

1. "At this point I confide my anxieties to the group, remarking that, however mistaken my attitude might be, I feel just this.

I soon find that my confidence is not very well received. Indeed, there is some indignation that I should express such feelings without seeming to appreciate that the group is entitled to expect something from me. I do not dispute this, but content myself with pointing out that clearly the group cannot be getting from me what they feel they are entitled to expect. I wonder what these expectations are, and what has aroused them." (30-1)

2. "It is clear that when a group forms the individuals forming it hope to achieve some satisfaction from it. It is also clear that the first thing they are aware of is a sense of frustration produced by the presence of the group of which they are members....Now, the point that emerges in all the groups from which I have been drawing examples is that the most prominent feeling which the group experiences is a feeling of frustration—a very unpleasant surprise to the individual who comes seeking gratification." (53-54)

3. "I shall now suggest that all facets of behaviour in the dependent group can be recognized as related if we suppose that in this group power is believed to flow not from science but from magic. One of the characteristics demanded of the leader of the group, then, is that he should either be a magician or behave like one. Silences in a dependent group are accordingly either expressions of determination to deny to the leader the material he requires for scientific investigation, and thereby to prevent developments that would appear to undermine the illusion of security derived from care at the hands of a magician, or expressions of worshipful devotion to the leader, as magician—an interpretation will often be followed by a silence that is far more a tribute of awe than a pause for thought." (84-85)

4. "In every group it will be common at some time or another to find patients complaining that treatment is long; that they always forget what happened in the previous group; that they do not seem to have learnt anything; and that they do not see, not only what the interpretations have to do with their case, but what the emotional experiences to which I am trying to draw attention can matter to them. They also show, as in psycho-analysis, that they do not have much belief in their capacity for learning by experience—'What we learn from history is that we do not learn from history'.

Now all this, and more like it, really boils down to the hatred of a process of development. Even the complaint about time, which seems reasonable enough, is only to complain of one of the essentials of the process of development. There is a hatred of having to learn by experience at all, and lack of faith in the worth of such a kind of learning. A little experience of groups soon shows that this is not simply a negative attitude; the process of development is really being compared with some other state, the nature of which is not immediately apparent. The belief in this other state often shows itself in everyday life, perhaps most clearly in the schoolboy belief in the hero who never does any work and yet is always top of the form—the opposite of the 'swot', in fact.

In the group it becomes very clear that this longed-for alternative to the group procedure is really something like arriving fully equipped as an adult fitted by instinct to know without training or development exactly how to live and move and have his being in a group.

There is only one kind of group and one kind of man that approximates to this dream, and that is the basic group—the group dominated by one of the three basic assumptions, dependence, pairing, and flight or fight—and the man who is able to sink his identity in the herd." (88-89)

5. "We shall have to examine these matters more closely when we come to consider W and particularly some specialized forms of work group, but for the present I must leave these aside to consider the complication that has been introduced by the close connection in baD between the leadership of the group and the most psychiatrically disordered member of the group. I do not wish to attempt any solution of the problem of why the group, when left to spontaneous behaviour, chooses as its leader, in baD, its most ill member. It has always been well recognized that this is so, so much so in fact that the great religious leader—and the religious group for obvious reasons is a group in which baD is active and vital—is commonly assumed to be mad or possessed of a devil, exactly as if members of a group with baD in the ascendant felt that if they were not led by a madman, then they ought to be. Indeed one could say that, just as they reject all facts that run counter to the belief that they are all individually looked after by the person or deity on whom they depend, so they reject all facts that might indicate that the leader or deity was sane. The belief in the holiness of idiots, the belief that genius is akin to madness, all indicate this same tendency of the group to choose, when left unstructured, its most ill member as its leader. Perhaps it is an unconscious recognition that the baby, if only we had not become accustomed to associating its behaviour with its physical development, is really insane, and in the baD it is as necessary to have someone who is dependent as it is to have someone on whom to depend." (121-122)

6. "The only point about collecting a group of people is that it enables us to see just how the 'political' characteristics of the human body operate. I have already said I do not consider it necessary for a number of people to be brought together—the individual cannot help being a member of a group even if his membership of it consists in behaving in such a way as to give reality to the idea that he does not belong to a group at all. In this respect the psycho-analytical situation is not 'individual psychology' but 'pair'. The individual is a group animal at war, not simply with the group, but with himself for being a group animal and with those aspects of his personality that constitute his 'groupishness'.
It is necessary for a group to meet in a room because the conditions for study can be provided only in that way." (131)

7. "Only by remaining a hope does hope persist." (151-2)

8. "On the emotional plane, where basic assumptions are dominant, Œdipal figures, as I have indicated, can be discerned in the material just as they are in a psycho-analysis. But they include one component of the Œdipus myth of which little has been said, and that is the sphinx. In so far as I am felt to be leader of work-group function, and recognition of that fact is seldom absent, I, and the work-group function with which I am identified, am invested with feelings that would be quite appropriate to the enigmatic, brooding, and questioning sphinx from whom disaster emanates. In fact terms are sometimes employed, on occasions when my intervention has provoked more than usual anxiety, which hardly require interpretation to enable the group to grasp the similarity. I know of no experience that demonstrates more clearly than the group experience the dread with which a questioning attitude is regarded. This anxiety is not directed only towards the questioner but also to the object of the inquiry and is, I suspect, secondary to the latter. For the group, as being the object of inquiry, itself arouses fears of an extremely primitive kind." (162)

9. "Fear of the basic assumptions, which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by structure and organization, therefore expresses itself in the suppression of emotion, emotion being an essential part of the basic assumptions. The tension thus produced appears to the individual as an intensification of emotion; the lack of structure promotes the obtuseness of the basic-assumption group, and since in such a group the intellectual activity is, as I have already said, of an extremely limited kind, the individual, conforming with the behaviour imposed by participation in the basic-assumption group, feels as if his intellectual capacity were being reduced. The belief that this really is so is reinforced because the individual tends to ignore all intellectual activity that does not fit in with the basic assumption. In fact I do not in the least believe that there is a reduction of intellectual ability in the group, nor yet that 'great decisions in the realm of thought and momentous discoveries and solutions of problems are only possible to an individual working in solitude' (McDougall, 1920); although the belief that this is so is commonly expressed in the group discussion, and all sorts of plans are elaborated for circumventing the supposedly pernicious influence of the emotions of the group. Indeed I give interpretations because I believe that intellectual activity of a high order is possible in a group together with an awareness (and not an evasion) of the emotions of the basic- assumption groups. If group therapy is found to have a value, I believe it will be in the conscious experiencing of the group activity of this kind." (174-5)

10. "All groups stimulate and at the same time frustrate the individuals composing them; for the individual is impelled to seek the satisfaction of his needs in his group and is at the same time inhibited in this aim by the primitive fears that the group arouses.

To recapitulate: any group of individuals met together for work shows work-group activity, that is, mental functioning designed to further the task in hand. Investigation shows that these aims are sometimes hindered, occasionally furthered, by emotional drives of obscure origin. A certain cohesion is given to these anomalous mental activities if it is assumed that emotionally the group acts as if it had certain basic assumptions about its aims. These basic assumptions...appear to be fairly adequately adumbrated by three formulations, dependence, pairing, and fighting or flight..." (188)