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> "All representations are transformations."
> (Bion 1965, 140)

Introduction: From the Depths to the Drawing Pad

The use of individual dreams and dream material to illuminate social processes was pioneered by the work of Gordon Lawrence and his Social Dreaming methodology (1999b). Participants in the matrix are invited to share recent dreams, and members of the matrix make associations to them. The hosts of the matrix 'take' these dreams, offer hypotheses that link the dreams thematically and suggest possible underlying meanings relating to the social or organizational world of the matrix. It is this use of dreams to explore the underlying issues of social systems that has led to my interest in developing a related methodology, Social Dream-Drawing.

For a period of years, I have been working with groups of colleagues and professionals in related fields to develop this methodology as a means of illuminating and potentially helping to resolve emerging, but perhaps not as yet fully conscious, professional issues. I have worked with groups in the Netherlands, Chile, Germany and the U.K. Some workshops were one-day; others extended over multiple sessions and a span of months. In 2009, I entered the doctoral program of the Institute for Psycho-Social Studies at the University of West England in Bristol, U.K. specifically to undertake further research on this new methodology. This chapter contains extensive interview material with six of these participants, whose comments appear in quotations throughout, as well as quotes from the original transcript of the Chile workshop group. I am very grateful to all of these participants.

Beginning with the dream…

As one's original dream makes its journey from a totally unique internal experience to its 'presentation' to the world through drawing, it becomes transformed. The delicate and mysterious 'decision' of the dreamer to attempt to recall his or her "latent not material unmaterial dream" – usually while still in bed and just awoken -- begins this process. The dream material becomes lodged imperfectly into some sort of disconnected narrative 'in the mind'.

From this first 'achievement' comes the opportunity to transform it yet again, either through language (by telling another or by writing it down) or through drawing. This is

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not an easy process. Said one interviewee: "…it's hard to come through to get in touch, or come in touch with the dreams. To come in touch with your own unconscious material, it's not so easy going!*"*

Sometimes, it is drawn and further elaborated by the written word. When the fleeting, often chaotic 'pictures' in the unconscious are represented on paper, they enter an arena of transformation. It is there that the dreamer has brought to physical reality what has already uniquely emerged from the unconscious. For every immediately forgettable bit, rejected fright, illogical and therefore impossible 'lost' dream fragment, come those that we somehow feel able to refine, reframe, and represent to others.

One London participant described her process of drawing a dream this way:

> I wouldn't be able to do it straight away…because I needed to collect it together…it didn't go away…it sat there in my mind…if I'd put it down straight away…I couldn't have done it…actually any creative activity…if you had an idea in your head…all the time you are working on the idea but you don't put it in the external until somehow it's formulated in a way in your mind…and it can just sit there.

For this participant, "if you have a clear image somehow embedded in your mind, which might take a couple of days to do, then that's your starting point."

Any step in bringing the dream from the original is an act of transformation. Bion (1965), in his theory of transformations, uses the example of the artist who paints a field of poppies. When he/she does so, elements of the original field (what he terms "invariants" [ibid., 4]) remain unaltered (i.e. the red coloring), in order for the painting to be recognizable as a representation of that particular landscape. Just so, the transformation of the original dream material contains invariants that link the original images to the drawing and make it recognizable. In this process, one can say, a kind of transformation in the psyche of the dream drawer also takes place.

But there are challenges. How can one possibly 'match' the experience of the dream with the materials of drawing, especially if one does not see oneself as a good enough artist? One must somehow translate a 3-dimensional experience into a 2-dimensional one. Can one's colored pencils really capture the colors? Must a 'story' (as a cartoon) be made out of unrelated images? Will the effort overtax one's artistic abilities? How can one stay 'true' to one's original dream experience? As one interviewee put it: "I can't paint the dream in the way that I dream it….It's more complex than I…can ever bring…to this two dimensional sheet".

Stephen Hau (2002; cf. 2004), a psychologist and member of the research staff at the Sigmund Freud Institute, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, did an experiment designed to compare what were termed "free-imagination drawings" and "dream drawings". He and his colleagues asked sleepers to wake up and immediately draw what, if anything, they

had just dreamt. He later asked them to make "free-imagination drawings" during a conscious state. Then he compared the two kinds of drawings.

He found that the dream drawings had a childlike quality and represented a regression into earlier childhood stages (the average age for dream drawings being 8.6 years and for free imagination drawings being 10.2). The dream images, he says, are from earlier developmental stages, even though they may represent much more complex material.

Hau sees dream drawing as being mainly concerned with drawing a story and creating some kind of connecting cord. The line of thoughts from the remembrance and the sequence of images of the perceived and remembered dream experience are supposed to be brought together and shown. Breaks, summaries, changes of perspectives, sequences of action, the space and time of the dream are condensed in the image, which doesn't give room or space for perspective representation. What happened in the dream is condensed.

Despite these limitations, however, Hau and his colleagues make the important observation that by drawing a dream, one is closer to the original experienced image (Hau 2002, 199). At the same time, the potential for distortion lies in overly elaborated or "sanitized" drawings, ones that are meant to show good drawing or good imagination instead of the "messier stuff", as one interviewee put it. These may not be very well linked to the original experience.

Here is how one participant in the German group put it:

> I think for me it's in the core….to bring ideas to the point of being visible. To bring it into materialized manifest form and then you can work in another way about it or with it. But I think in this it's a step from one part to the other and there are some things in this transformation if you have to bring it in the language maybe also in the symbolic language. I guess something will be lost in this transformational process. I have the idea that when I have a dream then I start to draw the dream, and then next I go to Solingen and I start to talk about the dream. In this step by step by step process I can't take all the content or all the ideas or all the parts with me. Some will be lost and other ideas, other parts will be found. So when I will start to paint the dream there is a form of selection. I can't paint the dream in the way that I dream it. That was sometimes very hard for me, because I thought there would be every possibility to bring this inner picture at the paper. It's more complex than I ever can ever bring it to this two dimensional sheet. So that's what I meant. Something is lost….I'm not sure what is the indicator of losing or finding some new parts. I don't know.

Additionally, there is the risk that, when being worked with in the group, the dream itself becomes distorted. As two interviewees put it (one from the German group and one from the London group):

As soon as you put it in the external, it becomes layered with other meanings…
your own idea gets submerged or emerged, absorbed into other people's…. It's
obviously got to do that to grow and have other meanings.

And also when you then start to get into talks with the other group members, they
will talk about your dream….And sometimes maybe it's strange to keep calm, to
listen what are they saying about my dream. 'So interesting, I've never seen that
in my dream.' So it's a present to hear these other associations and other
approaches and also the other symbolic offers…. I was not forced to pick up any
opinion which was offered or any interpretation which was given by the others.

Despite these limitations, however, these drawings do represent an unconscious event
in the dreamer and this methodology is based on capturing that.

Dead Babies In the Mud – Group associations to a dream drawing of my client

The first time I recognized the power of the drawings of dreams for my work was in
2003, when I presented a consultation case with a client who would only work with me
over the telephone (Mersky 2006). The client is a very ambitious female in her mid-
40's, who is quite fastidious about her appearance. A few days after the presentation, 'J',
a student in the class, had a vivid dream about my client. One part is as follows:

We ['J' and my client, Leslie] are now standing hip-deep in brown, muddy water
and there are small, soft and wet looking little islands with some sort of grass on it
like in a moorland. Here everything including our former business-like clothes are
in brown and pale green colours….Leslie is at my right side and now I can see her
for the first time. She looks a bit like Winona Ryder, big eyes, short brown hair
and a desperate look on her face. She is close to tears, pulls my sleeve at the right
arm and is trying to tell me something. She seems afraid I could punish her or be
angry with her, but she wants to tell it no matter what. Then I can make out what
she is constantly saying: "I killed all the babies, hear me? I killed them". At first I
do not understand what she is talking about, but then I can make out many little
baskets swimming near the islands. Leslie grabs such a basket and shoves it over
to me and in it is a dead baby, pale, dead and cold with mud and grass on it. In
the dream I have the impression that she killed them a time before by pulling the
whole basket under water. Surprisingly I do not feel any anger or that she should
be punished. In fact I sort of expected this and take it as a plain fact. I just want to
tell her that it is no surprise to me that she did this and that everything in her
appearance tells this, as if it was written in her forehead and that I wonder why
she is making such a big deal out of it...as the dream ends...

'J' emailed me the dream and offered to bring pictures of the dream to a subsequent
class for our reflection. She brought four big drawings of this dream and 'talked' us
through them. One of her drawings is below:
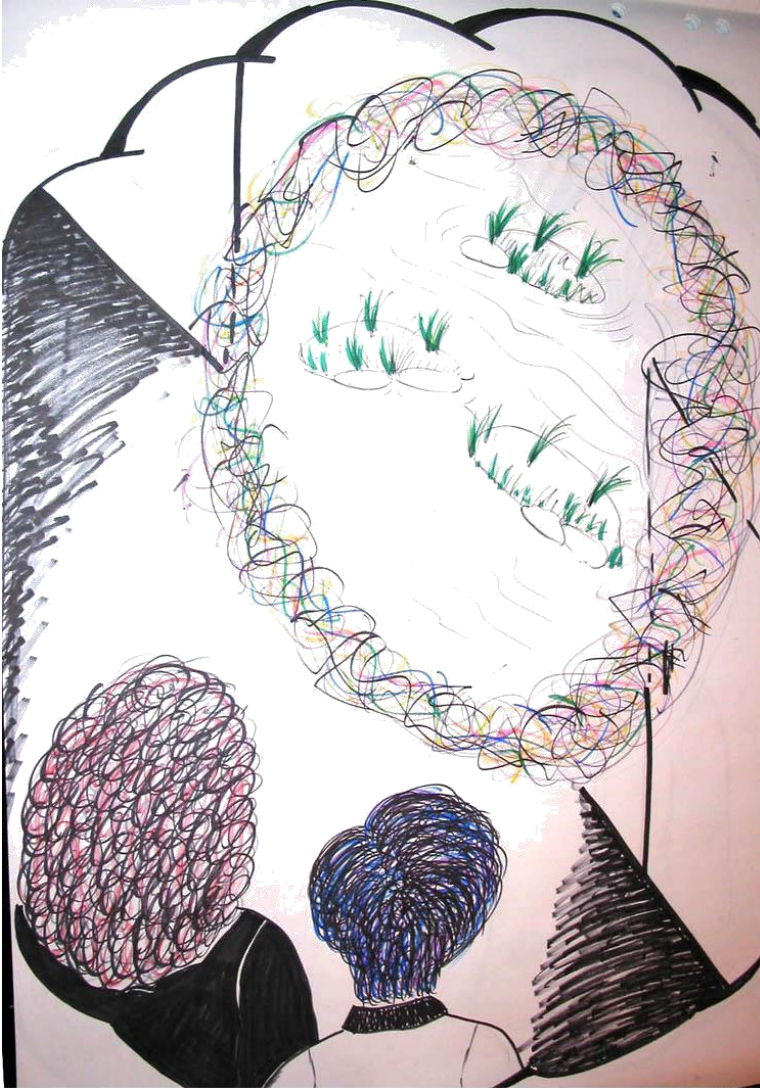
The associations to this picture dealt in large part with the mud and dirt of the dream and also on Leslie's deep shame for having killed babies and covered them with mud. We tried to connect these associations to two important facts about her: she is a pediatrician and, though married, has no children. The drawing of the dream was noted as being 'cleansed' in a certain way, as if it the material was just too difficult to look at.

In my work with Leslie over the past few years, I knew that she was very concerned about how she looked, what impression she made, and how she was seen – whether she had, for example, the right expression. She would often discuss preparations for upcoming unstructured situations, where she would be quite visible, i.e. office parties, workshops. She was also terrified of those times when she was tired and would lose her temper or do something destructive in her interactions with others. She had been more than once reprimanded for being unable to work well with other people.

The idea of being covered with mud for having done some unforgivable act (that must always be covered) was an important metaphor for my subsequent work with her. I was confirmed in my ongoing hypothesis that her self-representation was strongly influenced

by an early trauma of some sort. To be clean, fresh, not dirty, with the right expression and – especially – to be kept pure by the distance of the phone line made more sense and also helped me to accept that, for her, this was the closest intimacy she could handle. I became less judgmental of her choice to work only by phone.

The associations to this dream picture provided a kind of 'third eye' on the consultation. A great deal of space was opened for me to work with Leslie, not in the sense of sharing this experience with her, but in the sense of being able to develop and hold more hypotheses about her and her inner world. I grew open to the idea that 'J' had actually had a dream on behalf of the consultation. I felt identified with the figure of 'J' in the dream, who heard my client's deeply shameful confession and saw the evidence of my client's terrible deed. What was especially important was that 'J' offered her forgiveness and acceptance. Though I had never articulated it, I realized that, as a consultant, I was taking a similar role with Leslie and that 'J's dream provided a further reinforcement for this stance. I felt reaffirmed in my professional role and re-invigorated in my consultation work.

Understandably, I became quite excited about the possibilities for exploring drawings of dreams for future work. In 2005 I invited colleagues from the Netherlands to join me in experimenting with this idea. We met three times from 2006 to 2007. Meanwhile, I held a one-day workshop in Chile and began to organize a group in Germany. In the fall of 2009, I began my doctoral studies at the University of West England with the express goal of developing this methodology. Since then, I have run two one-day workshops in Bristol, U.K. and ran a 4 session workshop in London from September 2010 to December 2011.

Psychoanalysis and Dream Drawing

The value of the drawing of dreams has historical and contemporary support in psychoanalysis. Freud wrote about the Wolf Man's drawing of his childhood dream about wolves, and he also acknowledged that latent content was revealed in the drawings of dreams undertaken by Marcinowski (Hau 2004; Fischer 1957).

Bion (1965) considers the painter's representation of a field of poppies similar to an interpretation of a patient's unconscious material, wherein "the facts of an analytic experience (the realization) are transformed into an interpretation (the representation)" (ibid., 4), whether by patient or analyst. From his perspective, the key aspect of this transformation is that "an experience, felt and described in one way, is described in another" (ibid.).

Bion's notion that the painter's representation transforms the original landscape in the same way that an interpretation transforms analytic material suggests support for the idea that the dream drawer is also transforming unconscious material. Not only is unconscious material made available to the dreamer (and the group), it is being worked on, worked through and elaborated in the course of bringing it into the social arena.

Based on his work with patients' drawings, Charles Fisher (1957), a psychiatrist at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, believes that the act of creating images of one's dream evokes dream images that would otherwise not come to awareness. He writes:

> It is an interesting feature of these experiments that some of the latent content of the dream emerges and becomes evident through the process of drawing the dream. It is very likely that this content would not become evident if the dreams were reported only verbally and not drawn….There is no doubt that because dreams are largely visual in structure the usual purely verbal analysis results in the overlooking of significant latent content (Fisher 1957, 36).

Linda Brakel, a psychoanalyst and faculty member at the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute, proposes that dream drawing be officially integrated into analytic treatment. She compared patient verbal-only reports and associations to their dreams to their verbal associations to drawings of these same dreams. She documents the greater depth of material and detail revealed by the combination of "verbal association and pictorial renderings" (Brakel 1993, 368). In her view this combination provides greater access to the time in the patient's life when pictorial representations were more dominant and thus tap into earlier material that would otherwise not be accessed by purely verbal means. Furth (1998, 12) takes another step when he notes that "pictures from the unconscious represent primitive, raw material taken directly from the unconscious, undeveloped, yet filled with the unconscious content closely connected to the individual's complexes".

Unconscious revealed: Using drawings in consultation and research

In the traditional organizational development field and in the field of Socio-Analytic research and consultation, the use of drawings has proved extremely useful. The risk one takes in using this methodology is client resistance due to a fear of infantilization and skepticism that anything practical can truly be gained by such a methodology. Because one is engaged in an activity associated with childhood, there is a natural fear of regression and of appearing too childish or of revealing something that is better kept private. Very often, the success in convincing a client or research subject to undertake such an activity is based on the existing trust between consultant/researcher and client/subject, perhaps through previous work projects or previous participation in training programs, workshops or group relations conferences. And, because this activity often produces anxiety in the client system (inside and outside the group), the role of the facilitator in explaining the purpose of such an exercise and conducting the intervention in a well bounded and contained way is extremely important (Mersky 2012).

In terms of methodologies, a common assignment is to ask a group to draw a picture of an animal or a machine that represents one's organization (Morgan 1993) or, simply, to make a picture of their organization. One way these drawings are then worked with is as follows (Sievers/Beumer 2006): Finished pictures are mounted and displayed around the room. Each one is explored in depth. The first step is for the drawer to explain the drawing. After initial clarifying questions are answered, group members associate to the picture, while the drawer remains silent. After a period of 15 or so minutes, the drawer

responds and shares his/her reflections. From that experience, a general discussion or set of associations at the group level may take place, facilitated by the consultant or the researcher. Often this is an opening exercise with a group that will subsequently be working at a concrete level in a change management or a strategic planning process (ibid.).

Practitioners and researchers using pictures are trying to elicit material that lies out of awareness and that generally underlies current problems and challenges. Whether approached from the perspective of Jungian analytic art therapy (Furth 1988; Broussine 2008), psychoanalysis (Fisher 1957; Brakel 1993) or Socio-Analysis (Gould 1987; Nossal 2003), bringing "unknown and unconscious material" (Furth 1998, 9) "to the attention of the consciousness" (ibid., 12) is the goal.

In describing the methodology of Mental Maps, where participants are asked to draw a mental picture of their organizations, Larry Gould notes that the idea is "namely, to make unconscious or covert experiences, conflicts and fantasies conscious, and thereby available for interpretation, explication and insight" (Gould 1987, 5-6) and to "elicit previously inchoate, unorganized and/or preconscious assumptions and fantasies, and to give them sufficient form for scrutiny and analysis" (ibid., 3). In order to make this possible, adults are encouraged to playfully regress by drawing, which is in the service of the overall task of bringing this material to awareness. It is the work of the consultant in an ongoing way to help the client group link this material to their organizational reality. This is often done by identifying themes that emerge from the material, by making links between drawings and by offering what appear to be contradictory hypotheses from the data.

At the group level such work offers the possibility to develop a shared understanding of one's organization, as associations to individual pictures become linked with one another and themes begin to emerge in the discussion. Gareth Morgan (1993, 11) finds this a critical advantage. As he puts it:

> The challenges in times of change is to find shared meanings that are themselves in flux, so that people are encouraged to find an intelligent place in the world around them.

A well contained group environment, with a clear task and well bounded facilitation can become a place for creativity and new thinking, as well as a safe environment to experiment with other aspects of one's identity and personality in role. Brigid Nossal (2003) terms such an environment a "'thinking space' where there is openness to sharing and exploring in a different way" (ibid., 3). In this space, which is "characterized by a great deal of individual and collective creativity, and a spirit of playful competitiveness among the participants" (ibid., 6) there is the possibility to explore serious ideas and problems.

Through this kind of playful and creative methodology, complex data (often too complex to completely process at once) emerges. Often contradictory images and deep anxieties

are reflected and participants are awash in the complexities of their organization. One major advantage of working with both visual and verbal data is that "the brain is able to both store and give expression to far more complex data in a visual form, such as a picture, than it is able to do verbally" (ibid., 4). More parts of the brain are stimulated and are also required to sift through what emerges.

There is also an important benefit to focusing on something separate from the individual (i.e. a drawing) as opposed to what is being said at the moment. Once the picture is drawn (as my colleague Martina Joachem noted), it cannot be revoked. One cannot change one's mind and 'take it back'. On the other hand, it leaves the drawer and the group with something that is outside and which all can relate to together. This is termed the "third factor", i.e. the drawing as "a mediating or an intermediary device…[that]…enables the data to be out there in the drawing rather than in the immediate exchange between individuals and in this way it allows difficult material to be explored in a way that is less threatening" (ibid., 7).

That fact that working with drawings helps to "contain the playful as well as the serious" (Vince & Broussine 1996, 17) is well illustrated by the following example from colleague Stephanie Segal:

> It was through my first exposure to her [Virginia Satir] work that I saw how powerful using drawings can be in an organisational role. One of the workshops that I attended encouraged a group of public sector professionals to spend an hour each drawing their work roles. Lots of lovely huge sheets of paper and colourful pens were placed around the room. One of them, a Head teacher, who was feeling very jaded, drew a cruise liner with herself at the helm of the wheel on the top deck with lots of teachers peering out of all the cabin holes. There was not one child in sight. When the facilitator asked the Head teacher what she saw in the picture, she was unable to see the absence of the children (the primary task of the school) and only when others in the group pointed it out, did she realise how managerial and bureaucratic her post had become, why she was disliking it so much and how removed she felt from the children. It was so dramatic and she was very choked. It really was an enormous moving point for her, she eventually resigned as a Head teacher and moved to a position as a locum where she had far more contact with the children which was the part of the work she adored (2007 email communication).

Ultimately, the true value of such a methodology lies in its effectiveness in organizations. Morgan (1993, 9) documents the advantage and the learnings such a request can bring. Perhaps he does not state the case too dramatically when he writes "…imagery can be used to create breakthroughs on organizational problems and find new initiatives in difficult situations".

Access to the unconscious feelings of groups and organizations serve as a prime motivation for the use of drawings in research. Michael Broussine (2008) summarizes the many advantages:

> …the use of art as a research approach enables people to communicate multifaceted information and feelings about their experiences in organizations and other social settings. It legitimises the expression of complex, subtle and possibly irrational facets of organizational experience. This may be important within certain settings where it is 'not done' to give voice to feelings and irrational aspects of life….It is the dialogue, reflection and sense-making that is provoked in an individual or in a group by the production of expressive images that can be as important as the images themselves.

So for those organizations that wish to know more about and make use of the underlying dynamics in their systems, pictures are a well-researched and well documented source of valuable information, and provide a non-threatening and often playful/serious look at what is going on. Documenting these events by taking photos of each picture and perhaps providing a written record of the associations are ways to allow clients/subjects to return to the material again and again over time and to continue their integration of the possibilities and insights.

Dream- and Photo-Matrix with Associations and Amplifications

My work with the drawings of dreams is based on the pioneering work of Gordon Lawrence and his development of Social Dreaming. His critical insight is that dreams have a social meaning and that this social meaning can be uncovered in an environment where association and amplification are possible (the matrix). This idea is a major underpinning of the work on dream drawings. As Alistair Bain points out: "There is a waking life relationship with the Organisation, and a dream life relationship to the Organisation." (Bain 2005, 1) and "…the dreams of members of an organisation contribute to an understanding of that organisation, and its unconscious" (ibid., 5).

Lawrence's work is based on the assumption that people "…live in an ecosystem in which there are linkages that have been unimagined hitherto, that they exist in a 'wholeness' that can be but dimly perceived because of their own experiences of fragmentation" (Lawrence 1999b, 38-39). Through his work and his many publications, he has demonstrated that these disconnected and fragmented parts can be brought to some sort of larger consideration in the work of a Social-Dreaming Matrix and can be made sense of, at least in providing material for possible organizational hypotheses.

The use of Social Dreaming as an organizational intervention to bring about not only consciousness and awareness but also important change is more and more being documented. The work of Burkard Sievers (Sievers 2007) with the Austrian Social Democratic Party and that of Tom Michael (Michael 2007) with a community mental health center in the U.S. are two good illustrations.

Lawrence's pioneering work, developed in conjunction with colleagues from around the world, including Burkard Sievers, has formed the basis for Sievers' own elaboration, the

Social Photo-Matrix. Here the matrix associates to and amplifies thoughts in relation to photographs taken by the participants themselves, often of an organization they have in common, such as a university. They work to create links between photographs. This is an experience that grows in meaning over time. Sievers' innovation emphasizes photos as a collective representation, rather than belonging to the individual. Thus "the photograph – and not the photographer – is the medium of discourse" (Sievers 2008, 235).

The Methodology Itself

For the Social Dream-Drawing workshops, three or four participants are invited to bring a drawing of a dream related to a particular theme. The current theme I am using is "What do I risk in my work?". We sit at a table and follow the same procedure for each dream drawing. The dreamer first describes the dream. Then he/she shows the drawing. Clarifying questions to the dream drawer are asked and answered. For approximately 20 minutes, all participants, including the dream drawer, offer associations and amplifications to the drawing. Very often during this process, the dreamer recalls more original dream material. The drawer then offers his/her reflections on this associative work. We stand up and switch seats for a general discussion relating to the theme, the reflection section. We work on each dream drawing for approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

Free association comes from psychoanalysis and is anything that comes to one's mind in relation to the drawing or the dream material. Rather than the traditional psychoanalytic use of free association as a means to help the individual patient reveal repressed unconscious conflicts, this use of free association here is based on the concept of a group or a system's associative unconscious.

Amplifications are those cultural and political elements that come to mind, such as current events, music, literature and film.

A transcript of each workshop is created. It includes photos of the dream drawings, the dreamer's presentation of the dream and the drawing, the group's associations and amplifications and the reflections on the theme. Such a transcript can be produced in many ways. Sometimes participants rotate the role of taking notes, which produces not necessarily a word by word transcript, but a series of summaries of what is said, such as the transcript from Chile (see below). For my doctoral studies, I have more and more relied on tape recordings, which have been transcribed professionally. This has meant receiving the consent of all participants in advance.

An Example from a one-day workshop

In a recent dream drawing workshop in Chile, C. brought a drawing with images from two different dreams, which he had three days apart:
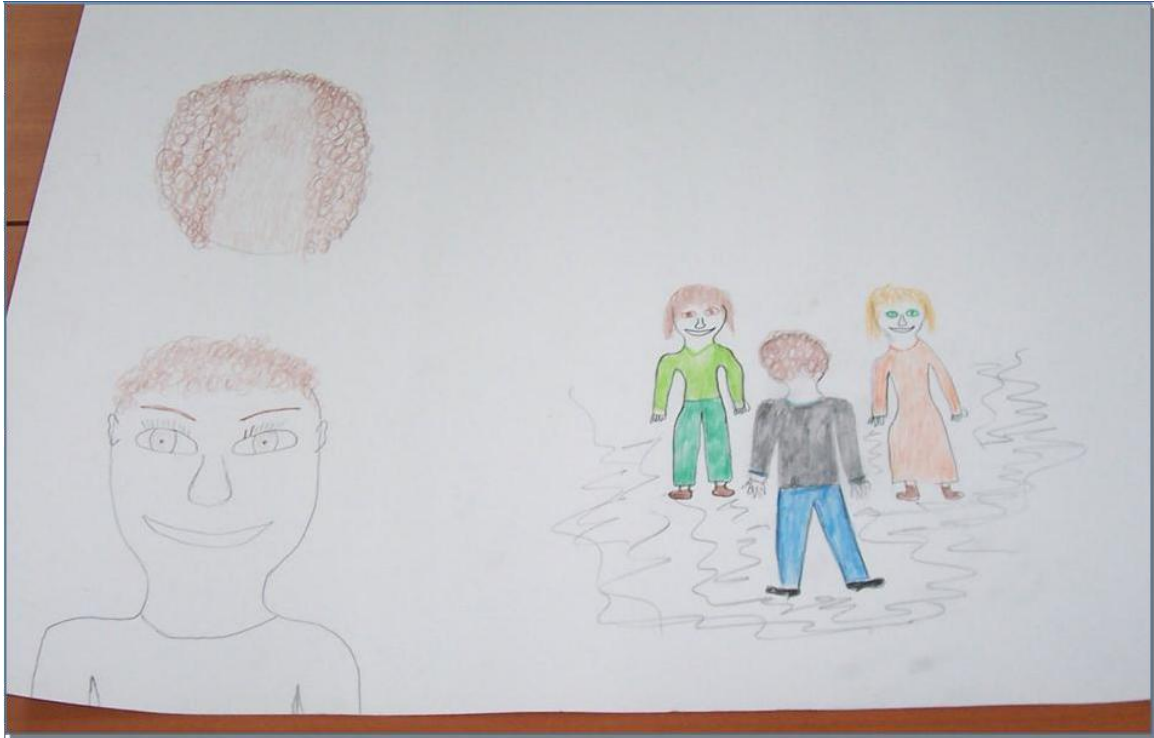
The transcript describes C.'s presentation of his first dream:

> C. depicts a fragment from a dream he had one day after receiving the theme. In the dream the dreamer sees himself facing forward and then from above. He has plenty of hair on both sides of his head and in the front in the middle, but he has almost none, or just fuzz, on the top of his head. When looking at himself head-on, the dreamer could not realize he had lost his hair. This happened only when he looked from above or from behind. The dreamer developed a feeling of anxiety and distress, since he was not able to tell what was happening when looking to himself head-on.

C's second dream:

> The second fragment is related to a dream the dreamer had three days after the previous one. In this dream he sees three women (students of his class), which, at the end of a class, approach him and remark on how interesting the lesson was. While this takes place, he realizes he forgot to put on his belt and his pants are falling down. This generates distress but also an erotic feeling.

C.s immediate association to his first dream and his drawing had to do with "the excess of work and the anxiety it generates". He noted that "baldness is associated with an illness (alopecia) produced by stress, an illness that his father also has" and his anguish about this. His associations to the second dream "refer to a sense of eroticism and the seduction of others, especially women, in his role of professor".

The associations and amplifications of other group members, all of whom were affiliated with the university, noted the connections between the two dreams and their drawings, for example "I see in the drawing the psychopathic behaviors people develop at work. On the one hand one smiles and, on the other, one loses one's hair". The complicated relationship between a young professor and his/her students was also referred to, noting, for example, how "powerfully…stress and eroticism is associated to the concept of a 'good professor' " and that a "Professor's role and advisor's role…promote a seductive and omnipotent role where you can't be yourself".

The dreamer talked of his struggle to connect with his students. His pants are falling down, because he is not absolutely sure if what they are saying is true. In a sense, he does not have the capacity yet to know what to trust and what not to trust.

The group discussion in the reflection session reinforced the dreamer's insights and noted two important risks. One is the risk that work will make one unhealthy, and that one needs to keep a good balance between work and personal life. The other is the risk of being perceived as irrelevant or unable to succeed in a new role. One can feel totally naked in such circumstances.

In a follow-up interview a year and a half later, the dream drawer recognized even more deeply how significant a time this had been for him. What connected the two drawings was his difficult experience of transitioning from clinical to business school professor. Not only was it "…very difficult in terms of the students and how to connect with them" and the "process of finding a role as a teacher". There were also strongly erotic aspects to this work. He felt "trapped…in this seductive role". The drawing of these two dreams and working on them with the group helped him recognize the impact of these two simultaneously difficult experiences.

> So it's complicated because when I had troubles with my role as a teacher, probably sometimes I felt quite lost with the audience. When people just really are out of mind, interested in other stuff, when I teach, probably playing with their mobile, or reading on the computer other stuff, and one has to really fight out, to really get them connected to myself and to the learning process.

From his perspective after the passage of time, he had now made this transition. The work on his dream drawings was for him helpful in recognizing the frightening implications of the stress he was under at the time.

Theoretical Grounding. Practice and Meaning

One key focus of my research, in addition to developing the practice of this methodology and attempting to identify its benefits, if any, is to articulate a theoretical basis for this way of working. I see the value of this methodology – along with the others in this book – as helping participants increase their capacity to think about the difficult realities they are facing, rather than suppressing them or allowing them to be acted out in other ways – and to take actions and make decisions based on these insights. By accessing a group's unconscious thinking using the

stimulus of the dream drawing, participants can be helped to see reality, mourn losses, and work them through.

Accessing unconscious thinking or the associative unconscious of a group takes place by the free associations to the dream and the drawing. Two forms of unconscious thinking, as posited by Lawrence (1999a), are being made available:

    1. Dreaming as thinking
    2. The unthought known

Dreaming as thinking is made available by the dream material brought in by participants, both as they recite the dream and as they show their drawings.

 "The unthought known", originally conceptualized by Christopher Bollas (1987), is defined by Lawrence (1999a) as "that which is known at some level but has never been thought or put into words, and so is not available for further thinking." The individually-created third object (the dream drawing) functions as a catalyst for associations and amplifications, which reveal the unthought known from the unconscious. As one interviewee put it: "The drawing in itself is only the tool that you're using for the exploration".

The reflection section that follows this free association period is where, I believe, participants are able to think about the theme we are exploring, informed by the unconscious thoughts that previously emerged. Here I apply Bion's notion (1988, 179) that thinking is the result of "two main mental developments. The first is the development of thoughts", which I see as arising in the associative processes. The second is the "apparatus to cope with them".

As I see it, the reflection section makes it possible for this apparatus of thinking to undertake its task of transforming the thoughts from the infinite into actual thinking relating to reality, i.e. the chosen theme of "What do I risk in my work?". From Bion's perspective "thinking is a development forced on the psyche by the pressure of thoughts and not the other way around" (ibid.), meaning that we cannot call thoughts into being by the act of thinking, but we can only think once thoughts arise.

Bion viewed these arising thoughts "as if they were objects that had to be dealt with" (ibid., 184). This is because "(*a*)…they in some form contained or expressed a problem, and (*b*) because they were themselves felt to be undesirable excrescences of the psyche and required attention, elimination by some means or other, for that reason" (ibid., 184). In applying this to the Dream-drawing workshop, one could say that the unconscious thoughts that arise are clues to important underlying problems of the dreamer (and perhaps of the group as a whole), and they represent what has been projected as unwanted into the dreamer's unconscious. The work of the Chile group illustrates this. The issues of personal health and the difficulty of connecting with students illuminated by the dreamer were clearly familiar ones to group members, although presumably never previously

articulated amongst them. The 'inside' of the dream was directly relevant to the outside work of the university.

In addition to theorizing about the content of this methodology, I have been focusing on how it is designed and facilitated. This is a methodology designed to access unconscious thoughts and to bring them to the fore, so that they can be thought and eventually acted upon. This process is a delicate and difficult one. Dreamers must feel safe enough in all ways to bring their material forward, and participants must feel sufficiently contained in order to freely offer their associations and amplifications.

A major task of the facilitator is to provide sufficient containment so that the group can undertake its task. To contain and containment are concepts that describe the capacity of any entity to keep within itself parts that arouse anxiety (Nunkevitch 1998). These events are not designed to provide a retreat; we want participation. As they all deal with the infinite, it is not possible to know what will arise. So it is important that the event (which often includes unfamiliar experiences for the participants) is experienced as safe and sufficiently contained. That is the role of the host. We want participants to be able to regress sufficiently to associate, but also to stay to the task (Mersky 2012).

The theme itself is an aspect of the containment and can be identified in advance by the group or separately by the facilitator. One important value of a theme is the containment it provides, which helps the system and participants contain anxiety relating to the regressive associative experience. On the other hand, two participants have raised important reservations about using a theme. One found it too artificial, not relevant to her particular situation and would have preferred that we had developed the theme as a group. For her, it was too sharp a transition between the deep associative work and focusing on the theme. Another participant, who used this methodology with a group he was supervising, felt that a theme might have been unproductive and experienced by group members as an attempt to lead them "in a particular direction". Instead he just asked "How might this relate to our work?", which worked extremely well. So while designed to provide a focus for the learning and discussion in the reflection section, a theme may actually not be necessary, especially when used as an organizational intervention.

I have been very much guided in my work by Socio-technical thinking. The Socio-technical perspective holds that there is interrelatedness between the social and technical components of organizations. The technical components that it most emphasizes are role, primary task, organizational structure and boundaries.

The drawing of clear time and task boundaries is essential in mounting these methodologies, in order that participants experience the leadership as clear, responsible and competent. One can say that there is a direct relationship between the confidence to safely regress creatively and the experience of leadership as taking its role in a clear and competent way.

There is always a task here, which is to help participants individually and collectively better understand what is being experienced as risky in their organizational life. What is required is a group experience, as it is through the associations of group members that a deeper meaning is discovered. Two interviewees eloquently expressed this point:

> When you share it with others, you see it again yourself…and I think seeing it through other people's eyes really struck home and made it very, very powerful.

> I think the richness was sitting there and looking at people's drawing in huge detail and trying to pick out what was in those drawings. You can't do it in isolation.

In fact, it is the depth of understanding that is mentioned over and over again in the interviews. One German participant likened the process to a Russian Babushka doll. "The doll in the doll in the doll. And so the idea that it's going deeper and deeper and deeper." She continues:

> It's looping like the snake, the picture. It's not this working straight on. It's not 'There's the aim and we have to go there in the shortest way and the most optimal possibility'. And that's the part where I can say I feel it like seductive work. You can take the time and loop back and meet an idea or a feeling which you've just found half an hour before or an hour before, and then it comes back and it gets another form. In the group work it's a sort of transformational process. So when we start, ok, that's the dream we hear. That's the first step. But when we ended, the room was wider…And it's like a knapsack, it's getting fuller, with more and more you can carry out and bring home.

Somewhat freed from the immediate experience of the dream, the dream drawer is able to take a role as a member of the group and to offer associations and amplifications. In this way, the drawing lives in two worlds: the world of the dreamer and the world of the group undertaking its task. As such it takes on an important mediating role between the unconscious of the individual and the underlying dynamics of the system. The drawer, as part of the group, can use his/her own capacities for association and thinking.

Concluding Thoughts….

Up to this point, I have been using this methodology with groups of professionals in the same or related professions. The explicit goal has been to provide a transitional space in which they can work on both collective and individual professional issues. One participant has taken this methodology a step further and used it as a sort of organizational intervention with a group of child therapists that he supervises once a month at a community mental health service for children. One participant mentioned that she had had a very vivid dream, so he suggested that they do a session of Social Dream-Drawing. He invited them next time to bring a drawing of a recent dream. Despite some initial doubts, it turns out that "people got an awful lot from that session and were quite taken aback", particularly because they had never expected that so much learning could

come from a drawing of a dream. "They were absolutely stunned about what they came up with" and how the work really made it possible to see a larger "systemic dilemma". The leader felt that it was very effective in revealing to the participants their 'Organization in the Mind', even though they were in many ways very loosely connected to the central organization. "It suddenly opened up a completely different landscape". And they very much enjoyed the experience: "They absolutely lapped it up, to be honest. They got a tremendous amount from it."

I am very gratified to know the potential use of this methodology in systems. From a theoretical basis, I am convinced that this can be a very helpful organizational tool. I have written about how to undertake such an intervention elsewhere (Mersky 2012).

In the course of my experience and research with this methodology, one aspect of it stands out very strongly: the power of the drawing. As one interviewee put it, in describing the process:

> You have the original dream. That goes through a process. And you draw that drawing. Then you make that drawing which is a kind of abstract from your dream, a very special abstract, not just any abstract. Then you go into the group and you know that you are going to work with that picture in a very special way. And these are always these two layers, the very rational thinking, talking about it, understanding, analyzing, in the situation itself….The picture always reminds you of the fact that you can't express everything in words. It's a reminder of that. It's not the fact itself.

From what I have learned in interviewing participants subsequent to these workshops, it seems that dreams are better remembered by their drawings than by their descriptions. When first asked to be interviewed, participants in groups that ended more than a year before usually say that they can't remember anything of the experience. But once they see the drawing again and read the transcript, the experience comes alive. And this time, they and we have the benefit of the passage of time and the ability to look back on the experience from the perspective of what has followed.

What characterizes these experiences is that of having somehow mastered or contained some sort of deep transitional experience, usually professional, but not always. Interviewees comments include: "The process enabled all of us to witness, I guess, a…kind of personal and life transition, for me that was the common theme."; "It's the possibility to bring life and work very close to each other"; "The process started then. It sorted itself out." One participant noted that, as a result of participating in this methodology, he has started to dream more and is "far more aware of my dreams and the richness of them".

Somehow this experience is felt as safe, even for those who were at the time going through a very difficult personal time. One interviewee, who went through a tragic life experience during the 11 month span of the workshop, referred to a "fine line" ("I

couldn't define this fine line. But there is a fine line") between staying to a clear task and regressing deeply into private material, which she did not want to do.

Having the freedom and the authority to choose which drawing of which dream to bring to the group affords a kind of safety for participants. The drawing is always created before the session. The act of drawing and the physical object places the material more 'outside' the personal reality of the dreamer, thus creating a kind of buffer or 'third factor'. And in addition, the structure and process itself, with its focus on a theme relating to work, seems also to provide safety. As one interviewee expressed it:

> It's like you know you have something that's gone through that process and that enables the group which is very clear about ok this is not therapeutic and this is about work and unconscious and we are working in a setting which enables everybody as a person and within a group to work on these issues.

Participants in interviews noted that it is a relatively straight-forward methodology, where the facilitator is present with the group throughout the process. One termed it "An accessible methodology that doesn't feel too frightening". Another observed:

> You didn't make it too complicated…. You just created the space…because it was just a space…with a task, I suppose, but a creative task…What I experienced was enjoying the process…like a small child…nothing else but sitting in the process….a long space just to sit with it.

At the same time, interviewees recognize that facilitation is important. More than one noted the fun that we had together.

So, in conclusion, from the complications of the original dream material, the dreamer attempts a representation of his/her unconscious. And this representation, this third object, is brought into a group setting, with clear boundaries and a clear task. And then we go to work. For those so far who have participated in this "daring experiment" which is "full of surprises", it seems to have been important, memorable and meaningful. As one former participant expressed it:

> This drawing that we have now with the papers I can really see, I experience them, not so actively, but certainly not passive, but as a kind of landmark that you rely on, like the mountain, it's not so close but you know it's there, and it helps you position yourself. That's the place of the sessions in my life and in my work.

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