The Group Analytic Movement Sixty Years On: Revisiting Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy by S.H. Foulkes

Dieter Nitzgen

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues, I feel very honoured to have been invited to give this 32nd Foulkes Lecture. Twenty-two years after his death, Foulkes has become a historical figure. There are not too many here tonight, who have met him in person or have personally been trained, taught or analyzed by him. For the rest of us, Foulkes is but a famous name, an author and, of course, a founding father figure, in whose name we work and come together every year. Becoming a figure of historical interest makes one pass from the subject of personal reverence to one of common interest, a subject of historical study. This moment has arrived now.

Why did I choose to speak of a group analytic moment in the title of my lecture? It is because I think that Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy (1948) (is not just the title of a book, it also marks a complex moment. It is the moment of Foulkes, but not only a Foulksean moment. And it is this moment, which I think deserves to be revisited sixty years later.

Depending on how we read it, Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy (1948) tells different stories. Although it is not a work of fiction, it resembles what the Spanish novelist Antonio Munoz-Molina has called ‘una novela de novelas’, a novel full of novels (2004). The basic storyline is, of course, that it gives us the first consistent account of group analysis as a coherent clinical theory and practice. Although Foulkes himself announced it only as an ‘introduction’, for Brown and Zinkin it was ‘remarkable’ in so far as it already contained most his ideas on group analysis (1994: 2). J. R. Rees in his foreword called it a ‘careful primer of group analysis’ (1948 [1983]: vi).

However, Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy (1948) is more than a textbook of group psychotherapy. Describing Foulkes’ experiences in World War II and his participation in the so called second Northfield ‘experiment’ from March 1943 until December 1945 ‘in considerable detail’ (Foulkes, E. 1990: 15; cf. Foulkes, 1948 [1983]: 42 u. 53), the book is also a document of the early history of group psychotherapy in Britain. As a personal account of Northfield and of those taking part in its ‘experiments’, Foulkes considered it ‘a Group Affair’ (Foulkes, 1948 [1983]: 21). And yet it is more than a document of psychiatric and/or psychotherapeutic history. It is of general historical interest insofar that it
highlights a specific moment in the history of postwar Britain, a moment which I have called the ‘group analytic moment.’

Beyond these social-historical aspects, Foulkes’ book also gives evidence of a singular desire, i.e. his desire to make the group an object of desire. This is, of course its most intimate aspect and one that is most difficult to grasp. To ignore it, would prevent us to understand the full range of the author’s motives including the very personal ones.

Writing *Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy* (1948) was, as Foulkes said, ‘the result of many years working and thinking’ (1968c: 204). Written in only three weeks, it builds on five previous papers on the subject of group therapy. Another paper to which Foulkes made no explicit reference in the bibliography, is his own lengthy study of the biological views of Kurt Goldstein initially published in German in 1936. All these works contribute to its textual body. According to the table of contents, the full text consists of five parts, starting with a ‘general introduction’ and ending with a ‘survey’.

To read the first part even today is a breathtaking experience. In the first thirty pages, Foulkes lays all his group analytic cards on the table. Writing like someone who has so much to say that he does not even have the time to take off his coat, he gives a concise, tightly argued overview of his basic theoretical assumptions and his clinical principles.

‘This volume’, he stated in the preface, ‘puts the Method into the Centre, emphasizes the special features of the “Group-analytic situation” and the Role of the Conductor, or Leader in creating this situation’ (1948, p. vii).

Regarding his overall clinical orientation, Foulkes had already made a clear statement in a paper read to the British Psychoanalytical Society.

‘In my approach’, he had said in April 1946, ‘the qualifying word “analysis” does not refer to psychoanalytic alone, but reflects at least three different influences, all of which operate actively’ (1946a [1990]: 29).

The first of these influences was ‘psychological analysis’ as being evolved by Kurt Goldstein and Adhémar Gelb (1946a [1990]:129). Already in his study on Goldstein (1936), Foulkes had emphasized the guiding function of the latter’s epistemological principle that ‘no finding /is/ to be considered without reference to the whole organism and the total situation’ (1990: 43) for his own clinical work.

In the course of his studies of brain-damaged soldiers during and after World War I, Goldstein had become aware of the inability of contemporary biology and medicine to explain both the impact of such injuries and the astonishing adjustments that patients made to them. He then began to challenge the atomistic approaches based on the idea of ‘localized’ lesions and symptoms, insisting instead that an organism must be analyzed in terms of the totality of its behaviour and interaction with the surrounding milieu.
It is interesting to note that, while Foulkes did explicitly refer to Goldstein and Gelbs’ “epoch-making work” in his communication to the British Psycho-Analytical Society, he did not in the introduction. For reasons we can only speculate about and despite the fact that Goldstein’s book on the ‘organism’ (1939) is among the listed references, his name does not appear in the printed text. Instead there is an extremely condensed summary of his ideas written up by Foulkes himself, subtitled as *The individual as a Whole in a Total Situation* (1948 [1983]: 1).

In order to make sense of this complex phrase, we have to break it in half and have a closer look at the pieces: ‘the individual as whole’ and the ‘total situation’. Paraphrasing Goldstein, Foulkes maintained that ‘the healthy organism functions as a whole and can be described as a system in dynamic equilibrium’. Dynamic meaning ‘that it is never in a state of rest, has constantly to adjust actively to the ever changing circumstances, milieu, conditions in which it lives’. Goldstein’s ‘holistic’ approach rested on the observation won from the treatment of brain injured patients that organic functions observed in isolation appear different from what they actually are in the complexity of their natural functioning.

In the famous ‘Schneider-case (Goldstein and Gelb, 1981), the patient called Schneider had the difficulty among others in pointing to his nose on command. No such hesitation occurred however, when he was bodily involved in a network of familiar needs, such as blowing his nose. Hence, Foulkes’ statement: ‘Disturbed function is due to the disturbance of the equilibrium of the total situation’ (1948 [1983]: 2).

As a consequence, for Goldstein every observation had to be made in view of the organism and its environment, following the scheme of ‘figure’ and ‘background’ set up by Gestalt psychology. Single functions and their disturbances can only be understood by taking into account the organism as a living unit, its developmental history, and its constant adjustment to the environment.

In Goldstein’s view, which was shared by Foulkes, this adjustment is active in nature and therefore ‘does not take place mechanically, following physical or chemical principles merely’ (Foulkes, 1948 [1983]: 1). Because ‘the organism acts as if it knew its aim and had a choice as to the means to achieve this aim’, there is always a “creative element” present, even in the simplest forms of adaptation’. Due to this ‘creative element’, adaptation is actually a form of self-actualization. For Goldstein, ‘there is only one motive by which human activity is set going, the tendency to actualize oneself’ (1940 [1951]: 201).

However, this desire of self-actualization must not be confused with what is frequently regarded as ‘a tendency to maintain the existing state, to preserve oneself’ (op.cit., p. 141). ‘Under adequate conditions’, Goldstein said, ‘the tendency of normal life is toward activity and progress’. Self-actualization as Goldstein and Foulkes understood it, always implied an act of creative intentionality even at an organismic level. Regardless of all its scientific merits, Goldstein’s approach nonetheless had its limits for Foulkes as it was still steeped in academic psychology.
‘The total personality and the total situation in their interaction’, he wrote, ‘could not be approached from the vantage point of Psychology as long as one was dependent on introspection on the one hand and experiment on the other’ (1948 [1983]: 7).

For Foulkes it was Freudian Psychoanalysis, the second of his three influences, which had been able to overcome these shortcomings in so far as it had provided the necessary ‘tools’ to open up the territory beyond Goldstein’s ‘psychological analysis’.

It was Freud who had first of all provided a ‘Method of access to the unconscious mind’ (Foulkes, 1948 [1983]: 5), ‘a method of investigation called free association’ (op.cit.p.7). And by applying this method, he had provided ‘the knowledge of the unconscious’ and ‘the analysis of the transference situation’ (op.cit.p. 9). With the help of these ‘tools’, Foulkes said ‘Psycho-Analysis has . . . made it possible to open up the total personality and the total situation for operation’.

The fact is that although Foulkes made this claim, he remained rather vague regarding the specific nature of his access to unconscious processes in groups in his first book. He just introduced the ‘Basic rule of Group Analysis’ as the group analytic ‘counterpart of free association’ in psychoanalysis remarking that ‘it works out in a different way in the Group situation from the individual situation’. And he added without any further explanation that ‘free association is in no way independent of the total situation’ (1948 [1983]; italics mine).

It should take him another ten years of experience as a practising group analyst to spell out the full implications of the step he had taken when he replaced free association by group association. Only in his book written with J. Anthony (1957), Foulkes was confident enough to openly claim the originality of his access to unconscious processes in groups.

‘It has not always been understood that by replacing this free association by “group association” in the group &ndash; which I believe, I have been the first to have done, we have taken a decisive step not only in method, but also in theory.’ (1957 [1984]: 28; 1971 [1990]: 157; italics mine).

This statement clearly stressed the overall importance of the psychoanalytic method to gain access to unconscious processes in groups. Like Freud himself who had underlined that psychoanalysis was first and foremost ‘ein Verfahren zur Untersuchung seelischer Vorgänge, welche sonst kaum zugänglich sind’ (1923a, SE 18, p. 235), Foulkes believed in what Laplanche has called ‘the absolute predominance given to the method in psychoanalysis (1995, p. 14; italics in orig).

This conviction he shared not only with Freud but also with Kurt Goldstein, whose dictum: ‘our methods determine what we find’ he quoted in his autobiographical notes (1968: 118). Therefore, Foulkes’ Freudianism and his Freudian orthodoxy is first of all a methodological orthodoxy.
To describe the last of the three formative influences operative in group analysis, Foulkes spoke of ‘sociological analysis’ or ‘socioanalysis’. Regarding this type of analysis, he acknowledged the influence of Karl Mannheim who he admitted was actually the first to have coined the term ‘group analysis’ in his book *Diagnosis of Our Time* (1946 [1990]: 131). Interestingly, Mannheim’s name did not appear in the printed text of his book but only among the references. Instead, Foulkes referred to E. Homburger-Erikson, a psychoanalyst and to N. Elias, a sociologist whom he had known from his Frankfurt days as key representatives of the ‘growing recognition of the basic importance of society’. He first quoted at length from Erikson’s paper on *Ego Development and Historical Change* (1946), which he saw as a ‘remarkable contribution’ to the appreciation of the ‘basic nature of social influences’ in psychoanalytic theory and practice. To illustrate this, he mentioned Erikson’s revised notion of the goal of psychoanalytic treatment when he suggested that ‘the individual’s mastery over his neurosis begins, where he is put in a position to accept the historical necessity which made him was he is’ (Erikson quoted by Foulkes, 1948 [1983]: 13).

As a consequence, psychoanalytic treatment could no longer be restricted to the increase of ‘mobility of the id, the tolerance of the superego and the synthesizing power of the ego’, but should also encompass the analysis of ‘the individual’s ego-identity in its relation to the historical changes which dominated his childhood milieu’.

Foulkes then referred to the sociological work of N. Elias whose decisive influence was not openly acknowledged in his previous papers on group analysis. Reminding the reader of his reviews of Elias’ book on the *Civilizing Process* (1938 [1940]), he summarized Elias’ sociological views, coining the well known phrase that the individual ‘is part of a social network, a little nodal point, as it were, in this network and can only artificially be considered in isolation...’ (1948 [1983]: 14). In this formulation, Goldstein’s idea of the ‘network of neurons’ was short-circuited to the notion of society as a ‘network’, which was first, put forward by Elias (1937 [1939]). However, the influence of the social was not only represented by Erikson and Elias.

In his first paper on group analysis, written with E. Lewis (1944), Foulkes had listed four group-specific therapeutic factors. He named one of these ‘activation of a collective unconscious’ (1964 [1984]: 34). These factors re-appear in *Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy* (1948) where they were supplemented by a fifth and a sixth factor, describing the function of the group as a ‘Forum’ and as ‘Support’ (1948 [1983]: 167&ndash;168). Although the concept of the ‘collective unconscious’, which Foulkes had evoked in 1944 and 1948, clearly had Jungian overtones (bearing in mind that Eve Lewis was a Jungian analyst working in a Jungian art therapeutic community (Pines, 1999), it can be said to anticipate his later idea of a distinctly ‘social unconscious’ (1964, p. 264).

Examining Foulkes’ clinical toolbox from 1948, we find Goldstein’s systemic ideas of the ‘individual-as-a-whole’ in its interaction with the ‘total situation’ combined with Freud’s psychoanalytical concepts of ‘free association, the knowledge of the unconscious, and the analysis of transference’
supplemented by Elias’ sociological notion of society as a ‘network’ including Foulkes’ own embryonic idea of a ‘collective unconscious’. According to Foulkes all of these ‘tools’ operated ‘actively’ in the development of group analysis (1946 [1990]: 129). Forming a combined instrument, they can neither be separated from each other nor be brought into a hierarchical order. Regarding these different influences, it may be said that Goldstein is the least understood and the most underrated of all of Foulkes’ teachers. And yet he is crucial for a full understanding of Foulkes’ epistemological position, his clinical thinking and his view of clinical practice. Even Foulkes idea of a ‘free-floating’ group discussion (1948 [1983]: 71, 86) is not only of Freudian origin; it is also derived from Goldstein who had characterized the language of a normal subject as a rapid and complete flow of words, a ‘natural discourse flow’ which could be become disrupted by aphasia (1933 [1971] 311–312, 318–319).

Regarding the decisive influence of Goldstein, it might seem paradoxical and even contradictory when Foulkes maintained that group analysis was nonetheless a ‘straight forward development of Freudian analysis’ (1965 [1994]: 6). What is the substance of this claim, if there is any at all? Like most of his written work, Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy (1948) is an ongoing dialogue with Freud and the major currents of Freudianism of the time. Although his name is not mentioned in the text Foulkes took issue with Heinz Hartmann’s paper Ego-psychology and Adaptation (1939), which attributed the rise of ego-psychology to the United States after the World War II.

Sympathizing with Goldstein’s ideas, especially his notion of ‘self actualization’, Foulkes discreetly ignored the views of Hartmann, Kris and Löwenstein. Speaking of ‘mirror-reactions’ in the group, he referred, albeit implicitly, to the psychoanalytic debate on narcissism and its structural revision among Freud’s followers in the late thirties and forties of the last century. The very word ‘mirror’ is reminiscent of Lacan’s paper on the ‘Looking glass phase’ read at the IPA Congress in Marienbad in 1936 where Foulkes was present (cf. Foulkes, 1990: 21). Because, as he said, in mirror reactions ‘apart from counteracting narcissism, forces of identification and contrast are at work’ (1948 [1983]: 167), the concept also stands in close relation to Klein’s idea of internal object relations. Unlike her seminal Notes on some Schizoid Mechanisms (1946) where internal object relations are described as being based on splitting and projective identification and projective identification itself as an expression of an unconscious ‘phantasy’, Foulkes’ concept covers an interactive process where intrapsychic and interpersonal factors, reality and phantasy, were completely intertwined.

Retaining Freud’s term of ‘repression’ instead of the Kleinian notion of ‘splitting’, he argued that in a group situation the individual member ‘sees himself, or part of himself, in particular a repressed part of himself in the other members’ (1964 [1984]: 81). From today’s perspective, we are reminded here that in order to be able to ‘mentalize’ one’s self, we need the bodily and psychic presence of the other (Fonagy, 1996).
While Foulkes’ reflections on adaptation and his concept of the mirror reactions in groups are indeed important comments to the ongoing psychoanalytic debates of his time, the reader has to have quite some patience to get to Foulkes’ major innovation to Freudianism. It is only disclosed at the very end of the book. Only on the penultimate page, does Foulkes forge a structural link between Freud’s classical libido theory and a theory of communication that really went far beyond all established psychoanalytic thinking.

To establish this link, he referred to symptom formation. Because psychic symptoms are ‘in themselves autistic and unsuitable for sharing’, they ‘exert for this very reason an increasing pressure on the individual for expressing them’ (1948 [1983]: 169). Unless this ‘pressure of suffering’ can be transformed into a ‘socially acceptable, articulate language’, the subject can find no ‘real relief’. Therefore, for Foulkes ‘understanding by other members of the group can only occur, when energies (libido) invested in these symptoms can be retransformed in exchangeable value (cash as its were)’ (1948 [1983]: 169).

This crucial ‘transformation’ of libidinal energy into symbolic value is brought about by the communicative process itself which accordingly became the ‘basis’ of the therapeutic process: ‘It is in the process of communication and the struggle for it that all the other dynamisms meet’ (1948 [1983]: 169; italics in orig.). Consequently, the ‘working towards an evermore articulate form of communication’ became ‘identical with the therapeutic process itself’ (italics in orig.).

It is the widening as well as the deepening of group communication that ‘drives the therapeutic process forward’ (Foulkes & Anthony 1957 [1984: 260: italics mine). This was the news that Foulkes was breaking to the psychoanalytic community in 1948; news which were echoed only quite some time later when Lacan (1953; 1955–1956) and Bion (1962) presented their psychoanalytic understanding of communication. And this is the legitimate substance of Foulkes’ lifelong claim that group analysis was a ‘straightforward development’ of Freudian analysis.

II

I will now turn towards a more detailed reading of Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy (1948), this time starting from the foreword and not from the first page of the written text. Written by J.R. Rees, at the time former director of the Tavistock Clinic and still on its staff, it really introduces the ‘Zeitgeist’. From a point of sales promotion, Foulkes and his publisher could not have done better than to enlist Rees to welcome the book.

In 1948 he was just about to found the World Federation on Mental Health and to organize as well as to chair the Third Congress of Mental Hygiene in London in August. As a brigadier and Director of Army Psychiatry, Rees had been Foulkes’ most high ranking military commander followed by Lt. Col. R. Hargreaves who was his staff officer and Lt. Cols. Rosie and Carroll as Foulkes’ immediate superiors in Northfield. Foulkes attested to him an ‘inspiring leadership’ (1948 [1983]). Accordingly, Rees was full of praise for his former
Major. He welcomed his ‘experience and ideas’ and ended his foreword by saying:

‘At a time like the present, when we are facing the need for the provision of a comprehensive medical service for the whole country, it is particularly opportune that this careful Primer of Group Analysis should be made available’ (1948 [1983]: vi.).

To which Foulkes resonated in his preface:

‘Group Analysis is a form of psychotherapy in small groups and also a Method of studying Groups and the Behaviour of Human individuals in their social aspects. (. . .). In this book I am trying to show that Group-Analysis deserves a central place in psychotherapy . . .’ (1948 [1983]: vii; italics mine).

As we can see, Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy (1948) is itself introduced by a memorable dialogue in which Foulkes promised to meet what Rees had outlined as the demand of the day. It is surely not by coincidence that what he announced was not so much an introduction to group analysis but to group analytic psychotherapy, a ‘treatment of many disturbances’ (op.cit.p. VII) as he said.

The publication of Foulkes’ book coincided thus with the project of the Welfare State and the creation of the National Health Service in Britain. In 1943 Churchill had called for ‘a National Health Service /and/ national compulsory insurance for all classes all purposes from the cradle to the grave’ (cf. Zaretsky, 2004: 268). According to E. Zaretsky, when this Service was created in 1948, it was ‘the first health system in any Western country to provide free health care to the entire population’ and the first ‘based not on the insurance principle, in which entitlement follows contribution, but on the principle of social citizenship’ (op. cit. 2004: 269).

Rees and other fellow members of his professional group of would play prominent roles in this development. We would be mistaken to assume that although Rees supported Foulkes’ approach to groups, the relationship between them was smooth and without any friction. I am not the only one who has noticed an emotional undercurrent in Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy (1948) that betrays a hidden discord. B. Nicol for instance supplemented his paper Bion and Foulkes in Northfield with a thoughtful note saying that reading between the lines the author ‘seems angry with someone or other for not recognizing him as the innovator of group analytic therapy nor according sufficient significance to small group processes in the whole experiment’ (2000: 8). As an illustration, he quoted Foulkes’ own account of his function in Northfield published in the introduction.

‘As to the Northfield Experiment’, he wrote, ‘my own function happened to be a rather important one’ ( . . . ). ‘I
was at Northfield for over a year before there was any Northfield Experiment, except on my own ward, so to speak!' (1948 [1983]: 17).

Regarding the historical facts, this is not quite correct because Foulkes arrived at Northfield only ‘some three weeks after’ Rickmann and Bion had left the place in December 1942 (Hinshelwood, 1999: 469). So he actually missed the first of the two Northfield Experiments and he also missed a personal encounter with Bion; a ‘near-miss’ which R. Hinshelwood regarded as ‘tantalizing’ (op. cit., p. 470). Foulkes was correct however to claim the role of a senior professional. This is obvious when we read what he wrote of his relation to H. Bridger during the period of the second Northfield Experiment.

‘The fact’, he stressed, ‘that I myself was a Senior Psychiatrist and a recognized Psycho-Analyst helped Bridger considerably’ (1948: 19). In fact, Foulkes was one of the few fully trained psychoanalysts in Northfield. Rickmann and Carroll were fully trained but Bion, Bridger and Main had not. Apart from this analytic qualification (although on Freudian and not a on Kleinian lines), Foulkes also had ample experience as a psychiatrist, especially with treating traumatized and brain injured patients in Goldstein’s clinic in Frankfurt from 1926 to 1928.

Moreover he was practically the only one to have practical experience with therapeutic groups from his time in Exeter from 1940 to 1943 (Foulkes & Lewis, 1944). For Hinshelwood that ‘enabled him to go to Northfield ( . . . ) as an authority (at that time the authority) on group therapy (1999: 47; italics in orig). For all his professional qualifications Foulkes was, and I suspect he knew this, an almost ideal candidate to do clinical work in Northfield. His hidden anger became most clearly visible in a comment where he compared his conduct of therapeutic groups with Bion’s approach of so called ‘leaderless’ groups.

‘I have been told’, he said, ‘that my own conduct of therapeutic groups follows the “leaderless Group” principles’. This is, I believe, partly true, but, if so, I followed it long before it actually existed. Through an unfortunate coincidence of foreign birth, which I regret, it was not possible for me to participate in the W.O.S.B. work, and I heard comparatively late of the leaderless groups. However, John Rickmann’s visits to Northfield proved a great stimulus in this respect, and H. Bridger, who came from W.S.O.B. work, played an integral part in the Northfield experiment . . . ’ (1948 [1983]: 17; italics mine).

The interesting thing about this passage is that is almost impenetrable for the uninitiated. Unless the reader is already familiar for what W.O.S.B. stands for, he has no chance to know that it means ‘War Office Selection Board’, a procedure of selecting officers by assessing them on the basis of a ‘leaderless group’ test initially thought of by Bion.
In the so called *Wharncliffe Memorandum*, a report for the army psychiatrist service, Rickmann and Bion had outlined a project to ‘treating neuroses through group therapy’ as well as new methods of selecting war officers (Bléandonu 1990, p. 54). This memorandum, which according to Pines is ‘missing’ until today, was probably ‘the basis for the first Northfield experiment’ of Bion and Rickman (Pines, op. cit.). Drawn up in 1939, it became operational only three years later, when No. 1 War Office Selection Board started to assess military candidates in Edinburgh in early 1942. Omitting this relevant background information, Foulkes actually put the reader in the same position of ignorance as he himself had obviously been. with regard to these projects. As I see it, it would be a mistake to misread the passage only as an expression of personal rivalry with Bion or as a conflict over conceptual priorities. Both play a role, certainly, but they are not the heart of the matter. It was the apparent hurt of Foulkes to realize that for all his professional expertise and though a respected co-worker on a clinical level, there was an invisible group at work in Northfield of whose existence he had had no knowledge at all and to whose planning hierarchy he had no access. It is quite improbable that he had any idea of new the military institutions that had been created since the beginning of the war like the W.O.S.B. (Trist and Murray, 1990).

He was certainly not involved in ‘Operation Phoenix’ starting towards the end of 1945 when an ‘Interim Planning Committee’ (IPC) was set up within the Tavistock to work out prospects for the clinic’s civilian future ‘in the light of the experiences gained during the war’ (Trist and Murray, op. cit.). Chaired by Bion, this committee consisted of six elected and two co-opted members. In recognition of what Murray and Trist had called the ‘impending political event’, i.e. the creation of the NHS in 1948 by the new Labour Government, the IPC resolved clarifying the clinic’s future tasks within the ‘as yet unknown setting’ of a national health service. One of the results was the decision to incorporate the Institute of Human relations into its structure in order to allow for the ‘study of wider social problems not accepted in the area of mental health’ (Trist and Murray, 1990).

As a German refugee, Foulkes was excluded from the executive level of these large-scale planning processes of the medico-military establishment (which was virtually identical with the staff of the Tavistock Clinic). To make things worse, this establishment, to a large extent, overlapped with the network of colleagues Foulkes knew and had been working with in Northfield; apparently on professionally equal terms. Seen in this light, Northfield was not just a competition of ideas, or a clash of minds or group ‘cultures’ (Hinshelwood, 1999), but also a place of hidden power struggles of which Foulkes was largely unaware, at least when he first came to Hollymore Hospital.

To say as he did that the Northfield ‘experiments’ were a ‘Group Affair’ (1948 [1983]: 21) was certainly true, but of a group of participants whose intentions were ‘invisible’ to him. His resentment shown in *Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy* (1948) was not so much about the fact that he was chosen as a specialist. Hinshelwood is certainly right to assume that ‘Foulkes was clearly seen in a restricted role of an investigator of group psychotherapy’
What he fails to acknowledge is that Foulkes was meant to be and to remain in this ‘restricted’ role. Thanks to his careful research however, we now have a document to prove this assumption. It is a letter written by R. Hargreaves dating from August 1945.

At this time, the Menninger brothers from Topeka, Kansas had been attracted by the work done in Northfield. Upon visiting the place, they wished to have a series of papers on the experiments to be published in their clinic bulletin. Foulkes who was invited to join the publishing project, was obviously eager to offer his group analytic views on what he called ‘Phase B’ of the Experiment where the hospital-as-a-whole was turned into a therapeutic community. Sending these ideas to Hargreaves, he was ‘countered’ (Hinshelwood, 2007: 352) by the latter’s letter of response. In it, Hargreaves made it very clear that the ‘total pattern’ of Northfield was ‘part of a long chain of developments in the Army’, which ‘originated from Bion’s work with the leaderless group tests’, as he wrote (Hargreaves, 1945 quoted by Hinshelwood, 2007: 351&ndash;352). He left no doubt at all that the ‘important thinking on the social field of the whole hospital’ had to be attributed to ‘Bion and his work at the War Office’. Foulkes’ contribution was only a ‘facet of the Northfield experiment’, a facet focusing on small group-psychotherapy.

Although reconciling in tone, his message was definite, dismissing Foulkes’ high-flying ambitions. At the time, Foulkes accepted this ‘restriction’ (Hinshelwood, op.cit.) and produced a paper on group psychotherapy for the Menngingers (1946c). Two years later, he was no longer obedient to the orders of his former military commander. In the preface of his own book, he openly defied Hargreaves’ injunction, stating that the principles of group analysis ‘can be applied in wider fields, such as Education, Industry, The Armed Forces, in fact social life in all its manifestations’ (1948 [1983: vii.; italics mine). Ironically, group analysis was going to be most successful in exactly the field Hargreaves had foreseen for it. As a form of group treatment, as a group analytic psychotherapy, it should fulfill an important function in the newly created NHS; much as Rees had suggested in his foreword. This is confirmed by E. Jones; findings on *War and the Practice of Psychotherapy: The UK Experience from 1939&ndash;1960*. At the end of his paper, he concluded: ‘Having established their pedigree in the army, groups became an accepted form of treatment in the NHS’.

In contrast, Bion’s approach to the group-as-a-whole which had not been a successful method of therapy had ‘given rise instead to a flourishing method of understanding organizations’ (Hinshelwood, 2007: 354), much as the IPC had anticipated by founding the ‘Institute of Humans Relations’.

To sum up we might say that both approaches, Bion’s and Foulkes’, originated in Britain’s war efforts and both belonged to what I have called ‘the group analytic moment’. Although Foulkes was definitely building on the German intellectual tradition of the twenties and thirties, group analysis only came into existence in and by World War II. In the light of historical research and group analytic knowledge as inspired by sociology, both the group analytic moment and Foulkes’ role in it can probably best be described in terms of as an ‘established-
outsider configuration’ as described by Elias and Scotson (1965). The particular
dynamic of this figuration in which Foulkes personified the outsider and Bion the
establishment, led to a polarization of Foulksian group analysis and Bion’s
approach to the group-as-a-whole both conceptually and with regard to the
underlying ‘cultures’ and aims (Hinshelwood, 1999, 2007). Due to the impact of
this historical group dynamic, both were ‘impoverished’ and seem to have lost a
‘dimension’ as Hinshelwood has rightly pointed out (1999: 485). A trace of this
dynamic can be grasped from the inherent tension between the title of Foulkes’
book (1948) and its overall claim. Regarding the further development of group
analysis, the lasting influence of this dynamic may be detected also in the
repeated discussions of the group analytic community and whether therapeutic
group analysis (sometimes called ‘classical’), is to be given priority over its
applied forms, in training as well as in reputation. As a matter of fact and in
contrast to the Tavistock-tradition, group analysts on the whole have been rather
reluctant and slow to apply group analytic principles to what Foulkes once called

III

Beyond the institutional aspects, there is a very personal dynamic at work in
Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy (1948). Years after the book had
been published, Foulkes disclosed that the it was written in an exceptional state
of mind. To write it he acknowledged, ‘gave me acute coronary trouble . . .
working day and night, smoking incessantly (not like me otherwise)’ (Foulkes,
1968: 204). At the time he attributed these troubles to his ‘strong personal
involvement’ and gave no further explanations concerning the nature and the
background of this involvement.

Regarding his life trajectory, it is striking that from 1928 onwards, every
ten years some decisive events occurred in his life. Having married in 1927, he
left Frankfurt and Goldstein’s clinic in 1928 to go to Vienna in order to undergo
psychoanalytic training. Going there, he was accompanied by his first wife, Erna
Stavenhagen and two of their children, with the latest daughter to be born only
after his return to Frankfurt in 1931. Back in Frankfurt, Foulkes worked as a
psychoanalyst at the newly founded Frankfurt Institute of Psychoanalysis and in
private practice. Due to the rise of Hitler, he and his family had to emigrate in
April 1933. They arrived in Britain in May. Personally invited by E. Jones
(Foulkes, E. 1990: 11), Foulkes was actually one of the first three German
analysts to arrive in Britain; the other two were Dr. Pearl from Hamburg and Dr.
Cohn (Jones letter to Eitington from 20th May 1933 in: Steiner, R., 1994: 604).

Following Jones’ advice, Foulkes then tried to obtain British medical
qualification, which he did in 1937. In the same year, two other important events
occurred. His first marriage ended by divorce and he became a regular member
of the British Psycho-Analytical Society delivering his membership paper On
Introjection (1937). In 1938 Foulkes became a naturalized British citizen and he
married Kilmeney Graham. Within the same year, he changed his name from
Siegmund Heinrich Fuchs to S.H. Foulkes (Foulkes, E. 1990: 4). Due to the
outbreak of war with patients being dispersed from London, he then moved to
Exeter. According to his third wife, Elisabeth, he ‘took a position . . . as a psychotherapist in the practice of a psychiatrist . . . (Foulkes, E. 1990: 13).

Foulkes worked in the private practice of a general psychiatrist in 23 Dixie’s field, and as honorary Physician and Medical Psychologist to the Exeter Dispensary Clinic for Nervous Diseases and to the Exeter Child Guidance Clinic. It was in Dr. Craig’s private practice at the Clinic for Nervous Diseases he, together with Eve Lewis, started his first group in September 1940. Herself a Jungian analyst, Lewis became the co-author of Foulkes’ first paper on groups (Foulkes & Lewis, 1944). Although her role for Foulkes and the development group analysis remains to be clarified, Lewis attested in the appendix of her book *Children and Their Religion* (1957) that she had in fact worked in the Child Guidance Clinic in Exeter at the time. As M. Pines rightly suspected (1998), she had also worked at Withymead, a Jungian art therapeutic community directed by G. and I. Champernowne. A trace of this can be found in the Jungian review *Harvest* where I found her paper: *On the Psychodynamics of Treatment in a Residential Group* written together by I. Champernowne and published as late as 1966.

Maybe it is true that, as Campos assumed, E. Lewis was for Foulkes what Fliess had been for Freud (1981: 178). Although the circumstances of Foulkes’ early work with groups are far from being clear, it is a fact that his work with groups took off only after he had changed his name. This change of name has stimulated efforts to find out *What's in a Name?* (Bledin, 2004) and what is not (E. Foulkes, 2004). Bledin, for instance, has tried to relate Foulkes’ name-changing to the experience of migration from Nazi-Germany. His reflections, however remain somewhat superficial, in so far as they neither take into consideration the linguistic aspects of the actual change of name, nor the temporal relation of this change and the start of Foulkes’ work with groups. To address both, one has to realize that the significance of the name was an important issue for Foulkes long before he had arrived in Britain. His very first psychoanalytical paper was dedicated to *Observations on the significance of the Name in a Schizophrenic* (1930 [1990]: 31–37; cf. E. Foulkes, 2004).

Around the time of his psychoanalytic training in Vienna, Foulkes had made use of a first minor change of his name when he started to refer to himself as Dr. Heinz Fuchs (E. Foulkes, 1990: 4) thus dropping the first of his Christian names Siegmund and abbreviating the old fashioned Heinrich for the more modern Heinz. Both names eventually re-appear in 1938 by the use of the initials S.H. By adopting the name of Foulkes as his anglicized family name, he remained phonetically as closely as possible to the original German pronunciation of his family name, Fuchs. This is much closer than by its mere translation into the name of ‘Fox’ (having same meaning German and English). Moreover, the English name contained a meaningful element that was not present in the original German name. Regarding it on the level of its letters, one will find enclosed in FOULKES the word FOLKS which in most Nordic languages means Volk, folket or folks, i.e. people. By way of this change Foulkes had literally inserted the object of his passionate interest into his name and made it a part of it. This meaning can be actually be heard, when the name Foulkes is
pronounced by ordinary German speakers. Most of them will have difficulties in pronouncing it correctly because they will mistake the long drawn ‘u’ of Foulkes for an ‘o’ and so bring ‘folks’ to the fore of hearing instead. Therefore, the anglicized name can be read as a coded combination of Foulkes’ desire.

Adopting this new name, its bearer became (at one with) the object of his desire and thereby inseparable from it. These reflections gain clinical substance when we view them in the light of biographical data from his early life-history as given by D. Brown. According to Brown (who most probably relied on information reported by E. Foulkes), Foulkes learnt that he was an unwanted child, ‘who when naughty’ was told by his mother that ‘she had a difficult confinement with him’. Also, he was told that she was unable to breastfeed him and employed a wet nurse’ (1998: 398).

Born as the youngest of five siblings with the other four seven to eleven years older, Siegmund was a late comer into the family, ‘unwanted’ as we might speculate not only by his mother who had already given birth to four previous children, but ‘unwanted’ in the sense of his (too) late arrival into the pre-existing family group. If it is true that to be ‘unwanted’ was the fundamental lack that marked Foulkes’ entry into this world, could there be a relation between this lack and his later change of name? Was it a way of confronting it, albeit unconsciously? By changing his original German family name, Foulkes symbolically (a)dressed both his lack and the desire it had caused. Naming the fundamental lack, he recognized his desire at the same time. Taking on his first group, he then acted according to this desire which from now on sustained him as a subject and from which only death could separate, surely not by coincidence in a group.

This attempt to read Foulkes by the letter, may be (and will be, I suspect) disapproved from various reasons. From a psychoanalytical point of view, it is not ungrounded. Labouring the same ground Foulkes himself had toiled in the thirties, when he published his paper *Introjection* (1937), Lacan refined this concept in the fifties. He criticized both the symmetrical view of introjection as the opposite of projection which Ferenczi had introduced in 1909 and the ‘magical’ understanding of the concept which confuses ‘introjection’ with ‘incorporation’ which he saw at work in the Kleinian use of it. Instead, he argued that both processes were situated in different ‘registers’. While ‘projection’ is an imaginary operation that relates to images, introjection is a process relating to signifiers. Operating always on a symbolic level, introjection thus refers to symbolic identification, i.e. the process by which the ‘Ego-Ideal’ is constituted at the end of the Oedipus complex. In contrast, projection originates in the specula image of the mirror stage and gives rise to an imaginary ‘Ideal-Ego’. Unlike this narcissistic formation, the ‘Ego-Ideal’ is based on a symbolic introjection functioning as a ‘guide of the subject’s position in the symbolic order’ (Evans, 1996: 52). This is exactly the function of the signifier ‘folks’ in whose name Foulkes finally went to make himself a name. To publish his ideas on group analytic psychotherapy, he went one step further than to privately recognize his desire. He now asserted himself to speak in his own name (which was also that of the group). To arrive there, he had once again to wrestle with the weight of two ‘Siegmunds’ and their
traditions: the weight of his father’s Wagnerianism and the weight of Freud and classical Freudian psychoanalysis. Sustained by his desire, he succeeded to counterbalance these weights although not without paying the price of suffering. This would explain the frenzy of his writing he described.

Although rooted in Freudian analysis, *Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy* (1948) is of Foulksian origin and originality. In order to understand the author’s underlying conflict to write it, we may reconsider a remark Freud had made in Totem and Taboo concerning the nature of prohibition in the taboo. For Freud, it is the prohibition to touch, which he equated with the prohibition to touch oneself sexually, i.e. to masturbate. Elaborating the subject, he then made the interesting remark that the prohibition to touch does *not only* have a sexual meaning but also a more general one in the sense of the ‘assertion of one’s own person’ (1912 [1913] SE 13: 72). What is prohibited socially is to assert personal autonomy rather than just sexual pleasure. Publishing his ideas on groups, Foulkes did exactly this: As an author, he symbolically asserted his autonomy and thereby violated the taboo. Hence the coronary attack. From this background, an informed guess concerning the personal meaning of this book may be advanced.

By writing it, Foulkes reworked and eventually worked through both his childhood trauma and the social traumas he had suffered from in his later life: the trauma to be ‘unwanted’ in his family of origin and in his native country, Germany and (partly) in the establishment of the country ‘of his choice’, Britain (Foulkes, 1968c: 202). By way of his work of mourning a change of position took place, a change by which he passed from ‘marginality to creativity’ (Brown, 1998). Such a change is alluded in *Autobiographical Notes* (1968c), where Foulkes remembered some people (folks) telling him: ‘This is not a book, it is an experience which changes one’s outlook.’ (op. cit., p. 204). Which, he said was what it was really ‘meant’ to be.

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**References**


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**Dieter Nitzgen** is a group training analyst of the IGA Heidelberg, a full member of the German Association of Group Psychotherapy (DAGG) and a member of the Association of Freudian Psychoanalysis. Presently, he is, the chair of Scientific Committee of the Management Committee of the Group Analytic Society. **Address:** Im Kalchen 20, 79379 Müllheim/Baden, Germany. **Email:** Dieter.Nitzgen@rehaklinik-birkenbuck.de