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PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WORK WITH GROUPS: A JUNGIAN PERSPECTIVE

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In their text Social Group Work Practice, published in 1949 and affectionately called, "The Green Bible," by many social workers trained within its tradition, Wilson and Ryland¹ portray program as, "the use of activities for attaining and maintaining mental health." By deemphasizing recreational modalities, social group workers have sacrificed their holistic practice, allowing other professionals to fill this vacuum. Recently, for example, "Sing your way back to health," is a "new" therapy in Los Angeles. Also, many Gestalt therapy exercises owe a debt to J.L. Moreno's psychodrama. Singing, drama, are but two of the many program tools taught as practice skills for social work with groups by Wilson and Ryland.

Jungian psychology can explain to social workers how their utilization of program can help clients achieve more individuated and holistic self integration. The balance of the paper highlights the aforementioned point via an analysis of Jung's concepts: the self, shadow, personality types; his perspective about symbols of the self.

Jung's psychology emphasizing the self has to be contrasted with Wilson and Ryland's² ego psychology emphasis for social work with groups. When asked what he thought about group psychotherapy Jung³ commented that there are groups in which one can find oneself and that there are groups in which one can lose oneself. Like Freud⁴ in his, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," Jung was concerned about one's giving up one's individuation by yielding one's ego either to a charismatic leader or to the group. Jung⁵ liked to refer to this phenomenon by using Levi-Strauss's term "participation mystique." He views the oneness of the child with the mother as the "participation mystique" of mother and child during early infancy. In the literature about group, Peck⁶ coins the abbreviation I.G.P.I. to stand for individual group psychological isomorphism. Peck theorizes an isomorphism between mother and group. Our anxiety about our acceptance in entering a group, says Peck,⁷ relates to whether the mother, now concretized as the group, will accept

or reject us. This is probably why in the formative stage of group development setting basic trust in the group parallels Erikson's⁸ basic trust of the oral stage of an individual's development.

Within a Freudian or ego psychological perspective the group can be utilized to center ego consciousness. According to Neuman,⁹ the separation from symbiosis with the Great Mother archetype, projected in part in the real mother, requires a surrender to group consciousness per se. Neuman calls this stage the magic phallic stage of ego consciousness. He writes about this stage as follows:

This psychic act of magical ritual is the expression not of a desire, but of the establishment of the human ego which as group ego and individual ego set itself at the center of a world that was to be dominated. Originally magic was always group magic, and anthropocentrism refers to the central position of the human group of which the individual was only a part. Similarly, hunting was at first almost always a common action of the group with which the individual with his independent activity was integrated. The magical security of the individual ego, on which the success of the group was largely dependent, was based on the evocation of the group-self, on an actualization of the higher unity of the group, which embraced and directed the individual and operated as a kind of "outside Self" incarnated in the leader of the group--be he medicine man or chief--who was traditionally related to a transpersonal being, an ancestor or spirit.¹⁰

It is my contention that ego centeredness found both within and through the group is at once the blessing and the pitfall of most current use of group modalities. The group admirably serves the process of developing that aspect of ego consciousness requiring conformity to the collective. The pitfall may be the absorption of the individual into the "participation mystique" of the group to the detriment of the individuation process. The

group as a whole and the individuals constituting the group may become fixated at the phallic magic stage of development. This is probably what Jung meant about one's losing oneself in a group. A more profound pitfall, a corollary to the potential superordinate role of developing ego consciousness through social work with groups at the expense of self development. This ego-self difference requires explanation.

11
Hillman, as a Jungian, criticizes most current approaches to psychotherapy because they cater to the "heroic ego" rather than to the self. It is as if "homo faber" the maker and technical expert, is the center of the universe. Ego psychology, the name itself inflates the ego to a position of predominance.

According to Jung,¹² the self is a priori to the ego; the oak tree is implicit in the acorn. The ego is a derivative of the self and has the potential to become conscious of the self. Plato¹³ implies the notion of an a priori self, a concept which reemerges in Jung's theory, through the following comment:

And if it is true that we acquired our knowledge before our birth but afterward by the exercise of our senses upon sensible objects recover the knowledge which we had one before, I suppose that what we call learning will be the recovery of our own knowledge.

A Hebrew myth¹⁴ parallels Plato's conception of the a priori self. According to this myth, before birth each of us is taken before God. All knowledge is shared with us. Just before we descend to our mortal existence God commands an angel to brand our lips and cause an amnesia to our omniscience. The indentation above our upper lip marks the spot where our lips were sealed.

It is my contention that updating Wilson and Ryland requires adding an emphasis upon the self to what, in my view, as its current ego emphasis. Where ego consciousness remains the developmental task, Wilson and Ryland's approach is most commendable. Usually developing the heroic ego is the task of the first half of life. Throughout life however many persons are concerned with problems of meaning and whether or not our current life endeavors are helping us get closer to our core, to our essential selves.

We can only know the self through its symbols. The very title of his book, "Man and His Symbols" illustrates Jung's¹⁵ view that we never know the self directly but that it expresses itself in myth, drama, art, music, literature, dreams, and so forth. Herein lies an addition to the Wilson and Ryland use of program. In addition to developing the strengths of the ego, program media can reflect archetypal aspects of the self in symbolic form. Program media can add to our development of ego mastery to a greater discovery of our essential selves.

In a brilliant text, Von Franz¹⁶ writes about the archetypal symbolism of number. Number has quality as well as quantity. In his approach to the interpretation of dreams Jung would count everything because of its symbolic relationship to the self of the dreamer. Briefly, oneness refers to the oneness of the world, the unus mundus; twoness can represent content still unconscious but about to emerge into consciousness; threeness can represent dynamically working on a problem; fourness can represent completion, and so forth. Blue can represent a wish for invisibility; green can represent growth; red, the color of blood, can represent life, and so forth. Color and number symbolism are areas too vast to cover in this paper and so I refer the reader to texts about these subjects.¹⁷ Color, based upon wave lengths of light of numerical magnitude, musical notes, based upon vibrations per second producing wave lengths of sound, also symbolize archetypal aspects of the persons engaged in painting and music. Discovery of the self through its archetypal symbols can be found in Wilson and Ryland but needs added consciousness of this to make the self aspect of its implications for group work equal to its ego aspects.

In addition a Jungian perspective for social workers can help them to help their clients as participants of groups each achieve greater wholeness of self. Each of us, says Jung,¹⁸ achieves wholeness by integrating our persona and our shadow. The persona is our mask to the world: how we choose to appear to others and how we choose to integrate ourselves into society via our social roles. Ego oriented group approaches help us to develop our persona.

In contrast to the persona, the shadow contains aspects of our disowned selves: aspects of ourselves that Sullivan would call the "not me." Bly's¹⁹ imagery about it can assist our understanding of the shadow:

We come into the world with three hundred sixty degrees of personality, a full circle. Then imagine a little black bag next to you where you place all the aspects of yourself that your parents, teachers, and other significant persons train you to disown. If you are a man you may put your appropriate rage, your tenderness into the black bag. If you're a woman you may put your aggressive scientific propensities into the black bag. Before long the man's personality can be represented by a piece of circle so big ; the woman's personality can be represented by a piece of circle so big . Essential aspects of both their personalities are placed into the black bag, are lost in the shadow. Most of us spend eighteen years of our lives burying parts of ourselves into the shadow and spend the next fifty years trying to recover them. In the process of each spouse rediscovering his or her shadow, a marital pair may spend hundreds of hours finding out who they really are and if they really belong together.

Wholeness of self requires that we integrate the persona and the shadow. Jung builds upon Freud's view of the id as a sewer of sickness by saying that it is only when we live out the shadow that we get into difficulty with ourselves and with society. Viewing one's shadow nonpejoratively as an unconscious undeveloped part of oneself is subtly yet significantly different than disowning the shadow as a sick part of oneself. When we counteract the depletion of our energy required to guard against our erroneous fears of the energy, of the shadow, when we incorporate the energy available from the shadow into our self system, we rediscover our naturally curious, lustful, vital selves and become free to explore, love, and creatively engage our world. Robert Bly²⁰ describes his incorporation of his shadow:

I am fifty years old and I feel more alive now than when I was younger. When you accept your shadow when you no longer guard against its energy your depression lifts.

Bly goes on to describe Jung's capacity to laugh from the depths of his being, an exemplar of what occurs when one no longer

fears but accepts his own shadow.

Freud's concept of the id sounds similar to Jung's concept of the shadow. The subtle difference between the two are profound. To repeat for emphasis, to Freud the shadow equivalent of the id was to be defended against through suppression, isolation, repression, denial, and other mechanisms of defense. Freud's concept of sublimation, the capacity of the ego to incorporate id impulses and divert them into higher social acts comes closest to Jung's view about the shadow. Adler²¹ sums up the major difference in Freud and Jung's major emphases. Adler speaks of Freud's thrust as causative--reductive vs. Jung's thrust as synthetic creative. Freud interpreted many aspects of psychological phenomena as being "nothing but"²² something that could be reduced to a lower level phenomena. Freud reduced much of dysfunctional psychological phenomena to the negative id which he viewed as the sewer of our sexual and aggressive drives. In contrast Jung views the unconscious, inclusive of its shadow development as an a priori source of our essence, of our life's task and our creative energy. A cursory understanding of Jungian theory may have already alerted the reader to the practice implications of a theory where the major thrust is to understand what a client's communications tell us about his past.

One Jungian addition to Wilson and Ryland then consists in utilizing the group to help clients achieve an integration of self by their becoming familiar with and incorporating the shadow through program. This emphasis moves the present utilization of the group for ego development to self development.

Jung's theory of personality types offers another source for achieving wholeness of self. The theory of personality types has the potential to offer us another method for assessing therapist client compatibility. In addition personality type theory has the potential to assist us in the understanding of marital incompatibility and marital compatibility.

Jung hypothesizes that the ego, the "little light" which helps us adapt to our environment attempts this adaptation by means of four basic forms of psychic activity or major functions. Von Franz²³ succinctly describes these as follows:

1. The sensation function which consciously registers inner and outer facts, irrationally;

2. the thinking function by means of which our conscious ego establishes a rational (that is in accord with reason in general), logical order among objects;
3. the feeling function, which rationally, establishes or, alternatively "selects" hierarchies of value (this is more pleasant more important, etc. than that);
4. the intuitive function which like sensation is irrational, which appears to be a kind of perception via the unconscious and which seems to be mainly concerned with the future possibilities of what is at hand. (Intuition is not identical with fantasy which Jung regard as a human capacity independent of the functions, just as will is.)

Jung also hypothesizes that each of us in our development cultivates and differentiates one function more than the other and tends to overdevelop this function for his adaptation. Undergirding the four functions is Jung's more basic dichotomy of introversion--extraversion. These can be defined in short hand manner by using David Riesman's terms²⁴ inner and outer directedness, respectively. The underdeveloped functions Jung calls our inferior functions. This is not to say for example that sensation is inferior to thinking or to say that extraversion is more desirable than introversion. In fact we often project both our needs and deficits upon other persons. Opposites may attract and marry or may not be able to endure one another. A client will often project his poorly developed functions upon the therapist, a source of transference. The fit between client and social worker the attraction and repulsion, or both of marital partners can be explained by Jung's personality typology.

Again helping clients achieve their wholeness and ipso facto more adequate social adaptations may require that we be alert to their undeveloped functions.

It is of interest how Jungian theory was put into practice in the settlement house movement without recognizing it as such. Much of social work with groups described by Wilson and Ryland²⁵ can be reconceptualized as utilizing program (e.g. drama, dances, crafts, games) as methods for helping clients get in touch with and develop both their superior and inferior functions. Part

of the therapeutic impact of group work in the settlement house movement may have been albeit it unconsciously, to assist clients to become aware of and integrate their shadows. As we change partners in a square dance each of our partners become the mirror of a projected shadow or personality type aspect of ourselves.

To summarize, Jung's concept of wholeness honors social work's commitment to the client's strengths rather than weaknesses. The shadow and undeveloped aspects of one's personality require development rather than renunciation.

Coming to the end of this paper, its intent was to help us see perhaps in a new light through Jungian theory, how the Wilson and Ryland approach integrated both the left and the right brain and thereby was a holistic approach to social work with groups. The new ethic, says Neuman,²⁶ requires an integration of both the individual and the collective shadow. It is only an integrated individuated self that can truly make its contribution to the collective. Wilson and Ryland with its ego building base can utilize Jungian approaches and shift to an increased self building perspective as elaborated throughout this paper. The shift encompasses building upon the task of the first stage of life to develop a persona requiring some conformity to the collective, to finding one's individuated self with its potential for making a creative contribution to the collective. Based upon all the foregoing I believe the Jungian theory can help us reinterpret, revise, revitalize, and refurbish Wilson and Ryland's tried, and, in my opinion, proven approach to social work with groups.

FOOTNOTES

1. Wilson, Gertrude and Ryland, Gladys, Social Group Work Practice (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949).
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7. Ibid., p. 88.
8. Erikson, Eric, Childhood and Society, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1963).
9. Neuman, Op. Cit.
10. Ibid., pp. 155-156, Italics mine.
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16. Von Franz, Marie Louise, Number and Time (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).
17. Ibid.
18. Neuman, Op. Cit. Some of the material in the following pages has been taken from my paper. "Jungian Theory and Social Work Practice," Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, Vol. VII, No. 4, July 1980, pp. 571-585. It is reprinted with permission of the editor.
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20. Ibid.
21. Adler, Op. Cit.
22. Ibid.
23. Von Franz, C.G. Jung His Myth in our Time, (New York: G.P. Putnams Sons, 1975) pp. 46-47.
24. Riesman, David, The Lonely Crowd (New York Heaven: Yale University Press, 1961).
25. Wilson and Ryland, Op. Cit.
26. Neuman, Eric, Depth Psychology and a New Ethic. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973).