The Individual as a Channel of Group Process: Case Studies in Group Process Work

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis will focus on the following goals: 1) discovering when an individual represents some significantaspect of a group's behavior; 2) analyzing what events and behaviors indicate that an individual is a vehicle for a group's process; 3) exploring various interventions that could be useful for group leaders when an individual represents information that is meaningful for the whole group.

I will engage in a descriptive analysis of group process work as formulated by Dr. Arnold Mindell (1989) and various theories that support the components of group process work. This will include a brief history of group therapy as it has developed since the late eighteenth century to the present, the concepts of field theory, general systems theory, hologram theory, planetary enfoldment and global theory.

Throughout the thesis I will use case material where individuals reflected the process of the group as a whole and describe changes that occurred in the group as a result of an awareness of that process. Emphasis will be placed on specific interventions that were made to help facilitate group awareness and how the tools of group process work were brought into play.

To my grandmother

Jewell Paxton Gartman (1896 to 1978)

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In the summer of 1985 I first met Arnold Mindell, and at that moment I had a sense of coming home, personally and professionally . He has become my teacher, guide and friend. Through the gift of process work he helped me begin a journey into myself that has been the clearest path ever opened to me. He and the process communities of Zurich, Seattle and Portland have helped me recapture the spirit of being on this planet in a way that is creative, exciting and joyful.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Groups have been a part of our culture since humankind began congregating in tribes for purposes of foraging, raising crops, and tending flocks for subsistence. Beyond these practical reasons for humans to congregate, there also is the need for support, belonging, fellowship, and identification with a group. Raymond Corsini (1957) aptly states "We know today that man is a social creature and needs to belong, to be accepted, to be valued, to be wanted and unless he experiences these social feelings, he sickens and dies." (p. 9)

We generally are born into a family group and have the task of negotiating with groups in one form or another our entire lives. Ironically, the majority of us have a great deal of difficulty with groups and often avoid them at all costs. Individuals in groups tend to demonstrate behavior that is different from when they are alone or with one or two others, regardless of the stated purpose of the group they are participating in. People experience feelings of isolation, fears of being overwhelmed by the group's feelings, loss of self or individuality, discrimination, being misunderstood and not belonging.

Since participating as a co-therapist in an adolescent therapy group 20 years ago, I have been fascinated by the dynamics of groups, not just therapy groups but groups of all

kinds. There are many aspects of groups which intrigue me, but one which has strongly caught my awareness over the past few years is what happens to a group when one individual works on or demonstrates a problem within the group.

Since I will be using the group process work format frequently, let me rephrase my focus in that context and give a few examples. By working in the group, I mean when one individual comes into the center of the group and works on a personal issue with a therapist while the rest of the group observes. Demonstrating a problem in the group means when someone introduces ideas or material into a group that are disturbing or incongruent with the stated purpose of that group. In both instances, one might simply say that the individual represents one feeling or set of feelings that may or may not be shared by other individuals within the group. This thesis is based on the idea that; although the feelings may not seem to belong, if one looks closely, it becomes apparent that there is a common thread behind the events. An example of the group thread behind an individual work was a situation where "Jessica," a group member came in and complained about being overworked and tired. She wished she was at home resting rather than attending the group. The moment that she was invited to go on vacation right there in the group, every other individual moved back into a more comfortable position and sat smiling warmly at the designated member who was "vacationing." The entire feeling of the group changed and everyone admitted feeling overtired and

fearful of having to work too hard in the group. We needed to go on vacation as a group.

Another example occured when a member disturbed the group's cohesiveness by analyzing at length every event that happened in the group. He was trying to be helpful, but it became obvious that the group was beginning to be annoyed by him. Finally, when asked how he was feeling in the moment, he admitted that he was angry at one of the couples in the group because they kept cycling around the same issue. At that moment, the entire group agreed that they also were feeling disturbed by this couple. Rather than manipulating the disturbing member into silence, the group was able to make use of the information that he was trying indirectly to bring in.

These examples sparked two questions I would like to explore throughout this thesis. They are: why does one individual working with a problem or demonstrating a particular behavior impact an entire group? How can I as a therapist help to bring this behavior into awareness and nurture the validity of each individual experience within a group?

In the following chapter I will review significant group therapy models that have evolved over the past century. The list of innovators who have made inroads into working with groups in specific ways is extensive. However, their focus often is on how the individual is impacted in the group and only secondarily on how the group as a whole responds. The

majority of research has been aimed at the kind of members that are included, the developmental stages of the group, the dynamics of those stages and the role of the leader. I have chosen those innovators who demonstrate some awareness that individual behavior in a group may represent information that is part of the group's process.

Freud (1921/1960) and Jung (1935/1985) each had his own ideas about the significance of groups for the individual. They themselves were not so interested in working with groups but noted how groups affected the individual. Freud cautioned against the negative effects of groups and saw them as ruled by the unconscious. Jung developed the concept of the collective unconscious, "which transcends individual conflicts and offsets them with the primordial experience of universal human problems." (Jacobi, 1973, p. 72)

Some pioneers in the area of therapeutic groups include J. L. Moreno (1966), Fritz Perls (1977), Eric Berne (1963), Carl Rogers (1970), Raymond Corsini (1957), Irvin Yalom (1985) and most recently Gerald Corey (1987). The originiators of the group dynamics approach include Bion (1959), Foulkes (1975) and Eziel (cited in Kapplan & Sadock, 1972). These innovators have made observations about what happens when a group comes together to work on a specific task - generally that of therapy, self-awareness or personal growth. Many of these observations and empirical findings can also be generalized to non-therapy groups. I am not specifically interested in therapy groups per se, but my

review of the literature will be of interest to those who use groups for the purpose of generating change and increased awareness in individuals. This could include learning a specific task such as bodywork or coming together to complete a common goal such as starting a training group or an Earth Day project.

Chapter 3 will explore the scientific and psychological theories that explain the phenomena of dynamic group interactions. This will include: 1) the field theory of Kurt Lewin (1951) which analyzes causal relationships and the concepts of the psychological space and life space of an individual; 2) Ludwig von Bertalanffy's (1968) research on General Systems Theory; 3) the hologram theory (Ken Wilber et al 1985) as it applies to individuals and groups; 4) David Bohm's (1986) concept of planetary enfoldment which takes the concept of hologram theory a step further and; 5) the global theory of Arnold Mindell (1989) as it relates to field theory, systems theory, hologram theory and the concept of holomvement.

Chapter 4 examines the paradigm of process oriented psychology as it applies to groups. Dr. Arnold Mindell (1989), the originator of group process work, introduced the idea that the individual with a problem or disturbing behavior represents a role that is not being identified with consciously in the group. He also proposes that there is a field generated by each group as they come into contact with one another and that there is often information outside our

awareness that helps to constellate that field.

In Chapter 5 I will relate two case studies where I applied the concepts and tools of group process work. The first will demonstrate how an individual's work in a group reflected the process of the group. The second will examine how a disturbing group member represented a need for change in the entire group.

It is my hope that as I explore some answers to the questions I have posed, I can explain some of the fears, myths and mysteries associated with groups. It is my wish to help group leaders and group members better understand the whole of what they are creating when they come together. This would allow us to increase our awareness, our sense of self, and our consciousness as well as our emerging unconscious motives for belonging to a group.

Chapter 2

History and Development of Group Theory

The Role of the Individual

Most of my professional group experience is with small groups of eight to twenty people. My beginning training was with psychotherapy groups. More recently, I have worked with training groups for process-oriented psychology exploring topics such as relationships and dreams. Participants in these groups range from professionals seeking a diploma in process work to curious lay persons who are interested in personal growth. As I work with these groups I frequently wonder about the history and progression of group work over the past century and pose myself questions like: how did beginning therapists participate in groups, and what has evolved in the profession over the past century? When did therapists begin to focus on the group as a whole rather than treatment of an individual within a group?

Since some of the methods employed in group process work are unique and often paradoxical, I find a need to anchor myself and expand on what has been noted by the leading pioneers of the psychotherapeutic profession. I also have a great deal of respect and admiration for the work each of them have done. As I mentioned in Chapter I, my focus is not on how to do therapy in a group but on how the dynamics of individuals impact groups. In this Chapter I will first review the literature historically; then I will focus on

individual schools of group therapy; and finally I will discuss the group dynamic approach to group psychotherapy.

Historical Beginnings

Groups have been used for treatment for centuries. Alexander and Selesnick (1966) comment that the "treatment of groups by inspirational psychology is as old as the primitive witch doctor, who influenced his tribe collectively through ritualistic performances." (p. 334) Corsini (1957) also gives an account of the healing temple that existed at Epidaurus from 600 B.C. to 200 A.D.:

> People afflicted with mental and physical ailments repaired to this temple to obtain relief from symptoms. The procedures involved talks, lectures, rest, baths, and what appears to have been a kind of general suggestion therapy. The effects produced by philosophers and religious leaders on their audiences and congregations were no doubt quite like those obtained in group therapy. (p. 10)

The first documentation of structured group therapy goes back to 1776 when Anton Mesmer, an Austrian physician in Paris, began to practice healing with groups through suggestion. (Corsini, 1957) Mesmer believed that he could effect a cure by sending powers from his own body to those of his patients, who as a group, sat around a wooden tub holding onto protruding bars.

Therapy in groups as a profession did not begin to emerge until around the beginning of this century. Both cultural and economic conditions and the advent of World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945) accelerated the need to study groups. World War I fostered the necessity of studying

the effects that large groups had on individuals, and social psychology came into flower. In World War II the shortage of time and staff forced psychologists to treat large numbers of psychiatric patients in groups, and psychotherapy groups became acceptable. An effort was made to explore newer and briefer treatment methods. As a result, the psychoanalytic climate began to change, and by the end of World War II the major analytic thinkers, including students of Freud, Horney and Sullivan were using group psychotherapy. Other methods of group therapy also began to develop, e.g. counseling groups, personal growth groups, T-groups, gestalt therapy groups and transactional analysis groups.

At first, individuals in the group context were treated using the same interventions and technical methods used in individual sessions. It soon became apparent to social psychologists that a group had a life unto itself. Work with an individual affected the group as a whole as well as that individual being affected by the group. In the 1920's, social psychologists began studying social groups to understand how they interact in order to better understand social problems. (Nichols 1984, p. 8) This led in the 1930's to case workers' leading group discussions with clients and eventually evolving these groups into psychotherapy groups. Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, was one of the prominent early researchers from that period who described groups as a coherent whole rather than a collection of individuals. His field theory will be described in detail

in Chapter 3.

The rest of this chapter will trace the historical development of group therapy as well as highlighting instances when innovators did note the effects an individual might have on a group's process. This will include the group dynamics approach developed by Bion, Foulkes and Eziel in Great Britain.

Roots of Group Therapy in Individual Psychotherapy

The pioneers of individual psychotherapy, Freud, Adler and Jung, have not been considered proponents of group psychotherapy. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to mention Freud, Adler and Jung and their thinking about groups because many of their ideas were the beginning framework for group psychotherapy.

Freud In 1921, Freud published Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. In reference to this publication, Christopher Badcock (1988) relates that Freud gave credit to the writings of Gustav Le Bon, who basically had a negative outlook on groups. "Le Bon felt that the group, mass or crowd is impulsive, changeable and excitable." (p.131) He felt individuals tend to behave differently in groups than they do in isolated situations. Freud tended to agree that groups are ruled by the unconscious, and are thus filled with emotive behavior, a loss of individual identity and regressive loss of the ego and superego. As a result, the id dominated and instinctual desires predominated over rational thinking. His explanation for this phenomenon was that a

strong transference to the leader or symbolic leader of the group degraded the ego and superego, as in early childhood, and left individuals insensitive to their fellow members and open to suggestion from the leader. This identification with the leader led him to believe that all psychology is group psychology in the respect that all people are in some respect part of a group with a definite purpose.

In his introduction to his book, Freud (1922/1959) states:

> Group psychology is . . . concerned with the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of a profession, of an institution, or as a component part of a crowd of people who have been organized into a group at some particular time for some definite purpose. (p. 2)

This concept can be taken a step farther, into the realm of what Freud and Darwin referred to as the "primal horde". Freud believed that the primal horde evolved from the primal family, where the father is analogous to the superego (which is projected onto the leader in modern groups), ruled the family in reality, and through time became the symbolic father. This would mean that when a group comes together, according to Badcock's (1988) interpretation of Freud, "the group constitutes a return not just to childhood and family but to prehistory and the prototypical human group, the primal horde. (p. 130) Here I would like to note that one individual, the leader, is seen as having the power to control group process. Usually the leader is not considered to have the same status as a group member but later in Chapter 4, I will discuss how Mindell (1989) views the leader

as an interchangeable role in a group.

Although Freud did not practice group therapy, it is thought that many of his ideas about groups and psychoanalysis evolved from his Wednesday night study group, which initially included Adler and Jung. (cited in Kaplan & Sadock, 1972, chap. 1) The group initiated Freud into group dynamics, providing him and his colleagues with a format for continuing their own self-analysis. The study group was the scene of many conflicts and often a battleground for the new concepts of psychology that were emerging at that time. Strong individuals such as Adler, Jung, Stekel and Rank challenged the leadership of Freud and shaped the group as it continued over many years.

Adler Alfred Adler is frequently omitted from histories of the first period of development of group psychotherapy yet he had a strong belief that all behavior occurs in a social context. (cited in Corsini, 1984, p.54) Adler began practicing in Vienna, and because of his background in socialism was vitally interested in working class groups. He wanted to find ways to bring psychotherapy to large groups of people. (Rosenbaum, 1972) As a result, he used group methods in treating patients. His first experiments, around 1919 - 1921, involved treating school children in front of groups of teachers, social workers, doctors and psychologists as a method of training those professionals. He noted that, rather than being hindered by the interruption of their individual analytic treatment, his patients began to benefit

from the exposure to others. Interestingly enough, Adler, according to Corsini, (1957) also noted "that the individual procedure was having effects on the doctors, the social workers, the teachers and the psychologists who attended his demonstrations." (p. 14) I find it significant that the treatment of the children had an effect on the professionals present for training, as I speculate that the child being treated in front of this group of professionals represented some aspect of the group dynamics as a whole. Adler never claimed to be a group psychotherapist, but Rudolph Dreikers, a student of Adler's, began working with groups of adults as early as 1920.

Jung Carl Jung's theories of the collective unconscious, archetypes and collective consciousness are a significant contribution to group psychotherapy. Jung (1935/1985) wrote:

> In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature. . . there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes. . . which give definite form to certain psychic contents. (p. 43)

These forms (archetypes) are expressed in our day-to-day encounters with fantasies, dreams, delusions and illusions and can be found in myths, fairy tales and world literature. Archetypes are what make up the collective unconscious. Jung (1963) described archetypes as "an irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and therefore manifest

itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time." (p. 411) Some commonly known archetypes include the mother and child, the wise women and the madman, and the hero and the villain. Every individual contains the basic outline for each of these primordial forms, however, from birth the personal experience of each person will shape their unique interpretation of that form.

Jacobi (1973), in describing Jung's definition of collective consciousness, writes that "the collective consciousness is found in the traditions, conventions, customs, prejudices, rules, and norms of human collectivity which give the consciouness of the group as a whole its direction, and by which the individuals of this group consciously but quite unreflectingly live." (p. 29) Cultures or groups tend to accept the norms that have been determined throughout their history. Challenges to these norms, like the civil-rights movement of the 1960s' create tremendous conflict and eventually change within the culture. Collective consciousness is analogous to Mindell's definition of "primary process," which I will define in Chapter 4.

Jung does not write about groups per se, and he actually avoided groups. Nevertheless, he often refers to the "mass man" and the impact culture has upon the individual. In Civilization in Transition (1946/1985) he states, "the psychopathology of the masses is rooted in the individual" (p. 445)

Eleanor Bertine, a long-time student, analysand and

colleague of Jung, wrote about the individual and the group. Bertine (1967) felt that "psychologically the group actually precedes the existence of the individual, who begins as a dormant potentiality in the collective sea. At birth the child has no separate psyche but has his being in an unbroken collective continuum." (p. 114 -115) As a result, when a person enters a group, he/she brings along all the tension of the polarities created by the archetypal images that are presently active within him or her. Bertine (1967) writes:

> When an individual in the group becomes possessed by an archetypal image, he acts in a way that seems to require a corresponding, but opposite, role on the part of the people he is with; that is, because he is identified with one of a pair of opposites, he will project the other - and the timeless dream will begin. For instance, complementary roles would be mother-child, hero-dragon, shepherd-sheep, savior-betrayer and endless others. (p. 115)

This theory helps explain how the group is affected by the individual and how the group as a whole often reacts at an unconscious level. In Chapters 4 and 5, I will demonstrate, using several groups as examples, how archetypal roles are played out.

Pioneer Period (1905-1935)

Corsini (1957), Moreno (1966), Gazda (1975), and Rosenbaum (1978), concur that the initial development of group psychotherapy roughly spans the time period of 1905 - 1935. The main contributors to theory and practice during that period, with some variation according to author, were considered to be J. H. Pratt, E. W. Lazell, L. C. Marsh, T. Burrow, and J. L. Moreno. I will not go into individual

methods at this time, but want to mention that these men introduced a whole new approach to working with psychiatric patients - the group.

There is some dispute as to who was the actual father of group psychotherapy. In 1905, Joseph H. Pratt, who was treating patients with tuberculosis, began giving classes to instruct patients on hygienic practices. (Gazda, 1975) Later, he noticed that the sharing of individual experiences had therapeutic effects on the group as a whole. Rosenbaum (1978) calls Pratt "the father of the repressive-inspirational movement in group psychotherapy". (p. 4) J. L. Moreno has also been named as the "father" of group therapy by his wife, Zerka Moreno. She writes:

> Scientific group psychotherapy is indeed a creation of the 20th century. The field was initiated and named by J. L. Moreno when he introduced the terms "group therapy" and "group psychotherapy" in 1931 and 1932. He has been given credit for fathering the movement. Credit for the "methods," however, should be given to each pioneer according to merit. (Zerka Moreno 1966, p. 31)

This quote leads me to the discussion of several highly individualized methods for working with individuals and groups.

Individual Schools

The following innovators, all have their own distinct personalities, methods and theories of group therapy. Each is described from the perspective of how they developed historically and their main ideas about the group and the individual. A more detailed review of theories that look at

the group as a whole follows in Chapter 3.

These group methods are discussed: J. L. Moreno and the Psychoanalytic movement, Fritz Perls and his theory of Gestalt Therapy, Eric Berne and his concept of Transactional Analysis and Carl Roger approach to encounter groups.

Moreno Over the span of his life, Joseph L. Moreno systematically formulated a philosophy and theory of group dynamics. His controversial methods and colorful personality probably had the most influence and lasting impact on the field of group psychotherapy. The most well known of his methods is called psychodrama. Moreno's first studies with groups were in Austria, where he worked with prostitutes in the slums. He himself claimed that he used group psychotherapy as early as 1910.

In the International Handbook of Psychotherapy (1966), Moreno recounts that in the period between 1908-1914 he had a vision of communicating with the entire world in the "here and now" (p. 154). It was out of this vision that he developed his theories of group psychotherapy and eventually, psychodrama. Initially he devised "a science of the therapeutic group called sociometry". (Z. Moreno, 1966) Sociometry was a technique used to measure the unique structure developed by each group from its first meeting. Moreno and Elefthery (1975) found that there is a unique field in the background of each particular group, that the structure of groups can be explored and determined and that groups are a phenomena which can be studied scientifically in

their own right. This theory concurs with Mindell"s ideas about the group field which will be explored in Chapter 4.

The principles of sociometry centered around the following concepts: 1) there is an observable interactional network that spontaneously emerges with the first meeting of a group, 2) every group has a conscious and unconscious base from which it interacts, and 3) every group follows a definite pattern which structures the attractions and repulsions between group members, the types of leaders that emerge, and the amount of group cohesion that developes. The therapist is expected to intuit and observe these principles, which will help him to measure changes in the affective patterns of the group. These principles led to the gradual birth of psychodrama methods. Moreno and Elefthery (1966) state that:

> . . . by means of psychodramatic methods, the depth dimensions of the group can be brought to the surface so that the members can recognize the invisible interactions existing between them. Effective therapy is, therefore, that in which the therapist becomes aware of the interactions of the patients towards each other, as well as of their interactions with him. The locus of the therapeutic influence is in the group rather than in the therapist. (p. 71)

Psychodrama, according to Gazda (1978), was defined by Moreno as the "science which explores truth by dramatic methods". (p. 7) The dramatic methods include the use of the client as the protagonist who plays out a problem, dream, or role, using assistants or the group members as auxillary egos who act out real or imagined characters in the protagonist's life. The audience, which is made up of the

group members, is used as a social barometer or reality check. Group members also often benefit by identifying with parts of the drama being enacted.

Here we have the beginnings of recognition of how an individual can have an impact on the entire group. Psychodrama techniques and how they have been adapted to group process work will be apparent in the case material in Chapter 5.

Perls Frederick Perls was trained as a psychotherapist in Germany during the 1920's. He, along with his wife Laura, began developing Gestalt theory while living in South Africa. Their first publication on the subject in the early 1940's was called Ego, Hunger and Aggression. The second and most significant publication, Gestalt Therapy, was co-authored with Ralph Heferline and Paul Goodman in 1949. After World War II, Laura and Fritz relocated in New York City where they began to train students in their methods. Fritz Perls died in the early 1970's but his wife and many others have continued to develop and teach his work.

The following description focuses on Perls and his unique style as the innovator of Gestalt therapy. Since his time, a number of training centers have continued to function according to Perl's philosophies and have developed more group-centered methods.

Gestalt therapy is not exclusively done in groups, but it is frequently used in workshop or seminar settings. The dynamics of the group as a whole generally are not

acknowledged; however, according to Rosenbaum, (1978) "it is believed that the observing patients are receiving therapy through empathic identification" (p. 21). Most interactions take place between the therapist and a client who volunteers to sit in the "hot seat," an empty chair in the center of the group next to the therapist. There may at times be some interaction with group members or the group as a whole as the client is asked to act out particular roles or to interact with another group member or members.

In writing about groups and Gestalt therapy, Erving and Miriam Polster (1973), two students of Perls who have carried on his work, state :

> . . . the movement of the group into concern with a particular person is an organically sound group phenomenon. It is quite different from individual therapy in a group because it flows naturally out of the group interaction instead of from the volunteerism of the 'hot seat'. "Individual focus comes not from exclusion of others but rather because of specific tension systems and their surge toward figural ascendency in the group. This special kind of one-to-one interaction might be called a "floating hot seat." (pp. 289-290)

They go on to relate a story of how the need of one group member obviously became the need of the entire group, and how focus on the group process facilitated a resolution for all members present.

Berne Eric Berne was a Canadian who migrated to the United States to study psychoanalysis. In the late 1950s he began writing about his own approach to psychotherapy, which he called Transactional Analysis. In 1958 he established study groups which met with him until his sudden death in

1970. Rosenbaum (1978) notes that transactional analysis is historically and traditionally practiced in groups. Berne's theory included a personality structure which was made up of three ego states, "the parent", which is when one is acting parentally; "the adult", which is when one acts objectively in response to his or her own mental states and the environment; and "the child", which is when one demonstrates fixations or breakthroughs from early childhood. He then went on to study and outline how these ego states interacted both within the individual and with others, and he made diagrams of transactions between individuals using these three ego states. Berne felt that the use of a dynamic theory of the unconscious was unnecessary for the use of TA.

Berne (1963) stated that "the advantage of using transactional analysis in group therapy is that it raises the theoretical efficiency of this treatment to 100 percent." (p. 177) Berne had very specific ideas about how psychotherapy groups should be selected and conducted. He wrote about them in several publications: Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy 1961), Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups, (1963) and Principles of Group Treatment (1966). Rosenbaum (1978) states:

> When a transactional analyst practices group therapy, the patient's behavior is explored as a transaction occurring in the ego states of child, parent, and adult, a transaction that is going on within the person. Berne stated that people spend their lives by engaging in games. These games follow a script which is a plan of living. When a patient is in a transactional group the therapist is in control of the group, and works with each group member in turn. Therefore, like Gestalt therapy,

> psychotherapy occurs in the group rather than with the group. The therapist explores the script, the games and the transaction of the patient. (p. 22)

Berne felt that a group was open to anyone who was interested in participating and he worked with clients and therapist trainees within the same groups. Berne taught that the leader was in control of the group, and he began groups by asking for a contract from each member.

In Goulding's accounts of T.A. groups, one will find that although individuals were worked with while other members observed, the members and their interactions with the individual were carefully monitored. What resulted often was interpreted as a "game" and was worked with in relationship to the entire group. (Goulding 1975) I would also speculate that recurring games enacted by individuals characterized the background material of the group as a whole.

Rogers Carl Rogers, the originator of person-centered psychotherapy, encouraged his students to apply his methods to groups. Rosenbaum (1975) notes that Rogerian therapists direct their attention "toward interaction with other group members, rather than toward insight as conceived of by psychoanalysts." (p. 10) The focus is on situational conflicts rather than depth psychology. In 1970, Rogers published his book On Encounter Groups. He was very enthusiastic about this approach and wrote from a personal rather than a scholarly point of view.

Rogers was impressed with and drew on Kurt Lewin's use of T-groups. T-groups, or training groups, were designed to

teach relationship skills to managers and executives in business organizations. Their emphasis was on education and the process of the group itself rather than on personal growth within a group. (I will explore Lewin's work further in Chapter 4.)

In 1946 and 1947, Rogers first used the T-group model as a base for training a group of counselors to work with veterans after World War II. Rogers (1970) explains that the "conceptual underpinnings" of what he began to call encounter groups in the 1960's were "Lewinian thinking and Gestalt psychology on the one hand, and client-centered therapy on the other" (p. 4). Corey (1987) defines encounter groups:

> . . . as an intense experience intended to help relatively healthy people function better on an interpersonal level. Rather than being aimed at curing personality problems, such groups are developmental, being concerned with exploring personal issues that most people struggle with at the various transition periods in life. (p. 11)

Rogers applied his theories of client-centered therapy to this developmental concept. He viewed the group as an organism with an innate capability to develop its potential and direction. Rogers enthusiastically endorsed encounter groups as meeting a basic cultural need for individuals to have close and real relationships with one another in a society that has become materialistic and mechanized. Although he talked about the focus of the group's being on the process of the group itself, Rogers' main research findings were on how the individual benefited from the group rather than on how the group was affected by the individual

or the group's process.

The Structure of Groups

Irvin Yalom and Gerald Corey are included in this discourse because they clearly outlined the structure and practice of group psychotherapy and counseling groups as they understand these groups. Group process work does not focus distinctly on these concepts because of the theory that there is a "field" in the background of every group organizing the process of that group. This theory will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. It is my belief, however, that weaving in some of the research that has been done on the structure and dynamics of groups can be useful to the process group work format.

Yalom Irvin Yalom is a professor of psychiatry at Stanford School of Medicine. Yalom (1985) begins his comprehensive volume The Theory and Practice of Group Therapy with the question, "How does group therapy help patients?" (p. 3) He goes on to answer this question through a thorough study of the curative factors which he considers to be the essential ingredients of effective group therapy. He lists eleven primary categories, but highlights interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness, existential factors and catharsis as the most significant. The category of interpersonal learning includes "the importance of interpersonal relationships, transference, corrective emotional experiences and the process of the group as a social microcosm (p. 19). Group cohesiveness involves how

committed members are to one another and the group as a whole - "it is the affective sharing of one's inner world and then the acceptance by others that seems of paramount importance". (p. 47) "Existential factors" refers to a broad category addressing such issues as "responsibility, basic isolation, contingency, the recognition of our mortality and the ensuing consequences for the conduct of our life, the capriciousness of existence." (p. 85) Catharsis encompasses more than just the expression of affect, and includes such topics as "being able to say what was bothering me, learning how to express my feelings and expressing feelings towards another member." (p. 84)

According to Yalom (1985):

> . . . though the individual curative factors operate in every type of therapy group, their interplay can vary widely from group to group; factors which are minor or implicit in one group approach may be major or explicit in another. Furthermore, patients in the same group may be benefited by widely differing clusters of curative factors. At its core, therapy is a deeply human experience and consequently, there are an infinite number of pathways through the therapeutic process. (p. 4)

Yalom believes that these curative factors exist generally at the core of every therapy group, no matter what school of therapy is employed. In Chapter 4, I will explore how the theories of group process work explain why certain factors are implicit or explicit in each group as it evolves.

Yalom (1985) goes on to outline what he calls the formative states of a group: initial stage - "orientation, hesitant participation, and the search for meaning;" second stage - "conflict, dominance and rebellion;" third stage -

"development of cohesiveness"; These stages do not occur on a schedule; they often overlap and tend to cycle, ebbing and flowing as the group progresses. After a group has been together for a number of months it moves into an advanced group standing and engages in "subgroupings, self-disclosure, conflict and termination." Yalom's outline of the stages of group development provides a useful model for thinking about all types of groups.

Corey Gerald Corey is a professor of Human Services at California State University, Fullerton, and a licensed counseling psychologist with a doctorate in counseling psychology. He and his wife Marianne Schneider Corey specialize in training group counselors and conducting personal growth groups. They are currently considered to be leading trainers in the area of group counseling.

Corey (1987) distinguishes various purposes of group therapy and states:

> Group counseling has both preventive and remedial aims. The group involves an interpersonal process that stresses conscious thoughts, feelings and behavior. The focus of the group is often determined by the members, who are basically well-functioning individuals who do not require extensive personality reconstruction and whose problems relate to the developmental tasks of the life span or finding means to cope with stresses of a situational crisis. (p. 10)

Corey is also of note due to his emphasis on the student or client who is basically healthy. This is not to say that all the above mentioned therapies are not useful with healthy clients, but Moreno, Perls, Rogers, Berne and Yalom initially developed their methods with psychiatric patients.

Corey outlines explicit characteristics of the developmental stages of groups. To him, being able to follow the process of a group is essential, as it allows the therapist to know how to pace, intervene with and most effectively lead the group. Corey's stages of group development are: the pregroup stage, initial stage, transition stage, working stage, final stage and postgroup stage.

In the pregroup stage, members are informed of the kind of group they are joining, including the nature of the leader, other members and the kinds of goals they wish to obtain. They are urged to decide if that group fits their needs in regard to leader, members and goals. The initial stage is the time of becoming familiar with the leader and its members. It is a time of establishing norms, goals, trust and as a result of these, group cohesion. Group cohesion is an essential ingredient without which the group will not flourish. The transition stage is the phase where anxieties, fears, resistances and conflict and control issues with the leader and other group members emerge. Each of these areas must be addressed and dealt with before a group can effectively move into the working stage. The working stage is often not truly distinguishable from the transition stage, and some groups may never reach this stage, which is the time of exploring material that is personally meaningful. The final stage of a group is a time for evaluating what members have learned in relation to each other, giving

feedback, and integrating what has been explored and learned into their daily lives. Finally, the postgroup stage is a time of follow-up and evaluation. Members may come together again for a session to evaluate their accomplishments or may use an individual session for the same purpose. It is a time to evaluate methods of continuing new behaviors and determining if self support methods have been established.

The Group Dyanmics Approach

In the group dynamics approach developed by Wilfred Bion, S. H. Foulkes and Henry Ezriel in Great Britian, Nichols (1984) notes:

> The focus shifted from individuals to the group itself, seen as a transcendent entity with its own inherent laws. These therapists studied group interaction not only for what it revealed about individual personalities, but also to discover the over-all themes or dynamics common to all patients. This 'group process' was considered a fundamental characteristic of social interaction and a major vehicle for change. (p. 13)

Bion In his book Experiences In Groups, Bion (1959) wrote, "in the treatment of a group the neurosis of the individual must be displayed as a problem of the group. (p. 11) He would interpret the group's behavior rather than the behavior of an individual within a group.

Bion believed (Kaplan & Sadock, 1972) that "the group, like the individual member, functions on both a latent level and a manifest level." (p. 8) At the "manifest" level groups come together to perform a chosen task. The "latent" level becomes apparent as the basic instinctual needs of the group begin to emerge as a result of unresolved tension in

the group. Bion facilitated this tension in a group by taking a passive role. His approach was often called "leaderless" because he believed that his task as a leader was simply to encourage the group to study the latent tensions that arose between them. (Kaplan &Sadock, 1972)

Foulkes Foulkes (1975), a colleague of Bion's, felt that the group leader, which he called the conductor, "must follow the group, guiding it to its legitimate goal." (p. 5) He defined group-analytic psychotherapy as "a form of psychotherapy 'by' the group, 'of' the group, including its conductor." (1975, p. 4) Foulkes perceived the disturbance of the individual as embedded in a disturbed field of social forces, which in the group analytic situation he called the "group matrix". (Nichols, 1984, p. 232) The interpersonal environment from which the group member comes he called the "network". Foulkes worked with the indiviual psychology of a member, the "network" from which the member came, and the "group matrix" which evolved when group members came together.

Eziel Henry Eziel was interested in the latent and manifest levels of the group but rather than the basic assumptions postulated by Bion he felt that a common group problem was the source of tension in a group. (Kaplan & Sadock, 1972) He also believed in a kind of group transference where individual group members would project their unconscious fantasy-objects onto various members of the group. This is similar to Jung's theory of archetypes and

the unconscious which I already discussed in this chapter.

These three men believed that the actions of an individual had a direct effect on the group as a whole. Each of them used individual issues as an indicator of what was happening in the entire group. Rather than focusing on one individual they worked with the whole group. This is a beginning model for my proposal that the individual often represents some significant aspect of a group's behavior.

The authors I have mentioned are only a few of the many now well known for group work. These few have had a major impact on the field.

The next chapter will focus on those theories that were not specifically developed for group therapy but because of their emphasis on fields or systems are inherently useful for group work.

Chapter 3

FIELD THEORY, SYSTEMS THEORY, S-MATRIX THEORY, HOLOGRAM THEORY, PLANETARY ENFOLDMENT AND GLOBAL THEORY

What is created when a group of people come together? There is something in the air, a sense of atmosphere, a field or force perhaps. This group feels nurturing, that one seems hostile, another one has potential for growth. One group cooperates with ease and another is hindered by conflict from the beginning; one follows predictable patterns of cohesion while another seems totally unique. Humankind continues to try to identify these unmeasureable phenomena that occur when people congregate. There are many theories about group fields and I would like to examine a few that have contributed to the development of group process work.

Field Theory

In physics, field and relativity theory have had a tremendous impact on the way that those interested in scientific exactitude view non-material psychological phenomena. The shift in physics away from classical mechanics in the twentieth century, toward quantum physics and Einstein's theory of relativity, gave rise to Kurt Lewin's field theory. It also began what Thomas Kuhn calls a paradigm shift in his book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1970). A paradigm shift occurs when traditionally accepted methods for understanding reality are explained in a new way. This shift in physics has touched

all our institutions of thought.

Fields actually were first mentioned by James Maxwell, a Scottish physicist, in his theory of electomagnetism, developed in the 1860s. He thought that fields were a modification of a subtle medium, the aether. According to Rupert Sheldrake (1988), "the failure of experimental attempts to detect this aether led Einstein in his special theory of relativity (1905), to account for electro-magnetic phenomena in terms of fields alone: fields which are non-material in nature." (p. 30) This concept of non-material fields is a revolutionary one, for it sets aside the Newtonian view that mass, time and space are absolute qualities. It also contrasts with Descartes' philosophy which divided mind and matter into two absolutely separate categories. The field concept allows us as psychologists to more comfortably talk about what we cannot materially measure in the realm of psychological interaction.

Another important aspect of Einstein's theory of relativity noted by Sheldrake (1988) is "that he treated gravity as a property of a space-time continuum curved in the vicinity of matter - treating time as if it were a spatial dimension: time is therefore essentially spatialized or geometricized." (p. 30) This takes away the absolute significance of time and space, making them both observable phenomena as described by the observer - this is an important component of Lewin's ideas about time and space in relation to human experience.

In 1931, Kurt Lewin, a Gestalt psychologist, fled Nazi Germany for the United States. Lewin is known in psychotherapy and social psychology for his field theory and for his extensive empirical research on training in human relationship skills. He borrowed his definition of a field from Einstein (1905) who states that "a totality of coexisting facts which are conceived of as mutually interdependent is called a field" (Mey 1972, p. xii)

According to Mey (1972), Lewin's adoption of the above definition of field "strongly coincides with gestalt psychology's attempt to view the whole as distinct from its parts, that is to say, thought and action are not provided with separate causes and motives; instead all aspects of the total psychic situation are grasped at one and the same time." (p. xiii)

Lewin believed that understanding an individual's or a group's behavior involved understanding the totality of forces operating in the psychological field. He developed a "field theory" which proposed that individuals are influenced by the "force field" they live in. Lewin (1951) called this force field the "life space" and defined it as "the personal and the psychological environment as it exists for each individual including his needs, motivations, moods, goals, anxieties and ideals." (p. 57) Behavior then is derived from the totality of these coexisting facts and personality is a totality that reacts as a whole. Lewin (1951) goes on to explain that "these coexisting facts have the character of

a 'dynamic field' insofar as the state of any part of this field depends on every other part of the field." (p. 25)

In reference to groups, Lewin (1951) felt that "one may speak of the field in which a group or institution exists with precisely the same meaning as one speaks of the individual life space in individual psychology - the life space of the group, therefore, consists of the group and its environment as it exists for the group." (p. xi) This would mean that every group that comes together brings with it all its unique inherent qualities which combine to form an organic whole. Mey (1972) concluded that "the key to a group lies in the atmosphere and the supposed causal relations of the group-unit--not in any 'man' or 'person'." (p. 47) In other words, any part of the field depends on every part of the field.

Lewin also specifically talked about time in relationship to the psychological field. He states that (1951):

> . . . according to field theory, behavior depends, neither on the past nor on the future but on the present field. (This present field has a certain time-depth. It includes the "psychological past," "psychological present," and "psychological future" which constitute one of the dimensions of the life space existing at a given time.) This is in contrast both to the belief of teleology that the future is the cause of behavior and that of associationism that the past is the cause of behavior." (p. 27)

This means that the time perspective is continually changing and the present field at a given time includes components of the psychological past and the psychological future simultaneously. Lewin believed that for change to occur it

had to be linked with the conditions of the psychological field at the present time.

Systems Theory

Lewin's field theory may be viewed as an earlier model of general systems theory. General systems theory was developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a theoretical biologist, in the 1930s and 40s. It has been expanded on greatly in biology, the social sciences, and psychology. In psychology it is central to almost all the modes of family therapy. Von Bertalanffy was not satisfied with the mechanistic (reductionist) approach to biology and used an organismic (holistic) approach to develop the idea that an organism is a living system rather than a machine.

General systems theory, according to von Bertalanffy (1981) posits that systems are integrated wholes that derive their essential properties from their interrelations, rather than from the properties of their parts. This is true whether the system is an atom, a cell, tissue, an organ, a gestalt pattern, a family, a culture or an ecosystem. This point of view is applied to all levels of living systems proposing that the principles of organization are the same for each one.

Von Bertalanffy's (1981) "aim was to achieve a general perspective , a coherent view of the world as a great organization, a framework in which all disciplines could be understood in their place." (p. xv) This then leads to the more global perspective that the interrelations between

systems are infinite and that an individual, an organism, or a single event can theoretically impact the entire planet. This certainly becomes evident when a single terrorist executes a world leader or a particular disease threatens all cultures.

Von Bertalanffy (1967) also theorized that living organisms were essentially open systems, maintaining themselves with continuous input from and output to the environment. Among the properties of open systems are wholeness, feedback, and equifinality (Watzlawick, Beaven, and Jackson, 1967). Wholeness implies that change in any one part of a system will lead to change in the entire system. Open systems are regulated by feedback. Feedback can be either negative or positive. Negative feedback is when information comes into a system and is counteracted in such a way that stability and homeostasis are maintained at any cost. Positive feedback takes the incoming information, amplifies it and acts as a positive influence on the trend towards change.

Equifinality means that the same result may be reached from different beginnings (von Bertalanffy, 1968). According to this principle, the same origin may lead to different outcomes, and the same outcome may result from different origins. This implies that it is more productive to observe the ongoing interactions within a system than the origin or outcome of these interactions. If this idea is applied to group interactions, then every group is a unique experience

with emphasis being on the process of the group rather than on its observable parts, participants, or its beginning and ending states.

Von Bertalanffy (1981) generalized the biological principles of open, self-regulating systems to explain, by analogy, personality, group relations, and social systems. He felt that civilization is not a random collection of individuals but is organized in systems of various orders, from small groups, such as families, to the largest group - civilization.

Fritjof Capra (1982) writes extensively about living systems in his book, The Turning Point. He sums up von Bertalanffy's analogy by saying:

> Systems are not confined to individual organisms and their parts. The same aspects of wholeness are exhibited by social systems - such as an anthill, a beehive, or a human family - and by ecosystems that consist of a variety of organisms and inanimate matter in mutual interaction. What is preserved in a wilderness area is not individual trees or organisms but the complex web of relationships between them. (pp. 266-267)

S-Matrix Theory

In the early 1960s, Geoffrey Chew, a particle physicist, proposed the S-matrix theory, also known philosophically as the bootstrap theory. The bootstrap philosophy strives to explain the complex interactions of subatomic particles. What is relevant about this theory is the implication that science is moving toward including the study of consciousness in its efforts to explain matter. The bootstrap approach abandons the mechanistic view which reduces all of nature to

fundamental entities and proposes that a scientist's perception of order is included in scientific reality. The scientist is no longer solely an observer but also a participant. This means that understanding nature is a process whereby nature is understood in relationship to the dynamic interactions of its parts rather than through the definition of set laws or equations. This concept plus that of systems theory offers a union of physics and biology, allowing for inclusion of the concept of spirit or the supernatural. A next logical step is to include psychology, which makes a science of behavioral perceptions. This is exactly what Lewin set out to do with his field theory. Jung also made a similar proposal when he defined the collective unconscious as an archetypical pool from which we formulate parts of our psyche and explained the phenomenon of acausally connected events where the psyche and material world correspond with one another as synchronistic.

Hologram Theory

Building on these concepts, Karl Pribram introduced his hologram theory of the brain and David Bohm devised his theory of the implicate order, which compares the universe itself to a hologram. Both theories allow for the inclusion of consciousness in their study of matter.

The hologram was first discovered as a mathematical principle by Dennis Garble in 1947. It was not until the advent of the laser that the first hologram was built by Emmett Leith and Juris Upatnicks in 1965. In 1969, Karl

Pribram, a neurosurgeon and researcher, speculated that the hologram might be a model for the way the brain stores memories. In 1971, physicist David Bohm presented his theory of implicate order which described the universe as a possible hologram. (cited in Wilber et al, 1981, p. 14)

It seems relevant at this point to describe how a hologram is created. In The Holographic Paradigm, a book of articles edited by Ken Wilber, a hologram is described as constructed through holography:

> . . . a method of lenseless photography in which the wave field of light scattered by an object is recorded on a plate as an interference pattern. When the photographic record - the hologram - is placed in a coherent light beam like a laser, the original wave pattern is regenerated. A three-dimensional image appears.
>
> Because there is no focusing lens, the plate appears as a meaningless pattern of swirls. Any piece of the hologram will reconstruct the entire image. (p. 6)

What is important about all of this is the fact that every part of a hologram provides access to the whole. If you take a hologram and smash it into tiny pieces, each piece will contain a picture of the whole. Pribram took this idea and applied it to his research on the way the brain stores memory. He believes that memory is not stored in one section of the brain but is distributed over large areas. When information is needed, it is selected holographically from all over the brain in the same way that a hologram works. This theory is explained in his book Languages of the Brain.

Planetary Enfoldment

David Bohm, in his model of planetary enfoldment or

implicate/explicate order, included the analogy of the hologram to explain enfoldment but also added the dynamics of nature to explain what he called holomovement. Rupert Sheldrake (1988), in his book The Presence of the Past, gives a succinct explanation of the theory of implicate order:

> According to this theory, there are three major realms of existence: the explicate order, the implicate order, and a source or ground beyond both. The explicate order is the world of seemingly separate and isolated "thing -events" in space and time. The implicate order is a realm in which all things and events are enfolded in a total wholeness and unity, which as it were underlies the explicate order of the world we experience through our senses. (p. 304)

The source or ground that is beyond both is the dynamic flow or the holomovement. This undefined, infinite totality of movement is the dynamic souce of all forms of material universal flow. A snapshot or static picture of this universal flow would be the hologram. The holomovement takes place in the implicate order - it is the order that is enfolded in the holomovement. The implicate order is a place where locality has no relationship to time and space and the universe is a web or network of unmanifested reality which unfolds into the explicate order of our manifested reality.

This concept is somewhat analogous to Einstein's theory of relativity which contributed to Lewin's concept of present time, which is a combination of that which is past and that which will come. Bohm's theory also parallels some of Jung's thinking about the collective unconscious and synchronicity.

Capra (1982) states that "what all these approaches have in common is the idea that holonomy--the whole being somehow

contained in each of its parts--may be a universal property of nature." (p. 301) This concept is one of the philosophical bases of global process work, as we will see below.

Global Theory

Psychology has recently begun to reflect some of these advances in science. There has been a progression from psychoanalysis to behaviorism to the humanistic movement, which gave birth to the transpersonal school of thought. The transpersonal school, founded by Abraham Maslow and Stanislav Grof, is similar to Jung's in that it recognizes the spiritual, or nonordinary states of consciousness, as an integral part of human nature. Some psychologists have now begun to consider hologram theory and holomovement as useful models of change in psychotherapy. One such psychologist is Arnold Mindell, who originally graduated from M.I.T. in physics and went to Zurich to pursue his studies. He became interested in psychology and eventually abandoned his studies in physics to become a psychologist, a Jungian analyst and a trainer at the Jung Institute. I will discuss Mindell's work as the originator of group process work and process-oriented psychology extensively in Chapter 4. Now, however, I would like to discuss his views about what he calls global process work as it relates to field theory, systems theory, hologram theory and the concept of holomovement.

In his most recent book, The Year I (1989), Mindell defines a hologram as "a field in which the same pattern

appears in the overall picture as well as in parts of the field taken independently of one another." (p. 149) A field is defined as "a vague atmosphere that we sense with our feelings, fantasies and hallucinations, capable of differentiation and interaction between roles or parts". (p. 149) Mindell (1987) states in The Dreambody in Relationships that the global field, or the "global dreambody" is an entity that:

> . . . including field, hologram, dreambody and anthropos theories, helps organize what we see, feel, and hear from individuals, groups, couples, and families. The aspects of relationships which are difficult to understand within individual or family-centered paradigms can be organized under the concept of the global dreambody. It is an anthropos figure with a process, a life and death of its own, like the rest of us ....
>
> The global dreambody operates like an individual dreambody by organizing the patterns, dreams and fantasies of the individual parts. Double signals, incongruent and congruent behavior, and primary and secondary processes are causal and mechanical aspects of communication between the parts of the universal dreambody and indicate its field-like operations. Yet at the same time, and from a larger viewpoint, the global dreambody is a non-causal field with synchronistic connections which are organized by patterns without any known, outside mechanical influence on the parts. In addition,the global dreambody operates like a hologram insofar as its individual parts reflect the same patterns as all the other parts of the whole. (pp. 104-105)

What Mindell proposes here is a combination of a causal and an acausal model for looking at human behavior at both individual and global levels. This is in accord with the belief held by Lewin, von Bertlanffy, Pribram and Bohm that reductionism and holism, analysis and synthesis need to be balanced. What all of these innovators are trying to bring

to light is the idea that we are living systems controlled by dynamic relations rather than rigid mechanical structures; that these dynamic interactions which involve individuals and their environment are timeless and spaceless and organize our universe.

Mindell (1989) characterizes his theory in a story about a farmer in a third world country. The farmer's wife is infertile and unable to bear him the three children he needs to work his farm. At the same time his village and country are severely overpopulated and the production of more children will result in increased hunger and poverty. His problem is not only individual but a reflection of what is happening in his world and coincidentally the entire world. The infertility of his wife, as well as being an individual crisis for him, is also the reflection of a world problem that he needs to realize.

Bohm's concept of holomovement is similar. A dynamic force operating in the world reflects all parts of our existence simultaneously. What an individual does is reflected in the entire universe, and conversely, the entire universe is reflected in the individual. This idea has been inherent in the mythical beliefs of the American Indians, Eastern Indians and Taoism for centuries. Bohm uses an analogy, saying that the implicate order is like the ocean and the explicate order is the wave as it manifests out of the ocean. Each wave through its folding and unfolding action (holomovement) affects every other wave in the entire

ocean - no two are alike but each has some property of the other.

Lewin (1951) also referred to this phenomenon in regard to field theory when he wrote that "the state of any part of a field depends on every other part of the field " and that the psychological past and future are found in the present. He used this definition in reference to individuals and groups, but it can easily be expanded to include the world.

Mindell also includes global theory in his work with groups. Groups are subsystems of the world, and the same ideas are applicable. Each group has a field which is made up of all the different members, who are mutually interdependent. Many of the group's actions can be reduced to measurable patterns and interactions, but the glue or source, or dreambody that organizes a group is determined by dynamic interactions between members and the whole of the group as well as by its relationship to the larger whole outside itself. In the next chapter I will explore the components of group process work.

Chapter 4

Group Process Work

In Arnold Mindell's first book, Dreambody (1982), he presents his discovery that physical symptoms could be worked with as if they were dreams of the body. Physical symptoms that were made stronger and clarified, could be connected with subjective meaning and had discernable reasons for appearing - hence the name dreambody. Mindell's second publication, Working with the Dreaming Body (1985a), used case studies to demonstrate the practical application of his methods for working with the individual dreambody and began to explore the idea of the world as a dreambody, finding out more about the relationship of the individual to the collective. In his third publication, River's Way: The Process Science of the Dreambody (1985b), Mindell delved into the arena of dream fields. In The Dreambody in Relationships (1987), he coined the term "global dreambody," which refers to the collective dreambody that organizes relationship, group and planetary patterns, and in his book The Year I: Global Process Work (1989), he explains methods for working with the global dreambody.

In Mindell's training as a Jungian analyst, group work was not stressed. However, in 1986, he and a group of colleagues taught a six week intensive course to 40 therapists and lay people who had come from the United States to Switzerland and were all living and studying together.

The students began to ask for group time with the instructors in order to discuss and work with what was happening among them as a student body. Since Mindell had no theoretical training in this area he began applying what he already knew about process structure to the group setting. It is interesting to note that this is the way that traditional group therapy got its start. The following year the Intensive curriculum included scheduled time for working together as a group, as well as a course called World Process. The World Process course examined questions such as: what principle or motif governs a group; what produces the field that we live in; and, how do we work with the background material in groups? The same course generated a five day seminar on World Process and then a series of two hour courses called Group Process. Each year since that time seminars have been dedicated to this topic.

What began to emerge out of these courses was a concept of group process work. These ideas were not developed specifically to deal with therapy groups, and are unique in that they propose tools for working with any constellation of people who call themselves a group, whether it is a business or industry, political or psychological group, or even a country in conflict with another country. The philosophy of group process work is still developing, as is true of all of process-oriented psychology. I will outline the components of group process work as they currently are used in the process community.

Process

It is important first to understand some of the concepts developed in process-oriented pschology. The most important term associated with the process paradigm is the word "process." Mindell (1988) defines process as having to do with the "flow of signals and information as defined by those who perceive it." (p. 178) This is not a static concept but describes the flow of what is happening in the moment.

In order to follow process one must honor the way of nature or the way of the Tao, Taoism being the ancient Chinese philosophy that the rhythm of nature defines our existence. The simplest way to explain this is to go back to the example of Jessica, in Chapter 1, who was "vacationing." The process that was unfolding in that instance was the one in which everyone in the group agreed that they needed to take a break from intense and deep work. This process was described by Jessica as a preference to be at home rather than in the group. Instead of analyzing her preference, the therapist invited her to take a break, now, in the group, thereby following her Tao of the moment. This also turned out to be a process that was shared by the entire group. Jessica was a "channel" for the group, therefore, her individual work enabled the entire group to identify their need to relax.

Primary and Secondary Processes

Mindell (1988) differentiates process into "primary and secondary" information which is closer to or further from the

sender's awareness." (p. 178) In this case, initially Jessica identified herself as a good group member who came to the group intending to participate but also having a desire to be at home vacationing. As the process began to unfold, a more secondary process, or one that was farther from her awareness, began to emerge. This involved a fight she was having with her partner. Within seconds of Jessica's moving back into her place in the circle, her partner made a sarcastic comment about her behavior. Immediately, members of the group began to take sides with one partner or the other and a deeper less conscious process began to emerge - one of fighting, and then another of needing to go deeply and intensely into the conflict. The Tao or flow of nature in the group had now moved in a new direction, and it was the consensus of the group to follow where this couple was taking them.

Mindell chooses to use the terms "primary and secondary processes" rather than "conscious and unconscious processes," because we often are not entirely aware or conscious of our primary process. In this example Jessica also was not completely conscious of her initial primary process which was to be the conscientious group member who attended group because she was supposed to and at the same time had a desire to be at home. As the therapist I encouraged her to be more aware of her primary identity. As a result a more secondary fight with her partner emerged.

Channels

Processes can be differentiated into primary or secondary and they can also be be defined through our channels of perception. The term "channel" comes from communications theory, and has to do with the specific mode in which information is received. In process work, these modes include four elementary channels: the visual or seeing channel, auditory or hearing channel, proprioceptive or feeling channel and the kinesthetic or movement channel. Two additional special channels which are a mixture of the four elementary channels are: the relationship or doing channel and the world or action channel. Channels, then have to do with the way we receive information through our senses: seeing, hearing, feeling and moving. They also have to do with our relationships and the way we interact with the world. We communicate with ourselves and one another through talking, sharing a vision or dream, touching, acknowledging a sensation or feeling, different movements, relationship problems and experiences, and our relationship to outer or world events.

Generally, our more primary processes, or those closer to our self-identities, are communicated through the channels in which we are most comfortable. In our culture, the visual and auditory channels are often the ones we tend to identify with or "occupy" most frequently, although this varies with each individual. Our more secondary processes, the ones we are not so aware of, tend to communicate through our less

occupied channels, such as body feelings and movement.

In the example of Jessica, she talked about (auditory channel) her primary process of being a conscientious group member who wanted to be at home vacationing. As she acted this out, she described a visual picture of herself at home, drinking tea and reading a book. As the work between the two partners continued, I noticed that she was leaning away from her partner, although they were sitting close to one another and speaking reasonably. When I asked Jessica to experiment with this, she moved to the other side of the room. She had not previously been aware of this movement. Therefore it was a secondary signal. When she focused on her tendency to lean away from her partner, by moving across the room, she began to cry and discovered that she was afraid of being devoured if she showed any affection, which had often been the case with her mother. Jessica found it significant to express that she was uncomfortable with coming any closer.

Double Signals

Jessica was not aware of her leaning movement until I brought it to her attention. Mindell (1985b) states that "these secondary processes become double signals when they are incongruent with primary processes." (p. 26) Jessica's primary process, in that moment, was to stay related in an "acceptable" way with her partner, and the unconscious double signal she was sending in the movement channel was her leaning away. If I had encouraged her to continue relating in her more primary stance of sitting close and being

related, without picking up this signal, she and her partner would probably have become frustrated with the argument that they were having. As a result of her experimenting with the subtle movement of leaning away, and her courage in coming out with her inner feelings about the memory of her mother, Jessica was able to overcome her fear of moving away and to then express some very deep feelings.

Edges

Mindell would call Jessica's fear an "edge" to the secondary process. Mindell (1985b) states that:

> The edge splits processes up into primary ones which the client identifies himself or herself with and secondary ones which he or she feels they are not directly associated with. (p. 25)

Edges are a barrier to the unknown. They are like a road-block in a given channel. (Mindell, 1990) Edges emerge whenever we access information that is difficult for us to accept.

In this case Jessica's edge was to getting some distance from her partner in a painful situation (secondary process) rather than sitting close and being attentive to what her partner was saying (primary process). She was able to go over her edge through changing channels. She explored her unoccupied movement channel by amplifying her movement (ie. doing it more fully) and by becoming aware of its meaning.

Dreaming Up

Another essential concept in process work has to do with transference and countertransference, which are terms for two

complicated processes that are described in psychoanalysis and can be studied extensively in all the psychoanalytic literature. Mindell perceives transference and countertransference as a shared communication between two or more people and calls both together "dreaming up." He used the word "dreaming" to explain these phenomena because he believed that dreaming up occurs as a result of our unconscious double signals. Double signals occur when our primary processes are incongruent with our secondary processes. (Mindell, 1985b) These double signals have a dreamlike quality because they often come from our unexpressed dreams and desires. Mindell (1988) explains that "the term comes from the empirical observation that the reaction in the other person (person receiving the double signal) is always reflected in the double signaller's [one sending the signal] dreams." (p. 175)

In the case of Jessica, I can only speculate, but I would predict that if Jessica had not become aware of her double signal of leaning away from her partner, her partner would have eventually been "dreamed up" to become her devouring mother. This pattern was actually played out frequently in their relationship. It also would have been easy for me, as the therapist, to become the devouring mother who pushed her into getting closer to her partner in order to resolve their painful conflict, rather than permiting her to experience the distance she needed. This would have occurred without any of us being aware of what was happening to us. I probably would

have viewed myself as the helpful therapist and Jessica would have gone away feeling frustrated and misunderstood.

All the concepts I have described thus far are part of process work with individuals. They are also applicable to group process work which contains these methods and many more which I will now explore.

Group Ideologies

In Tschierv, Switzerland in 1987, at the first World Process seminar, Mindell proposed that " a group is often the same as an individual searching to become whole, 'whole' meaning having access to every part of one's self." (A. Mindell, World Process Seminar, Tschierv, Switzerland, 1987) This is a Jungian concept that the "Self," which is the central archetype, has the task of unifying the total personality, which comes from the interaction or polarizations that occur between the conscious self, the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. (Jacobi 1973, p. 127) Just as an individual strives to know all parts of him or herself, a group also strives for wholeness. In his unpublished manuscript, Dreaming Up Reality: The Politics of Countertransference in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life, Joe Goodbread (unpublished manuscript) states:

> Groups have identities in much the same way as individuals or couples. These group identities are, if anything, more clearly defined than are those of individuals, being supported by laws, rules or scriptures. Even an unofficial group, like a gathering at a concert or sporting event, has its identity defined by the purpose which brought it together. (subm. manuscript, p. 202)

Mindell proposes that groups are organized by these identities or ideologies that bring them together, and finds that these ideologies usually represent the primary process of the group. (A. Mindell, World Process Seminar, Tscheiv, Switzerland, 1987) If a group comes together to study acupressure, that is its primary process. As this group studies and learns together, its primary process will always be disturbed by internal challenges from the individual students or subgroups as well as by external challenges from outside the group. Mindell (1989), Goodbread (unpublished manuscript) and Dworkin (doctoral dissertation) would concur that these disturbances constitute the secondary process of the group. Both the primary and the secondary processes often are expressed by individuals in the group. "Just as an individual has many channels so does a group." (A. Mindell, World Process Seminar, Tschierv, Switzerland, 1987)

In addition to the four sensory channels: seeing, hearing, feeling and moving, plus the relationship and world channels, groups also use several other channels that are not available to the individual. These include (Dworkin, 1989, doctorial dissertation) the spiritual channel, the subgroup as a channel and the individual as a channel. The additonal channel that I will highlight here is the individual as a channel.

An example of this would be a class I taught a number of years ago, before I had much knowledge of group process work. The class was very eager to embark on its studies, but was

continuously disturbed by one member of the group, "Terry," who always had more information to add to any material I presented. The first two days of the class, the students and I tolerated Terry relatively well in his offerings of information. By the third day everyone's acceptance was beginning to wear a little thin.

When Terry did not show up on the fourth day, everyone was visibly relieved and at the same time a little guilty for being so happy about his absence. I asked the group to work a little on processing what meaning this member might have for the group. What began to emerge was the concept of a leader or teacher who was not fully coming out. This man was doing a couple of things in the group: first, he was challenging my own feelings of inadequacy as a leader and teacher; he also represented the students' repressed desires to bring out their own leadership and teaching abilities.

One of the secondary processes in the background of this particular group had to do with the role of the leader or the teacher. The minority, or disturbing behavior, being expressed by Terry was present in all of us and needed to come into the awareness of the group in order for the group to be more whole. As is characteristic of most groups, we were invested in keeping the primary goal of the group undisturbed.

Unfortunately, we were unable to have this awareness with the student present. If I had been able to decipher the background field a little better I might have been able to

bring out the tensions that were being polarized by my student. I could have used this disturbing behavior in a way that was advantageous to the entire group. He could have become a positive representation or "channel" for the whole group. Instead, Terry, in our eyes, became identified with the minority role that he was filling and became a scapegoat for the group. This leads me to a discussion of the group field and role theory as it pertains to group process work.

Background Fields

In the Tschierv seminar, Mindell began the seminar by telling a story about carrots in a garden. He used an analogy of how we tend to focus on the carrots and to forget about the earth that the carrots are growing in. The carrots are like the issues and problems we encounter in groups, and the earth, which is often ignored, is the dreambody or dreaming process in the background of every group. This is what Jung would call the collective unconscious, Pribram and Bohm would call holomovement, and Lewin would refer to as the field.

This background field, or dreambody, is seen as being organized by the patterns of behavior present in the group, at any given time and is not dictated by time and space. This background field is one of the most important components of group process work. It contains, as I mentioned before, the secondary process of the group. Within this container are both all the causal and noncausal aspects of groups. The causal structures are those such as the primary and secondary

processes, double signals, congruent and incongruent behavior and ideology of the group. The noncausal aspect is the field which organizes the patterns of a group without any known mechanical influence.

Mindell (1989) proposes that:

> The field is created by the tension between essential roles, such as tyranny and democracy, the persecutor and victim, the leader and follower, the hero and villain, the wise old woman and the madman. Each part of the field is the leader; each is required to create the global field, and everyone is needed to represent the known as well as the unknown and unpopular roles in the field. Only when all parts are known can the anthropos transform its clogged and static atmosphere into an exciting and electric community. (p. 140)

These tensions or polarities are created when any group of people comes together. The field concept is similar to Eleanor Bertine's idea, mentioned in Chapter 2, that archetypal images and their counterparts are projected in groups. Now comes the question of what roles or archetypes will be present in a group at a given time. Mindell feels that the answer can be found in hologram theory as it applies to the global dreambody.

Mindell (1987) points out:

> The part of a person or group which is available and which best fits a certain figure in the hologram receives that role to play. Hence,the role you play in a given family depends upon who else is present; in another family you may be completely different. Since most people have the drive to experience all parts of themselves, you can now understand why people have the need to have many relationships, for they experience different parts of themselves in each relationship. (p. 101)

As an example let's suppose that a young woman walks into a

scheduled meeting with a male co-worker where some work policies are to be decided. Up to this point the day has gone relatively well for her and she has just returned from a pleasant lunch with another female co-worker. When she is with this particular co-worker she finds that she tends to feel very wise and professional, as this colleague is always asking for her advice and tends to look up to her rather than rely on her own expertise. After a few moments she finds herself feeling increasingly uncomfortable with what is going on in the meeting. She begins to feel irritated by what this male co-worker is saying and starts thinking about what a tyrant he is. He always makes her feel inadequate and foolish when she has to interact with him. In fact, he reminds her of the way her father made her feel when she was growing up.

When this woman is with her friend she feels wise and a bit superior; and when she is in the presence of the male co-worker she begins to feel as she did as a child with her father. Both of these parts are present in her individual hologram; which part will become active depends on who is present in her field at that time. This theory explains both her individual psychology and what happens to her when she comes in contact with certain individuals and also what those individuals will find themselves experiencing when they are around her. Let's take this idea a step farther and envision what happens when an individual comes into a group and we consider the group as a hologram.

Group Roles and Leadership

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Mindell believes that each individual is representing a role or parts of a role that are not identified with consciously in the group. These roles include the disturber, the silent member, the leader, the follower, the confused one etc. The possible roles are many, and according to group process theory, no one individual can completely fill a role alone. Mey (1972) in his interpretation of Lewin's field theory supports this idea when he stated that "the key to a group lies in the atmosphere and the supposed causal relations in the group - not in any 'man' or 'person'." (p. 47)

Jan Dworkin, in her doctoral dissertation Group Process Work: A Stage For Personal And Global Development (1989) stresses that:

> Group process work relieves people of their need to maintain individuality in a group setting by recognizing that the concept of the individual, defined by the physical borders and the personal identity, is a limited idea which lacks empirical grounding as soon as a human being enters a group setting. In a group, an individual is part of a larger field and is used by the field to express an aspect of its personality. In essence, an individual becomes a channel for the group process; one plays a role which one may or may not identify with personally. (Chp.7, p. 3)

If you think of Terry in my acupressure class, you can see that he was being "dreamed up" by the group to disturb our need to play out the roles of teacher and student in a rigid manner as precribed by our culture. I myself was filling the role of teacher, but I was also being challenged to share the role and to stop trying to fill it completely myself.

Everyone in the group needed to bring out their own repressed teacher or leadership qualities. Of course, this incident also had to do with Terry's own individual psychology, but the field, too, was using him or dreaming him up to bring up this particular issue.

Mindell (1989) explains that "people and roles are different. An individual has many parts and can assume all the possible roles in a group." (p. 88) This calls for a radical shift in the way that we define our roles within a group. However, it actually is a relief to know that part of what is organically trying to happen in a group is role sharing. The capacity to fill all roles resides within each of us. If I can understand and share the role of the silent member who never speaks out, as well as the difficult one who is always demanding attention, or the wise sage who reveals the hidden meaning of the group, I can then become more of myself. As I quoted Mindell (1989) earlier, "only when all the parts are known can we be an exciting and electric community." (p. 89)

Previously I also quoted Mindell's (1989) statement that "...each part of the field is the leader; each is required to create the global field." (p. 140) This is another radical idea about groups and leadership, in that if this is true, the scapegoated man in my acupressure class was actually the leader of the class. Of course, because the class did not have this awareness he was simply seen as a disturbance.

These concepts of role sharing and leadership help to

dissipate some of the common fears associated with being in a group. If we become identified, and therefore stuck, with a particular role it becomes suffocating to remain in the group. The man in my acupressure group was probably wise not to return on the fourth day, as he was receiving all the feelings of irritation the group was projecting on him for representing a minority position which was not being fully expressed. Had the group become aware and shared his disturbing qualities, we all could have become more whole in the process. In addition, if I as the leader could have shared my role and used this man as a representive of the secondary process of the group, I would have truly been whole in my leadership capacity and would also have empowered the entire group to experience themselves more fully.

As I mentioned in Chapter I my hope in this thesis is to allow each of us to begin to unravel the many archetypal roles that manifest within each group, while keeping our awareness, our sense of self, and our conscious as well as our emerging unconscious motives for belonging to a group. I demonstrate the difficulties and rewards of doing this in Chapter 5 by applying these concepts to two case studies.

Chapter 5

Case Studies in Group Process Work

Mindell's theory encompasses groups of all sizes. The two cases I will be describing are of smaller groups. Mindell's descriptions of his experimental work with larger groups can be found in his book The Year I and Jan Dworkin's (1989) doctoral dissertaion, Group Process Work: A Stage for Personal and Global Process Work.

In Chapter I, I mentioned two aspects of training groups in process-oriented psychology that fascinate me. The first is: what happens to a group when one individual does therapeutic work on a personal problem? The second is: what happens to a group when one individual becomes a disturbance or a nuisance in the group? I would now like to examine these two situations while expanding on the concepts of group process work.

The Individual and Therapeutic Work

Last winter a colleague, Nancy Minter, and I taught a three day seminar on bodywork and movement. There were 15 participants plus the two group leaders. I knew four of the participants well and the rest I had never met before. This was the first time that Nancy and I had worked together. At the end of an exercise, one of the students, "Wendy" felt hopeless and incomplete. She asked to finish up her work in the large group.

She started the work by describing herself as a pathetic "therapist killer" - one who will sabotage any and all interventions by a therapist. My collegue, Nancy, began working with her by lying on the floor and saying that she was already a dead therapist. Wendy came over and triumphantly put her foot on Nancy and started celebrating that she had killed her.

She was initially very happy about this, but then another part of herself began to come out, criticizing her for trying to get any help and telling her that it was all hopeless. As the work progressed it became apparent that the therapist killer part of Wendy was a primary role with which she needed help in identifying more fully. As Nancy helped her identify more completely with this part, Wendy discovered that it was quite powerful.

She was having a good time eluding the part of herself that was more critical. Wendy felt that she could stay forever in that part, but when Nancy moved away from her physically, she began to feel sad and alone. Wendy stated, "I am beginning to change roles a little bit into this sad and alone feeling." She rolled over on her side and curled up like a small child. Nancy guessed that this signal in the movement channel indicated that a young child was present, and began whining like a needy child. Wendy responded by telling her "Shut up, I don't want to hear you." Wendy had come to an edge in identifying with this more secondary childlike part.

As Nancy persisted, Wendy got up and began making faces in front of the camera and a demanding needy child began to emerge. She sat down in the middle of the group and began to count the number of people present. With a look of glee she exclaimed, "Fifteen people sitting and watching me be impossible forever. That is the first thing that has made me happy."

The group responded by laughing loudly and nervously, which made me think that they also had an edge to this needy demanding part. A group member, "Christie," spontaneously began to taunt and criticize Wendy for being a whiney demanding child. "Who wants to pay attention to you?", jeered Christie. At this point another participant exclaimed, "Now we are in the process." How true. Wendy had now "dreamed up" another group member to criticize her in the way that she had been criticizing herself earlier.

If one steps back and takes an objective look at this work, there are two strong roles emerging. One of a needy child and the other of a critical antagonist who wants to degrade the child. Mindell (1989) writes "each role in a field can be understood as a reaction to another role, and polarizing these two roles defines the field." (p. 99)

At this point, I came in and began to help Christie pick up her role even more strongly by siding with Wendy. Christie responded by saying, "Now I feel like I am playing a role." I agreed with her that she was playing a role. Christy relaxed and continued with the role of criticizing

Wendy. Wendy responded by whining and crying more and demanding that her antagonist pay attention to her. Now the whole group began to be polarized, as some members sided with Wendy and assured her that they were paying attention and others began to join Christie in her criticism. A number of people remained silent simply watching what was going on.

Mindell (1989) states, "The factions or roles in a group call on people to fill them. Thus, if a certain role is not sufficiently filled in a group, those who are closest to its characteristics will be drawn together to fill it." (p. 87) In this instance, people were clearly drawn to different roles.

As the work continued, Wendy kept crying and demanding that Christie pay attention to her for eternity. Someone suggested that Christie pay attention to Wendy for just five minutes, and surprisingly enough, Christie agreed to do so "for five minutes only."

Christie went over and put her arm around Wendy, looked at her and said, "You know what? I kind of like sniveling kids." Christie asked Wendy what she wanted, and Wendy asked to sit in her lap. With a great deal of laughter and movement from the entire group, Wendy began to try to find the most comfortable position in Christie's lap.

At this point several group members became engaged, offering pillows and back support to the couple in the center. Wendy could not get comfortable and there was a lot of nervous laughter in the group. Finally Wendy and Christie

sat quietly while everyone looked on with rather glazed eyes. Watching Christie nurture the needy child, the group was in an altered state as if everyone was frozen in the visual channel observing these two people do what they themselves shared an edge to doing - demanding attention. Mindell would identify this as a group edge.

Nancy then suggested that people move in closer and we could talk about the work. At that moment the entire group moved in and surrounded Wendy and Christie. The trance was broken when they switched into the movement channel and began to fill their need to be included in what was happening in the center. I noted that I felt this was a shared group process and everyone began talking at once, sharing how this was their process too. The group then began to do what they had not done before, sharing openly and warmly. At the Tschierv seminar Mindell noted that "the whole group feels well when all have gone over the edge." (A. Mindell, World Process Seminar, Tschierv, Switzerland, 1987)

As the group continued to share, I noticed two group members sitting more outside the inner group and asked them for feedback. One of them said that she felt restless but was OK where she was. She soon realized that she felt shy to touch people and then moved closer to the group. At the same time the other silent member spontaneously moved closer. These two silent members represented another role in the group - one of shyness - that needed to be respected and acknowledged in future processes. Mindell (1989) notes,

"The silent feelings that cannot or are not yet ready to express themselves determine the future." (p. 102) They are like the dream which has not yet happened.

Wendy shared that Christie sounded exactly like her mother when she had been taunting her and Christie admitted that she had reminded herself of how her mother had treated her as a child. More members began to share stories of how they needed to be paid attention to and Christie then realized that this was exactly what she needed from her husband. Christie had a need to fill both roles, the one of the antagonist and the one of the needy child.

Wendy, as an individual had become a channel for the group. Jan Dworkin (1989) aptly states "a group uses certain channels which aren't available to the individual: every person in a group can be a channel for the group's process. (Chp. 6, p. 1)

One way that I am alerted personally to an individual channel is through my own body feelings. I begin to have a sense that something is trying to happen but is hiding in the background field. This alerts me to the fact that I am probably missing double signals that individuals in the group are communicating. I then begin to notice body signals, voice tone and speed, incomplete moments and aborted thoughts and sentences in the group dialogue. I try to step back and "metacommunicate" about the group in my mind - just noticing the bare essentials of what is going on in the group at that time. I ask myself if one individual stands out in the group

and notice what draws that person to my attention. Then, I notice if there is oppostion within the group or within that person to what they are representing.

Since Nancy and I are both beginning group process workers, the edited text reads more smoothly than the actual process. There were many false starts, missed signals and aborted interventions. In some way, it seems amazing that we arrived at a successful conclusion. This is the way that one learns group process work, by experimenting and trying many different interventions, looking for feedback and discovering the flow of the process. Mindell (1989) observes "If tension is given a chance to create and express itself, it dreams itself to conclusion. (p. 101)

The Individual as Disturber

A second example will show how a member identified as a group disturber can have a tremendous impact and eventually transform the group. It was difficult to find a successful example of this in my own work, since it seems to be a process of my own to encounter major disturbances in many of my seminars and be unsure of how to integrate the disturber. This is partly true because I have an edge to my own "disturber" and, to my embarrassment, must admit that I have been "dreamed up" many times to be a disturber in groups. Having this awareness is an important part of my development as a group process worker, because groups I am involved with will constantly challenge me to go over my own edges and I will consistently dream them up to amplify this process for

me until I become fully aware of it.

Another ingredient here is that my problem with disturbances is not unique to me. The example of the student in the acupressure class is not an unusual one. In fact, as I pointed out, the primary process of the group will usually be challenged in one way or another. I am still learning how the role of the disturber, the leader, or any other roles can become a state. Just as my acupressure student became identified as the disturber and then became a scapegoat for the group, someone can be designated to fill the role of always being silent in a group, or being the group organizer, etc. as an unchanging state. As well as looking at the role of the disturber in this example, I also want to examine the concept that "all roles which polorize and create a field are leadership roles." (Mindell 1989, p. 99)

This example comes from a supervision group that I have facilitated over the past two years. A group of six students met bi-monthly to practice using process techniques with one another. All the members were practicing therapists with varying degrees of experience. The original format was that the students would work with one another as therapist and client on current problems and I would supervise their work in relation to process theory and personal style.

When the group resumed meeting after an extended break, a number of unresolved relationship conflicts began to emerge. We used group time to work with these issues. Traditional group therapy, as we have seen in Chapter 2, would say that

this would be a particular stage of development in the group. Yalom would refer to it as the second stage - conflict, dominance and rebellion - and Corey would call it the transition stage where anxieties, fears, resistances and conflict, and control issues with the leader and other group members emerge. In group process work we would say that this is a time when the group differentiates itself, splitting into various groups with differing viewpoints and suffering from internal conflicts. (Mindell 1989, p. 47) This is when Mindell recommends that the group needs to consider the problems or disturbances in the group as a method for change.

One of the newer members, "Hilary" became a feeling sensor for the group - always bringing in feelings that she felt were unresolved in the atmosphere. Intially the group remained open to Hilary, and I kept reminding myself that her need to disturb must represent some secondary process the group was not able to bring out. She also was having a relationship conflict with another member, "Rodger," which she tried to solve both within the context of the group and outside the group. Hilary felt that Rodger had unfairly criticized her in another group that they were both attending. Neither Rodger nor Hilary felt satisfied with their effort to resolve the conflict. Since their unresolved conflict was a disturbance to the group we as a group began trying to explore the idea that the conflict that the couple was having was also a group conflict. Mindell (1989) states that "a couple that disturbs a group because they cannot

solve their personal problems is a symptom of a relationship problem in the whole group." (p. 108)

Theoretically, this was a sound intervention but in retrospect, I can now see that my approach was not adequate. My feeling that conflict through the role of a nasty critic needed to be brought out strongly in the group was true, but this was the more primary identity of the group at that time. What needed to happen first was the more primary role of the critic needed to be supported until the more secondary role of weakness could organically emerge. Mindell believes that being able to metacommunicate, that is step out of a group and give an objective overview about what is happening, can be a very strong intervention. (Tschierv 1987) This was an intervention that had worked for me in other group situations, but this time I simply was not objective enough. I knew that I was missing many of the double signals in the group and was not particularly aware of my own. I was definitely on an edge to bring out my own annoyance with Hilary.

Mindell (1989) lists common group edges in The Year One. Briefly, some of them are: fear of the unknown, of strong emotions, chaos and personal opinions. A frequent indicator that the group is on an edge is that members avoid the present through talking about the past or the future. (pp. 79-80) This particular group demonstrated all of the above. The main edges seemed to be an edge against bringing out strong emotionals and a fear of chaos. Hilary kept creating

chaos in the group until the group finally began to come out with some emotional issues. Hilary had clearly become the leader of the group through her disturbances, but it took the group a long time to interpret her disturbances as useful.

More and more group time was being used to work with the issues that Hilary brought up. I myself felt very stuck, and began to dread coming to the group. I kept trying to fill the role of the "good leader" and stay in control. I was stuck in my role and as a result I was dying a slow death. I knew that the group was near to ending out of frustration and that they were experiencing the same feelings I was. This is a typical situation that often occurs in groups and contributes to an individual's dislike and fear of groups. It also contributes to groups eventually disbanding or splitting.

Mindell (1989) writes:

> The hidden factor in the homeostatic behavior of real human groups of people is fear of change and pain. Our homeostatic behavior and exterior stem from our fear of change and of the incomprehensible agressiveness of the disturbers. Therefore, when we can, we neglect disturbance and change.
>
> Most individuals and groups produce or try to produce an apparently peaceful persona, a calm and collected mask for the world in order not to show conflict or internal tension. A more realistic picture wold depict a system which aims to appear peaceful but is, in fact, perturbed by internal stresses, anger and fear. Leaders and facilitators need to model more realistic behavior by allowing some of their internal doubts and tensions to show. (p. 74)

Once again Hilary began to complain that she felt there was background material not coming out in the group. As she

began to stand more strongly for this, the group became polarized against her, saying that the main reason for the group was training, not working on personal issues. All of us were angry that she continued to challenge the homeostasis of the group. Our primary process was that we were there to learn process work, not to become a social club.

At the end of this session Hilary became angry and said that she felt that she was always being identified as a troublemaker. I told her that I could identify with that role and began to side with her. Then I suggested that she try the role of leading the group instead of disturbing it. She got a big smile on her face and wanted to know if I was serious. I assured her that I was, and the group ended with a better feeling.

The following week the same pattern began to repeat itself, as Hilary began to complain that there was something in the field. All of a sudden I realized that Hilary was trying to help me get out of being stuck in my role as the leader. I was on an edge to come out strongly with my own feelings of frustration with how the group was going. I needed to bring out my feelings of inadequacy as a group leader. This is the intervention that Mindell was recommending in the quote above. I challenged Hilary to give up her role of disturbing and to help me lead the group rather than criticizing the group all the time.

Helping the disturber or a group member with a minority opinion to value their differences is an important

intervention in group process work. Hilary kept bravely standing up for her differences, but she was not valuing the majority opinion. She needed help to reformulate her opinions in such a way that the group could accept them. However, I was not able to fully help Hilary do that at that time.

As a result of this confrontation, Hilary realized that pursuing her study of process work was not right for her in the moment, because other areas of her life were more interesting to her at that time; she decided to leave the group. There was definitely something right about this decision. This was evident in her body signals from previous group meetings, where she often sat outside of the group, even though she kept saying that she wanted to be closer to the group members.

Additionally, there was still some secondary process not being defined by the group. I had not stated strongly enough my feelings of failure and inadequacy. I also was to some extent criticizing Hilary through my intervention of asking her to respect the majority opinion. I was actually being dreamed up to criticize her.

Even after Hilary was no longer a member of the group, the disturbance remained. This supports the concept that conflicts that disturb the entire group has to do with conflict in the group as a whole. The following week another woman, "Linda," did not show up and left a message on my answering machine saying that she would not be coming to the

group any longer. Rodger was furious and began attacking Linda for not coming to the group, even though she wasn't there. The group froze and I realized that Rodger's outburst was very scary for me; I was afraid that he would criticize me in the same way.

The group itself had gone into an altered state, which often happens when strong emotions come up, due to the fear of conflict in relationships and groups. We enter a trance state when someone brings up behavior that is against the primary ideology of the group. Again, I was polarized to come out strongly with a feeling in reaction to this student's outburst. Instead of counterattacking, I decided to express to him my fear and sense of inadequacy, realizing that "my" feelings were also a role in the group field.

The group was visibly relieved and were then able to recognize and represent both roles. Part of the group played the angry righteous one and the other half played the weak, afraid one. In order to define how these roles were being represented in the group, I encouraged the group members to switch roles when they became more identified with one side or the other.

As I have said before, no one person can completely fill a role alone. At times a member would feel strongly identified with the angry one and at times with the weak, afraid one. When Rodger was finally able to leave the role of the angry one and began to congruently identify with his feelings of weakness, the group transformed. He did this by

coming out with his own fears of being criticized by the group and being labeled as a "too aggressive."

This was the role that Hilary was so desperately trying to bring out in the group. The same role was represented by Linda in her feeling too weak to come back and deal with the group. It was the edge that Roger and Hilary were unable to go over in their relationship work in the group when they stayed polarized in their anger at one another, and it was the shared edge of the entire group. Rodger needed to be able to stand for the aggressive, judgmental part of himself in order to meet the inadequate, weak part that he was less identified with. This was Hilary's process, as well as my own and that of the entire group.

If I had been able to be less identified with the role of leader and could have more consistently invited the disturber to be the leader of the group, we might have progressed through this conflict much more rapidly. Progress is usually facilitated by looking for the strongest polarities in the group and the parts that the group isn't quite picking up. However, the recommendation to invite the strongest part of the group to be the leader is a radical one, and goes against all my former traditional training as a group leader. In this group, it took me a long time to identify what was primary and what was secondary in the group, the group edge and the roles that we needed to define. It is my hope that by sharing this chaotic, often painful process, I and others can learn from the experience.

I was extremely grateful to this particular group for struggling with their frustration for so many weeks without any clear resolution. Each member was clearly committed to his or her own growth and to believing that we would eventually unravel the process that was trying to happen. Many groups are not so tolerant.

Dworkin (1989) notes that "Mindell recently formulated another implicit goal of his work with groups. He would like to facilitate the creation of a group atmosphere where the people who are present feel at home." (Chp. 4, p. 6) One of Hilary's ongoing complaints about the group was that we needed to become more family like and create a community of safety. Ironically, this group was doing exactly that by tolerating long periods of uncertainty and chaos. Through their continued participation they explored the belief that the more shadowy kinds of behavior the group was engaging in could eventually lead us to a feeling of wholeness and of being at home with one another. Unfortunately, we lost a couple of group members along the way, but it was miraculous that the group continued and began to function together.

Mindell (1989) says something very significant about interventions; it is a simple yet utterly basic process philosophy:

> The process work philosophy behind interventions is that those things we are consciously and unconsciously doing will aid us in solving problems and enrichng our own experiences. There is an inherent intelligence in human beings which appears when all parts of their behavior are made equally accessible. (p. 82)

The radical implication of this is that what is happening in the moment is itself an intervention. This knowledge helps one to look at a disturbance in a different light. What was happening with Hilary was the key to what the group needed, as the group was on an edge to express its weakness and feelings of inadequacy. The very feelings that Hilary's actions elicited in us were what needed to come out. Not being able to admit our weaknesses generated many relationship fights in the group and created a situation where group members were judging each others capabilities as individuals, as a group, and as therapists.

This was also true in the work with Wendy. She needed help to be even more of a demanding, needy child and Christie needed to amplify her criticism rather than being told to keep quiet. The group itself also needed to be involved in the work, rather than being asked to contain their feelings and stay on the outside. These individuals were channels for the group's process.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In the beginning of this paper I proposed a number of goals. My first goal was to discover when an individual represents some significant aspect of a group's behavior. The key to this question lies in the field and role theory of Arnold Mindell. The group field is determined by the ideologies that bring the group together and the tension that is created between the various roles that emerge in the group, consciously and unconsciously. The roles represented depend on who is present in the group and the holonomy of each group. Which person will play what role depends on the part of a person or group which is available and which best fits a certain figure in the hologram. Since groups are continuously striving to become whole, the parts which are not well represented will demand to be acknowledged in the group. The group field uses individuals to represent the various roles which one may or may not identify with personally. The individual actually becomes a channel for the group process.

This was demonstrated in the example of Jessica and her need to vacation and in Terry's constant interruptions in my acupressure class. In Wendy's work it became evident that she was playing a part in the group that needed to be represented in some way for everyone; the archetypal role of the needy child. Another role that clearly emerged in

Wendy's work was that of the critic or antagonist. That particular role was not the one most strongly represented at that time, but it was needed to help amplify and better define the role of the needy child. At another time in the life of the group the antagonist probably will emerge. In fact, that was exactly what happened in the next piece of work in that group.

Hilary, also, through creating a disturbance in the group, helped bring to light the role of the inadequate one. She helped to amplify the feelings of inadequacy all of us were having in the group at that time. Since the group was unable to interpret that process, Hilary kept disturbing the group. When Hilary was no longer present the group was disturbed by another member who wasn't even present, Linda. If I had not been able to help Rodger identify with his weak and inadequate part, helping the entire group to pick up that part, the group probably would have disintegrated. In fact, several members stated that they would have left the group if something had not changed that day.

From these examples and using the theoretical tools reviewed, it seems that an individual is likely to function as a channel for a group when: secondary material in the group field is not being acknowledged; and when the group field uses various roles to express itself.

My second goal involved analyzing what events and behaviors indicate that an individual is a vehicle for a group's process. As is supported by the example of my

supervision group, when there is an unresolved disturbance in a group it is an indication that something more secondary is trying to emerge through the person who is creating the disturbance. This was also true in the example of the man who kept analyzing everything in the group in Chapter 1 and the example of Terry in Chapter 4. Group members who keep bringing up ideas that the group disagrees with, or those who generally feel outside of the group or unheard by the group also carry a secondary message. They generally become the scapegoats or the minority and often create subgroups with other dissenting members of the group.

Individuals who work on a personal problem or even relationship issues in a group may also be representing some aspect of the group field that needs to be consciously acknowledged. This was true in Wendy's work with her needy child and in Rodger and Hilary's disagreement in the supervision group. This can also occur when one group member expresses strong feelings or several members share a common vision. They as individuals are a clue as to what is happening in the entire group.

Silent members hold important messages for the entire group as they often have the key to future processes or have observations that the rest of the group missed because they are so actively involved in dialogue. Group altered states in response to an individual's behavior can indicate that there is a process trying to happen that belongs to the entire group. A lot of movement or activity in a group,

continuous nervous laughter in response to an individual, or disturbances coming from outside of the group can also be significant in determining that an individual is expressing what all of the group needs but probably also has an edge to expressing.

This leads me to my third goal which was exploring various interventions that could be useful for group leaders when an individual becomes a channel for the group. As I have demonstrated in the preceding cases, the most powerful interventions come from what is presently manifesting in a group. This means one must have tools to interpret the process that is trying to unfold. One must understand that the ideologies of a group tend to represent the primary process, and all the other interesting and disturbing events usually represent some secondary process that is trying to unfold. The role of the leader also tends to support the primary process of the group and needs to be looked at as a role that can be shared by all members of the group. This means two things. One is that the leader must allow the group to help him or her fill the role. No role can be totally represented by any one individual, and the leadership role is an archetypal form that is far more comprehensive than one individual. The second corollary is the concept that what leads a group can simply be the strongest part emerging in a group at a given moment, and a group leader or facilitator needs to help that event become the leading focus of the group.

Group leaders need to be able to decipher the group field in relationship to all the events that are occuring in a group. This means that having some concept of the roles that are trying to emerge and the tensions that the roles are creating in the atmosphere is essential. A group is not just the sum of its parts but an interrelated system of interactions.

Understanding group edges is another important intervention in working with the individual as a channel in a group. Groups create many barriers which help keep out the unknown. The more rapidly a group leader can understand his or her own edges and help individuals and the group go over its edges, the less pain and chaos a group will have to experience. The leader or facilitator can also consciously be a channel for the group by bringing in personel feelings and opinions, and becoming aware of his or her own edges. It is useful to be able to determine if an individual's edge also belongs to the entire group. This often is indicated through excessive nervous laughter in the group, restlessness or activity in the room, boredom or a lack of energy in the group, group altered states, superficial chatter about unrelated events, and talking about people outside of the group. All these indicators were present in Hilary's work and throughout the course of the supervision group.

In group process work, the most essential ingredients for reaching all of these goals are awareness and willingness on the part of the group leader or facilitator to be a Taoist by

following the group's process, sensing the group atmosphere and helping all the parts of a group come to life. This requires that the group process worker continue to explore his or her own edges and be alert to the endless possibilities for role sharing within a group.

Groups are a fact of everyday life. The groups I have been exploring are training or therapy groups, but the structures and interventions I have outlined can be applied to any group on the planet. This is what is so exciting about group process work. There is still much research to be done in the area of group process work. It is a young science which has only begun to develop in the past ten years. It is important that group process workers document what they observe in the groups they lead and use video tapes to study the structures that unfold in these groups.

Groups can seem like monsters filled with fears and hidden agendas; they can become exciting adventures and challenges waiting to be sampled. Understanding the role of the individual in relationship to the entire group can be a powerful tool for facilitating the transformation from monster to adventure.

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