Beckett termed the 'narrator/narrated'. (Cordingley 2012: 510)

The different roles implicate the observer with alterity as s/he observes the group and then observes her/himself representing her/his experience. Attempting the impossible and desired task of elucidation confirms the phantasy that the Drawer has taken up the position of the phantasmatic *subject-supposed-to-know*, while her/his engagement with the group is a performance, a dramatic enactment, a tragedy. The observer fosters the appearance of a Viewer as an other of the picture, as a seer (Tiresias, who goes blind after seeing what he should not have seen, i.e., either the naked goddess or the copulation of two snakes); the dialogue of the Drawer with the Viewer, the encounter, the tension between them, becomes an antagonism, a struggle, but also a relationship. The roles do not have existence as a collection of individuals but have a discrete intermediary function jointly with other roles as a sentient network of conflicts where roles as characters compete with each other, and even beget each other.

The 'I' which approaches the text is already itself a plurality of other texts, of codes which are infinite or, more precisely, lost (whose origin is lost). [...] Subjectivity is a plenary image, with which I may be thought to encumber the text, but whose deceptive plenitude is merely the wake of all the codes which constitute me, so that my subjectivity has ultimately the generality of stereotypes. (Barthes 1975: 10)

The constructed roles are also a disguise, both accurate and a distancing device, making sense of one's expectations and rejections from personal and clinical roles. Liking and disliking (that is, having an attraction or repulsion) to members, moments, marks, finished drawings, exposes the observer's struggle with difference and the brittleness (fragility) of the skin or boundary. And yet, amongst the deceit there is an aspect of testimony (section 3.4 above), the wish for and by the observer to have seen and remembered (even if also obscuring the seen by forgetfulness), noticing through the practice the different actual and phantasmatic roles in relation to hers/his and the group's desire.

6.2.3 DIGESTIVE FUNCTION

Hypothesis 3: The practice offers a reflective space to register and consider the impact of the group on its members, including the participant observer.

Drawing does not circumvent repression but it may help – through additions, omissions, and gestures – to elaborate (digest, metabolize) the traumatic experience rather than

evacuate it through action or forgetting. The visual representation is not akin to preconsciousness since what will be re-presented is repressed, bungled up, impacted upon like a parapraxis or a dream.

Repressions that have failed will of course have more claim on our interest than those that may have been successful; for the latter will for the most part escape our examination. (Freud 1915: 153)

The repression in the representation will be 'the repression of that which threatens presence and the mastering of absence' (Derrida 1978: 197). There is a theatricality (the quality of being exaggerated and excessively dramatic) in the drawing, and the representation is never accurate (unless highly realistic and hence no longer an unrestrained drawing but an attempt at mimesis) because it exceeds its source, it makes a violence to it, as caricature and excess. We laugh at caricatures with the pleasure of vindictiveness – images by Honoré Daumier and Steve Bell are cruel representations of the sitter that ring true, and the ensuing laughter is never innocent because of the (partly shameful) enjoyment at recognizing one's own cruel streak at the expense of the other. Winnicott (1949) referred to the disavowed experience of hate in the countertransference, and drawing is a multilayered and complex act where naming (re-presenting) is an act towards the other involving attraction and aggression. The process implies a reconstruction because the experience of the group is represented, repeated, furthered, reproduced, developed, disguised, contradicted. In the process of drawing, a digestion or transformation takes place from β - into α -elements (Bion 1965). There will be an intimacy between the Drawer and the drawing, but drawing is not just a palliative – cleansing – detoxifying process but also one of discovery about the complex partnership of observer and group.

The observer cannot ascribe unbiased meaning to the event and put forward an interpretation of the group since s/he, as a consciousness, is her/himself a product of the group. The drawing does not digest the material of the session – even if the observer may eventually do so – but the translation of the sense impression of the session into a re-presentation assists its elaboration. Drawing is a way of taking time (out), taking time in, taking in time, digesting the experience by ideogrammatizing it (Bion 1992 – section 2.5). And the nature of the visual image is not limited to the formation of an ideogram within the psyche, but its affects are expressed through the musculature in actual gestures. The communicative power of the drawing is not only dependent on mimetic accuracy but also on the gesture of the marks, that is, not just from the idea as form but by the form (texture, violence, (im)precision, languor, etc.) of the mark as idea. While drawing appears silent it is not mute since it offers a dialogue across the confusion of tongues and semiotic levels, working like an interpreter, i.e., not by transcribing the text heard but by re-presenting the experience of its listening. The drawing assists the processing of emotion by allowing the drawer the fear of experiencing desire for the group and the group's desire.

Because of the impenetrability of the event (since there is no access to the group-in-itself) ethical responsibility (section 4.4 above), requires that these representations are never shown to the group observed in order to assist the drawer to bracket and stay with the fear of actual exposure of form, content, skill, sexuality, repetitions, banality, incompetence, and death. Even if the process of signification may be poetic, the visual representations are not intended as art and are constructed like a dream out of a repertoire of signs derived from psychical and bodily experiences. The relationship between the representation (as signifier) and that represented (as signified) must be considered beyond possible semantic claims as an undecidable, a characteristic that Freud (1900: 318) observed in the tendency of the dream-work to express contraries by identical means of representation.

The dreamer dreams the contents of the dream and a different agency of the self then organizes the dream as a coherent narrative or word-presentation. Neither is about elucidation of meaning but about stating the narrative through two mark-making stages, the second organized by the syntactic dimension of language. Similarly, the drawer aims at drawing the thing-presentation, discovering in the process, the image-presentations. The point is not to define the drawing of the event as an intersemiotic translation, which can be analysed with the same semiotic tools to be applied to a text. They are not alternatives – the two semiotic codes provide a confluence of meanings that are greater than their discrete qualities brought together. They are not the sum of the meanings, they embody different meaning and provide approximations (through presence and absence) which can be experienced and revisited by iterations. It is not in their similarities but in their playing of parallels and counterpoints that they are equivalent to instruments in the same orchestra, performing different parts while allowing space to the other instruments, joining with them, departing, traversing different routes through the score. It is a polyphonic exercise, and protecting the lack of a stylistic demand on the praxis allows it to develop as unintentionally as possible. The selection of one medium and not another, or the use of the same medium or technique are akin to the difference between writing in the first- or third-person, or foregrounding or ignoring the ending. These may be telling narrative choices. It may be alluring to ascribe them to a creative impulse, but the creative is not a second order impulse; it is in the nature of the impulse itself as a compulsion to represent – a drive, not lesser than the epistemophilic or sexual drives, where the creative act is compelling regardless of comfort/discomfort because ‘the point of excitement is being excited’ (Winnicott 1986: 24).

Observing, waiting, drawing, are instances of dreaming *while awake* (section 2.5 above). Dreaming requires memory – there is no dream without something previously experienced (even if used as a sign, standing for something else). Every image originates in the seen (and the seen unseen), since the dream requires the day residue to provide the lexicon for appropriation and creative forgery. It is in the meeting (coming together) of the self and otherness that the image takes form, to protect and attack, to articulate the

link. No solipsism is possible, the other-in-the-mind is also its own other. In a dream, there may be several (conflated or discrete) speakers: the character in the dream who had the emotions that the narrator recounts, the narrator about the character (who may also be the narrator), the narrator as the holder of the emotions or perceptions described. These areas of overlap become further complicated by considering the Other to whom the dream is addressed, whose desire is anticipated by the dream and with whom the dreamer is in unconscious dialogue, since it needs the other to whom the dreamer tells the dream for the dream to come alive, to reach a destination.

Drawing functions as an intermediary, a potential digesting – posited by Bion as the model for thinking and active in dreaming (1992: 42), named metabolizing by Aulagnier (2001). It offers the space to process the experience of the observation, offering the necessary distance between event and the materiality of the artefact. This replicates secondary revision in dreams, opening up the possibility of an exploration of the different levels of content. 'At bottom dreams are nothing other than a particular form of thinking, made possible by the conditions of the state of sleep' (Freud 1900: 506 f. 2). The drawer as a joint dreamer can only present the manifest content, yet this goes beyond attending to the dream-work, that is, not to the binary of latent/manifest content of the dream, but to the process by which the dream (the drawing) comes into being. And there are four moments of dreaming: when observing the group, when remembering the group, when drawing the group, when looking at the drawing of the group. Drawing (rather than the drawing) keeps the dreaming at work. It appears as symptom, a foreign body whose cause we do not seek to attribute and hence dissolve. The session has to be slept and dreamt, bringing the day residue (the content of the session) together with the stirrings from the unconscious of observer and group to be digested through reverie. It may eventually result in insight and interpretation and understanding, to be used as a performative at the following session or when possible and appropriate. Though *the drawings provide some relief*, they are not used for evacuation but dream-work, transforming the raw elements into α -elements that can be used for dreaming.

Yet the observer/drawer will worry that her/his feelings will become more intense, or too intense, or sexualized, or inert. There is not enough time to draw everything that goes on. There is the horror that the drawing may (and may not) escape control, the hope (and the fear) that it may do so, depleting the tension that fuels its origination in a traumatic event – and an aspect of the group is always traumatic, i.e., a psychic wound, harmful and scarring, rehearsing the psychotic dimension of the observer's personality to perceive 'that which is obvious and unobserved' (Bion 1962: 149). The observer looks at her/his drawing (not intended for an Other) contemplating the visual clues made available by the drawing, comparing them with her/his repertoire of available forms. Here lies the value of the undecidability of the drawn image, where the articulation and later reading of objects may or may not offer certainties (as in the duck/woman or vase/faces images). This is not a contradiction (as in the images of M. C. Escher) but the impact of *différance*

(Derrida 1984), a delay whereby we acknowledge difference and the suspension of judgement, as heard or misheard and also misread because

Any formulation, including this one, is a representation and all representations are transformations, often of transformations. [...] Transformations may be scientific, aesthetic, religious, mystical, psycho-analytical. They may be described as psychotic and neurotic also, but though all these classifications have a value it does not appear to me that the value that they have is psycho-analytically adequate. I have chosen to write, though briefly, of transformation in hallucinosis because the description may serve to explain why I consider existing methods of observation, notation, attention and curiosity are inadequate, why a theory of transformations may aid in making these methods more nearly adequate and why the theory of transformations itself must be freed from existing associations if it is to be fitted for its psycho-analytic tasks. (Bion 1965: 140)

Drawings are not representations made to stay in the past but to experience the past in the present, to connect the past with the present in a continuous event shaped as a Moebius strip. Yet the purpose is not to remain in the realm of dreams but to access the contradictory constellation of waking. Drawings are no allegories to be decoded but experiences to be sustained in the digestion of the preceding experience of being with the group. In the end, it does not matter how much later than the event the drawing was made and to what time the drawing belongs – whether the moment of the experience or the experience of its making (unlike a photograph, as a document of the ‘scene of the crime’). Temporality does not play a part in the observation, nor in the scene of the drawing. And yet the drawing takes time, it lasts, and the Observer can see the journey of the Drawer through the drawing. Laplanche’s formulation of the *après coup* suggests a complex temporality in the interplay of the two scenes.

With Scene II we have the experience, the event itself, without affect; with Scene I we have traumatic excitation and the defensive action of repression, but without the experience. Thirdly, then, we have a complex spatiality too. The first, external event happens and provokes insufficient unpleasure to motivate any defensive psychological mechanism. As yet unrepressed but also inassimilable, it remains in limbo, a ‘foreign body’ unworked over and isolated. What precipitates defensive action is the unpleasure elicited by the associative reawakening of Scene II by Scene I. More precisely: the origin of this unpleasure is the evoked recollection of Scene II. (Ray 2002: 19)

What is unknown is the impact of Scene I (the representation in the present of an observation in the past) – the drawing actualizes Scene II which is unknown, an *après coup* of the repression of what has been perceived, the traumatic horror that goes under the surface – which the drawing does not disclose but merely brushes past. There is no insight to be gained from the drawing as re-presentation, which cannot be read as a

translation of the repressed as a thing-in-itself but of the experience that has been repressed. Representation is not a strategy to dominate and subjugate Scene II and control its impact on Scene I. The drawing re-presents an *après coup*. Two stages are possible in its formulation. Fig. 10 (below) shows a diagram of the original helplessness as the core experience of the group and of the dynamics that follow, and Scene I is only an attempt to assert mastery of the repressed, leading to a re-presentation, that is, a fiction available to contemplation. The representation as such has no truth value, it is simply the materiality of a construction.

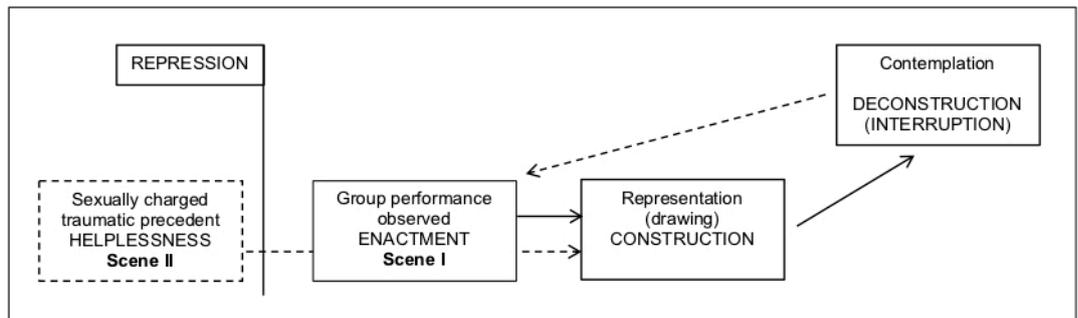


Fig. 10

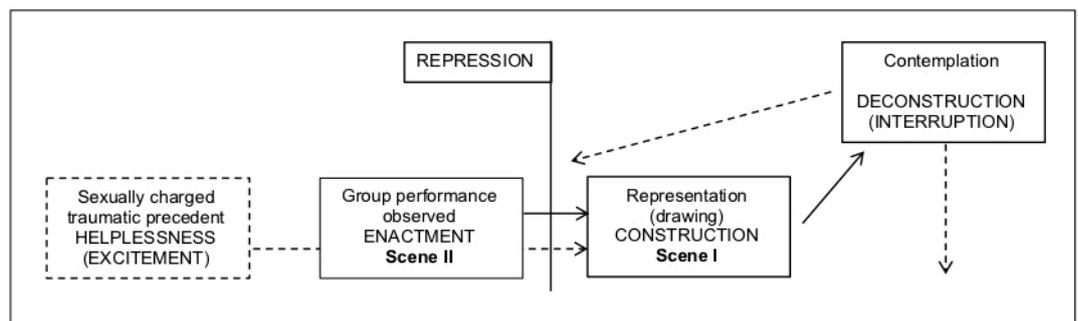


Fig. 11

Fig. 11 (above), shows an alternative formulation where the re-presentation is considered as a Scene 1 activating a Scene 2. If the drawing from the observation disturbs this is because it interrupts. The arrow without final object refers to decathexis of sexual energy. The box on the left labelled HELPLESSNESS could also be named EXCITEMENT. This dissipation is not a loss but a re-directing as an economical model where the libido finds alternative means of expression and object. The term contemplation derives from L. *contemplare* 'to gaze attentively, observe', originally 'to mark out a space for observation', from *com-* (intensive prefix) + *templum* 'area for the taking of auguries' (i.e., observed natural signs, interpreted as an indication of divine approval or disapproval of proposed actions). The difference between observing and contemplating is that the observer differentiates through the gaze, while s/he who contemplates merges, joins, takes a position within that observed. The same action at two different points. Before

the knowledge of the observed, with knowledge already. Observation offers data, contemplation assimilates (i.e., absorbs and digests) to create order through the process of reverie. One may observe others but does not contemplate them. To observe implies action, gathering, testing, comparing. Contemplating does none of these, it is neither gaze nor glance, it takes in the world within and beyond, including the observer. Observer is a role – linking subject and object in active engagement – while a contemplator is not active though s/he allows, lends the space for the object to do something to (make use of) the subject.

Contemplation, understood as the act of lingering-with, of tending to a process, is a minor form of doing. It attends to the conditions of the work's work. Contemplation is passive only in the sense that this attending provokes a waiting, a stilling, a listening, a sympathy with. This sympathy is enveloped in the process [...] attuned to the fragile art of time. Contemplation, operative at the edges of perception where the conscious and the nonconscious overlap, activates times of its own making. (Manning 2016, cited in Cannon 2018: 577)

Hence the process does not come to an end – it circulates – and contemplation is not the system's final purpose but only a strategy for re-direction. After all, drawing takes place in the actual representation, in the act of representing, and in its (gazed and glanced) contemplation. It is this circulation across boundaries of emotional cause, time, form (i.e., semantics and grammar), and formlessness that gives the process its potential and truth, since the drawing does not fix something as seen, it only states its absence through (as an embodiment of) the trace.

In my view, afterwardsness is inconceivable without a model of translation: that is, it presupposes that something is proffered by the other, and this is then afterwards retranslated and reinterpreted. On the one hand, there is my introduction to the notion of the *other*, and on the other hand, there is the *translation* model. Even if we concentrate all our attention on the retroactive temporal direction, in the sense that someone reinterprets their past, this past cannot be a purely factual one, an unprocessed or raw 'given'. It contains rather in an immanent fashion something that comes before – a message from the other. It is impossible therefore to put forward a purely hermeneutic position on this – that is to say, that everyone interprets their past according to their present – because the past already has something deposited in it that demands to be deciphered, which is the message from the other person. (Laplanche 1999: 265)

An important aspect of the work with groups consists in setting up and maintaining appropriate conditions so that transformations may take place. Preta (2019) has suggested in respect of the psychoanalytic practice that those

transformative operations that are enacted may on a certain level leave the materials they operate on intact and act only on their possible combinations. So what becomes interesting is not found in the transformations of things but rather in the relationships between these transformations. (ibid.: 16, italics in original)

The strategy to draw oneself within the group attempts to distract the drawing away from a first-person narrative, as described in the account of the proliferation of roles (section 5.2.1). This attempt fails, but at least it calls attention to the unbearable centrality of the drawing subject as interpreter – the drawing is not a communication but a miscommunication. Taussig suggested that the position of the maker-viewer

is at once intimate and personal yet bears the obligation to bear something that exceeds the personal. It's like a three-way conversation between the drawer, the thing drawn, and the hypothetical viewer. (Taussig 2009: 265)

Yet the conversation takes place between the motif, the drawer, and the drawing. This is different in photography, and Taussig (2009: 265) proposed that 'common language use would define the photo as *taking*, the drawing as *making*.' The seductive ease of image-making in the digital age appears as synchronic, hence the struggle to recover lived time in the act of drawing the experience. Photographic image-making offers taking possession of the motif photographed and the fantasy of total control, even more so currently with the widespread access to digital technology. But if the etymology of the term *conversation* (p. 38) illuminates its meaning as 'turning things over with others', drawing as making is

a mute conversation with the thing drawn and can involve prolonged and total immersion. You stare and draw and draw again. Back and forth it goes. A quick sketch has a bare minimum of this dialectic, but the more prolonged study can make your body ache from the tension. (Taussig 2009: 269)

This refers to looking at the object in front of the subject, but it also applies to past experience, when the object is no longer present and must be imagined (i.e., re-created in the mind) by remembering it. However,

It is a platitude in the teaching of drawing that the heart of the matter lies in the specific process of looking. A line, an area of tone, is not really important because it records what you have seen, but because of what it would lead you on to see. [...] A drawing is an autobiographical record of one's discovery of an event – seen, remembered or imagined. (Berger 2005: 3)

Furthermore, the scene of the group has been seen, is remembered, and imagined – all three. But this is not a seamless process. Berger (2005) referred to the resistance experienced in the act of drawing pointing that the person or object being drawn does not become defective, unlike the drawing.

The drawing fails to embrace the presence. [...] drawing is an activity whose aim is to recognize and perhaps reconcile an apparent contradiction: that between presence and absence. [...] To draw is to involve what will no longer be there when the drawing is looked at later. Drawing is about a company which, beyond or outside the drawing, will very quickly or eventually become invisible. This is why drawings whilst embracing, or trying to embrace, a presence, concern absence. [...] Drawings offer hospitality to an invisible company which is with us. (*ibid.*: 116–7)

Taussig (2009: 271) suggested that the point of the (anthropological) observation is to be cast outside of oneself, to lose one's moorings and figure out a poetics of translating the experience, which is inevitably incomplete. This is achieved

through the build-up of connection between the face never before seen and expressive fullness of self that attention restores linkage between heart and mind. Emptiness becomes generative. One becomes, then, in relation to one's 'memory' of oneself, other, without this otherness becoming alienating. 'For this other', writes Levinas (1991), 'is the heart, and the goodness, of the same, the inspiration or the very psyche in the soul' (p. 109). (Emery 2000: 822)

The drawing (a form of embodiment as gesture) not only records but also institutes what is to be noticed. The drawing, following a deconstructive approach, calls attention to obliterations and discontinuities. Scale is of importance too – if too large or too small they diminish the possibility of control (Stewart 1993, Agamben 2007). Yet miniaturization plays a part in the creation of the sacred toy (referred to in section 3.3) – about the materiality of the drawing of the group transformed into its peculiar flat representation, a product of bodily engagement since drawing is physical, done with the mind but also with hand movements and the whole body, and thus having a sexual nature involving excess and creation, destruction and discharge. Thus the consideration of drawing as a practice of the sacred and the profane (section 3.3). The drawing (n.) as a magic object, the genie in the lamp, which might be actually empty. Enlarging the minute detail produces a less controlled image – and fear appears in the uncanny. The process turns the experience of the real into an aesthetic act, to make it manageable, for fear of what the gaze may discover as passive receptor and active articulator.

The representation must be made from memory to avert the gaze of self and other, protecting the Drawer from the fear of seeing too much (sexuality, the primal scene). Representation exposes abjection, sanitized unconsciously to make it bearable. The drawing and the writing may be instances of prolepsis – the representation of a thing as existing before it actually does or did so – and hence the gaze from memory may be less fearful than the gaze of looking, to avoid what the eye has seen and cannot countenance (tolerate, endure, consent to). While drawing from memory may set up a passive way of avoiding a rejection, it may also give space to the enactment and acting

out of the drawing as an *après coup* of the observation. The Drawer does not represent anew but re-presents what has been already represented by the session. She/he is blinded or deprived of the present and thus particularly gifted for seeing that which is not the present of the observation. We always draw in the present – even if we recall the motif – what we think (remember) now, not what we thought (had seen) then. Hence the drawing is a distorting update, there is no past save by implication to a sensitized past event that emerges in the process of the drawing. The representation is always the re-representation of the *après coup*, its longings, uncertainty, and confusion. The drawing (from memory) clarifies and confuses, exposes and represses in an uncertain proportion as secondary revision. There is no future, only different versions of the past, hence the nostalgia of the drawing, or music piece, or the aesthetic in general. Sadness is always a concomitant with the aesthetic experience, mourning the lost that is called past yet again, a cyclical impossibility without ending. What was, made present now, as loss, as past. The drawing as an incomplete souvenir as a remembrance or memory of the journey through the group, like images which throw off their camouflage to ambush the viewer, represented as artefacts for collection, objectifying the manifestation of the experience and yet fascinated by it. For Benjamin, the image has a hermetic quality, closing itself off from explanation. But it is precisely its monadic character – ‘it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation’ (Benjamin 1973: 89) – that allows the image to arouse astonishment and thoughtfulness. Abbas (1989: 52) suggested that although the monadic image may be closed *off* (from explanation), it is not closed *up* since it relates to mythic continuums dialectically by interrupting them.

The image no longer pretends to give a full, satisfactory and unbiased representation of events. Rather it presents a trace, a displacement of experience. It bypasses society’s representation of itself to gain entry to the unconscious of culture. ‘Living’, Benjamin writes, ‘means leaving traces’ [...] but traces of an experience already on the way to being obliterated, traces of eminent disappearance. (Abbas 1989: 54)

6.2.4 MOURNING FUNCTION

Hypothesis 4: The practice assists mourning the impossibility of certainty.

The problematic of lack obscures its counterpart – an excess, an uncontainable abundance impossible to digest which has to be expulsed. Like any group, the group (to which the observer belongs) is attracted to its ecstasies of trauma (see Emery 2000 in section 2.3). Seeing into the forbidden ecstasies of the trauma – an originary relation to the other that is both effacement and repetition of simple origins (Derrida 1978) – requires blinding oneself to the seen in order to state it to recover its otherness, its presence on the empty page as the spatial location of a performance. The group defends itself against its own pleasure, which exhausts, confuses, and misdirects the attention of its members

(including the participant observer) because of the insufficient satisfaction currently derived from its symptom, similar to the analysand starting treatment to reinstate the effectiveness of a symptom no longer successful in providing relief from the pressure of unconscious conflict (Fink 1997: 9).

Freud (1911) distinguished attention from action and emphasized attention as the pathway to thought. Regardless of the observer's skill in depicting the member's physiognomy (typically sketched in drawing A), an attempt at depicting the group renders their subject strange and uncanny. However, attending to a representation of the face of the Other frees the observer because

Exposed to the Other, becoming for the Other, attention is denuded of its shifting preoccupations. Attending to the face of the Other, the face can be dissected, discerned, probed, scrutinized, peered at, obliterated, idolized, adored, revulsed, lusted after, coveted, and otherwise judged through the intentional foci of loading stabilizations. [...] The more attention abides in an openness without opacity or sharp demarcations, [it] becomes less and less saturated. One is not haunted by reminiscences. There is no 'place' or 'position' and so, too, there is no 'point of view' or 'disposition'. (Emery 2000: 807)

The practitioner is able to approach the Other with a distinctive mode of attention that Levinas (1991) characterizes as 'disinterestedness' and 'non-in-difference'. Freud stated that analysts must blind themselves in order to concentrate their attention on the singular dark spot that illumines the patient's discourse. However,

there is a blindness that happens alongside seeing, while we are seeing. Not only are there things we cannot see and do not want to see and refuse to see and that are too peculiar to see or too dull to see, there is a blind spot built into each eye. (Emery 2000: 812)

Emery (1997) has suggested that if memory is used as a container for the past, it becomes 'a possession or idol' (which cannot contain the future), rather than an 'icon', a *visible* transmitting a never immanent *invisible*, giving access to the infinite and alterity. The analyst's obligation is to attend in blindness to that which is infinite and, as Derrida suggested, also apocalyptic as yet-to-come, a future not linked to a past even though 'the psyche enunciates itself in story as a historical phantasm' (Emery 2000: 813). Attention, in contrast with vigilance, presupposes the freedom of the ego which directs it while the watchfulness of *vigilance* refers to

the scopic counterpart to suffocating presence. It is looking where there is nothing to see but where one is unable to not look. In vigilance, one is held hostage by being, gazing toward nothing, at an object without content, a bare enveloping presence that strips attention of its anarchical unfocused openness. (Emery 2000: 823)

Accordingly, only mourning through the icon exposes one to the responsibility that comes from the jurisdiction of the face. The responsibility of the group practitioner is to mourn what cannot be mourned but what, by virtue of the traumas of alterity, must be mourned as an incomprehensible and disinterested ordering towards the face of the Other. But the face is also the container of an unassumable monstrosity and an uncanny inassimilable trauma of absence.

The face is not an appearance or sign of some reality. It is at once apparition and epiphany, representation and proximity, community and difference. The face is, above all and beyond these antinomies, an enigma, a 'hesitation between knowing and responsibility.' (Levinas 1991: 155)

Depicting the experience of the session results in a distancing from the group process brought about by the performative quality of representation, articulation, translation, transformation, testimony, communication, relief, and enjoyment of translation – by constructing the statement without expectation of accuracy or truth. Drawing as text is affected by intertextuality (Kristeva 1969) since it does not exist in isolation as a closed system. Neither it is a matter of influence. Whether the drawing precedes or follows another is immaterial, since both are texts linked by multiple relations, for instance, as an *après coup* of the other text. This is a refusal to determine and name a fundamental substance, and thus merely cite an instance of the universal in question, splitting universals and particulars, doggedly seeking to define the essence. It points to the unbearable existence of undecidables, disorganizing knowledge, threatening consciousness, identity, and survival.

No correspondence is required between the subject imagined and observed; impact refers to the effect (the affect) brought about by the act of representing. Because the drawing is made from the re-collection of the observation, it functions as a pictogram (see 2.4 above) or dream that cannot be modified at the point of dreaming (or telling) other than as a consequence of repression (directly in the dream, or as secondary repression in the telling). The approach restores temporality and becoming. The drawing is partly an unprocessed utterance not bound by the reality principle (Freud 1920) as in the psychotic mind (in the imaginary) active in phantasies and dreams. It comes into meaning only through language – it needs to be narrated, not just given an account but given as an account, accepting that all meaning in language is essentially ambiguous (Glendinning 2011: 21). According to Bensmaïa (1990: 147), the pictogram, as formulated by Aulagnier (2001) 'is neither a choice nor a free creation, but an effect of the laws that govern the activity of representation.' This pictographic reservoir is where representations remain active and fixed,

representations that, in the final analysis, are the means by which the irreducible conflict between Eros and Thanatos represents and actualizes itself indefinitely, the combat between the desire for fusion and the desire for annihilation, love and

hate; the activity of representation as a desire for the pleasure of being and as hate for having to desire. The pictogram is a representation wherein the action, linking the two complementary entities, comes in turn to testify as to who, between Eros and Thanatos, has momentarily won the battle. (Aulagnier 1981 cited in Bensmaïa 1990: 147)

It may be assumed that scopophilia is the driver, as narcissism in relation to the epistemophilic drive in a sublimated yet perverse wish to see it all. Desire (for the object, for the other, for what the other desires, and for being desired by the Other) is, by definition, an impossibility. The narcissistic pleasure of seeing oneself making representations will be a distraction, together with longing or nostalgia, for the irreducibility that the present cannot offer or satisfy. While nostalgia may be linked to melancholia – and the observation of the event leaves the ground turned, the wanting ajar – it also ‘opens the possibility of irony and play in rethinking history and our various relationships to it’ (Pickering & Keightley 2006: 924). Drawing refers not to the ‘acquisition of a fragment (by depiction) but the ‘countersigning’ of an idea that one has come into contact with but the origin is always one in dialogue with an Other – it always accommodates the trace of the Other.’ (Glendinning 2011: 18). Acknowledgement of the other is of methodological significance. There is no drawing without a viewer or writing without a reader, i.e., the enunciation is always for an Other – language comes to us from the other (Oliver 2015: 35–6). This other is also present in the otherness of the representation – which the drawings represent but also make enigmatic. Like all ceremonial acts, drawing as a performative practice does not state something but also does something. The practice proposes a provocation as an incitement, giving each other a future. The drawing constitutes an enactment the observer as other is enlisted by the group to represent. Making a drawing, standing outside the site of the event, is a responsible act of which the drawing is just a mechanism like Bion’s Grid. Being used as an object requires resilience, support, and experience. It is not the drawing as artefact that allows contradictions to surface but the act of drawing such artefact, contraption, and utterance. Every drawing deceives, falls short. Drawings want their own thing and the impossibility of capture (make prisoner, cage) of the experience is the liberating instance when the observer has to remain in the extended moment of articulation rather than the punctual memory of the articulated, i.e., the session, history, narrative of the group. Berger (2005: 109) has suggested that drawing is a ‘ghost subject’ and, ‘before drawing evolved into a “questioning” of something visibly there, it was a way of addressing the absent, of making the absent appear’ through its trace.

The trace is the erasure of selfhood, of one’s own presence, and is constituted by the threat or anguish of its irremediable disappearance, of the disappearance of its disappearance. An unerasable trace is not a trace, it is a full presence, an immobile and incorruptible substance, a son of God, a sign of parousia and not a seed, that is, a mortal germ. This erasure is death itself, and it is within its horizon

that we must conceive not only the 'present', but also what Freud doubtless believed to be the indelibility of certain traces in the unconscious, where 'nothing ends, nothing happens, nothing is forgotten.' (Derrida 1978: 230)

Drawing always speaks of absence; Newman (2003) asserted that

Drawing, as stroke, 'touches' the surface, bringing out its texture, in a way that is different from the way in which oil paint 'covers' the surface. [...] This touching of the surface is also a separation from it. Drawing, with each stroke, re-enacts desire and loss.' (*ibid.*: 95)

Suffering the drawing's obscurity, its failure of representation, its impossibility because the drawing points to an unbearable absence, a mourning that drawing as ritual keeps present, open, alive. Hence the earlier expectation of identifying a *punctum*, driven by the misguided aspiration of being surprised (pierced) by the drawing as presence, i.e., from event to representation, in the hope of discovering the group-in-itself through the sacrificial translation. The transformation that matters is the one of the practitioner (group consultant, facilitator, therapist) in and out of the Drawer. It is not about becoming an observer of the drawing, ceasing to be an insider to become an outsider to the event, re-presenting it to make it foreign, separate, yet alive as a tune overheard in the distance. However, following the observation by Bleger (1967) of ritual appearing as a resistance to knowledge, Faimberg (2012) asked

how is it possible to maintain the analytic frame, a frame that is part of the analytic method and the discovery of the unconscious, and at the same time to overcome the ritualization of the frame? (*ibid.*: 989)

How can the practice of the observer repeatedly drawing the group towards disruption of certainty be itself disrupted? Hence the value of the two drawings, one about the observed, and one about the observing, amplifying and taking issue with each other even if, in practice, the function may also be addressed by producing a single drawing. The drawings are not the cause of disruption as images recovered from traumatic half-forgotten, inaccurately and accurately distorted and remembered experiences. The practice offers the possibility of avoiding a reductive merger of opposites by holding them together – distinct and in tension, through mourning the absence of certainty in the face of undecidability. Hence, drawing and writing are sites of mourning (Newman 2003); and at the end of the experience of observing, drawing, and writing, there is death.

The scholar to come

would finally be capable, beyond the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life, of thinking the possibility of the specter, the specter as possibility. (Derrida 1994: 13)

The contents of the specter of the drawing remain secret. Paraphrasing Derrida (2007: 32), the observer 'lives his death' in drawing. In this sense, drawing as *différance* is not simply an affirmation of who or what is Other, but rather of 'the impossible', that is, of apprehending the group-in-itself.

6.3 GATHERING THE STRANDS

The paper is torn,
brushes all gone –
this critical moment
no fainting heart cherish,
draw without delay. (after B. Kokushi, quoted in Suzuki 1959: 120)

In retrospect, the initial proposition (section 1.4.2, page 43) was predicated on an essentialist belief in core meanings. It was a means-end proposition, aiming to demonstrate that drawings made by the observer exposed unconscious communications from the group observed, offering meaningful representations of the predicaments of the event. It was, therefore, a tautological formulation because it anticipated an affirmative response in respect of the value of making visual representations, already explored through a vast literature of child psychotherapy and arts-therapy practice. Notwithstanding, it proved to be useful towards suspecting logical reasoning as the mode of enquiry, originally aimed at coupling the production of observational drawings from the memory of an event, with the notion of the dynamic unconscious, strung together in a scientific (evidence-based) approach. The focus then evolved towards an interrogation of learning from experience, subjugating the idea of the unconscious to technical rationality (psychology, neuroscience, translation) in order to arrive at a phantasmatic state of unquestionable conceptual clarity. The expectation of revelation through testimony also played a part in the endeavour to find ultimate meaning – an impossibility because of the 'sheer unconsciousness of the unconscious' (Coltart 1986: 187). Purity, honesty, and truth are impossible intentions because as soon as we bring a thought into language (writing, drawing), a betrayal takes place. Hence, the drawing may begin as a fantasy of disencumberment, an aspiration to a totalizing truth rather than assisting towards an awareness of the multiplicity of stories that contribute to the overall narrative. Mimesis is confused with accuracy, foregrounding appearance over impact, *studium* over *punctum*.

However, can the practice lend itself to evacuation and thus work against mourning? Drawing group sessions may have parallels with recording dreams in writing to be brought into the analytic session, thus rehearsing secondary revision instead of trusting the unknown of the session for the dream-work to be re-presented into language in the presence of the analyst. In the drawing practice, thirdness is operative in the triad group/observer/practice, and even though there is no analyst, the presence of an absence can be mourned. Nevertheless,

We are too rigid or too idealistic if we think that it is a question of transforming primary processes into secondary ones. It would be more accurate to say that it is a question of initiating play between primary and secondary processes by means of processes which I propose to call *tertiary* (Green 1972) and which have no existence other than that of processes of relationship. (Green 1975: 17)

Unlike systems of decipherment, the practice does not argue for the truth-value of drawing as translation but for its potential as a useful disruption by representation as performance. The observer does not know what s/he is translating, s/he dislikes (is threatened by) the text to be translated because it literally comes through, it intrudes, it bursts through, it disorganizes and disturbs the observer, who is and is not the author of the text, since any text is multidetermined by the unconscious in the observer and the dynamics of the group – their vision, fears, and also sound objectives – and the current cultural discourse(s). It is only possible to offer a tentative answer (in the process of becoming) to the research problem remembering that ‘the answer is the misfortune of the question’ (Blanchot 1993: 13). Bion cited Blanchot’s dictum in three different passages in the same book (Bion 2005: 9, 30, 36) adding that an answer stops curiosity and prevents us from doing any further thinking. The space of drawing proposes an interruption by

suspending the question it sets out to address, pausing to hold us up, in a moment of contemplation. [...] the pause initiates the possibility of the endless repetition of endings; [and] suspension revisits the demand for closure, for transparency. All it can reveal to the gaze of authority is its own essential equivocation, its own being-otherwise. (McCarthy 2015: 23)

Perhaps this is what can be affirmed with sufficient conviction at the end of this study: the belief in the superior value of connotation (whereby the drawing means ‘something’ to be captured) constitutes a prison to be exposed.

Such the confusion now between real and – how say the contrary? No matter. That old tandem. Such now the confusion between them once so twain. And such the farrago from eye to mind. For it to make what sad sense of it may. No matter now. Such equal liars both. Real and – how ill to say its contrary? The counter-poison. (Beckett 1982: 40)

What has been argued for is the necessity of an empty and yet evolving space towards thinking and learning. Sapisochin (2015: 48) has called attention to the role of Winnicott’s work in expanding the paradigmatic coupling of the patient’s free association with the analyst’s evenly suspended attention, also including the effects of the verbal communication itself on the analyst’s subjective position.

The innovation was the creation of conceptual tools for determining the analyst’s position in the encounter, on the basis of which he could *gain insight into the*

texture of the transference object with which he had been identified by the patient. (Sapichin 2015: 49, italics added)

No longer limited to the semantic content of the communications, analytic listening was opened up to the movement brought about by their *form, shape, and texture* – their poetics.

There is much more continuity between autonomically appropriate quanta and the waves of conscious thought and feeling than the impressive caesura of transference and counter-transference would have us believe. So ...? Investigate the caesura; not the analyst; not the analysand; not the unconscious; not the conscious; not sanity; not insanity. But the caesura, the link, the synapse, the (counter-trans)-ference, the transitive-intransitive mood. (Bion 1977: 56)

And this is where Bion's thinking appears most lucid and least concrete, unlike the rigour of the Grid, described in section 2.4 (p. 66) and discussed in section 3.4 (p. 93). The activity of drawing represents the experience of the session within an imagined space. The Grid proposed an approach based on a diagrammatized abstraction of lines and mathematical symbols, the use of which Bion (1963: 101) likened to the work of a musician who practises scales and exercises, not directly related to any piece of music. Bion proposed that the Grid was a useful diagrammatic device to investigate his own thinking about the vicissitudes of the treatment. However, the practicing of a musical scale is also a sensuous experience, not only an exercise in finger dexterity. It also requires listening to the quality of the sound production, even though its purpose is not the production of a music piece. Making drawings attends to shapes, objects, and experiences in the world sensuously perceived and sensuously represented through a visual language game. The focus of such production is the form, and not the unravelling of the content, which is thus interrupted or disrupted by attending to the process of enunciation rather than to what is enunciated. Grid and Drawing are equivalent yet substantially different – the use of the Grid is led by abstracting the experience to think it by ascertaining categories, while making drawings requires looking for (and looking at) the invariants (p. 68). As an artefact, the Grid is immutable and shaped as a grille, a prison-like metal grating through which the outside can be imagined, conceptualized, but only intellectually experienced. This is different to the intimate perception and articulation offered by a visual narrative with its uncertain darkness, the baffling irreverence of the representations, their incomplete and imperfectly controlled independence. As a masculine proposition the Grid organizes spaces with clear limits and boundaries, while drawing depends on and fosters the fluidity and pleasure of visual marks, their accidents, traces, misinterpretations, excesses, and parapraxes. The Grid introduces algebraic abstractions prioritizing thinking over feelings about the observer her/himself in the room.

While Bion (1970) proposed that psychoanalysis is concerned with non-sensuous experience (see 2.4, p. 65), the practice of consulting to a group functions at the

convergence of several types of engagement involving rationality plus all the senses – noticing significant glances and gazes in the room, listening to the polyphony of the music not just the lyrics, one’s own bodily feelings – and surrendering to imaginations in the material of the session, in oneself, and later in the act of representing. At times Bion seemed led by the classicism of his own upbringing (in terms of both the literary classical tradition and social class), military training and experiences of military action even if his humour shone through, as when he drew caricatures of his patients (see p. 67). Bion devised the Grid as a method to assist sustaining the inquiry into the vicissitudes of the psychoanalytic session. Making a drawing of the group session has an equivalent function but does not seek abstraction nor reasoning. Producing a representation of the observation assists digesting the experience before conceptualizing it, and only then formulating an intervention. Using the Grid and making drawings are not opposites, yet they address from different vertices the same intention: creating a protected space for reflexion, intuition, and engagement.

The act of representation does not aspire to exegesis or elucidation (a hermeneutical approach) but to opening a space for deconstruction, attracted by the possibility of avoiding the merger of opposites (in Saussure’s sense of considering signifier and signified as sides of the same coin), holding them together as distinct yet in tension. The attraction (and profound excitement) is the possibility of not yielding to logocentrism and thus avoiding an ‘irritable reaching for fact and reason’ (Keats 1817) in the face of undecidability. The practice is akin to Freud’s description of the function of the celluloid laminate in ‘A note on the “Mystic Writing Pad”’ (1925a) because, without it,

the thin paper would be very easily crumpled or torn if one were to write directly on it with the stylus. The layer of celluloid thus acts as a protective sheath for the waxed paper, to keep off injurious effects from without. The celluloid is a ‘protective shield against stimuli’; the layer that actually receives the stimuli is the paper. (*ibid.*: 230)

The question pursued by the participant observer is not ‘What made us, the group, be like that?’ but ‘Who are we?’ This requires noticing the impact of both the activity of drawing (as procedure) and drawing (as artefact) in the process of becoming – avoiding linear insights, and thus leading to a suspended space for emptiness and reverie to digest the traumatic experience of belonging – i.e., using and being used as an object by the group. Such an approach must refuse to offer a decoding that assumes the existence of immediate meaning ‘below the surface’, trusting that joint meanings will be constructed and tested when the holding space has been allowed. Practitioners, whether organizational consultants, experiential group facilitators, or couple therapists, have to work against internal and external pressure to seize on whatever is felt to be proof of validity – before the time is ripe for an intervention – because of the profoundly primitive group and individual discomfort of ‘not knowing, yet’ (Mitchell 1985). Bion (1977: 12) warned against the vicious effect on observation exerted by a need to understand,

quoting Darwin's statement that 'it is fatal to reason whilst observing, though so necessary beforehand and so useful afterwards.' While associations to the drawings will be unavoidable, rehearsing an empty space as a state of mind is a source of trepidation that brings the observer/drawer into contact with the difficulty of imagination (to conceive what is not present to the senses – the unknowable 'O') and a restorative mourning for the impossibility of control over the other, since alterity may be refused and disavowed but is not negotiable. It has been asserted that in the beginning of time was the word (Εν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος) but, even before the word, it was the vision of the face of (m)other.

Meanings as hypotheses on the genesis of the dynamics experienced may inevitably be inferred from the visual representations as hallucinations. Yet these need not be returned (verbally, in writing, or through the actual drawings) to the group, trusting that attention to the experience afforded by the production and contemplation of the actual representation will contribute to the conception and elaboration of deferred interventions, and that these will be of value to the management, consultancy, and therapy of groups. O'Connor (2011) pointed out that Derrida (2006), in the name of what might be called 'hauntology',

establishes a series of concerns that have become ours: a respect for the ghost, the *revenant*, that complicates a metaphysics of presence through a spectral figure that is neither present nor absent, dead nor alive; a temporality of the *contretemps*, of a time-out-of-joint, of a time of a Freud after a Derrida, which is also the time of the *arrivant*, the future-to-come. (O'Connor 2011: 110)

6.4 REFLEXIONS ON THE STUDY

Subjectivity is deeply mistrusted in traditional social science and the research strategy that developed through the project resulted in a compromise between the expectations of a scientific discourse foregrounding reproducibility, verifiability, and validity, and a creative practice approach where the focus was rigour in the production of a personal narrative as data, together with a purposeful critical engagement in the analysis of the whole project. The object of the investigation was not the drawings produced but the story I (the researcher) told of the process of drawing them, and the narrative was another layer of representation about group and observer. This was fractured according to the procedure described in 4.3, creating a disordered and reordered plot through a thematic analysis strategy, resulting in the overall narrative of Chapter 5.

An experience of the project has been the uneasy tension between lack and excess in respect of complexity, clarity, depth, and validity. Differentiating between richness and overloading of sources had to be struggled with through successive editing. As in every area of knowledge, further and interesting connections could always be made, led by an encyclopaedic aspiration which might be energizing as motor but requires being curbed to result in a workable mode of production. The ostensive function

of references, contributing to the academic apparatus to articulate and clarify, may thus be hijacked by the wish for support as authorization, the resulting overabundance hiding a suspected and shameful lack. While this can be attributed to personal insecurity, I also suspect the tentative nature of the subject in an academic setting, as if assertions are insufficient unless they conform to a model of scientific rationality in research with a set of reproduceable procedures, may result in an expectation not conducive to the development of an art practice. This may be another tension in the wish to disaggregate drawing, a practice traditionally considered an art form, from drawing understood as visual representation and communication. Not all texts are poetry, and not all representations are art. The intention of the fieldwork was not to make an aesthetic impression on a beholder but to understand how the process as formulated fosters reverie and the digestion of emotions. Furthermore, the subscript numbering, initially used to refer all sentences in 5.2.1–10 to their provenance in the full phenomenography, was dropped partly to enhance clarity but also suspecting that the strategy was another ritual attempt at scientific rigour disguised as scholarly apparatus.

An approach to the subject that was insufficiently considered were feminist methodologies in research. Although the writing of Cixous (1993) had been inspirational, it is absent in the literature cited in the thesis (alongside many other equally interesting and relevant texts) because of the need to edit down, even though its Dionysian intensity felt disturbingly appropriate, as is the writing of Kristeva on abjection (section 2.2). What seems problematic in considering the dynamics of groupwork is

the trace of the quick of life hidden beneath the rounded appearances of life, life which remains hidden because we wouldn't bear seeing it as it is, in all the brilliance of horror that it is, it is without pity, like the drawing must be. (Cixous 1993: 96)

The absence of feminist texts is to be noted, particularly after the late discovery of theorizations of representation (such as Ettinger 1997, 2004, 2006) questioning the hegemony of the phallogocentric gaze – at times asserted with masculine certainty. Cixous (1981: 51) calls attention to the need 'to get rid of the systems of censorship that bear down on every attempt to speak in the feminine' to make space for texts that inscribe a feminine *jouissance* as a return of the repressed feminine that, with its energetic, joyful, and transgressive practice of writing, poses 'plurality against unity; multitudes of meanings against single, fixed meanings; diffuseness against instrumentality; openness against closure' (Kuhn 1981: 38). The project has been predicated on the use of self to make knowledge about self-in-the-world and world-in-the-self, considering both self and world as interrelated and not as oppositions. Yet, on reflection, I realize the difficulties of navigating the space between the factual and fiction. A traditional scientific model seeking rigour dismissed the potential for other approaches. The frightening nature of the method seemed to require firmer boundaries to restrain contradiction and ambivalence inherent in the process itself. Hence autoethnography was ruled out as a soft option for fear of

attending to the self as the centre, and this may have extended to the omission of feminist research methodologies, even if Lapping (2013) and Butler (1993, 2005, 2014) were briefly enlisted to support the argument. After producing the drawings the phenomenographic text was put forward as a second line poetic articulation, later domesticated through thematic analysis, to elicit commonalities and underlying themes. The tension in the opposition external-internal was thus preserved against the expressed intention of avoiding dualisms. However, oppositions are not to be proscribed – a strategy as ineffectual as an instruction to avoid a compulsion to repeat – but to be inhabited. One of the limitations of this study is a concern about the upsetting nature of disturbing tensions. After viewing in a museum Picasso's drawing 'Study for Woman Ironing', Cixous wrote

I don't want to draw the idea, I don't want to write being, I want what happens in the Woman Ironing, I want the nerve, I want the Revelation of the broken Woman Ironing. And I want to write what passes between us and the Woman Ironing, the electric current. The emotion. Because as a result of drawing her with my eyes, I felt: it's death that is passing through the Woman Ironing, our mortality in person. I want to draw our mortality, this quiver. (Cixous 1993: 96)

Ettinger (2006: 218) has called attention to a compassionate hospitality in the 'special connection between analytical practice as an ethical working-through and artistic practice as an aesthetical working-through'. In the phenomenography I had referred to the ravishment by the intrusion of drawing an other (p. 166) and it seems difficult to insist from any inevitably gendered formulation that in this project drawing is to visual art what language is to literariness, or sound to music – that is, only the necessary building block for an architecture to follow. The practice creates the necessary availability to interruption (irruption of the other in this asymmetrical transsubjective space) resisted by the drawer as perceiver and reproducer of the objective reality of the observation, by her/his wish to be different, unique, liked, beauty producer, excited. A true excitement is derived from the un-excited excitation of the feminine/masculine in articulation, listening/forming which should not be confused with passive/active, since an active observer must let in the observed into the border space. And that is why drawing is effected from the site of absence, rather than from the plenitude of the aesthetic moment, offering hospitality in a Levinasian sense to the traces and representations of the I and the non-I, hence the relevance of drawing A representing all participants, drawer included, in handling experiences the rational I cannot handle because of resistance since such an imaginary I is implicated in the imaginary (psychotic) state of mind which must be appreciated (enjoyed?) without sanitizing it. Both the drawer and the traces of the drawn are transformed by the practice, that is, observed, digested, mourned and transformed.

It seems rather seductive to inscribe this project in the ineffable of art practice, giving in to the idea of enlisting the presence of the group in the production of aesthetic experiences. But the drawing is not an expression but only a reference, a partially empty

signifier to be filled in (though never in full) at a later stage, aware of the temptation to be an interpreter appealing to the power of meaning-making rather than an observer looking, listening, chewing, swallowing, and digesting, and (only then) acting on the observation, which may partly also be a defence and evacuation. Paraphrasing Cixous (2002: 483) (by replacing the term *writing* by *drawing* as equivalent), my purpose was

to tell of the violence of *drawing*. I want to *draw* what I cannot *draw*. The *drawing* helps me and also leads me astray, carries me away. It wants to *draw*. It wants me to *draw* it; I want to *draw* the *drawing* I am pursuing.

One of the limits of the study which would need to be tested and elaborated upon is the usefulness of the practice for consultants other than myself, towards delaying the internal urgency – arising from group and consultant – to formulate interventions. While my own anecdotal evidence testifies to this outcome, the lack of the necessary distance is one of the limitations of a single autoethnography. The observation module described in 1.4.2 was affected by the power dynamics student/tutor/learning institution and the practice requires individual willingness beyond the demands of a curriculum. However, drawing from my involvement with groups, the literature explored through the study, my experience of the practice, and the research, I would posit that the iterative practice of drawing group sessions from the site of absence

- opens up a hopeful expanse for daydreaming and reverie;
- calls attention to and invites a number of conversations between the notion of the group itself, the observer's group-in-the mind, the multiplicity of the observer's roles, and the representations themselves;
- brings the observer/drawer into contact with layers of phantasy, hallucination, and madness in group and observer;
- and, through its digestive and performative functions, disrupts rigid reasoning and assists mourning the impossibility of certainty.

It offers a non-obedient space for imagining and phantasizing, protecting observer and group while encouraging the observer to take the productive risk of thinking unthinkable.

6.5 POSSIBLE DISSEMINATION

The process discourages analysis of the drawings and fosters a capacity for observing, listening, pondering, and becoming – any analysis leading to certainty before time is ripe leads to premature/inaccurate interventions. The concern is not whether an interpretation is right or wrong but arising out of the dynamics of the session. Hence the process does not suggest further analytic steps concerning drawings or dynamics but rehearses the capacity for reverie. As described in 1.2 (p. 17) the use of drawing in diagnosis, consultation practice, psychological therapies (including Winnicott's Squiggle) has a long history and a variety of uses. The claim to innovation in the project is setting up a method

to disrupt the certainty that arises for consultants when protecting themselves from the disturbing violence of group work. The practice that does not take place *in situ* but acts as an internal reminder of the necessary state of mind to allow group situations to be experienced, take their space, and remain there with no insistence on action borne from omniscience as a defence from frustration inhibiting learning from experience (Bion 1967: 114). Having used the method as part of the discussion process of consultant teams in organizational consultancy, teams of tutors in Higher Education, and staff teams in group relations conferences, it became obvious that the production of drawings were a point of contention unless the whole group engaged in and was party to the purpose of the practice. Competition emerged over understanding and clarity of presentation, and also on the imagination, accuracy, and perceived aesthetic value of the drawings. Although the making of drawings in these settings occasionally led to greater depth of understanding, by and large it was felt as a distraction. Drawings have a status, and making them confers, even if unwillingly, the cultural role of artist. Preparatory work has to be done by the group to understand the unconscious value attributed to representation. The only occasions in which a whole group drew their respective consultancy experiences and brought them to peer discussion was the organizational consultants seminar described in 1.4.2 (p. 44) and one group relations conference where nine consultants regularly produced a single drawing following their respective small-group sessions, as an effective aid to their subsequent staff discussion of dynamics, narratives and drawings. In my partial experience, consultants go through training programmes rich in theory and group events but students and staff often lack a solid grounding because psychoanalysis is both regarded with awe and considered an apparatus or mechanical approach to be learned and applied instead of engaging with the long and arduous meandering towards some form of (always insufficient) acquaintance with one's own unconscious as the source of enabling and censoring states of mind. The method offers an opportunity for marvelling at, enjoying, and suffering imagination, characteristics of an engagement with unconscious processes.

The impact of the practice would assist the work practitioners and the development of group work technique. From my experience of consulting to groups and working with teams of group consultants, the research question makes an urgent appeal to avoid the facile temptation of interpretations which may produce an impact but are not performative and, even less transformative. Duration of contracts and frequency of meetings are an issue. Engagements with an undefined number of consultations fall under the description of group support meetings or group therapy, while organizational consultancy to organizations, consultation to experiential groups, and group relations consultancy take place within a time-limited contract, and couple therapy may consist in a fixed number of sessions, as open-ended treatment, or a combination. The pressure on a group consultant to produce results in short-term contracts, particularly in the extraordinarily active environment of group relations conferences, leaves little time for

processing. In group relations conferences lasting between three days and two weeks in the Tavistock model, all the group structures are short-lived and the pace becomes frantic as consultants are expected 'to think under fire' (Bion (1982), limiting the opportunity for reflexion and thus fostering the occurrence of enactments (i.e., unconscious collusions of participants and consultants) going unnoticed (Sapochnik 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020).

The writing of Freud (1921), Bion (1961) and others consider group behaviour consistent across all types of group, albeit with contextual differences. While cultures may differ radically in their expressions, the notion of the unconscious seems of general validity to the human species across time. Thus the method may be of use towards dispelling certainty in respect of any group. However, it must be acknowledged that the project has been researched through the single year-long case study within groups which were predominantly integrated by English-speaking middle class members, albeit with differences in ethnicity, race, language, age, gender, and sex. The method is not concerned with the specificity of the group but with the uncanny capacity that groups have of enlisting every member in particular ways which may not be immediately recognized. Delaying certainty will thus be an advantage towards productive participation, regardless of the role(s) consciously and unconsciously undertaken. These findings have no different valency for therapeutic groups, of which marital therapy (particularly if with two co-consultants) is another form, but therapeutic settings (unless in short-term interventions) are not under the same pressure that in other types of groups described, since the recurrence of ongoing sessions will offer time for elaboration. It may be asserted that the method will assist anyone in any form of short-term groupwork, regardless of group objectives – whether within training, consultancy, learning, or therapy, where all members (consultant included) are actual participants in the maddening, confusing, and creative experience of active engagement with a group.

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