

SOCIAL DREAM-DRAWING (SDD)  
PRAXIS AND RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Social Dream-Drawing is a socioanalytic praxis conceived, developed and researched by myself as a psycho-social action researcher. Although it is built upon related praxes, such as Social Dreaming, Organisational Role Analysis and the Social Photo-Matrix, its unique contribution is the work with drawings of dreams done by participants, relating to an identified theme. The theory underlying all of these praxes is that thoughts from the unconscious can be made available to consciousness by the processes of free association and amplification. They can be further reflected upon and then used as the basis for individual professional insight and/or for intervention in organisations.

The theme that I used for four of the five different groups that I worked with is “What do I risk in my work?” and my research goal was to “to evaluate the benefits of this type of developmental methodology for the work of organisational role holders”. The emphasis here is to help them gain greater insight into what they risk in their capacity as role holders and to enhance individual learning and transition in relation to working life. I have worked with twenty-two participants in five different groups in four different countries.

This study is among the first to actually use psycho-social research to demonstrate the value of a socioanalytic praxis. My three major findings are as follows:

1. SDD is a very valuable individual transformative professional learning experience.
2. SDD can contain and support individuals going through major transitions in relation to working and personal life.
3. SDD can help groups identify and explore underlying systemic dynamics.

The dissertation itself is divided into two sections. The first is devoted to the praxis itself, its underlying theory and development. The second focuses on the philosophy, methodology, methods, findings and ethics relating to the action research I undertook. I use the metaphor of the helix to capture my dual consultant/action researcher and psycho-social researcher roles.

The dissertation ends with my reflections on being an older researcher, recommendations for the use of SDD as a professional development tool for professional cohorts and training programs, concerns and cautions about the use of this praxis, and thoughts for possible next steps in using this praxis for organisational development interventions.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In this chapter I will discuss my own professional roots and from there explain at length how I became interested in the use of the drawings of dreams as a way of making available unconscious thinking in organisations. I will define the focus of the research I have undertaken and make note of the metaphor of the double helix, which represents the dual roles of consultant and researcher that I took during the course of my studies. The chapter closes with a few explanatory notes relating to various terms used in this study and the use of translations.

The title of this dissertation (Social Dream-Drawing: Praxis and Research) embodies and expresses the double aspect of this study. Social Dream-Drawing is itself a praxis that I have created and developed, whose purpose is to help organisational role holders gain insight into underlying unconscious processes affecting the way they take up their roles. Its theoretical roots, design and developmental history is described in section 1.2 of this chapter.

Over a period of five years (2007 to 2012), I have been working, as one of my progression examiners put it, “to develop, trial and critically evaluate a new developmental methodology, ‘Social Dream-Drawing’”. What he terms ‘methodology’, I term ‘praxis’ throughout this dissertation, in order not to confuse it with research methodology. In this endeavour, I have worked with five different groups in four different countries to consolidate its design and processes.

My research, as framed by this examiner, is to evaluate the benefits of this type of developmental methodology for the work of organisational role holders. For this

task, I have used a psycho-social approach to undertaking my research, collect and analyse my data and to formulate my findings (See Part II of this study).

For the development of the praxis, I have largely been in the familiar role of organisational consultant, especially in relation to design and facilitation. (Although, to be fair, I have also been in an action researcher role, as I have over time learned from experience and made changes and alterations to the design over time).

In conducting psycho-social research, I had to take up a whole new identity and learn from scratch how such a study should be done. This has been a demanding and challenging undertaking and the learning has been immense. This double-task frame, what I term a double helix, has had significant consequences for the roles that I have taken up in this effort.

### 1.1 Where I am coming from professionally

My professional orientation and experience for over 25 years is in the field of organisational consulting and coaching from a psychoanalytic perspective. This perspective, both as a theoretical frame and a practical guide, posits not that organisations as a whole are patients, but that there are unconscious dynamics in organisations similar to the dynamics in the psychoanalytical dyad. These dynamics lie below the conscious and rational surface of organisations and can be related to, for example, its history (Sievers 2000), its structure and task (Miller & Rice 1967) or how authority is exercised and managed (Hirschhorn & Gilmore 2002).

This perspective takes as its assumption that organisational role holders develop social defenses (Menzies 1960) that help them to deal with the anxiety of organisational life (Bion 1961). These defenses include, but are not limited to, projections (Krantz & Gilmore 1985), basic assumption behaviour (Bion 1961) and enactment (Mersky 2001). There is a further rich literature on this topic on the website of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO).

One way the consultant gains an awareness of these unconscious processes is by way of his or her internal experiences while working there. The challenge is to differentiate one's own personal reactions from those that are induced by the system. Often unconscious dynamics in an organisation are mirrored (parallel process) in the working relationships in a consulting team.

The consultant's work is to help the client become aware of these unconscious processes in order to understand them and eventually work them through in order to function more effectively. Often the 'presenting problem' is discovered to have much deeper roots. A field of study relating to this perspective has evolved from the object-relations-informed group work of Wilfred Bion (1961) and has over the subsequent decades evolved into a very richly informed way of thinking and praxis in organisations (see ISPSO website for more information on this history).

Related to and supporting this work is what is termed the socio-technical perspective, which holds that there is interrelatedness between the social and technical components of organisations. Socio-technical thinkers base their view of the social aspect of organisations very firmly on psychoanalytic thinking, particularly that of

Bion and Klein. Originally developed at the Tavistock Institute in the 1960's (Trist and Murray 1993), it emphasises role, primary task, organisational structure and boundaries. As Krantz (2013:24) puts it: "Technology refers to the tools, processes, and systems that humans discover and develop to get things done".

As an organisational consultant and coach, my work has been deeply informed by these perspectives. The psychoanalytic aspects have enabled me to use my own internal experiences as data about the systems in which I work and to identify and work with what underlies social defensive behaviour. The socio-technical concepts have helped me design workshops, retreats and numerous off-site events over the years.

Since 1988, I have been an active member, paper and workshop presenter, board member, president and director of professional development of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO), which is the major professional society in this field. My consultant training took place at the William Alanson White Institute for Psychoanalysis in New York City in 1990-91.

A key aspect of this perspective is that when one works in an organisation, one thinks of one's clients not in a personal way, but as role holders in a system. How they work together and relate to one another is directly connected to how their roles relate to one another. Organisational role is a key concept. Thus, for example, a conflict between a sales person and a marketing person, which may seem intensely personal, may instead, from this perspective, be understood as representing the larger conflict between their two departments. Those with a certain personal valency towards, for example, paranoia, may indeed exhibit that trait in such a conflict and

benefit from coaching, but it could also be said that this trait is induced by the system itself.

My area of specialty is in the newly evolving area of socioanalysis. In 1999 Alistair Bain 'coined' the term Socio-analysis to describe a field of study based on the principles and concepts of psychoanalysis applied to organisations and society. As he describes it (1999:14), it "combines and synthesises methodologies and theories derived from psycho-analysis, group relations, social systems thinking, and organisational behaviour". Critical to this approach is that the researcher him/herself is an instrument of research and that the researcher's internal experiences provide important data about the researched subject.

Susan Long (2013d:307) has since described socioanalysis as follows:

...a science of subjectivity, devoted to understanding how subjectivity works collectively in groups, organisations and society, recognizing that the collective comes before the individual and that subjectivity and mind are formed and shaped in the social.

With Gordon Lawrence's discovery of Social Dreaming in the early 1980's (Lawrence 1998b), various socioanalytic methodologies have been developed and continue to evolve. What they all have in common is "the intent to access a group's unconscious thinking, whether related to a pre-identified theme or a particular organisational or social issue" (Mersky 2012:20) and to generate data to be later developed into working hypotheses.

In these praxes (see list below) participants bring dreams, make drawings, take photos, write observations, and/or work with small blocks and figures. In all cases,

working with these ‘objects’ opens up creative possibilities to access unconscious dynamics.

There are two parts to their design. The first (‘coined’ by Lawrence as the ‘matrix’ 1998b) consists of offering free associations and amplifications to these objects. This is followed by a reflection period on this experience. Groups can be as small as 3 or 4 or as large as 50. This depends on which praxis one uses. Participants can all be in the same organisation or can come from different ones. See Chapter 2 of this study for a more thorough exploration of the theoretical groundings of Social Dreaming and Social Dream-Drawing.

To date these methodologies include Organisational Role Analysis (Newton, Long and Sievers 2006; Sievers and Beumer 2006; Newton 2013) Social Dreaming (Lawrence 1991, 1998a/b, 1999a, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005; Baglioni and Fubini 2013), Social Dream-Drawing (Mersky 2008, 2012, 2013, 2015), Social Photo-Matrix (Sievers 2007a, 2008, 2013), Organisational Observation (Hinshelwood and Skogstad 2000; Hinshelwood 2013), Role Biography (Long 2006a), Listening Post (Dartington 2001) and Organisational Constellations (Hellinger 1998; Weber 2000).

## 1.2 The origin and ongoing development of the praxis of Social Dream-Drawing

As in psychoanalysis, so in socioanalysis dreaming is of major importance.

Organisational role holders dream about their organisations and their roles. Their dream material is not always just personal, but also collective. As Bain has noted:

“There is a waking life relationship with the Organisation, and a dream life relationship to the Organisation” (2005:1) and “...the dreams of members of an

organisation contribute to an understanding of that organisation, and its unconscious” (ibid.:5).

Gordon Lawrence’s praxis of Social Dreaming is based on this premise. He pioneered the concept of using individual dreams and dream material to illuminate social processes and, with many colleagues, developed the Social Dreaming praxis (Lawrence 1999a).

Lawrence’s insight is that organisations have an unconscious that can be accessed through associations to and amplifications of dreams that organisational role holders share with one another. The ‘container’ in which these dreams are shared and associated to is termed the matrix. The physical space is carefully arranged in arrays of chairs so that participants do not make direct eye contact with one another and are presumably more available for unconscious associations.

Participants in the matrix are invited to share recent dreams. Members of the matrix work with this dream material in two ways. One way is by free association. Free association comes from psychoanalysis and means anything that comes to one’s mind, for example an earlier experience related to the content of a dream, such as an accident or an exam. Very often associations are recent dreams. The other way participants work with the dream material is by offering amplifications. These are those cultural and political elements that come to mind, such as current events, music, literature, and film.

The term that Lawrence uses for those who facilitate Social Dreaming is an unusual one: ‘host’. It is designed to send the message to participants that they are invited to

participate. These hosts 'take' the dreams shared in the matrix, which means that they work to make links between the dream material, identify emerging themes and offer hypotheses that link the dreams thematically and suggest possible underlying meanings relating to the social or organisational context 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 praxis, Social Dream-Drawing.

The first time I recognised the power of the drawings of dreams for my work was in 2003, when I presented a consulting case to a master's class at a German university. My client would only work with me over the telephone (Mersky 2006). She is a very ambitious and successful 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...

After 'J' had this dream, she drew a number of drawings relating to it. She brought four big drawings of this dream to a subsequent class and 'talked' us through them.

One of her drawings is below:



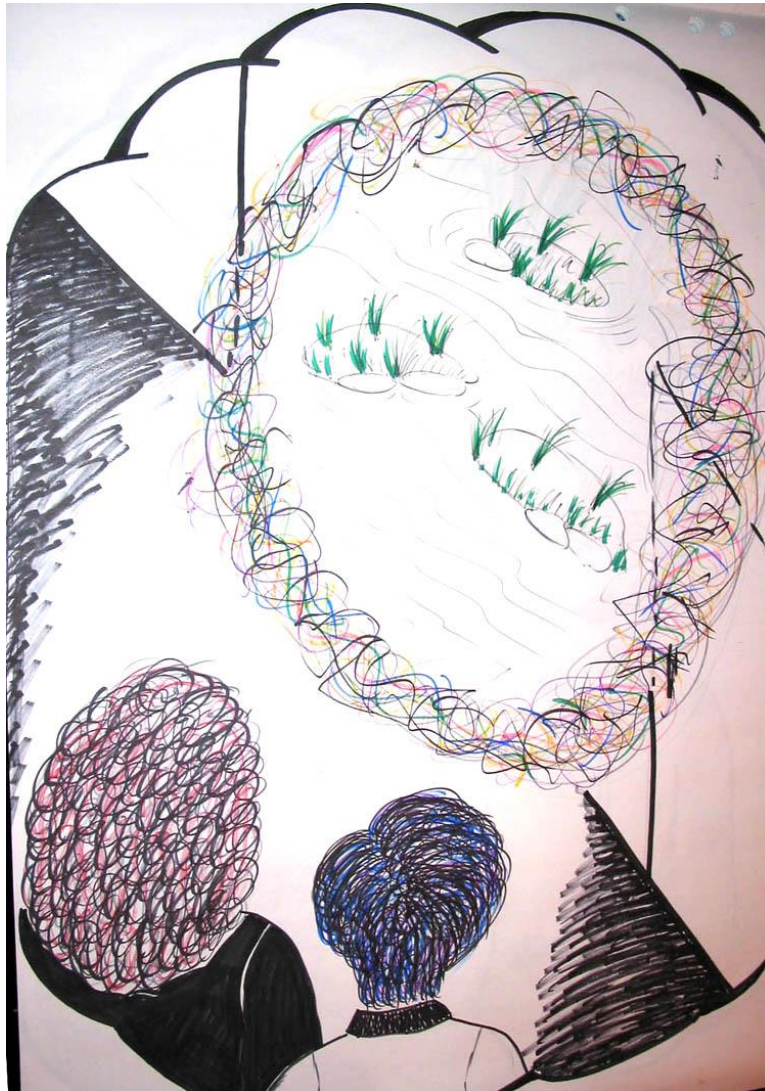


Figure 1 Dream Drawing: Dead Babies in the Mud

The associations by the students and myself 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 manager and, though married, has no children. The drawing of the dream was noted as being 'cleansed' in a certain way, as if 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. She would often discuss preparations for upcoming unstructured situations, where she would be quite visible. 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 more than once been criticised 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 realised 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.

This experience with students at the German university made me quite excited about the possibilities of exploring drawings of dreams for future work. As a very active dreamer myself and as an active participant in many Social Dreaming matrices, I was already convinced of the creative possibilities of working with dreams in organisations. What the student's drawing did was to energise and focus a group in a particular way (although I really didn't understand it then) that Social Dreaming did not. Seeing the drawing as a group and working from the drawing elicited dream material in a very special way. One dream, rather than a series of dreams as in Social Dreaming, contained so much material that could be relevant to consulting.

Based on this experience, I decided to pursue this interest in earnest. From March 2007 through December 2011, I facilitated Social Dream Drawing (SDD) workshops with five different groups in four different countries (Netherlands, Germany, Chile and the UK). In total, I worked with 22 different participants (see Table 1 in Appendix 11).

Appendix 1 (Events: March 2007 through April 2012) of this dissertation is a chart listing each session, who attended, and what documents or data were generated from each event. Each participant has been given a coded identity. These codes begin with the country in which the workshop was held (i.e. N = Netherlands and L = London). The number that follows indicates the order in which this participant appears in the first transcript of the first session. This chart also includes the dates of interviews and

their corresponding data. I will be referring to this document (Events Chart) throughout this dissertation.

The history of my work with these groups begins after I moved to Germany in 2005. Wanting to develop a way of working with the drawings of dreams, I contacted a close colleague in the Netherlands and asked her to help me get together a small group of related colleagues to help me explore this interest in dream drawings. She invited a colleague of hers, with whom she was entering into a working partnership. I invited two former students of ours, who were participants in a professional development program I co-directed in Germany. Another participant, who had taken a previous workshop with me in Amsterdam, asked to be included. In total, there were 6 of us, although we didn't always meet with the entire group. In all we met three times (23 & 24 March 2007, 17 November 2007, and 29 March 2008). The first two sessions were held in Haarlem at the office of my close colleague (N3). The last was held in Amsterdam, in the home of one of the participants (N1).

### Phase one: The Development Stage

At the beginning this was just an experiment. The only model that I had for working in groups with dreams was Social Dreaming, however, there is a related praxis called Organisational Role Analysis (Sievers & Beumer 2006; Newton, Long and Sievers 2006), which is structured differently, and I adapted this praxis to working with drawings of dreams.

In Organisational Role Analysis, participants are asked to think about their role in an organisation and how it is influenced by personal and organisational forces. They are

asked to make a drawing, using a template explained by the facilitator. The facilitator works in small groups and focuses the group work intensively on one drawing at a time. After each drawing is presented, participants offer free associations and amplifications. There follows a time for reflection on the drawing.

Essentially I copied this design for my experiment and gave this new praxis the working name of Social Dream-Drawing (SDD throughout this document).

In retrospect, I consider this work in the Netherlands as the first of three phases of development of the praxis, the Development Phase. Each person was asked in advance to bring a drawing of a recent dream that they would like the group to work on. At that time, I did not specify a theme or say how recent the dream needed to be. The two days that we worked were designed around working in depth with each dream drawing, following the same procedure with each one. The process was very simple.

- Step 1: Each person shows the drawing and explains the dream (10 minutes).
- Step 2: All of us (including the dreamer) offer free associations and amplifications (20 minutes).
- Step 3: We reflect on the experience as a group (20 minutes).

This first session engaged the participants. We were able to make meaningful work, even from the sparsest of drawings:

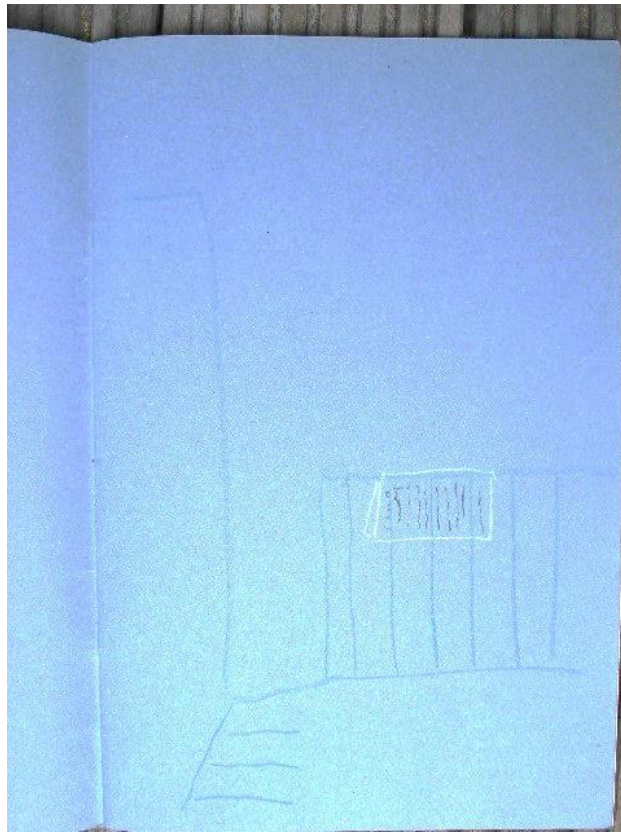


Figure 2 Social Dream-Drawing: The bannister

What I and others saw from this experience is that something very interesting can be gleaned. For example, our associations and reflections on the above dream drawing by N4, helped the drawer to recognise the connection between a very unstable staircase and the instability of her current work situation, which was to help to renovate old structures in Amersfoort.

We agreed to meet again.

In order to focus more particularly on our work roles, I decided to propose a theme for the second meeting. The theme I chose was ‘What do I risk in my work?’, which ultimately became the theme for the subsequent Chilean, German and London groups. I chose this theme for two reasons. Firstly, it asks a question, which opens up

the possibilities for exploration. Secondly, the word 'risk' invites the participants to consider those current conflicts or problems that the dream work might help to illuminate.

Using this theme, the second session (Event 2) did have more of a focus and produced the only dream drawing from this group that became part of my data analysis and findings (See Finding 1, Chapter 8). The consensus was that using a theme was an improvement. Despite my conviction that the 'risk' theme could be used again, I accepted the suggestion of another group member to use a different theme for what turned out to be our last session (Event 3). His theme was: 'Drawn by the Dream: Mysterious Details from the Unconscious Storyteller'.

Although I found this theme a bit too intellectual and abstract, in the spirit of collegiality (and because I was still experimenting), I agreed to it. I would say it didn't work at all well. I think, in retrospect, this would be an excellent title for a paper about the drawings of dreams, but not as a work theme for such a group. In fact, instead of this third session being one of collective work, conflicts broke out openly in the group (particularly in relation to male/female dream images and ways of working). I presented the last drawing of the day, and by then we were all very tired. Participants criticised my drawing for having too many details (they likened it to a children's game board) and found it too difficult to work with. It was a sobering and disappointing end to this work together.

Another design change made during this period was the effort to record the associations and reflections and to create a transcript of the work. At the second session, my supportive colleague (N3) and myself took notes of what was said, and

subsequently I created a summary, which included photos of the drawings. While not systematic, this was the very first Social Dream-Drawing transcript produced (Data Item 2a in Events Chart, Appendix 1).

In the third and last session, I organised a more systematic process of recording by asking members to rotate the role of recorder, so that each dream drawing was recorded by hand by a participant. After the session, these notes were sent to me and from them I created a transcript, which I distributed to everyone in the group (Data Item 3a in Events Chart, Appendix 1).

At this time, we did not know how sick one of our members was. This member was the key colleague who helped me to organise this group (N3). She died within two months after this third session. I had lost this key support and a good friend and colleague, and it was very difficult for me to, on the one hand, mourn her loss and, on another hand, continue with this work. In addition, the Netherlands participants did not want to meet again, so we never had an opportunity to process the experience and the praxis. Despite that, however, they were essentially positive and supportive of this work, and this was confirmed in the follow-up interviews that I did with two of them (Events 8 & 16).

The pain of the loss of my dear colleague and its connection to the praxis of SDD was very difficult to overcome, and I was very much helped to work this through by my German work supervisor, a colleague whom I turned to in order to process this experience. I gradually developed the strength to continue the dream drawing work without feeling I was somehow betraying my deceased colleague. I resumed this work in the fall of 2009.



I began to reflect on the role that my colleague had taken to support me in the first experiments. She had enough faith in me to take an active role in organising and holding the session at her office in Haarlem. Because of that I was able to 'hold' the concept of the work and feel free to experiment with it. On the other hand, because she and I both took the role of participant and both brought dream drawings, there was no figure who really contained the whole event. I think this partly accounts for the conflicts in the third session. Based on that experience and also on my growing self-confidence with the praxis, I decided to take the role of facilitator from then on and not to bring my own dream drawings to the sessions. This decision was confirmed in my subsequent interview with one of the Netherland's participants (N6; Event 8):

R: I've learned a lot about the methodology. For example, I don't bring my drawings any more. I take the role of facilitator. I felt with that last group there were difficult dynamics....And it needed more containment, more holding (reconstructed)

N6: I'm glad that you mentioned it. That made it hard. Your not being the facilitator, not so much confusion. Where is the centre? It made it more complicated....

R: That was a really important lesson learned.

N6: We learn one way or another.

### Phase two: The Establishment Phase

At the beginning of 2009, I began to organise another Dream-Drawing group, this time in Germany. Despite the language problems this would entail, I had a number of colleagues who were interested, and I thought this would be a relatively low-risk way to keep working on this idea of mine. Little did I realise that in the process of organising this group, I would decide to undertake doctoral studies at UWE, which

would have SDD as its focus. This decision came about after co-facilitating a workshop in Bristol in February 2009 and meeting with the then director of the Centre for Psycho-Social Studies, Paul Hoggett. Having already published a number of articles and having always done my own research, I was longing for the opportunity to develop this praxis with the support of a research community. The program at UWE seemed ideal, and I began my studies there in October 2009.

Before my official matriculation, I held an introductory session with the group of four German colleagues who agreed to participate in a set of three Social Dream-Drawing workshops, held at my home in Solingen. The decision to use this praxis as the topic of my doctoral studies dramatically influenced the work with the German group. It was no longer a low-risk event. It was to become part of my research. At the introductory session, they all agreed verbally that I could use our work together for my Ph.D. studies.

As to the workshop itself, I designed an introductory session, in order to explain to the participants the format of the praxis, seek their consent to use the material for the university and to, in a sense, prime them for the future work by asking them to each make a drawing. I set as a task that, after sharing the drawings, we would, as a group, identify a common theme. While the discussion of these drawings was lively, it was not possible to achieve any kind of consensus on a suitable theme. One participant complained that it was just too difficult a task to ask the group to undertake, because “the cover we opened has now quickly to [be] reduced into one single concept” (Data Item 4c in Events chart, Appendix 1). As a result, I decided to stick with the theme I knew best and liked very much, i.e. ‘What do I risk in my work?’. I used this theme with all the subsequent groups in this study, with the exception of Bristol (Event 7).

Beginning with the first German session (Event 4), I took the role of facilitator, and I instituted the process of record keeping used in the last session of the Netherlands group. I also added two more formal components to the design. The first component was the opportunity for participants to ask clarifying questions of the dream drawer after the presentation. This is a component of Organisational Role Analysis, and it often yields important information. The second change to the praxis was to give the dreamer a chance to respond to the associations, before turning to a group reflection on the theme. This innovation became very important in the design, because the dream drawers were often astonished at the associations and amplifications, which often opened up so much new material for them. In addition, this opportunity for the dream drawer to respond led to very rich discussions among the group.

So, to summarise, the design of SDD was now the following:

- Step 1: Each person shows the drawing and explains the dream (5 to 7 minutes).
- Step 2: Participants ask clarifying questions of the dream drawer (3 to 5 minutes)
- Step 3: All of us (including the dreamer and myself) offer free associations and amplifications (15 to 20 minutes).
- Step 4: Dreamer responds to free associations; discussion follows (5 to 10 minutes)
- Step 5: We reflect on the theme (15 to 20 minutes).

The loss of my supportive Netherlands colleague was still with me. As the stakes were much higher now, I felt insecure about conducting this group on my own. To address this, my UWE supervisors suggested I create a role (Process Consultant) to support me at these sessions and invite a colleague to take up this role at each session. I wrote the following description of the role:

1. To help Rose process the experience of the meeting, dynamics in the group, how she took her role, what came up in the PC's role that could be projections from the group.
2. Support Rose during and after the session, so that she can focus on the meeting and knows that the PC is available to help her with her learning and her tasks.
3. Help Rose develop the methodology by observing what actually happened in the group and thinking about it with her.

In conceiving of this role, I thought carefully about the boundaries of participation in the sessions. On the one hand, like myself, the process consultant did not bring his or her own dream drawings to be worked on. At the same time, I wanted the process consultant, like myself, to participate by offering associations and amplifications and reflections, when appropriate. They had a kind of dual role, i.e. participant and observer. The group was told in advance about the role, and permission was given for such a figure to be present.

I was very fortunate to have two English-speaking German colleagues take this role with this group (one was at the first session and another was at the last two sessions). Another colleague in the UK took up this role with the London group. It was a great support and supplemented my learning in key ways. For example, in addition to participating with associations during the course of the sessions, one process consultant took copious notes, which we reviewed after each session. He particularly noted those points where I may not have fully understood the specific German language meaning of a phrase or a word. One example is the word “ekelhaft”, which was an association to a dream drawing that included apples. This word means “disgusting”, and my consultant felt it was important that I know that, because to his mind this strong word was an important ‘clue’ to a deeper meaning of this dream. There were other examples relating to German fairy tales that he illuminated for me. In each case, he used his own professional judgment as to what might be important

for me to realize from the session in relation to the dream material and the associations.

Shortly after the introductory German session, I was invited by a colleague in Santiago, Chile to offer a half-day Social Dream-Drawing workshop at the business school of the University of Santiago. This workshop took place on 2 November (Event 5), and used the theme of risk. The system for recording was slightly different. This time a student who had not brought a dream took the notes and created a summary, which was ultimately in English and Spanish (Data Item 5a in Appendix 1; also see chapter 6 for more detail on data collection). In this workshop, three dream drawings were presented and the design was the same as in Germany. The only change, which was temporary, was to co-facilitate this workshop with a senior colleague, who provided the kind of support (including translation support) that I received from my Netherlands colleague and my two German process consultants.

Another chance opportunity came my way in February 2010, when the instructor of the course at UWE (Researching the Unconscious) invited me to hold a Dream Drawing session with my fellow course participants (Event 7). In this case, we used a theme suggested by one of the students, but the general design was the same as with the German group (a more extensive description of this session, along with the interesting findings they provided are in Chapter 8 of this study).

### Phase Three: The Establishment Phase

My supervisors strongly recommended that I organise a group of native-speaking English participants. This prompted me to accept the offer of a colleague to organise such a group in London. These sessions took place at a professional institute, where three of the four participants were themselves doctoral students. My colleague took the role of Process Consultant, similar to the role in the German group. I used formal consent forms for their permission to use this experience in my studies (see Appendix 2). Again, I used the theme ‘What do I risk in my work?’.

By this time, I had given much more thought to the order of events in the workshop itself. Previously I had invited each dream drawer to show the dream drawing and tell the dream at the same time. For this group, however, I decided to change this procedure. I asked each one to first tell the dream and then show the picture. My rationale for this change was to stimulate the visual imagination of the participants themselves before seeing the drawing. I felt that this would lead to a more intense interest in the dreamer’s visual representation. In addition, it would create a boundary between the two mediums, i.e. the verbal telling and the drawing, and pique our own visual imagination and curiosity.

The final design thus became:

- Step 1: Each person tells the dream (3 to 5 minutes)
- Step 2: Each person shows and explains the drawing (3 to 5 minutes)
- Step 3: Participants ask clarifying questions of the dream drawer (3 to 5 minutes)
- Step 4: All of us (including the dreamer and myself) offer free associations and amplifications (15 to 20 minutes).
- Step 5: Dreamer responds to free associations; discussion follows (5 to 10 minutes)
- Step 6: We reflect on the theme (15 to 20 minutes)

During the course of the London workshops (Events 11, 12, 13 and 17) the design stayed the same, although I made a number of small changes. After working so intensively in the free association and amplification stage, I thought we needed some way to make a clear shift to the task of reflection. One of my UWE supervisors suggested standing up and changing seats, which we did in London. It was very helpful and continues to be part of the design. Also the London participants very much liked the fact that I wrote the schedule of the workshop on the blackboard each time. It gave them the sense that I was well organised and increased their security, especially when I consistently adhered to the time boundaries.

Regarding the design of future workshops, I received further suggestions. My London process consultant suggested that it might be advantageous if fewer dreams are worked on in the first session, so that people can easily familiarise themselves with the praxis and the time pressure is not so great. My German work supervisor also suggested that it is important that the sessions not be spaced too far apart, so that a sense of groupness between participants can develop.

Since the London group ended and thus my research groups were over, I have subsequently held SDD workshops in South Africa (May 2013), Oxford, U.K. (June 2013) and Amsterdam (June 2014). In discussion with my Oxford co-facilitator, we realised that those dream drawings that were freshly drawn and drawn after the theme was announced led to the most vibrant and intense work. Those dream drawings of recurring dreams or an important dream from the past or a drawing made with the group did not lead to such richness. He recommended that from now on I should only accept for this work dream drawings that were drawn after the

participants hear of the theme. I instituted this new requirement for the workshop held in Amsterdam, and it was a real improvement.

### 1.3 The focus of my research

The process of clearly formulating my research questions was difficult, because the first years of my studies were devoted to developing the praxis, and I wasn't sure what research question would be appropriate. At various times during this period, I became interested in certain questions. At one point, for example, I wanted to explore the question of whether people could dream 'for' a context, i.e. a particular theme (I explore this topic in chapter 4 of this study). Another area of interest was to compare this evolving praxis (SDD) with other socioanalytic ones. Because I was holding groups in different countries, I was interested at another point in exploring the cultural differences as they related to the praxis. However, I abandoned this question when I concluded that the praxis was sufficient in and of itself for its own study. Finally, and ultimately most importantly, I wanted to see if I could demonstrate that this praxis had a value for individual learning and transition in relation to working life.

This last question was difficult to formulate. As I noted in my reflexive journal on 27 February 2010:

AMC [one of my supervisors] stated in last supervision (Feb 2010) that if I want to demonstrate that this methodology has led to actual changes in an organization, then I have to do some checking in the organization. This was a profound statement to me, because it meant I would have to open up my inquiry much more broadly than I wanted.

This proposal really forced me to think deeply about what I wanted to demonstrate with my research. My strategy from the very beginning was to focus narrowly on the



praxis itself, which I have ultimately done. It was my experience that the other socioanalytic praxes, with which I was very familiar, while always good experiences, lacked a certain rigor in terms of how they were facilitated and organised. I wanted to illuminate them through the development of my own. I also recognised that there was a lack of any articulation of the value of these praxes to clients and organisations, and that they risked being seen as pleasant experiences, but basically irrelevant to organisational change. However, interesting as this was, I decided that questions of organisational intervention were always beyond the scope I had imagined (see Chapter 10 for a suggested formulation on this praxis as an organisational intervention).

At my progression exam on 15 November 2011, one of my examiners, Peter Simpson, offered the following formulation of my research goals:

1. to develop, trial and critically evaluate a new developmental methodology, 'Social Dream-Drawing'
2. to contribute to existing literature in the field by critically evaluating the theories that underpin this and related developmental methodologies
3. to explore the principles that underpin the effective design and facilitation of such developmental methodologies
4. to evaluate the benefits of this type of developmental methodology for the work of organisational role holders

What makes this research special and different from what has gone before is that it is the first complete research undertaken of any socioanalytic praxis that demonstrates the true value that such an experience can offer (see Chapter 8 Findings). On the basis of my research, practitioners interested in using this praxis will know how best to design and facilitate it. In addition, they will know for which participants this praxis has a value and perhaps for those it would not be recommended (see Chapter 10: Generalisations and Conclusion). Articles that I have published during the course of this research contain details about how to design, facilitate and make use of this

praxis (Mersky 2012) and also articulate the epistemological basis for this praxis (Mersky 2015). Thus, this work and what has developed out of it can be of very practical help to those working with clients to enhance individual learning and transitions in relation to working life.

A second special consequence of this research is that what I have demonstrated can also be applied to related socioanalytic praxes, such as Social Dreaming and Organisational Role Analysis (see Chapter 10: Generalisations and conclusion). Because this praxis utilises a very similar ‘technology’ (e.g. free association, amplification, reflection), the consultant can generalise from the findings of this study to these other praxes, and consider which would be the most appropriate to recommend in which situations.

Thirdly, when organisational consultants have been asked to help an organisation with a persistent and difficult problem, they now have a language and a rationale to articulate the value of these sorts of praxes. They can articulate a theoretical basis for their value and also can refer to this study (and my related publications) in order to be guided in how to facilitate these praxes. This helps bridge the communication gap with clients that might otherwise be concerned or sceptical of such approaches to organisational change.

#### 1.4 The double helix: The ongoing relatedness between the consultant role and the researcher role

When I began my doctoral studies in 2009, I had no previous experience as a researcher. I had published a number of articles and book chapters, but I had never engaged in academic research. Thus I started from scratch and from a deficit,

because I was strongly self-identified as an organisational consultant with a psychoanalytic approach, specialising in socioanalysis.

I was not accustomed to looking at professional literature with a critical eye, much less in pursuit of knowledge related to my own research goals. In order to undertake my studies, much of the literature I had ‘grown up’ on had to be critically evaluated in light of this new role, and new forms of literature had to be incorporated. I not only learned from scratch a series of research methodologies intellectually, I was also learning by practice.

I experienced many internal dilemmas related to gradually taking on the role of researcher, but gradually I was able to integrate both roles in myself and better understanding how and where they are appropriately utilised. I mobilised my role as practitioner in developing the praxis, but took my new role as researcher in researching what the participants gained or learned from the experience. This certainly complicated the process, because I was researching a praxis that I myself was developing as opposed to a praxis (e.g. Social Dreaming) that was developed by someone else AND I was developing the praxis during the time of my doctoral studies.

Broadly speaking, my primary work in the first few years of my studies was to develop and improve the praxis of SDD in very practical ways. I developed this praxis, adapting learnings from one session to the next, continually using the data from one workshop to improve the praxis for the next. Although I was primarily in the role of organisational consultant, I was also in the role of action researcher. Using a recursive process, which I term psycho-social action research, I undertook what

Reason and Bradbury (2006) have termed “an emergent form of inquiry” (349), using my work with others to improve and consolidate the design. This work is reflected in Research Goals #1, 2, 3 (see above). For Research Goal #4, my role was totally as a psycho-social researcher.

Throughout the entire period of my studies, therefore, I was working in two roles. Being 64 years old when I began my studies and having worked as a consultant for the previous 25 years, I was no beginner in terms of the role of developer of the praxes. However, I was a complete beginner in the role of researcher. This extreme contrast in roles (i.e. expert and beginner) was very difficult to integrate and separate. After my very first UWE seminar, on the way to the parking lot, I managed to stumble up a set of concrete stairs, an action that has served as an ongoing metaphor for this experience.

This helical research experience also created problems for me in relation to the university. That my way of proceeding did not match the university’s expectation became very clear at the progression exam, which was held on 14 November 2011. At that point in the process, according to the examiners, I should have used many more research methods and used them correctly. I was ‘exposed’ for not having done that sufficiently (see Chapter 9 for a further discussion of this experience). However from my own side, I was completely on track, as my focus had been almost entirely on the development of the praxis. This first ‘face to face’ experience of the university at large was very difficult. As I wrote in my reflexive journal on 5 January 2012:

Somehow it is also about separating from my supervisors and making my own way. Somehow like being a cancer patient managing one’s own treatment. This is the challenge: how to match my process with the demands of the university.

In addition, each role (consultant and researcher) has its own separate ethical issues. In my case, I wasn't just transitioning from the consultant role to the researcher role. I was instead taking both roles at the same time, one intertwined with the other. And they weren't always very neatly separated. For example, in the role of the consultant developing the praxis, I was also taking a research role, in evaluating each time how to improve its design and my facilitation. In the role of researcher, I had to contend with my own consultant ambitions in attempting to keep a neutral as possible research stance. This had implications in terms of the ethics of this study, as explored in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

This dilemma was particularly acute when I was in the role of interviewer. In the course of undertaking organisational diagnosis, for example, I had been taught to explore and build on the responses of those I was interviewing in creative ways during the interview process. As a researcher, however, one must, while certainly taking account of the themes being discovered, maintain a structure and a clear set of questions that are used consistently with each interviewee. Also, as interviewer, it was not always easy for me to maintain the role of studying the methodology, as opposed to selling it. This made it complicated for the interviewees as well. As I wrote in my research diary on 17 January 2012:

As I read the interviews I could see how much I was a consultant and not a researcher. As a consultant, one does put words into people's mouth', one does attempt to relate, to understand to try to help people put things together, to make sense. That is the role. But that is not the researcher role. And I must, in doing these interviews in a better way, try to make this role transition properly.

Hollway & Jefferson's free association narrative interview (2009a:39-53) was for me a very new method. Although I had carefully read the literature on this method and

had reviewed it with my supervisors, my first few interviews were quite compromised. As I wrote in my reflective journal on 4 March 2010:

I'm pretty sure I totally botched my role...I tried to do what you are supposed to do, which is to get back to the direct experience. That was good. But I asked him leading questions and yes and no questions. He was trying very much to help me and to say something positive.

This was confirmed in the progression exam. As I wrote on 17 January 2012:

I realise that all my interviews to date are absolutely not correct. I was introducing my own experiences, putting words into people's minds and generally not doing it correctly. I was more having a conversation than doing an interview.

This double role mixture also led to the doubts that I had about my capacity to do data analysis. My investment in the success of the methodology could certainly influence those whom I interviewed. As I wrote in my reflexive journal on 3 November 2012:

As I go through...[L3's] dream transcript now, I think to myself: am I only picking up on the details that match my previous hypotheses, i.e. transitions and natural phenomenon? I really don't know if I am allowing other possibilities to surface.

Throughout my studies, it was difficult for me not to insert my own professional ambitions and insecurities. On the one hand, I hoped it would be a successful praxis, but on the other hand I was often very reluctant to take much credit for what I was doing, and to describe the impact of my work. This was noted very often in the feedback from my supervisors.

During the course of my supervision, my supervisors validated both of my identities, which was extremely helpful. Not least, being validated in my consultant identity helped me gain the confidence that I could take on my new research identity. At times I felt I was betraying my original professional roots in taking on the researcher

identity. One supervisor noted “themes of betrayal, loyalty, separation and transition evoked by this – from your old to your new intellectual home and role. The learning has been conflictual and painful, beyond the usual PhD process of having to stick with ‘un-knowing’”. This was an issue that I explored in depth in the Role Consultant workshops held in Bristol. This group, my ongoing supervision and the entire reflexive process served as the glue that held this role spiral together.

This is related to a larger theme of the integration of my researcher role with my current professional role and identity. I have found this process really difficult, but it has ultimately led to a much wider set of possibilities for me that was not possible earlier. Now I could develop not just new ‘thinking’, not just new ‘knowledge’, but new theory. As I noted in my reflexive journal of 9 September 2012: ...“developing a new theory is an act of separation...” This possibility was especially vivid in the spring of 2012, as recorded in this journal entry of 19 April 2012, after a meeting with my German supervisor:

Ellen made an interesting comment about me doing my doctoral work, in that it now forces me to separate from ISPSO. And I guess that’s really right. It forces me to grow up and not just be connected to and dependent on the thinking there. Last night I dreamt that Jim Krantz had died. He had been having a difficult time in some foreign country getting a visa, and he died. In the dream I was absolutely heartbroken and very, very sad. There was also a scene where a priest was outside the door of his church, hitting against the thin outside walls with saints on them. And in fact he hit them so hard that they fell over. But he was in a dangerous, fighting zone at the time and didn’t even seem to notice it.

### 1.5 Explanatory notes

Together, my supervisors and I struggled to figure out how to organise this dissertation to reflect what we eventually called the ‘double helix’ of these two

intertwined and spiralling roles and sets of tasks. Both roles throughout the process were intertwined, but each role involved a different identity and task.

Therefore, this dissertation is organised to help the reader keep separate these two processes, i.e. the development of the praxis (Part I: Theory and Praxis, which is related to research goals #1, #2, and #3) and the Research on the Praxis (Part II: The Research, which is related to research goal #4).

In order to orient the reader to this document, I would like here to clarify certain terms and abbreviations. For the purposes of this thesis, the terms ‘methods’ refer to the particular tools that I used as consultant and as researcher. In my consultant role, the methods that I used included drawing, free association and amplification. In my researcher role, the methods that I used included free association interviews, tape recording, videography and transcript/video analysis. For the purpose of this thesis the term ‘methodology’ refers only to the researcher role and specifically to the way that I undertook the research. The term ‘praxis’ refers to Social Dream-Drawing and other related ways of working, such as Organisational Role Analysis and Social Dreaming. Social Dream-Drawing itself is abbreviated as SDD throughout.

For the two workshops held in non-English speaking countries (Germany and Chile), native speakers did the translations to English. Excerpts from two German books were translated by myself, with the expert supervision of my native-German speaking husband. The English transcripts (London group) were professionally transcribed by a transcriber affiliated with UWE. All of the interviews were held with English speakers and professionally transcribed by this person.



In summary, I have used this introductory chapter to give the reader some idea of the intellectual and professional world from which I come, some of the challenges of taking on the role of researcher in a related field and explicit details about the praxis of Social Dream-Drawing, which is the focus of this study. As I have indicated, this study has involved both the development of the praxis and researching the praxis. This two-pronged focus is reflected in the structure of the dissertation as follows. Part I (Chapters 2 to 4) focuses on the praxis itself, i.e. the theory behind its design, the collective unconscious and the theory behind the use of drawings. Part II (Chapters 5 to 8) focuses entirely on the research that I undertook. In the next chapter, the first of three relating to the praxis, I focus on the theories of dreaming relating to the development of thoughts. It is these unconscious thoughts that form the material for reflection and insight in SDD.

## **Part I: THEORY AND PRAXIS**

### **Chapter 2: Theory Behind the Praxis of Social Dream-Drawing (SDD)**

Having described the details of the development of the praxis of SDD from its very beginnings in the introduction, in this chapter I will turn to the theoretical bases for the praxis of Social Dream Drawing (SDD). Because SDD is essentially based on the concept that the unconscious is a source of thinking that can be used for organisational learning, the first part of this chapter (2.1 Theories of dreaming in relation to thinking) will focus on the history of theories on dreaming and the notion (largely beginning with Bion) that dreaming produces unconscious thinking.

Essential also to SDD is the notion of the collective nature of dreams, so in the second part of this chapter (2.2 Dreaming as a collective experience), I will trace this historically and discuss the contemporary work of Gordon Lawrence and Social Dreaming.

In laying out these theoretical underpinnings, I am using a set of theories primarily, but not exclusively, psychoanalytic and/or psychoanalytically derived. I draw particularly from the thinking of Freud, Jung, Klein and Bion. On the one hand, while this praxis has evolved from other similar methodologies, particularly Social Dreaming, this study endeavours to provide a theoretical grounding for this particular praxis (Social Dream-Drawing), much of which could be applied to other Socio-Analytic methods (see Chapter 10: Generalisations and conclusion).

At the same time, although this praxis is similar to others, this study highlights the way it brings together many concepts and ideas that are not usually connected, i.e. psychoanalysis and organisational consultation; passion and reason; psychoanalytic

patient and organisational role holder; mother and workshop facilitator; dreaming and drawing; thinking and drawing. This chapter explores in turn each of these aspects.

## 2.1 Theories of dreaming in relation to thinking

As the praxis of SDD is based primarily on the dream material of participants, my theory of dreaming is central to how I conceive it, how it is designed and how I conceive of its potential value to organisational role holders. There is robust scientific research underway that increasingly helps us to understand dreaming from a cognitive perspective, particularly the role of the brain in the production of dreams in the active time of REM sleep (Solms 2000). However this research has limited relevance for my work. As Walde (1999:128-129) notes:

Experimental dream research seeks to track down the origins of dream formation in the brain and to map out the physiology of dreaming. Such physiological research is not interested in the impression a dream can make on an individual, inducing its interpretation or narration. Once the conclusion was reached that dreaming is primarily a physiological phenomenon, the question of its sense and meaning for humans in the waking state seemed pointless.

Instead, my interest is in articulating a coherent theory (drawing from more than one theorist) of the role of dreams in providing insights to the collective. My central question is: how can we make it possible to work with dreams in order to gain insight into unconscious issues affecting how we take up our roles in organisations?

### 2.1.1. Freud and notions of dreaming

In his classic book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud (1900) laid out his theory of dreams in extended form, including extensive dream material from patients and from himself. It is Freud who put dreaming on the map, so to say. As Walde (1999) puts it: “Freud’s concept of dream work (that is, the interplay of mechanisms transforming the material into the structure of the manifest dream) constitutes an original discovery” (136). In contrast to the psychiatric view of dreaming as purely a somatic phenomenon and the historical view that dreams were somehow a visitation from the gods (Moses 1999:303), Freud was the first to locate the dream in the psychic life of the dreamer. “[W]hile for the ancients dreams had a prophetic character and were thus oriented toward the future, in Freud’s eyes they refer to the dreamer’s past” (ibid.:306). They “express...the mental life of the dreamer...in contrast to antique conceptions, in which the dream, coming from without, visits a completely passive dreamer” (ibid.:303).

Moses (1999:307) captures this concept:

The unconscious is presented in Freudian thought as the concept of a space where elementary psychic realities dwell (affects, drives, memory traces, etc.) and where they will begin to manifest themselves in a series of ‘primary processes’. When these unconscious forces collide with barriers imposed by the ego (censorship, reality principle) they must, in order to find expression, agree to a series of compromises that manifest themselves as symptoms; one of these compromises is the dream.

Freud posits that, as opposed to the residue from the day’s activities, there are essentially two unconscious sources of dreams. One is the wishes formed in infancy that are yet to be realised, i.e. wish-fulfilment. The other is the sexual drive that has not found a place in one’s waking life. As Freud theorised it:

To characterize the dream stimuli, Freud reverts to a typology of dream materials, which are responsible for the dream's individual quality. For, according to his concept of dream work, infantile experiences, recent events, and physical and sensory stimulation, as well as timeless symbolic representations, are placed in a new context in the manifest dream image. The latent content of a dream can only be discovered by explaining the origin of its materials (ibid.).

To Freud the dream itself was a kind of amalgam of two energised sources that became fodder for dream content by being “drawn into the unconscious” (1900 [1976]:753). One source was the “neglected or suppressed train of thought” (ibid.) in the preconscious that is normally “left to its own devices” (ibid.). When the wish, “always on the alert” (ibid.:752), forms a connection with these unconscious thoughts, the energy produced pushes them into dream formation.

An additional critical element is “the ‘day residue’ of waking life which, by virtue of their link with early developmental history, have a special disturbing effect on the dreamer's unconscious state” (Meltzer 2009:14). From this perspective, a dream is a disturbance, and as such can disrupt our sleep and our daily living. It is, so to say, something to be, if not feared, at least not to be welcomed or treasured. Here the metaphor is one of aggression into the consciousness, i.e. “forcing a way through into the perceptual systems” (Freud 1900 [1976]:755). Thus, it had to be disguised, thought Freud, “so that the content would not shock the dreamer into waking” (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:15).

To Freud dream-work was a “process of deformation” (Moses 1999:305). And dreams themselves “...are the guardians of sleep and not the disturbers” (Coxhead 1976:15). At the same time, however, it is a source of tremendous information to the patient and analyst as to what suppressed wish or desire has been, so to say, disabling the patient's mental health.

Freud laid out what he terms “the psychological processes at work in the formation of dreams” (1900 [1976]:403), in other words the mechanics of their production, as well as their function for the dreamer. As a doctor of the mind, so to say, Freud used a kind of mechanical metaphor for the formation of dreams. He terms the process by which dream thoughts formed dreams as condensation, meaning that the dream elements undergo a series of transformations and are compressed or condensed into the actual dream. Thus, from his perspective, “the psychological material has undergone an extensive process of condensation in the course of the formation of the dream...the dream which we remember when we wake up would only be a fragmentary remnant of the total dream work.” (ibid.:383). Thus “...dream-condensation is a notable characteristic of the relation between dream-thoughts and dream-content” (ibid.:403).

Freud formulated the concept of the unconscious and noted a contrast between the extensive dream thoughts in the unconscious and the relatively fewer manifest dream elements in the dream.

He also offers the concept of displacement, whereby dream thoughts are transformed into mundane manifest dream material. As a matter of fact, the more mundane the dream content, according to Freud, the more bizarre the dream thought that prompted it. As he noted, “dreams are brief, meagre and laconic in comparison with the range and wealth of the dream-thoughts” (ibid.:383).

His idea was not that in the process of condensation some things are included and others are left out, but that elements were somehow matched together to create a

dream that at least somewhat represented all the unconscious thoughts related to it. What appeared in a dream had to do with what fitted together from these two sources. So that while few elements from the dream-thoughts find their way into the dream-content, those that do “represent logical relationships between the individual thoughts” (Meltzer 2009:15). There was a logical process by which the dream was produced.

Freud’s explanation (1900 [1976]:389) was that

...a dream is constructed, rather, by the whole mass of dream-thoughts being submitted to a sort of manipulative process in which those elements which have the most numerous and strongest supports acquire the right of entry into the dream-content.

These dream thoughts in the unconscious, while perhaps not appearing in the dream itself, could be accessed by the process of free association in the treatment room (“if the work of interpretation is carried further it may reveal still more thoughts concealed behind the dreams” [ibid.:383]). Thus Freud introduced to the world a way of working called free association, which meant that the patient is encouraged to say whatever comes to his mind in as uncensored way as possible. Freud’s great insight was that the way people go from one topic to another topic in a seemingly random way might actually reveal an associative thought process, “a chain of ideas” (Bollas 2007 [2013]:9).

### 2.1.2. Melanie Klein and object relations

The next great psychoanalytic theorist on whom I wish to focus is Melanie Klein, whose (1975) formulation of the transference relationship between mother and child

brought early emotional experience to the forefront of psychoanalytic work, away from Freud's more medical and mechanical perspective. In her object relations theory, Klein saw the role of the mother's containment as critical to the emotional development of the child. Her great contribution was the notion of the infant's inner life and particularly the early experience of the mother's "reverie" and the containment she provides. Here the world of emotional meaning is central. She also posited that the mother's role is not just the 'service' aspect of taking care of the infant, but is also the role of "modulation of the infant's mental pain" (Meltzer 2009:68).

In Klein's thinking, in order for the infant to integrate both the good and the bad parts of the breast, the mother must be able to 'contain' the negative projections from the infant related to its frustrations at not always being able to be satisfied. The mother intuitively and unconsciously feeds these back to the infant, so to say, as it is able to take them back in and gradually re-integrate the previously 'split off' elements into an integrated personal identity. In Klein's thinking, the mother's role is not only to receive the various projected (what Bion would term beta) elements of the child, but to contain them, meaning not just receive the affective communication, but also to process it (Crociani-Windland & Hoggett 2012:170). By this process, the infant is gradually able to engage in a process of "symbolic representation" (Segal 1991:35), by which objects may be seen as having separate reality.

Winnicott's theories of holding and transitional space (1965, 1971), developed from his work with children, are also closely related to Klein's concepts. As Farley (2011:9) writes:



Winnicott came to the concept of 'holding' through his clinical work with mothers and infants. It required of the 'good enough' mother the capacity to contain the baby's projections of intolerable aspects of early life experiences, without herself becoming overly rigid (in the presumption to know too soon) or fragile to the point of going to pieces. Winnicott found the return of these infantile projections in the adult patient, which were felt as 'the tendency ... to disintegrate, to cease to exist, to fall forever.' As 'subjective object,' the analyst's role in this context was to 'hold' projections and to return them to the patient in a form that did not carry the same pitch of anxiety that first constituted them. For the good enough mother, the capacity to 'hold' the baby's projections could create a potential space of communication.

These split off and uncontained feeling states remaining in the adult patient could only be made available to be worked on and worked through, in the presence of and through a particular way of working with an analyst. Klein emphasizes the intimacy of the consulting room in the interaction between analyst and patient, which was not really a central topic for Freud (he took for granted the expert role of the analyst). In the dyadic relationship, when the analyst was able to contain and detoxify the various feeling states of the patient (beta elements), in the sense of being able to allow space for their expression and to process these feelings back, without punishing the patient, then the patient could experience the increasing safety of being in contact with these often threatening and dangerous feelings. This was presumably an experience that the patient did not have with his or her own mother as an infant.

What cannot be integrated by the infant becomes fragments floating around, so to say, in the individual's unconscious, inaccessible for integration. These important split off and undigested feeling states and memories often consist of quite painful material against which sophisticated, life-long defenses are erected. It is the integration of these split off elements that becomes the task of analysis, from the object-relations perspective.

### 2.1.3 Wilfred Bion and dreaming as thinking

Even though I am not exactly proceeding historically, I want now to turn to Bion, as he based his theory of dreaming and thinking on Klein's work (1975), in what Meltzer described as "Bion's modification of Klein's modification of Freud's model-of-the-mind" (2009:46). Thus these three theorists offer "...three models of the mind, the neurophysiological one of Freud, the geographic-theological one of Klein and the epistemological one of Bion, [which] can be seen to link with one another to form a continuous line of development" (ibid.:47).

As opposed to Freud's concept that dream material consists of a forging of unfulfilled childhood wishes and floating dream thoughts peppered with daily minutia, Bion's view was that the unconscious elements that form dreams are related to the repressed early trauma and memories resulting from a break in the connection between the infant and its mother, as outlined by Klein. These painful bits of "raw unencoded sense data" undergo a process of "narrative transformation" into "meaningful thought" (Haartmann:1). He termed the free-floating split-off feelings as Beta elements and those that have been processed through the mother's containment (and later the analyst's work) as Alpha elements (Bion:1962). He named the process by which this transformation takes place as Alpha Function. Dreaming is one very important way that these bits of sense data can make their way into the state of consciousness. In order to bear them, dreams, as Haartmann (2) notes, rely on disguise to "assuage psychic pain" that accompanies this process. At the same time, these dreams have another extremely important function, in that they, so to say, pick up where the early experience left off. As Haartmann notes: "Because dreams

contain messages and promote internal communication, they adopt and extend the work of maternal reverie and containment” (ibid.).

Klein theorised that dream life is going on all the time, when awake or when asleep. It is a process that thoroughly infuses one’s existence, rather than functioning as a mechanism to eradicate or modify one’s daily needs. In this way, dreams are “phenomena that were infinite in their possibilities because they were essentially imaginative and not just neuro-chemical elements of ‘mental energy’ within the brain” (Glover 2009:63).

The British psychoanalyst, Donald Meltzer (2009), captures the revolutionary impact of Klein’s thinking on Bion, as reflected in Bion’s development of a theory connecting dreaming and thinking. What Klein taught us, so to say, is that there is an active internal world and that dreams have an important meaning in relation to both that internal and external world. This internal world plays out in our daily reality, so that “[i]nstead of transference phenomena being seen as relics of the past [à la Freud] they could now be viewed as externalizations of the immediate present of the internal situation, to be studied as psychic reality” (39). Klein created a bridge between early experiences and present realities, in that “[i]t is in the internal world of relationships that meaning is generated and deployed to relationships in the outside world” (ibid.:40). As Walde (1999:137) notes, Freud did not take “notice of the dream’s role as an important mode of processing real life”.

Meltzer (1999:41) describes Klein’s great achievement:

The elaboration of the experiences of different worlds and of a dream life as against waking life in the outside world; of unconscious phantasies as

thinking processes where meaning is generated, particularly as one can study it in dream life; all brought emotionality also into a central position.

From this perspective, then, dreams take on a central role in mediating our understanding of the relationship between the internal world of meaning and our external world of work and relationships. What a dream does is to “represent the *meaning* of emotional experiences” (ibid.:44). Note that, like Freud, Klein does acknowledge the role of outside stimulus (yesterday’s experiences, noises from the street, etc.), but takes their use in relationship to the dream material to a totally new level. This idea is central to the praxis of Social Dream-Drawing and further elaborated in chapter 4.

While Klein’s focus was primarily on the emotional development of the child, Bion was concerned with the link between early emotional experience and the capacity to develop the mind. As Meltzer notes (ibid.):

Bion’s work places emotion at the very heart of meaning. What he says in effect (and this is almost diametrically opposed to Freud’s attitude towards emotion) is that the emotional experience of the intimate relationships has to be thought about and understood if the mind is to grow and develop. In a sense the emotion is the meaning of the experience and everything that is evolved in the mind through alpha-function, such as dreaming, verbalizing dreams, painting pictures, writing music, performing scientific functions – all of these are representations of the meaning.

Meltzer really pushes us to recognise the deep significance of these insights. As he writes (ibid.:46):

It is only in our intimate relationships where our passions are engaged, that we can experience the conflict of emotional meaning which nourishes the growth of the mind. Dreams of the above sort demonstrate how our problems are spelled out and worked through and solved. In analysis what we are doing, more or less, is monitoring this internal world. We monitor it through the transference, and through the dreams, and through the play of children...it is the poetry of the dream that catches and gives formal representation to the passions which are the meaning of our experience so that they may be operated on by reason.

This direct link between passion and reason, between the internal and the external, between working through and problem solving all form the basis for the praxis of SDD.

In attempting to bring us back from the exploration of the theories of dreaming of Freud, Klein and Bion, I want now to integrate and elaborate the relationship of these theories to another major theme of this section, which is the process of thinking.

#### 2.1.4 The process of thinking

Freud, as Meltzer (ibid.:65) points out, makes it very clear that from his perspective “*no* intellectual activity or manifestation of judgment or function of judgment goes on in the dreamer”. In effect, dreams are composed of childhood reminiscences salted with the day’s “residue” (ibid.), what Zeal (2010) characterised as “something from earlier life [that] has hitched a ride to material from more recent life”. Freud also made it clear that emotions had no meaning in dreams (Meltzer 2009:67). In fact, as Meltzer (1983:n.a.) notes, Freud was:

So deeply rooted in a neurophysiological model of the mind, with its mind-brain equation, that it will not bear the weight of investigation into the meaning of the meaning of dreams.

Although Freud linked dreaming to thinking (1900 [1976]:385), he contrasted “an *unconscious* process of thought, which may easily be different from what we perceive during purposive reflection accompanied by consciousness.” Carl Jung’s view (1964a [1970]:53) was that “...a dream cannot produce a definite thought”, and Klein did not concern herself with this. She essentially concurred with Freud that

there is no particular intellectual activity taking place in dreaming other than what he had outlined.

Bion, on the other hand, posited that dreams contain the thoughts related to the unintegrated elements of the infant. Bion's idea was that in addition to the emotional consequence of the mother's capacity to contain split-off emotional fragments, there is also an intellectual consequence, i.e. the first roots of the baby's capacity to develop thoughts. Thus "something which in the infant was near-sensory and somatic was transformed into something more mental...which could be used for thought or stored as memory" (Crociani-Windland & Hoggett 2012:179).

Grotstein (2000:xxx) puts it this way:

In a series of works on epistemology and ontology, Bion (1965, 1970, 1992) conceived of mental transformations, one of which was the transformation of raw, unmentalized experiences into K (knowledge), initially through the infant's use of mother's reverie and alpha function (patience and intuition), following which the infant could comprehend itself from mother's preliminary 'digestion' of the infant's raw experiences. In Bion's terms, this amounts to a transformation from O (unmentalized experiences) into K (knowledge about the self which is to be accepted and integrated).

This alpha function is "performed by the mother in the earliest mother-baby relationship" (Meltzer 2009:51) and transforms the raw data of emotional experience (beta elements) into alpha elements that could be stored in memory and function as a basis for the development of thoughts. This function

...renders this emotional experience comprehensible and meaningful, by producing alpha elements consisting of visual, auditory and olfactory impressions, which are storable in memory, usable in dreaming and in unconscious waking thinking (Symington 1996:61).

A swamped infantile ego is not able to process what the mother cannot contain.

When this containment is not sufficient, the infant projects out the unintegrated

material by a schizoid mechanism, which ultimately interferes with his ability to think. Thinking becomes swamped by psychotic anxiety (Lawrence 1999b; Sievers 1999, 2006). But when it is successful, then, as Grotstein notes (2000:6) “the infant who is contained and the mother who contains him constitute a thinking couple”.

This entire process encompasses a journey from split off aspects to integrated thought, a major internal development. This intellectual development, a singular human achievement, requires enormous dependency of the infant on the mother.

Bion envisions

...a relationship between the mother and baby in which the mother really does have to perform mental functions for the baby so that the baby may, by gradual introjection of these functions into its internal objects, learn to perform these functions eventually within itself (Meltzer 2009:69).

“He is describing a passage toward symbolisation and thought” (Crociani-Windland & Hoggett 2012:170). Importantly, these elements, according to Bion, are dreamlike and pictorial.

The consequences of Bion’s formulation are especially significant when we attempt to understand how we think. This achievement is described at length in Meltzer (2009:67):

Bion’s work has as its foundation the assumption that an emotional experience exists, and that it can then be thought about if certain operations take place. Not only does he place the emotional experience prior to thoughts, but he also places thoughts prior to thinking – and describes thinking as the manipulation of thoughts. That seems to be the revolutionary step in Bion’s work that has made it possible for us now to think about thinking. Before this postulation of the chronology of the emotional experience (the idea that thoughts could be generated from it and that thinking could be done with these thoughts) it was not possible to think about thinking.

With the containment of the analytic setting theoretically replicating the original dyadic environment of the baby and child, the process of free association to the dreams, both by analyst and patient, was for Bion a way to make these dream thoughts more consciously available. His critical theory of thinking was based on the concept that thoughts were always in search of thinkers, not the other way around. As Lopez-Corvo (2006:132) puts it: “For Bion, thinking is a consequence of thoughts and not the other way around. Thinking represents an obligatory development of the mind that is produced by the pressure of thoughts.”

In relation to dreams, this meant that only through a dream could certain thoughts be made available that could then, in the properly contained analytic setting and using free association, be made available for thinking. These thoughts, therefore, were already in existence in the unconscious, but not available for thought.

Being available for thought, from his perspective, meant that they could be ‘digested’ by the patient and gradually integrated into a more robust relationship with reality (which links with Freud’s reality principle, which was very helpful to Bion’s thinking). As Symington (1996:60) notes:

Bion’s view was that the conscious and unconscious material was rendered more comprehensible by the dream-work, in the sense that it became processible into elements that could be used for furthering the integrating processes of thought.

Here exactly is the basis for the work of SDD.

Thus, for Bion, working through had to do with “synthesis of thought” (ibid.) and the capacity, through a contained and safe relationship and environment, to think what before was unavailable and psychically threatening. Ultimately the patient achieves a



form of “self-knowing” (ibid.:61). Critical to this understanding is Bion’s concept that affect has a central role in thinking. This link between thinking and dreaming forms the basis for my own thinking.

When one fully takes in Bion’s theory, then one can see the dream as something to embrace and take note of, rather than the source of persecution or, as Freud (1900 [1976]:270) sees it, “wolves in sheep’s clothing”. This is very similar to Bollas’ view of the creativity of the unconscious (2009b).

As Meltzer (2009:46) notes:

...dreaming is thinking, that dream life can be viewed as a place to which we can go in our sleep, when we can turn our attention fully to this internal world. The creative process of dreaming generates the meaning that can then be deployed to life and relationships in the outside world. This means, in a sense, that all of our external relationships have a certain transference quality, that they derive meaning from what exists in our internal world.

Bion and Freud offer, in a sense, two different perspectives on dreams that are nonetheless both valid and useful for this study. Freud focuses on the mechanics of dreaming, for example, the process of condensation, whereby the extensive dream thoughts are compressed and pressured into a smaller or more contained version, only to be later accessible through analysis. Displacement is the process by which extensive dream thoughts are transformed into mundane manifest dream material.

Consistent with his theory that dreams are more to be feared than embraced, he also cites secondary revision where “the dreamer attempts to organize the dream narrative to make it intelligible as an account in words, but also to further disguise its meaning” (Sapochnik 2013:18). The contradictory elements that, in his view,

characterise dreams somehow form a compromise with one another (See Section 2.1.1 above). Freud (1900 [1976]:760) also provides an explanation and a definition of the process of repression. This is a psychic process that serves the important function of enabling the ego "to avoid releasing the unpleasure" associated with what the conscious finds too painful or unbearable to be aware of. This could also be asserted for collective enterprises, particularly organisations.

These, so to say, mechanical aspects of dreaming, however, do not fully capture, from my perspective, what dreams can offer. Meltzer (2009:11) notes that for Freud "...the basis of the theory is so deeply rooted in a neurophysiological model of the mind...that it will not bear the weight of investigations into the meaning and meanings of dreams." In fact, Meltzer notes, it is not a theory at all (ibid.:36); it completely lacks a qualitative component (ibid.:12). More disturbing, from Meltzer's perspective, is that Freud thought that dreams really don't mean anything to the dreamer (ibid.) and are actually not the source of anything new or creative (ibid.:16). To Freud "dream work is doing nothing original" (ibid.:22).

Seemingly boxed in by the constraints of contemporary scientific theory and his own view of the role of the psychoanalyst, Freud had no concept of the affective and emotional quality of dreams. In his view, they do not achieve the "status of 'mental experiences'" (Meltzer 2009:17). More deeply, Freud was not focused on a concept of an inner world (ibid.:37) that existed in parallel and in constant relationship to one's outer or conscious world. He did not view the processes of dreaming or day dreaming as reflecting an intimate connection between these two worlds. As Meltzer (ibid.:38) puts it, with Bion's innovations,

Dreaming could not be viewed merely as a process for allaying tensions in order to maintain sleep; dreams had to be seen as pictures of dream life that was going on all the time, awake or asleep. We may call these transactions “dreams” when we are asleep, and “unconscious phantasies” when we are awake. The implication was that this internal world must be assigned the full significance of a “place”, a life-space, perhaps the place where meaning was generated.

Therefore dreams, as opposed to not being the source of anything new or creative, as Freud posited, instead could be seen as being “infinite in their possibilities because they were phenomena of imagination and not the finite events of the distribution of the ‘mental energy’ of the brain” (ibid.).

From Freud’s perspective, dream-work, “the process of transforming the dream-thoughts into dream-content” (1901 [2001]:667), is rather mundane. This process, from his perspective, “is not creative...it has no functions whatever other than condensation and displacement of the material and its modification into pictorial form” (ibid.). While Bion also strives to articulate a model of the mechanics of dreams, i.e. the alpha function, he is more focused on the affective and sensory qualities of the dream thoughts and specifically on the original emotional experiences with the mother that resulted in the repression of these early experiences. Bion deepens the reader’s understanding of how the containment and the free association process in analysis make these thoughts available to both analyst and patient/dreamer. These are what Freud, in a more technical or impersonal way, refers to as “recollections of impressive experiences—not infrequently dating back to early childhood” (1901 [2001]:659).

In a sense, Freud saw dreams as impeding or interfering with underlying dream thoughts, by the way in which they mis-represented their actual unconscious roots. He sees dreams as having “destroyed” (ibid.:662) the unconscious connections

between the thoughts and of obscuring and disguising the original dream thoughts (ibid.:672) When one is asleep the normal day-time censor is a little bit relaxed (but not completely), which makes possible “for what has hitherto been repressed to make a path for itself to consciousness” (ibid.:676) and so the dreams can emerge. But since this censorship function is not entirely asleep, this material must be somewhat disguised, thus the strange manifest dream material.

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#### 2.1.5 What stimulates dreams to take place?

What the great theories about dreaming do not cover, however, is what causes a dream to happen. What in either one’s inner life or one’s reality (and probably somehow both in tandem) leads the dreamer to dream such a dream?

External influences are often cited. Freud writes about the reality theory and about the influence of daily experiences on manifest dream material in terms of “dream-instigators” (1901 [2001]:656). This question of the role of the external world is central to my work, as the workshops always have a theme, and one of my hypotheses is that once the dreamer knows the theme, this has an influence on which dreams the dreamer dreams. Lawrence supports this concept relating to the dreams that are shared in Social Dreaming. As he puts it:

The existence of the matrix alters the nature of the dreams, compared to the classic situation. The matrix becomes a different “container” for receiving dreams, with the result that dream contents change (2011:333).

But where is the theoretical basis for that assumption? Lansky (2003:357) theorises, from an essentially psychoanalytic point of view, that “[b]oth the meaning and the function of the dream can be understood only in relation to the instigating disruption

that drives the dream into being. It is the instigator of the dream that connects the working of the inner world with events in the external world.”

The dream, considered metapsychologically, is so to speak the wishful answer to a problematic disturbance. The wish, therefore, can only be understood in relation to the instigating problem that drove it into being and to which it is an attempted solution. Psychoanalytic handling of the dream is not complete until the analyst and analysand understand both the meaning and the function of the dream as a wish fulfilment (ibid.:362).

Lansky’s perspective links up with Meltzer’s idea (1983:page n.a.) that the dream process is designed to ‘solve a problem’ not yet in one’s consciousness. This idea is echoed in my findings (Chapter 8), which is why I am emphasising it. By bringing dream material to the SDD group and making it available to collective free association, its source begins to be identified.

In his introduction to Bergson’s theory of dreams, Slosson (1914 [2007]: 6-7) notes that “dreams...have...a life and purpose of their own, and strive to rise into consciousness whenever they get a chance....Our memories are packed away under pressure like steam in a boiler and the dream is their escape valve.” Bergson (1914 [2007]:37) himself powerfully notes: “...and the phantom memory, incarnated in the sensation which brings to it flesh and blood, becomes a being with a life of its own, a dream.” This image of dreaming as some sort of underground volcanic material links with Freud’s notion (1900 [1976]:346) that “[s]uppressed and forbidden wishes from childhood break through in the dream”. And Bollas (1992:131) tops this off by reminding us that “...the unconscious never ceases its work and the psychic material in which it plies its trade is profoundly beyond our knowing”.

Perhaps we can hypothesise that a dream without an external context would not emerge. It does not just pop up due to pressure from within; it exists always in relationship to the dreamer's real experience in the external world. In fact, according to Lawrence, context has an influence on dreaming. As he notes (2003:610): "The content of the dreaming alters to take account of its context and becomes social in orientation". This reflects an active, rather than a passive process, coming in two directions, i.e. from the outside in and from the inside out. The unconscious is an active element that participates, along with the stimulus or context of reality, to form the chaotic material of dream thoughts in a dream.

This idea is further emphasised by Grotstein, who considers the unconscious "a knowing, thinking presence" (Haartman n.a.:1), whose role it is "to dramaturgically encode and portray unmentalizable psychic pain so as to render it thinkable" (ibid.:4). Haartman (ibid.) in a review of Grotstein's 2000 book, describes it this way:

The unconscious tries to attract the attention of the psyche, to forge a unity that allows one to "be together with oneself"...As part of this covenant, the unconscious works to ensure that dreams, symptoms, and free associations deliver tolerable doses of 'revelation'. The unconscious aims to produce useable insights that we can recognize and absorb.

Naturally the great mystery is how the unconscious manages to do all of this without our awareness. As Lopez-Corvo (2006:209) notes:

Where and how is the intention of the unconscious message precisely manufactured? Where and how can all of this have been decided without the awareness of our conscious self? What exactly is this concealed intelligence, capable of conceiving, so speedily, beautiful condensations and displacements in order to produce a dream? These are mysterious questions that still lack an answer.

This mystery is at the heart of dreaming and, in a sense, must remain a mystery for now. It is part of the awe and wonder, in my experience, of working with the drawings of dreams, which come from the unconscious. Somehow we must live with this wonder.

What appears to be amazing about the process of dream formation is how such complex selection and transformation of memories, sensations, and metaphorical visual ideograms take place without any conscious intervention, behind our back, so to speak, where the whole process is generated outside of our selfness as if the unconscious was always several steps ahead (ibid.:213).

All these various notions of the external and internal stimuli leading to dreaming informed my own approach to SDD, including setting a theme for a context and encouraging individuals to find their own individual way into the material through the creativity of drawing (see next chapter for more on this process).

#### 2.1.6 C.G. Jung and dreaming

Many aspects of Jung's theory of dreaming have also contributed to my thesis. While I do not subscribe to his concept of archetypes and he really does not offer a contribution to a theory of thinking, there are some aspects of his work that are quite relevant to this study. As elaborated below they are the visual nature of dreams, the use of amplification and his concept of the unconscious as a creative and infinite resource.

Jung believed centrally that dreams were visual, and he himself drew many of his dreams, mostly notably in the recently uncovered Red Book (1930 [2009]). This is connected to the development of amplification, which was Jung's way of "extending

the significance of a particular dream image with elements taken from mythological and ethnological parallels” (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:16).

As opposed to or in addition to Freud’s method of free association as a means of making the unconscious available, amplification allows the dreamer to connect his dream images to the larger world of meaning, i.e. to “culture, history, mythology, and religion” (Shalit & Furlotti 2013:1). From Jung’s perspective, free association “reflects a causal view of neurosis [whereas] amplification indicates the movement from etiology toward understanding the *meaning* and *value* of the image” (ibid.).

In Jung’s theory, amplification is more connected to the image than is free association, and in fact, free association often takes the dreamer too far afield from the actual dream. His idea was “to stay as close as possible to the dream itself, and to exclude all the irrelevant ideas and associations that it might evoke” (Jung 1964a [1970]:12). For him, the dreams “are the facts from which we must proceed” (Jung 1961 [1995]:194). He continues:

While “free” association lures one away from that material in a kind of zigzag line, the method I evolved is more like a circumambulation whose center is the dream picture. I work all around the dream picture and disregard every attempt that the dreamer makes to break away from it (ibid.).

What Jung means by dream picture is not so clear, but clearly, for him, the visual aspect of the dream contains essential elements for understanding. He appreciated the vividness of the pictorial dream:

The images produced in dreams are much more picturesque and vivid than the concepts and experiences that are their waking counterparts. One of the reasons for this is that, in a dream, such concepts can express their unconscious meaning (ibid.:29).

As Shalit and Furlotti (2013:1) observe:



...amplification aims at enhancing consciousness by focusing on the image...we attempt to enlarge the dream image by amplifying it....The psyche speaks in images.

Despite Freud's significant experience of working with the Wolf Man's drawing, he did not emphasise very much the visual aspect of dream work. One could hypothesise that for Freud the verbal was more important than the visual, because it was the means on which his entire analytic theory was based.

Jung has a more expansive view of the unconscious than do the other theorists. From his perspective, it "is a vast ocean" (Shalit and Furlotti 2006:6) of "all-uniting depths" (Jung 1964:par. 305 [as cited in Shalit and Furlotti *ibid.*]). As opposed to the view that the unconscious contains, like a "sack" (*ibid.*), all that drops down from the daily life, he views the unconscious as an infinite and creative source of dream material which "contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution" (Jung 1969:par. 342). From his perspective, "the dream is the prism and a mirror of the soul" (Shalit and Furlotti 2006:7). As Jung notes (1977 [1980]:235-234):

In reality, they [reactions and impulses] are based on a preformed and ever-ready instinctive system with its own characteristic and universally understandable thought-forms, reflexes, attitudes, and gestures. These follow a pattern that was laid down long before there was any trace of a reflective consciousness.

Referring to Freud, Jung (1964a [1970]:53) notes: "Dreams do not guard sleep from what Freud called the 'incompatible wish'. What he called 'disguise' is actually the shape all impulses naturally take in the unconscious." Jung expands further (1961 [1995]:185):

I was never able to agree with Freud that the dream is a "façade" behind which its meaning lies hidden – a meaning already known but maliciously, so to speak, withheld from consciousness. To me dreams are a part of nature,

which harbours no intention to deceive, but expresses something as best it can. These forms of life, too, have no wish to deceive our eyes, but we may deceive ourselves because our eyes are short-sighted. Or we hear amiss because our ears are rather deaf – but it is not our ears that wish to deceive us. Long before I met Freud I regarded the unconscious, and dreams, which are its direct exponents, as natural processes to which no arbitrariness can be attributed, and above all no legerdemain. I knew no reasons for the assumption that tricks of consciousness can be extended to the natural processes of the unconscious. On the contrary, daily experiences taught me what intense resistance the unconscious opposes to the tendencies of the conscious mind.

Jung also had a different notion of what lay hidden in the unconscious. As Coxhead & Hiller (1976:15) note: “While Freud looked on the dream itself as a disturbed form of mental activity through which he could approach his patients’ neuroses, C.G. Jung saw the dream as a normal, spontaneous and creative expression of the unconscious...he rejected the ‘disguise’ theory completely”. The idea that the dream is an innovative and creative way to bring into consciousness that which reflects problems and anxieties offers a more subtle picture of its process. Lopez-Corvo (2006:130) describes it as “...vindicating the unconscious from an ominous, unfriendly, and threatening nature, to a more gracious, positive, and valuable one”. Lawrence (2003:612) thinks of dreaming as “the working through of thinking and creativity during sleep”.

Finally, Jung rejected Freud’s theory that dreaming is designed to get rid of illness that spring from one’s past. He had a more forward looking concept of dreaming, which “valued even the neurosis as part of the psychic life that is trying to advance” (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:16). As he wrote (as quoted in Coxhead:16): “All psychological phenomena have some sense of purpose in them.” From his perspective the dream was a means of self-discovery (ibid.).

In closing, elements of the underlying theories of dreams developed by these four great thinkers – Freud, Jung, Klein and Bion – form a theoretical support for my thinking about dreams that underlies the Social Dream-Drawing praxis. From Freud, most importantly, comes the idea that dreams themselves are significant events, that there is an unconscious of which they are an expression, and that free association is a process by which the dream content can be revealed. Klein’s notion that the early relationship between mother and child forms the basis for the child’s capacity to mature normally led to Bion’s idea that the way in which the mother provides this containment can be thought of as a particular process that transforms chaotic early experiences into thoughts. More so, dreams have meanings and contain emotion and are a form of thinking.

Jung’s notion that the unconscious is an expansive and creative domain and that dreams are visual and a normal part of one’s being are also important theoretical supports for the work of SDD. His technique of amplification, taken up actively by Gordon Lawrence in his development of Social Dreaming, as described in the next section, serves to connect the dream material to current reality.

In addition, Jung’s notion of the collective unconscious introduces us to the notion that individuals share the same set of unconscious set of archetypes. The notion of a collective unconscious world, however, predates Jung and will be explored at length in the next section (2.2 Dreaming as a collective experience). This focus on the collective is intrinsic to the praxis of SDD, which takes place not in the analytic dyad, but in groups and whose learning depends on the group experience.

## 2.2. Dreaming as a collective experience

The praxis of SDD is based on the core concept that dreams belong not just to the individuals who produce them, but can also be considered part of the collective unconscious of any group of which the dreamer is a member. In this section of chapter 2, I will be transitioning the reader from the focus on theories of dreaming relating to individual psychoanalytic processes (as just elaborated) to exploring various historical and contemporary notions of dreaming relating to the collective. Long and Harney (2013:8) capture the conceptual duality (i.e. individual and collective) of the unconscious:

Here, then, is a formulation of the unconscious as a mental network of thoughts, signs, and symbols or signifiers, able to give rise to many feelings, impulses, and images. The network is between people, but yet within each of them.

I will begin this exploration by looking at historical perspectives on dreaming as related to the collective, which preceded Freud's theorising and which he credits. From there I will explore Jung's notion of the collective unconscious in relation to dreaming and then Gordon Lawrence's pioneering work (as described in Chapter 1 of this dissertation) in connecting dreaming to organisations in the creation of Social Dreaming. Lawrence's innovation has become central to the perspective of socioanalysis, which I see as the theoretical home of SDD.

### 2.2.1 Historical notions of dreaming

As Freud himself has noted, the psychoanalytic idea that the unconscious and the dreams that emanate from it belong to the individual, in historical terms, is a fairly recent development. As cited in Walde (1999:121), he is quoted as saying:

I think that in general it is a good plan occasionally to bear in mind the fact that people were in the habit of dreaming before there was such a thing as psychoanalysis.

This psychoanalytic lens can be seen as having done our contemporary understanding a great dis-service, in that we have dismissed the much longer and deeper tradition of seeing dreaming as a cultural and group phenomenon. In fact, since dreaming is as human as any activity, it has always been an important element of cultural and societal interest, “expressive of culturally specific themes, patterns, tensions, and meanings” (Shulman & Stroumsa 1999:3). When one integrates this perspective into one’s view of dreaming, we may then view the dream as an expression of “cultural creativity” (ibid.:12).

For Freud, as for modern Western civilization as a whole, the dream has been fully subjectivized: it no longer refers to another world, outside the individual, nor has it any legitimate location within the public sphere (ibid.).

Thus, as opposed to “the modern assumption that dreaming is the most private and personal of modes” (ibid.:4), dreaming has for centuries been taken seriously by cultures from around the world, often in relation to religious or shamanistic belief and often explained as facilitating a connection to figures in the spiritual world. Pythagoreans, for example, “...believed that in sleep the soul is freed from the body, its tome, and, soaring upward, is able to perceive and converse with higher beings” (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:6). And, going the other direction, in the Biblical tradition, God communicated to prophets either through direct communications or through dreams, such as Jacob’s dream of a ladder. (ibid.:7).

Even in ancient times, the mystery and confusion of the dream experience could only be explained as something ‘too hot to handle’ by human beings. As Grotstein (2000:xxvi) notes:

The ancient Assyrians believed that dreams were the language of the gods, that gods spoke to each other through human dreams, and that humans were forbidden from attending to them or remembering them. Dreams, to ancient Assyrians, constituted a divine sexual conversation, and paying attention to them amounted to voyeuristic hubris.

In Islam, there is a “great tradition of the spiritual dream” (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:9), most notably Mohammed’s infamous dream, The Night Journey, where he was approached by Saint Gabriel and went to the centre of the world. It was this dream that initiated him into his role of prophet. Islam has the notion of the “visionary dreamer”, who has pure intentions and a high degree of spiritual development. Islam is essentially a prophetic religion, and the role of this visionary dreamer, as with Mohammed, is highly important (ibid.:1).

Dreaming has been so important to certain cultures, that the role of dream interpreter has attained a special status. From Aristotle’s perspective “a skilled dream interpreter can predict illness and prescribe cures from such dreams” (ibid.:6). In some cases, when the dream is believed to be a direct message from the Gods, the “responsibility of the decoder is enormous, literally one of life or death” (Shulman and Stroumsa 1999:9). The K’iche’ Mayans of Guatemala (Tedlock 1999:93) had the special roles of dream interpreters, whose own dream material and symbols were often considered to be more socially significant than the dream material of ordinary people. Thus there were “separate dream interpretation codes for lay dreamers and professional dream interpreters within the same society” (ibid.)

This differentiation in code also related to how the dream was categorised.

Thus, for lay persons this dream would be interpreted as a personal event, while in the case of daykeepers the same dream would be interpreted at a social level, indicating that religious rituals should be performed. For the K'iche', then, an identical unsought dream varies in interpretation depending upon the religious status of the dreamer (ibid.:90).

One good example of the role of dreaming is the use of dream-visions in the Crow Indian tribe, when they were faced with imminent destruction by white settlers and soldiers, who were crowding them out of their native lands and killing off their beloved buffaloes. Like other cultures, they sent out identified members, usually young men or boys, who were called dream-seekers, to the wilderness. Their task was to “plead for the Great Spirit to grant a dream” (Case & Gosling 2013:711). After a dream came, the young man would share it with the elders, who would interpret it, according to their own “cosmology of dreams” (ibid.) in relation to whatever the collective issue was, i.e. finding new hunting grounds, solving a medical problem, etc.

In 1855 or 1856, the tribe sent out a nine-year old young man named Petty Coups, in order to facilitate the tribe’s “response to their longer term fate at the hands of the whites” (ibid.). His dream included images of the buffalo being replaced by the “spotted buffalo” (ibid.:712). This was interpreted as the reality of the future, as former hunting lands were being taken over more and more as grazing pastures for the bulls and cows of the white man. The white man’s cow was interpreted as the spotted buffalo image in the dream. According to Lear (2006), who studied this case intensively, because this and other images appeared in the dream, the elders concluded that they must come to terms with this future, rather than resist it, as had many other Indian tribes, particularly the Sioux and the Blackfoot. This led them to

negotiate terms that, while not insuring that they kept their traditional hunting life, allowed them to survive as a tribe.

Another version of this is exemplified by the Senoi people from Malaysia, whose “collective life centred around a complex dream psychology that served to integrate the community” (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:11). Families met each morning upon awaking to discuss and analyse the dreams of the previous night (ibid.). And then “after the family dream discussion, the Senoi men gather in the council...where the dreams of all are discussed and analysed” (ibid.).

Lucid dreaming, that is the awareness that one is dreaming, was considered a special gift of those who were considered shamans in their cultures (Tedlock, 1999:94-98). These shamans would go into trancelike episodes that would result in a prediction about the future, perhaps, or a diagnosis of some illness. The Peruvian Quechua Indians and other Amerindian tribes saw a connection between dreams and myths, so that when an image in a dream (such as a maggot or an armadillo) also appeared in a known myth, the dream was seen as a prediction of the future (ibid.:91). American Blackfoot and Mohave tribes interpret dreams as portents of the future.

Freud, while certainly acknowledging that dreaming existed long before the concept of psychoanalysis, revolutionised the understanding of dreaming, and, write Coxhead & Hiller (1976:15) “restored it to the centre of western man’s concern”. Freud theorised that dreaming could be seen as an internal process reflective of the inner world of the individual dreamer. As Stéphane Moses (1999:303) points out, Freud’s enormous achievement was to somehow avoid two contemporary pitfalls in relation to dreaming of his own society. One was “the positivist theses of the psychiatric



school, according to which ‘a dream is not a mental act at all, but a somatic process’ [a quote from Freud 1953]”, and the other was “the conceptions of ancient cultures that saw dreams as supernatural revelations” (ibid.).

This latter perspective included a rich history in some cultures of the notion that either the soul of the dreamer had made contact with the Gods or that the Gods themselves had entered the soul of the dreamer. For example, the Maricopa Indians of Colorado “believed that success in life depended on the spirit, and that the spiritual is approached through dreaming” (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:12). They believed that when they were in a state of dreaming, the soul would leave the body and search a spirit, who would “reveal a song or a cure” (ibid.). Again, Freud rejects the notion of the passive dreamer, who is visited from without. Instead, from his perspective, the dream is an expression of “the mental life of the dreamer” him- or herself (Moses 1999:303). This is in contrast to the Greeks, who “...were visited by dreams: they did not ‘have’ them” (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:5). Because “the dream is the expression of a subject’s activity” (Moses 1999:304), it can be interpreted and it has meaning for the subject.

It is Freud’s great achievement that “the Unconscious is not conceived as an exterior power, like the pagan gods or fate (of the Christian God), but is rather located within the human being” (Walde 2009:129). Although the Unconscious, in Freud’s view, could certainly torment and punish, having a “divine or demonic character” (ibid.), it was the individual psyche and not the pitiless gods that the dreamer had to contend with. And, as Lawrence (2011:325) has noted, when one thinks of the unconscious as the source of infinite possibilities, then perhaps one has begun a process of internalising the specialness of the individual. As he notes: “The fact of the

unconscious and the recognition of the infinite exist beyond the knowingness of the conscious, giving uniqueness to humanity” (ibid.). There is much unknown to the rational mind of the individual, and yet the individual contains the infinite in the unconscious.

There were those thinkers before Freud, such as the Greek Artemidorus, who lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and was considered a professional diviner, who developed a classification system for dream images. His great innovation was to turn away from theories of dreaming and to actually study dreams themselves. He observed more than 3,000 (Coxhead & Hiller 1976:6). He is considered similar to Freud in that he looked at the context of the dreamer him- or herself in formulating the meaning of a particular dream, so that the symbols did not just stand alone.

Freud also stood apart from the notion that a dream is a premonition of future things to come, which often characterised earlier notions. For him, “the meaning of a dream is a strict function of the personal history (both recent and distant) of the dreamer. He held each dream to be a unique constellation that translates an absolutely singular moment in the psychic biography of the subject” (Moses 1999:303). “For Freud, the dream is not a sign announcing the future but rather the ‘symptom’ of a history” (ibid.:304). In summary “Freud was the first to conceive a theory of dream as something produced by the subject, as a creation comparable to an artist’s work of art” (ibid.:303).

Equally revolutionary was the implication of Freud’s theories of dreaming and the unconscious, i.e. that man had parts of himself that he did not know and could not easily access. This not-knowing existence challenged the prevailing positivist notions

of reality and set the stage for the development of ways to access this unknown part.

As Moses (1999:307) puts it:

The Freudian discovery of the unconscious completely subverted the identity of the subject and of conscious life by transporting the subject outside himself and toward a space where he no longer knows himself. Freud's division of the psychic apparatus into a conscious and unconscious system explodes the classical notion of subject and scatters its fragments in multiple psychic instances that may no longer be reassembled, as in classical psychology, into one original synthesis.

Lawrence (2003:612) refers similarly to the role of dreaming when he writes:

“Dreaming and dreams are an awesome and mysterious human ability and are essential elements of creativity”.

### 2.2.2 C.G. Jung and the collective unconscious

Jung's notion of the collective unconscious in a sense harkens back to these earlier cultural views of dreams. What was collective to him was the collective history that all humans share in the same way and “represent the life and essence of a non-individual psyche” (Jung quoted in Coxhead 1976:16). This notion of “identical psychic structures common to all men” (ibid.), which is composed of images that were inherited generation after generation, built a growing stock of unconscious visual references over time, what Edgar (1999:199) describes as “a common and universal storehouse of psychic contents”.

As earlier noted, this concept stands very much in contrast to the socioanalytic notion of the collective unconscious, in two significant ways. Firstly, from a socioanalytic perspective, all members of the collective do not hold the same exact images. In fact, individuals hold only a part of the collective whole in their unconscious, which makes the case for wanting to access all parts, in order to have a better sense of the

whole. Secondly, socioanalysis does not subscribe to the notion of fixed images, but instead to a world of infinite mental images.

Jung believed centrally that dreams were visual, and he himself drew many of his dreams, mostly notably in the recently uncovered Red Book (1930 [2009]). This, of course, is connected to the notion of Social Dream-Drawing and represents a clear departure from Freud's belief that dreams were only accessed verbally.

Jung differentiates personal dreams, dealing with the daily lives of the dreamers, from what he called dreams from the collective unconscious. This, of course, is an idea taken up by Lawrence in Social Dreaming. For Jung, "Personal dreams are limited to the affairs of everyday life and one's personal process, offering information and guidance pertaining to what is going on in our current lives. These are the everyday dreams, the 'bread and butter' of the dream world" (ibid.:10). The collective dreams have a much broader meaning.

This notion of different kinds of dreams connects to Lawrence's subsequent notion (see below) regarding Social Dreaming, i.e. that dreams can have a personal aspect as well as a collective one. This notion of dream material being related to the larger world is central to the notion of the collective unconscious, which is central to the praxis I am studying.

### 2.2.3 Gordon Lawrence and Social Dreaming

In 1982, Gordon Lawrence, who was at that time at the Tavistock Institute in London, began developing a praxis based on the concept that dreams have a

collective aspect and that working a certain way with the dreams of participants in group settings would access unconscious collective material for further learning. This is, by the way, exactly the same goal that I have for Social Dream-Drawing, and I credit Gordon Lawrence for his influence on my work. (For a detailed description of Social Dreaming and its underlying theory, see Chapter 1 of this study).

Lawrence called this praxis Social Dreaming and stated as its purpose “accessing unconscious thinking through dreams” (2011:327). He considered it to be “a direct and uncomplicated way of accessing the social unconscious” (2003:621), and he specifically referenced ancient collective notions of dreaming as an influence on his thinking.

Lawrence’s innovation built on decades of thought relating to the idea that groups, collectives and organisations have an unconscious. Wilfred Bion, whose own thinking was based in Kleinian psychoanalysis, was the pioneer thinker in this realm, “the first to map the place of the social unconscious in groups” (ibid.). When working with patients in group therapy, he began to notice that there were certain patterns that returned again and again, when his groups could not seem to work on the task at hand. He termed these three patterns basic assumptions, because each dysfunctional pattern was based on unconscious assumptions that the group as a whole was making (Bion 1961). He contrasted the basic assumption group to the work group, which could undertake its task and stick to its purpose.

The three basic assumptions that Bion (1961) identified were dependency, fight-flight and pairing. Briefly they are as follows. A dependency group is one that gives over its responsibility for functioning to a leader, on whom it depends to take care of

all the group's needs. The church is a prime example of a (more or less) functional dependency group. A fight-flight group is one that sees itself constantly under threat from the outside, that must be primed at any moment either to attack or retreat. One could say that the army is an example of a functional fight-flight group. Lastly a pairing group is one that sees a combination of two of its members as a hopeful sign of renewal and regeneration, that will lead the group to a positive future. Some pairing political coalitions, such as Juan and Eva Peron in Argentina may be seen as examples of this.

Bion's theories provided the ground work for further thinkers on the notion of the group unconscious, particularly at the Tavistock Institute in London and later the Tavistock Clinic consultancy Service, where this way of working and thinking continues to flourish through research, training programs, seminars and many publications. Its most important manifestation of this theory is the Leicester group relations conference, first held in 1957, which has since become the prototype for a world-wide movement. The group relations conference is designed and structured as a temporary learning event, in which participants learn to recognise the unconscious processes in groups and how they influence individual and group behaviour (Miller 1990).

Lawrence first conceived of Social Dreaming as "a methodology used in the exploration of unconscious processes in social groups and organisations" (Long, 2013b, xix) in the 1980's and began holding these events, developing the praxis with the help of a number of colleagues. Social Dreaming is based on several important concepts that Lawrence has developed and explicated over the years in various publications. The primary concept harks back to the thinking of ancient times, i.e.

that dreams are not just personal. They do not just belong to the person. Dreams also have a collective quality. People do dream about their organisations, their community, their families, and the world at large. And since that is the case, these dreams can help us better to understand them.

In developing Social Dreaming, Lawrence was influenced by the work of Charlotte Beradt, in her description of the dreams of Germans just before World War II. These dreams, described in her 1968 book, *The Third Reich of Dreams*, contained references and images related to persecution and annihilation. They were not essentially personal dreams. “Instead, they arose from the public realm and the disturbed human relations that the context engendered...The dreaming can be seen as a nightly, running commentary on the psychosocial reality of Nazi Germany” (Lawrence 2003:616). They “describe how the dreamers are thinking of reality by processing their chaotic experiences of their social environment and rehearsing, through their dreaming, how they are to survive it” (ibid.). Thus, these dreams had a function for the society and its members.

Perhaps it is important to say here that there is no specially developed mechanism for determining if a dream is a personal or a collective one, or which parts of a single dream (if there is such a thing as a single dream) fall into which category. That is not necessary. Built into the praxis are various protocols that guide participants toward the collective. For example, participants decide which dream material to offer and presumably choose material that, from their perspective, is not of a personal or private nature. In the introduction, participants are asked to associate to the dream, and not the dreamer, thereby insuring that “the cultural context of dreaming is addressed” (Lawrence (2003:610). Interpretation of the dream or the dreamer is

discouraged. The seating arrangement encourages a distancing of oneself personally from the other. That said, one could perhaps argue that every dream is social, as it involves material related to others.

Lawrence posits that Freud's way of working with the dreams of individual patients is reflective of the Oedipus perspective. Social Dreaming, on the other hand "starts from the sphinx vertex. It is not about the individual's intrapsychic and personal unconscious, but about intersubjective space and the social unconscious." (Lawrence 2011:332) The notion of the Sphinx, as elaborated by Bion (1961), is the core notion underlying the influence and experience of collective unconscious experience. As Lawrence (2003:610) notes: "By focusing on the development of thinking and knowledge, Bion broadened the base for understanding dreaming and dreams by freeing them from being bound by the individual psyche. He named this vertex the Sphinx."

By such an approach, the cultural context becomes the media for exploration. As Lawrence (ibid.) notes: "Dreaming thinking and thought are the currency of the matrix, and not the face-to-face relationships of its participants". For Lawrence, dreaming is "the pursuit of knowledge" (ibid.:615). The matrix is "the creative pool of new knowledge" (ibid.:610). Sphinx, in this instance, is used to "symbolize the quest for knowledge", as it stands for the as yet not solved riddle, which Oedipus eventually solved (ibid.:615). In the matrix, participants are asked to associate to the dreams, not to the dreamer. He writes: "By concentrating on the dream and not on the person who dreams it, the cultural context of dreaming is addressed" (ibid.:610).



Following Bion's notion that thinking comes from unconscious processes (1962) and that, in fact, dreams are a form of unconscious thinking, Lawrence posits that dreaming could be made available to groups and organisations in order to better understand issues of the whole system. Like Bion, he saw "the function of the dream was to synthesize fragmented elements of emotional experience into a whole" (Lawrence 2003: 614-615). He developed a particular way of making these dreams – and by inference the thoughts that they held – available to the collective. Using Foulkes' (1973) concept of the matrix, which meant an environment in which things could grow, Lawrence saw the matrix as "the unconscious web of relationships subliminally present in any group formation" (2011:328). In the matrix, "the focus is on the thinking, etc., embedded in the dream, which ceases to be a personal possession of any participants, because, once voiced, it belongs to the matrix" (ibid.). Participants are asked to free associate and to amplify to the dreams. The latter idea, i.e. amplification, which originates with Jung (1969) is particularly interesting, because, as Lawrence writes, "[a]mplification confirms the status of the dream by examining its social context and the symbolism it evokes" (Lawrence 2003:618). Thus it also has a political agenda.

As important as the underlying theory, the structure and design of the praxis is also central. Following what is known about group dynamics from the group relations tradition (i.e. issues of being swamped or annihilated by the group) and also about containment from the role of the mother to the child, Lawrence developed a structure around time (similar to the analytic session), task (from socio-technical theory) and role (participant, host). Not least, the access to the infinite would be limited to holding these events with certain defined groups in certain defined larger contexts (i.e. a conference, a training program, etc.) Thus the notion of the context for such an

event and the containing boundary around it (i.e. time, task and role) was carefully thought about (Long & Harney 2013:7).

In comparing a matrix to a work group, which must, at one point or another, come to a decision or develop a consensus, Lawrence (2005:40) describes the matrix as “a collection of minds opening and being available for dwelling in possibility.”

Lawrence’s concept is that when groups meet in such a matrix and work a certain way, by freely associating to and providing amplifications (cultural parallels) to dreams shared by the members, that they are not a group, but are instead in a kind of regressive state that encourages creative association. His idea was that when the various dreams of participants in the matrix meet up, something more is created, a notion of the whole can be glimpsed and perhaps worked on. Through the multiplicity of dreams, so to say, the unconscious of various participants meet up and bring something entirely new to the system. “What then happens is that the dreams interact with other dreams and new thinking emerges as a result” (Lawrence 2003:616). And further “[w]hen one person as a self encounters others and establishes rapport, the ‘social unconscious’ becomes pre-eminent as one person’s unconscious resonates and ‘chimes’ with the other” (Lawrence 2011:326).

Lawrence sees the dream as a source of the infinite, both in the individual and in the collective. And while each separate dream itself, with the possibility of infinite associations, is enlarged, something even more powerful occurs when multiple dreams are shared. The matrix is a particular environment in which this infinite could be connected to in order to enable the “infinite possibilities of meaning” (ibid.:334).

From Lawrence's perspective Social Dreaming is both a tool of social and cultural inquiry, as well as a method by which new thinking can emerge, so it has a task and a function. In a creative use of Bion's (1967:166) concept of "thoughts in search of a thinker", Lawrence posited that in fact dream material was composed of unconscious thoughts that, when made available, could be utilised in thinking about the system in which they arose. In this way, thoughts never thought before could be expressed. He considers them the "unthought known" that, according to Bollas (1987), is actually known in a system, but not thought about before.

The purpose of Social Dreaming, as stated by the hosts at the beginning of each session, "is to transform the thinking of the dreams presented to the matrix by means of free association to make links and connections between and among the dreams so as to be available for new thinking and thought" (Lawrence 2011:331). The role of the hosts is not only to convene and end the event, but also to offer links and hypotheses relating to these links. It is an unusual role, but not unlike that of the analyst or the mother. Lawrence (ibid.:330) writes:

Hosts do not possess [sic] any quality other than the ability to explore social dreaming and pursue the unknown through reverie by willing themselves into a dreaming state while listening to the unconscious < > infinite of the dreams present in the matrix.

As opposed to what one might traditionally term a facilitator role, where one must keep in mind that group's goal to achieve its task, while at the same time looking out for the needs of individual members, the host of the matrix is expected to be deliberately "blind" (ibid.:328) with regard to group dynamics and to immerse themselves as well in the regressive experience, sometimes offering his or her own dreams. The role "demands a different kind of leadership – one inspired by the

recognition of the infinite, of not-knowing, of being in doubt and uncertainty, as opposed to knowing.” (Lawrence 2005:40). As Winnicott (1971 [1996]:57) has put it: “The patient’s creativity can be only too easily stolen by a therapist who knows too much”.

Lawrence places great emphasis on being in a state of not knowing, in order to be available for the new thoughts that may arise in the matrix. As he writes (2003:611):

The social dreaming matrix allows participants to have the experience of being in the unknown, or being in doubts, mysteries and uncertainties. Social dreaming facilitates the mental disposition of ‘negative capability’ (Keats, 1970), which allows participants to work at the limits of their comprehension and, as a result, to be available for the apprehension of patterns in the dreaming that lead to new ideas and knowledge.

The social dreaming matrix encourages this mental disposition of ‘negative capability’ on the part of participants by accepting the working on the boundary between knowing and not-knowing, or the finite and the infinite. In the not-knowing everything depends on seeing patterns that form to become known (Lawrence 2003:620).

Participants are encouraged, both by the structure and way the hosts undertake their roles, to, in a sense, regress into a state of availability and reverie. As such they “suspend their individuality and their ordinary (and/or scientific) rational logic; they are prepared to dive into the endless chain of associations and amplifications” (Sievers 2013:148). Lawrence (2011:332) terms it a capacity to “temporarily ‘submerge their ego functions’ in order to be more open to dreaming and ...for listening to the unconscious messages of the dream content and the social unconscious operating in the matrix”.

Lawrence’s goal is to provide the greatest leeway in associating to multiple meanings or associations to dream material, which, to Bollas’ thinking, is already “a form of

unconscious thinking” (2009a:32). The task is not to interpret the dream, nor the dreamer. But to open up as many possibilities as possible.

Truth is determined through the transaction of hypotheses, or intuitions. The act of social dreaming, thus, allows divergent thought processes to hold sway over the narrow, convergent processes of routine thinking. With divergence, the capability of intuition is enhanced, as is the recognition of the infinite to foster learning and creativity from the domain of the unknown (Lawrence 2011:330).

Using Winnicott’s (1971 [1996]) notion of transitional space, Lawrence sees the matrix as a creative and playful environment, a perspective that I fully endorse and share. Winnicott notes that a professionally reliable and trustworthy environment is necessary child’s creative play experience. It is not a space for further reflection and deliberation. In fact, he notes, “free association that reveals a coherent theme is already affected by anxiety, and the cohesion of ideas is a defence organization” (56). In other words, such coherent efforts belong not in the matrix, but in the following reflection section.

Lawrence contrasts this playful aspect to the traditional Tavistock approach, as explicated by Obholzer and Roberts (1994), which he sees as “negative and joyless” (2003:621). One could say that one aspect of the so-called Tavistock tradition of thinking is that the unconscious is full of repressed material that needs to be brought to light and that such experiences (particularly the group relations conference) are often quite painful and confronting, as analysis can often be. Lawrence envisions another quality to this access, which is based on a concept of the unconscious as being a source of creativity and play (see Chapter 4 of this study for a further discussion of play).

Lawrence describes the state of reverie in Social Dreaming participants as having “its foundations in the original, emotional contact of the mother and her baby” (2003:622).

In psychoanalysis the analyst symbolizes the mother, carrying out much the same thinking function. In a social dreaming matrix the dreams of the other participants perform this function. Individual participants relate their own dreams to the collective reality as it is being constructed by all the dreams as reflections of reality.

Thus he theorises a metaphoric relationship between the function of the mother in helping the child metabolise the chaotic Beta elements (i.e. Bion) and the function of the matrix in helping participants metabolise the chaotic dream thoughts.

It can be said that the pre-thought elements of the mind (Beta elements), embodied in the social dreams, are projected on to the matrix which contains them, to be transformed into primitive elements of thoughts (Alpha-elements). This matrix is the parallel of the breast of the mother experienced in early infancy and, as such, is central to any evolutionary change in thinking (2003:617).

It is with this insight that the kernel of the transformative processes in Social Dreaming and Social Dream-Drawing can be seen. The participant in such a praxis experiences a similar contained environment as with the mother (Bion 1977), in which emerging chaotic elements can be gradually reintegrated in the form of learning, by which to facilitate a kind of internal transition. This is consistent with the results of my research and also one of many parallels between socioanalytic praxes and other psychoanalytic processes described in this dissertation. (See Chapter 4 for a deeper exploration of these parallel processes).

Lawrence’s great innovation was to take a set of concepts and ideas from the history of psychoanalysis (free association, amplification), group analysis (matrix), earlier collective dream cultures and certain concepts from later psychoanalytic thinkers, i.e.

Bion (“thoughts in search of a thinker” [1967:166] and the Sphinx) and Bollas 1987 (unthought known) and integrate them into a praxis that could be (and has been) used with groups and organisations throughout the world.

To summarise, the purpose of this chapter has been to refer to examples of the historical and increasingly contemporary notion that dreaming is not just related to the individual, but has a meaning and a purpose relating to the community in which the dreamer is situated. Over the centuries, various methods have been devised to access and make sense of this dream material. Lawrence’s Social Dreaming has revived this focus and been given meaning in the context of the developing field of socioanalysis (as described in the introduction). Social Dream-Drawing (SDD), while rooted in the theory and praxis of Social Dreaming, introduces the element of the drawing of the dream, which has implications for the level of access to the original unconscious material and the conduct of the praxis. In order to explicate this difference, I will turn next to the physical means by which the dream material is transformed and produced in SDD, i.e. the creation of drawings. The physicality inherent in the act of drawing and the value of the visual for the work of the group will be explored and emphasised.

## Chapter 3: Drawing

This chapter is an extensive exploration of the myriad ways in which dream drawings add a new dimension to SDD that Social Dreaming lacks. It explores how drawings can capture the intrinsic visual nature of dreams and make possible a richer and broader world of unconscious thoughts to emerge. I discuss in depth Freud's work with the Wolf Man. Interestingly, in spite of the fact that Freud was not interested in the drawings of dreams, when this patient brought a drawing, their subsequent work could be characterised as the first Social Dream-Drawing workshop. This chapter describes an important piece of research done in Germany on the drawing of dreams and demonstrates how its findings support the work of SDD. The chapter closes with a discussion of the value of using both words and drawings in dream work.

### 3.1 A Transformative Process from the original dream to the drawing

To explore the topic of the drawing of dreams, one must first begin with the notion of the ineffability of dreams themselves and how difficult they are to get ahold of. As one of my interviewees noted: "...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!"

As the researcher Stephen Hau at the Freud Institute in Frankfurt, Germany has noted: "Dreams are not finished products" (2004:83). They are part of a dynamic process "where there is not a beginning and end point". (Please note that this source is unfortunately not yet available in English and a native German speaker is providing the translations to this material and to all the following quotations from this book).



As soon as one becomes conscious that one has had a dream, a series of transformations take place. Here is how Hau (ibid.:82) describes them. Firstly, the state of consciousness changes from a dreaming state to a waking state, in which a “carry-over-Phänomenen” [phenomenon] (ibid.) takes place. Secondly, the dream has to be remembered, otherwise it is not experienced. Awareness comes afterwards, when one is getting clear and becomes aware that one has dreamt. Thirdly, the dream is transformed into language, another medium of presentation. And fourthly, originally a private matter of the dreamer is now shared with another person, which results in further changes.

This description could also be compared to Freud’s concept of secondary revision, which applies directly to what the dreamer does when he or she relates a dream. In so doing, the dreamer makes a “... rearrangement of seemingly incoherent elements – typically of a dream but also, I would add, of traumatic experience – into a *form serviceable for narration*” (Hook 2013:264). Freud saw secondary revision as:

the final stage of the dream work. According to Freud, this is where the dream loses ‘the appearance of absurdity and incoherence.’ In essence, secondary revision can be thought of as the ways in which the dream work covers up the contradiction and attempts to reorganise the dream into a pattern in sync with the dreamer’s experience (Wilson 2005).

From Freud’s perspective, the unconscious engages in primary process thinking, where there is no language, only impressions, sense data and emerging scenes.

As Hau notes (2004:82), the “original dream experience”, once told, has already undergone a transformation process, and this has an impact on what someone tells about a dream, i.e. a form of secondary revision takes place using language.

Therefore one shouldn’t speak about the dream, but of the telling of the dream,

which is the focus of his research. Hau (2002:185) writes that: “the remembered dream is different from the experienced dream or the dreamt dream.” However, he does regard the dream as a “psychic product” (2004:87) that can be described.

Hau (ibid.:83) makes note of the process through which the dreamer goes from the telling to the drawing, which could also be thought of as another secondary revision process. Now the ‘to-be drawn image’ becomes a transformation and thus is different both from the remembered dream and the dream that has been transformed into language (ibid.). Also the 3-dimensional experience of the dream has to be transformed into a 2-dimensional sheet of paper through the detour of motor control of action (ibid.).

Bion (1965) compared a painter’s process of representing a field of red poppies on the canvas as similar to the analyst’s process of interpreting the patient’s unconscious material. I see a similar process taking place in the drawing of a dream. As I discussed in a published paper, when the painter paints this scene of red poppies

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 dream material to the drawing and make it recognizable. In this process, one can say, a kind of transformation in the psyche of the dream drawer takes place (Mersky 2008:36).

In the case of the dream drawing, as will be explicated further, these invariant images may not be so easy to recognise, given the fact that the dream drawer is drawing from a so called ,‘inner eye‘, rather than from the memory of a physical field of flowers. The drawer uses an “inner model“ (Hau 2004:126). However, in both cases, according to Bion (1965:4), a transformation is taking place, where “an experience,

felt and described in one way, is described in another”. Thus in his thinking, “All representations are transformations” (ibid.:140), which naturally raises the question of what is lost and what is gained.

### 3.2 The first Social Dream-Drawing

The value of the drawing of dreams has historical and contemporary support in psychoanalysis. Clearly the most famous dream drawing in all of psychoanalysis is that of Freud’s patient Sergei Pankejeff, whose case is featured in Freud’s *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* as that of the Wolf Man (1914). Pankejeff, early in his analysis with Freud, after sharing his dream of the wolves, provided Freud with a drawing of this dream. While it is not known whether Freud had asked for a drawing or whether the patient had offered it on his own, it is clear that this drawing catalysed the treatment process and Freud’s own theoretical developments in a major way.

Whitney Davis (1995) devotes his book, *Drawing the Dream of the Wolves*, to the drawing itself, and provides evidence that the very first Social Dream Drawing workshop took place in relation to this drawing, with Freud as analyst and Pankejeff as patient.

Initially, after seeing the drawing and later in his extended writings on the subject, Freud declared that the drawing served as a confirmation [Bestätigung] of his own theories regarding childhood sexuality. He was developing the notion of the primal scene (i.e. seeing one’s parents making love) as an early event in a child’s life that, so to say, ‘marks one for life’ and has been repressed by the patient. And because this experience is so fraught with anxiety and feeling, Freud noted that the “infantile

scene...is unable to bring about its own revival and has to be content with returning as a dream” (Fischer, 1957:39).

At the time the drawing was produced, Freud was focusing on the concept of the veil, that is, something that is drawn over the traumatic repressed material to obscure it from the patient. While the dream itself includes the opened window of the bedroom from which the dreamer is looking, the window does not appear in the drawing (see below). Davis theorises, therefore, that the dream drawing was “presenting or depicting a barrier ‘cutting off’ the world, in the place of the opening window in the dream report” (Davis 1995:103).



Figure 3 The Wolf Man's Drawing

That is, the absence of the opening window in the drawing meant that the drawing stood for the veil that the patient had cast over this material. As Davis (ibid.) puts it:

...the connection ultimately enabled a complete construction to confirm Freud's initial conviction about the case, namely, tearing veil = opening window = opening eyes or adult neurosis = childhood neurosis = infantile sexuality.

Despite the fact that (or perhaps because of the) details in the dream (such as the open windows and the actual number of wolves) were different from the details in the drawing, Freud saw the drawing as material by which the two of them could conjure a much richer and deeper meaning. The fact that some verbal details were altered in the drawing did not hinder his idea that the drawing was a confirmation of the dream material. From his perspective, the drawing enhanced the material, because it, in and of itself, represented the drawn veil.

At the same time, and in a sense ironically, the dream drawing could be seen also as a correction of the original told dream, in that the drawing, like secondary revision, revealed new material, such as 5 wolves in the tree instead of 7. Instead of expanding and deepening the told dream, the drawing, according to Davis (1995:60)

takes Freud closer to the unconscious, ‘latent’ content. In other words, far from being a ‘confirmation’ of the manifest dream thoughts or of the patient’s ‘report’ of the dream, the drawing takes Freud beyond or behind them to the disguised content finally constructed as the Wolf Man’s ‘primal scene’ (CF. Marinov 1991).

The drawing perhaps secured Freud’s ‘conviction’ about the dream because it was indeed the ‘correction’ of the dream: for Freud, it may have directly visualized – it pictorially realized – the very structure of the repression of endogenous, infantile sexual drives and fantasies of which the dream itself was supposedly the manifestation and of which the entire analysis, from the first consultation onward, was becoming Freud’s ‘case’, his example and proof (ibid.:70).

One can only wonder if Freud would have called Pankejeff the Wolf Man, or even if he would have selected this case for extensive exploration, without the drawing.

What is clear is that this drawing, in combination with the original verbal dream report, was the source of his preferred version of this case of “an objective Freudian

psychoanalysis of the infantile origins of psychic division.” (ibid.:157). In other words, it had enormous impact.

Freud himself was a prolific and passionate drawer. He was fascinated by Egyptian hieroglyphics and other visual media. His office was strewn with photographs and replicas of ancient sculptures. In his earlier roles of biologist and scientist, Freud made many drawings that, so to say, 'put him on the map' as an esteemed scientist. In the latter part of the 19th century, German researchers considered drawing instrumental to scientific discovery.

Freud made a natural transition to the use of drawings in his psychoanalytic work, for example his Sexualschema (ibid.:77) and his diagram of the Architecture of Hysteria, using “established graphic conventions” (ibid.:84) of the day. These are just a few examples of his many “schemas for mental concepts” (ibid.:88). (See page 85 in Davis for an extensive and impressive list of the conventions influencing Freud and utilised by him in these drawings.)

Davis carefully traces the various cultural influences on both men that would have influenced their understanding of the symbolism of the wolves. For example, Freud had a picture book of wolves, with their ears pricked, similar to those in Pankejeff's drawing. What Davis makes clear is that for both men, these images powerfully evoked their own internal worlds. Although Pankejeff was from a rich landowning Russian family and Freud from the modest middle class world of Vienna, each had his own influences. Each brought his own associations and subjective experience, which were ignited by the drawing, a shared medium that influenced their relatedness.

In the role of analyst, Freud “projected his subjective object into the Wolf Man’s drawing” (ibid.:200), and, as Davis notes: “They jointly created a new, intersubjective image out of their separate histories” (ibid.:204-5). At a time when Freud was presumably first conceptualising the idea of the analyst’s countertransference, something intersubjective arose between them, each of them bringing their own individual unconscious worlds to the physical drawing. In contemporary terms, one could characterise this as their collective unconscious (see description of Socioanalysis in Chapter 1 of this dissertation) and the resulting insights related to the “unthought known” (Bollas 1987).

Freud, it seems, was not only able to confirm his theory, but, through the drawing, became convinced that he must further explore the repressive mechanisms behind his patient’s homosexuality in relation to “phylogenetically acquired endowments” (Davis 1995:171). In other words, the drawing took Freud further from the concept of the veil and the primary scene, into a deep exploration of his patient’s unconscious repressive mechanisms. Phylogenesis, the evolutionary development of species, was an important concept to Freud and was elucidated in his *Overview of Transference Neuroses*, a brief text sent to Ferenczi in 1915 (Freud 1915 [1985]).

In addition he was also drawn into a deeper intersubjective relationship with his patient as a result of the drawing. As he wrote to Fliess “the veils dropped, and everything became transparent – from the details of the neuroses to the determinants of consciousness” (Davis 1995:104). His own internal objects relating to his homosexuality were impacted. Thus it “decisively reorganized both partners’

subjective identities and positions” (ibid.:184). In understanding and analysing this case, one must bear in mind always the intersubjective relationship.

What might seem to be the independent historical determinations of the Wolf Man’s drawing, in and for his own life history, cannot be disentangled from the intersubjective relationship between Freud and the Wolf Man – for it is, of course, the primary art-historical fact about the Wolf Man’s drawing that it was made precisely for Freud’s interpretation and in response to his attention (ibid.:186).

Thus, as with any dream drawing, the drawing is made for an audience, for a beholder, and that influences the content and the interpretation.

One could say that the work with the drawing of the dream by the Wolf Man stimulated the free associations of both figures, activated the unconscious historical patterns of both figures and led to a deeper self-understanding for both parties. If one were to think of this dyad as a group of two, then this could be seen as the first instance of a social dream-drawing event and an example of the collective unconscious.

Despite the fact that he did not continue his work with dream drawings, Freud often acknowledged that dreams were primarily visual in content. He agreed with the German theologian and philosopher Schleiermacher that “what characterizes the waking state is the fact that thought-activity takes place in *concepts* and not in *images*” (Freud 1900 [1976]:113). As opposed to this state of waking, Freud notes in his *The Interpretation of Dreams*, that:

dreams think essentially in images; and with the approach of sleep it is possible to observe how, in proportion as voluntary activities become more difficult, involuntary ideas arise, all of which fall into the class of images. Incapacity for ideational work of the kind which we feel as intentionally willed and the emergence (habitually associated with such states of abstraction) of images – these are two characteristics which persevere in dreams and which the psychological analysis of dreams forces us to recognize as essential features of dream-life (ibid.).



Elsewhere in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (ibid:155), Freud notes: “Imagination in dreams is without the power of conceptual speech. It is obliged to paint what it has to say pictorially, and, since there are no concepts to exercise an attenuating influence, it makes full and powerful use of the pictorial form”. A year later in *On Dreams* (1901 [2001]:659) Freud continues this theme: “The manifest content of dreams consists for the most part in pictorial situations; and the dream-thoughts must accordingly be submitted in the first place to a treatment which will make them suitable for a representation of this kind”. The dream work then carries out modifications “owing to *considerations of representability in the content of the dream*” (ibid.). The dream working mechanism takes the “impressive experiences ... having a visual subject matter” (ibid.) from childhood that can be made into something visual. Later he terms this “pictorial arrangement of the psychical material” (ibid.:666) and refers to a “dream composition” by which material is arranged to “form an approximately connected whole” (ibid.) and the creation of “dream-facades” (ibid.:667). As Farley (2011:24) puts it:

Freud underscored the power of visual imagery in the mind’s reel of dreams: what he described as ‘visually remembered scenes’ of early forgotten experiences that return to us at night, when consciousness is sleeping.

Despite the above and Freud’s great interest in visual punning and the way in which verbal and visual puns overlap in dream images, his primary emphasis in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) was verbal. As Moses (1999:308) notes:

Although we experience dreams in the form of images, Freud studied them not as visual structures but as texts. Or rather, the images of the dream are transposed in Freud’s presentation to verbal signs. The reasons for this, of course, are evidently pragmatic: while the dream is experienced in a visual form, it can only be communicated in verbal terms (through speech or

writing) ... Most striking, in the Freudian process, is the transformation of images into words.

As Moses (2013) emphasises, Freud believed that

the materials from which the dream is made (the “dream ideas”) are linguistic in nature. The dream is constructed from a substance of words, and each of these words refers to a nearly limitless series of associations...in which each element is always defined solely in relation to the elements continuous to it (313).

After all, his way of working is commonly called ‘The Talking Cure’ and **not** the drawing cure.

Although Freud viewed latent dream material as consisting of ideas and as linguistic in nature (and thus “perceptible only through words” (ibid.:310)), he was well aware of the fact that relying only on the verbal analysis of a dream “results in the overlooking of significant latent content” (Fischer 1957:36). He knew of the work of his contemporary, Marcinowski on the drawn dream (Hau 2004:88; Fischer 1957:36), who was able to demonstrate that concealed latent content was revealed in dream drawings.

One way to perhaps understand Freud’s lack of further exploration of working with the drawings of dreams is related to his central concepts of word presentation versus thing presentation. Freud thought that thing presentations “comprise basic ‘sensory images’” (Boag 2008:82), which one would associate with dreaming. On the other hand, “*word-presentations* involve either auditory or visual verbal residues” (ibid.). Freud believed that it was only through words (i.e. word-presentations) that data would come to consciousness, rather than the more sensual images related to Thing-presentations, which would comprise the drawings of dreams.

Although one of Freud's most famous cases could in fact be seen as the first Social Dream-Drawing event, there is little evidence of subsequent analysts taking up the use of drawings in relation to their patients' dreams as an integral part of their therapeutic practice. For example, despite his emphasis on the visual nature of dreams and his view that "[t]he dream is a communication from the psyche in the form of images arising from the realms of the unconscious" (Shalit 2013:1), Jung did not seemingly incorporate such work into his practice. The same could be said of Bion, although he noted the visual aspect of dreams when he "speaks of beta elements as dreamlike and pictorial" (Crociani-Windland & Hoggett 2012:170).

The serious use of dream drawings with analytic patients seems to begin with one of Freud's contemporaries, Otto Pötzl (1917), whose Pötzl Syndrome refers to those patients who were not able to mentally recall or revisualise images from their dreams (1928). He is seen as being the first analyst to use dream drawings with adult patients (see Hau 2004:94).

Since these very early days of psychoanalysis, various analysts and researchers have explored and written about the use of dream drawings (See Hau 2004:91-98 for an extensive elaboration), although I think it is fair to say, perhaps because of Freud's own prejudice, that this work exists largely out of the mainstream of ongoing psychoanalytic practice.

Charles Fischer (1957), a psychiatrist at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, however, believes that the pictures his patients draw of their dreams evoke images that would otherwise not come to awareness. He writes (1957:36):

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.

Winnicott's work with children displaced during the bombing of London, involved drawings – both his own and that of the children he was treating. These were not dream drawings, but this work showed “a propensity toward visuality as a mode of expression and communication where words might otherwise fall short” (Farley 2011:15). Winnicott developed a methodology called the Squiggle Game, where a drawing evolved from the marks made alternatively between himself and the children. As Farley (ibid:14) notes: “Something about drawing, it would seem, brought Winnicott and the youth in his charge nearer to experiences that words could not yet describe.” In describing Winnicott's Squiggle work, Farley (ibid.:23-24) continues:

Winnicott had from the beginning described the squiggle as a ‘dream screen, a screen onto which a dream might be dreamed.’ The squiggles are dream images that reach into the unconscious. Jan Abram's interpretation agrees: “By ‘dream screen,’ Winnicott is referring to the unconscious nature of the squiggles, akin to a pencil drawing of a dream, replicating aspects of the early mother-infant relationship.” Viewing them as a canvas for the return of the repressed...

Specific clinical examples exist as well. For example, psychoanalyst Joseph Slap (1976) has noted how the use of a dream drawing led a patient to make a slip of the tongue (“drooping” for “trooping”), which led to an insight. “Her attempt to draw the dream detail she was having trouble describing facilitated interpretation of the dream” (ibid.:456).

Despite the fact that work with drawings of dreams has not become a mainstream method in psychoanalytic practice, Linda Brakel, a psychoanalyst and faculty member at the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute, makes a case that dream drawing should be officially sanctioned as a psychoanalytic treatment method. In comparing patients' verbal tellings of dreams with drawings of these same dreams, she noted a much deeper and more extensive set of detail, especially with 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" (Mersky 2008: 40). The notion of the value of visual over verbal data is explored more deeply in a later section of this chapter.

### 3.3 Drawings themselves

In the history of art, drawing has always been seen as a step-child of the more evolved and elegant tradition of painting, having a "secondary and intermediary nature" and a "less privileged position" (Fay 2013:12). Drawings are generally seen as the first tentative step toward something more evolved, not representative of a finished process. Drawings themselves evoke the creations that children make, often with crayons or markers (the tools we use with social dream drawing), thus conjuring up images of a childish enterprise. Given what has been researched about dream drawings, this is appropriate, as signs that drawers have regressed to earlier childhood developmental stages appear in the dream drawings (Hau 2004:242). Artist and lecturer Brian Fay, in his article entitled *What is Drawing – A Continuous Incompleteness* for the Irish Museum of Modern Art (2013), makes note of

“drawing’s properties of contingency, intermediacy, in-betweenness and becoming” (2013:20). He cites (ibid.:17) art historian Norman Bryson’s notion that drawing “always exists in the present tense, in the time of unfolding ... a continuous incompleteness.” As drawings are considered to be only limited and incomplete sketches of a much more developed and intricate reality, one could say that they are quite appropriate as representatives of dreams, which themselves are unfinished processes.

Interestingly, as Richard Serra has pointed out (Fay 2013:16), drawing is not just an object, but also a verb. A drawer draws. A person takes a physical action and creates an object. As Hau (2004:126-127) notes, in the act of drawing, there is an exchange [Wechselwirkung] between the execution of the drawing and perception. The brain and the mind are not just simple containers [Behälter] for thinking, but a unifying whole.

Drawing is a way “to put down an idea before it floats away – to materialize an idea” (Eames 2012:127), “making tangible a dream, an imagination, in its most primitive way” (ibid.). Rosenberg (2012:111) extensively describes the role of the hand in this process.

Naturally, the materials that one uses for such a drawing have an influence on them (Hau 2004:139), and in my experience, dream drawers have taken pains with various media to produce anywhere from very simple line drawings to the most complex and innovative, filling a full page with colour and details. The simplicity and ease of use of one’s drawing materials allow the dream to come through more easily than a formalised set of art materials or standards.

In working with colleagues free associating to their drawings, Sapochnik (2013) notes that the actual objects drawn and their accuracy are not relevant. From his perspective, “representational technique was indeed immaterial. Drawings were produced in black & white and in colour, either in markers, ball-point pen, pencil and electronic media” (12).

There is, however, much more than just the physical process. Professor of literary studies, Ernst van Alphen (2012:64), especially notes “[t]he tension that arises when the pencil touches the paper that directs the activity of the drawing. In this sense the artist is no longer the subject who performs the action but the medium through whom the drawing is able to manifest itself.” Given Hau’s research (2004:246) showing the way dreamers regress when drawing their dreams, this notion of being the vessel through which the unconscious dream material becomes material resonates. In fact, as Sapochnik (2013:13) notes, “[d]rawing, because of its connection with motor muscular impulses, is connected with primitive functioning”, as is dreaming, with its primitive early content.

Sapochnik (ibid.) especially makes the case for the major role of the unconscious in doing a drawing. From his perspective, a great deal of unconscious material is made available in a drawing, due to the lack of censorship involved in the process of creating it in the first place. Thus “drawings may provide representability at a more primitive level of consciousness than words, that is, closer to the unconscious, by-passing censorship” (ibid.:17). According to Arnheim (1969:263) Margaret Naumburg (1966) used what she called her “scribble” technique to encourage patients to “create spontaneous free-swinging forms in curves and zigzag lines upon

a large sheet of paper””, which, according to Arnheim “liberates not only the flow of unconscious content but can also help to recuperate the spontaneous sense of form from perceptually inanimate, constrained picture making”. This is rather like Winnicott’s Squiggle game.

Thus the unconscious in relation to drawing makes possible alternatives available for insight. The act of drawing can conjure up early childhood experiences, “circumventing internal censorship” (Sapochnik 2012), thus permitting “access to tacit knowledge and unconscious perceptions of which she has not been aware” (Sapochnik 2013:0). In fact, the first chapter of Furth’s book *The Secret World of Drawings -- Healing Through Art* (1988) is entitled Drawings as Expressions of the Unconscious (1).

One also may say that drawings can reveal psychological realities not even conscious in the mind of the drawer, as Winnicot noted in the development of his Squiggle Game. As Farley (2011:5) writes: “...the squiggle etches onto the historical record forces over which a child has no direct memory and which take a detour through the unconscious on the way to becoming significant.” He notes later (ibid.:30) that the Squiggle Game is a way of “reaching into the unknown”.

In some ways dream drawings can be compared to Art Brut or Outsider Art, which was born in France in the 1940’s and later popularised in the U.S. and the U.K. in the 1970’s. The artist Dubuffet coined the name “to define objects of expression created by people who are not professional artists with an academic background in art, as well as patients suffering from mental illness” (Koide 2008:005). As with dream



drawings, “we see the visualization, the materialization of a world unlike anything we have ever seen” (Lingis 2011:36).

While I am describing various possibilities for the accessing of unconscious processes in the act of drawing, perhaps the above authors a bit over idealize the process of drawing. Drawing is, after all, a conscious act. Any drawing can be both a revelation and a concealment, because it is selective. It will never give the whole truth, even in the best of circumstances, because it is a reductive representation of something else. And while it certainly does more than language, as previously noted, because drawing is a conscious act and the drawer physically uses materials to create it, it can also be subject to distortion.

One extreme example of such a distortion is the ‘dream drawing’ brought to my very first SDD workshop in the Netherlands (Event 1) by participant N1. Instead of a drawing, he brought the following computer picture:

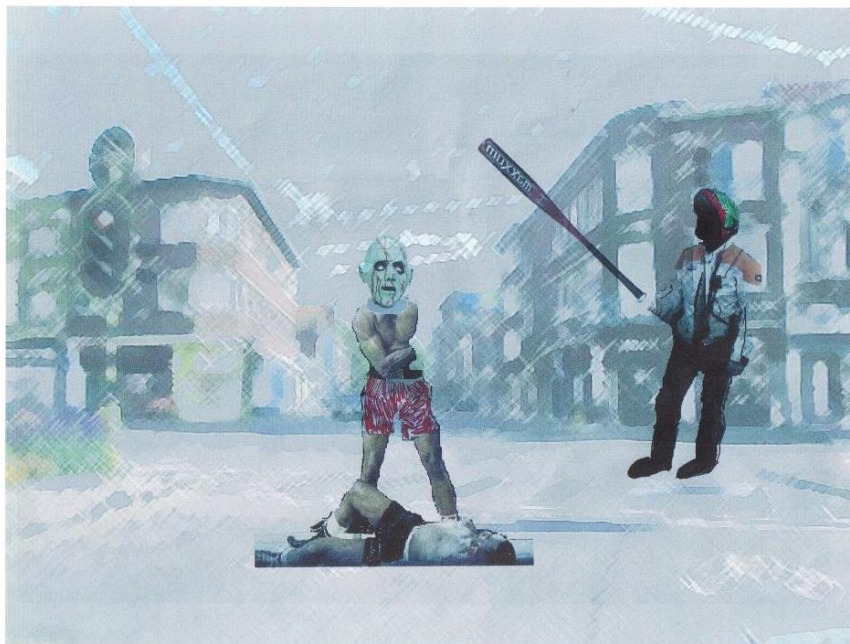


Figure 4 Computer-generated Social Dream-Drawing

We did our best to make our associations, but at the same time, it was clear that this was a composed picture more than a drawn one. Subsequent participants have, in their own ways, either ‘cleaned up’ or distorted their own dream images for purposes of working with others (see Chapter 4.4.1 for a further discussion of this phenomenon).

The transformative act of the drawing of a dream can itself be seen as a way of documenting and understanding a significant internal experience that might soon fade from memory. Thus one is not only representing a visual, but, in fact, is discovering something by making it able to be seen. Taylor (2012:9) deems drawing, “an investigative, transformative and generative tool”. From her perspective, the act of drawing “remains a primordial and fundamental means to translate, document, record and analyse the worlds we inhabit” (ibid.). She continues (ibid.):

Through signs and symbols, by mapping and labelling our experience, it can also enable us to discover through seeing – either through our own experience of seeing, observing and recording or through the shared experience of looking at another’s drawn record of an experience.

This idea is confirmed by many participants in Social Dream-Drawing workshops, whose original dream material and their deeper resonances and themes are evoked by looking at their drawings, even long after the workshop has ended.

From a therapeutic perspective, one could say that drawings are a way of helping us to work through an experience or a conflict. The act of drawing can be seen, not only as a representation of the unconscious, (i.e. the Scribble Method), but as a “means to work out the problem by making it portrayable” (Arnheim 1969:262), i.e. a form of working through unconscious issues. Because of this quality and their affinity with play, drawings have been used since the early beginnings of child psychotherapy (Di

Leo 1973,1983; Furth 1988; Meadows 1993), both as a diagnostic tool and as a tool for treatment. Art therapy with children and adults has tended to emphasise the creativity of the individual with respect to artefact-making and its potential to assist emotional healing in the patient. And, as Vince and Broussine note (1996:17) working with drawings helps to “contain the playful as well as the serious”.

The very act of drawing is an immediate experience that takes a period of time. Every choice of material, placement of an image on the page and stroke of design involves a decision. Each act could be said to represent something emanating (at least in part) from the unconscious. Over this period of time “imagination and the object interact with each other” (Sapochnik 2013:14). Thus:

Drawings may allow the viewer to notice the sequence of the journey through the making of the drawing as decisions have to be made, and the sequence through the drawing is a part of its meaning. (ibid.)

A last observation about drawing for purposes of this study is the critical role that a drawing can play in connecting the drawer’s inner life to outside reality. No matter what the intent, i.e. as a draft, as a sketch, as a dream representation, it is an act AND an object that carries much meaning, similar to Winnicott’s notion of a transitional space (1967, 1971). The importance of this very sensitive membrane between one’s inner and outer world must always be kept in mind when working with such revealing creations as drawings. This will be more deeply explored in the following chapter.

### 3.4 Dream drawings

Building on the concepts of transformation, drawings as products of the unconscious with a capacity to connect one's inner world and the outer world, I turn now to focus specifically on dream drawings, their nature and how they are produced and experienced. Upon reflection, drawing dreams makes a lot of good sense. In addition to all their physical and aural qualities, dreams, after all, are visual. As Symington (1986:97) reminds us, dreams "operate entirely at the level of images" and the dreamer can be seen as "a painter who has a message – an idea or theme – to convey but no words, and his materials are paint brush and canvas".

Naturally, this is an imperfect process. The dream drawer is not sketching from a model before him nor is he/she painting an object or scene from visual memory of external reality. The drawing is not an imitation and is not designed as a reproduction. The drawer is using instead what one might term his/her inner perception, an inner eye, that somehow, in the dreaming state, registers various images, many of which are contorted or manipulated in such a way as to seem not at all realistic. As Aristotle noted (Coxhead 1976:6): "Mental pictures are like reflections in water...the reflection is not like the original, nor the images like the real object."

Nevertheless, as one Bristol participant noted (B2; Event 25) drawing a dream is "engaging" and often brings back dream material that one had forgotten. She found that the act of drawing a dream ("something from my mind to paper") somehow made the dream "more solid" and jogged her to remember more details. After drawing, she found herself regarding the picture and noting: "That looks right on paper".

Freud noted that a state of regression fosters the capacity for dreaming, and one could say that the act of making the drawing returns the dreamer to this previous regressive state. It is a state in which thoughts become fragmented and disassociated, which is often later captured in the dream drawing. Fischer (1957:49) describes this as a “regression to a primitive, preverbal type of thinking, namely, in terms of visual images” (ibid.) and a “regression to perceptual images” (ibid.). Thus the drawings are a “direct representation of the mechanisms of dream work, which makes the dream drawing so valuable” (ibid.). Through the drawings these processes are represented.

Stephen Hau (2002, cf. 2004) undertook extensive research comparing three kinds of drawings. The first set was drawings of dreams by sleepers woken up during REM sleep. The second set was dream drawings drawn by sleepers after waking normally. And the third were what he termed “free-imagination drawings” which he asked sleepers to draw after they had arisen and were clearly in a conscious state.

Hau noted that the first two kinds of dream drawings (as compared to the third, i.e. free association drawings) contain visual patterns associated with children’s drawings. For example, there are rare references to ground or sky lines [Bodenlinien & Himmelslinien] in the dream drawings and a lack of facial features (Hau 2004:239). They contain only the basic elements. These drawings concentrate on the essentials and operate on what Hau (2004:123) terms “The Principle of Frugality”. They are a “simplification” of something very complex (ibid.).

Hau theorises that in drawing the dream, the drawer regresses to “an earlier developmental state” (2004:242) typified by a more primitive thought, perception and process mode. He states, based on extensive research on children’s drawings

(ibid.:201), that the average age for dream drawings is 8.6 years as compared to an average age of 10.2 years for free imagination drawings, a significant difference. REM state dream drawings, for example, often show either barely sketched or isolated stick figures, with no contextual or background illustration. In comparison to free association drawings made by the same drawers when they were awake, they were much more primitive and simple. This hypothesis is very well illustrated by the dream drawings in my study (see Chapter 8), and in fact the ‘simple’ and ‘childlike’ nature of some dream drawings was noted by the London process consultant in our very first session (E11).

Like the dream itself, from Hau’s perspective the drawing is not considered a finished thing (Hau 2004:113). However the drawing is neither ‘arbitrary’ nor ‘accidental’. It has been thought about and carefully constructed (ibid.:129).

One of my German participants (G3, Event 19) recognised the impossibility of capturing it all:

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 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.

Clearly, drawing a dream is not a simple task. Many of the participants in my study have noted this fact. As Hau (2004:124) points out, the drawing is the result of a “complex dynamic process” that has taken place “in a differently conscious state”,

i.e. the dreaming state (ibid.: 138). Anyone who has accepted the assignment of putting “a moving perceptual expression” on a piece of paper knows the difficulty (ibid.:124). Not only is the challenge to put something on paper that comes from an internal experience, but in addition one must ‘translate’ a three dimensional experience to a two dimensional medium (ibid.:141). Even in the best of circumstances, drawing perspective is very difficult.

As dreams take place over time, it is and can be, nigh impossible to capture the entire dream. Participants find many creative ways to handle this. Some use multiple images, dividing the paper up into thirds or sixths to show each step in a dream. A more common solution is to try to encompass the entire dream in one large representation, such as a German participant’s (G1) drawing of a long walk up a hill to a chateau. Others choose to represent only one image from a dream, as the Wolf Man did in drawing the second half of the dream with the wolves in the trees.

Probably the greatest challenge, however, to drawing a dream is the stress level of the drawer. Many participants have bemoaned that they are not talented nor good enough drawers. Attempts to compensate for a perceived lack of talent can bring the drawing even further away from the dream material. This can be seen in the above dream drawing (Figure #4) using computer images by Netherlands’ participant N1. Others have distorted and seemingly overly elaborated or ‘sanitized’ their drawings, in order to show good drawing skills or good imagination, instead of allowing the “messier stuff”, as one interviewee put it, to be seen. These drawings may not be very well linked to the original experience and may also be distorted by the experience of being a defended subject. Certainly another important factor is the performance anxiety related to the judgments and interpretations by the group.

One German interviewee noted the paradox that on the one side drawing a dream is a creative working through, but on the other side it is quite stressful, because one cannot possibly capture a dream on paper. This is also borne out in Hau's research. He (2004:202) calls the process of drawing a dream, the memory and the synthesis required, the transformation and the manufacturing challenges and skills needed, an "extremely complex self-achievement". In the drawing process, the drawer has revisited the dream experience, which demands a great deal of energy and self-investment. Hau (2004:208) refers to "the psychic energy intrinsic" to drawing, and to the dream material as well.

The many dream drawers that I have worked with approach the task of drawing their dreams in their own individual ways. My recommendation was always to have drawing materials at the bedside and to immediately draw. However, this was not optimal for everyone. For example, one London participant (L2) did it 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." This is an excellent example of the way conscious thoughts can transform dream material into an almost unrecognisable other form.

This response suggests to me a much deeper and thoughtful process than one of an immediate drawing upon waking up, which may have had consequences in terms of



how much original material was represented. But on the other hand, this way of approaching the task gave her a sense of safety and security, knowing that she would be presenting this drawing to others.

As challenging and stressful as this activity is, there appears to be a great benefit to the creation of an actual physical object (i.e. the drawing), not only for the work of the group (see Chapter 5 on methodology) but for the ongoing meaningfulness of the workshop experience. As Edgar (1999) has noted regarding his use of drawings of dreams with groups: “Facilitating respondents’ to draw pictures from their ‘inner’ images objectifies their imaginative world and allows a dialogue to develop in a different way between group members and the researcher” (206).

The drawings function as an objectification and a crystallisation of the dream. On the one hand, for the dreamer, this object assists him/her to remain connected to the original physical and sensual dream experience. Bergson (1914) and Freud (1900 [1976]) have noted the sensory aspect of dreams. Freud (*ibid.*:115) writes: “The waking mind produces ideas and thoughts in verbal images and in speech; but in dreams it does so in true sensory images.” Bergson (1914 [2007]:6) might argue that the drawing itself revitalises the original sense material experienced during the dream.

In psychoanalytic terms, the drawing of a dream can be thought of as a third object – standing between the dreamer and the dream itself. As theorised by Jessica Benjamin (2004:7) the third, is a “point of reference outside the dyad” that is co-constructed in the analytic space between analyst and analysand. It is what is created between the two of them in the analytic work, what she calls a “shared third” (*ibid.*:19). It stands

outside each of them as individuals and yet links them together. This can be seen as similar to what Britton (1989:86) has termed a “triangular space”.

Benjamin emphasises that in this concept of the third, she is not referring to an explicit object, such as a drawing would be. But I take from her thinking the notion that the drawing (as would be the case with a reflexive journal, or a supervisor or an engaged colleague) takes a particular function as standing not only for but between the dreamer and the original dream material. It stands outside the dreamer and the dream in a separate realm, where it can be engaged with by the senses of sight and feel, having already been generated by the physical effort of the dreamer.

In addition there is a kind of separateness that brings distance and perspective, but also integration. It connects something coming originally from the unconscious to the larger world. As one German participant (G3; event 19) once noted: “Drawing brings the inside out”. This perspective and distance also makes it possible for the dreamer to associate to one’s own dream material in the workshop group, which sometimes induces previously unremembered original fragments to come to consciousness. But in addition, and most importantly for the theory of a group unconscious, the drawing takes another role:

...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 (Mersky 2008:13).

One noticeable aspect of SDD is that the pictures are remembered for a very long time, perhaps even longer than the workshop experience itself. Quite often when I first ask someone from an earlier workshop if I could interview him or her, the first concern was that they could not remember anything. But as soon as they see the

picture again, the experience comes back, in full colour, so to say. It is amazing how much the picture triggers the internal experience. The general issue of how this influences the significance and meaning of the work is important to consider. This is also often the case with photographs. As Zelizer (2004:158) notes:

how we remember through images remains powerfully different from how we might remember the same event were images not involved.

She continues later (ibid.:160) to emphasise how drawings stay in the memory over time:

As vehicles of memory, images work in patterned ways, concretizing and externalising events in an accessible and visible fashion that allows us to recognise the tangible proof they offer of the events being represented. Images actively depend on their material form when operating as vehicles of memory, with our ability to remember events of the past facilitated by an image's availability and interchangeability. In a sense, then, visual memory's texture becomes a facilitator for memory's endurance.

This notion is also consistent with the principles relating to the art of memory, which, explicated by Frances Yates (1966), has developed over centuries. Before books and documents were easily replicated and collected, one needed a way to retain large chunks of information. The idea was to create some sort of familiar or easily remembered visual image that stood for this store of information, so that it could easily be brought back to mind. This perspective has as its two principles the creation of a vivid image and some sort of structure to hold it in, i.e. a kind of memory place. Then, in order to retrieve the embedded information, one first returned to the memory place and then retrieved the image previously stored there. Perhaps we can say that previous participants, therefore, somehow return to a kind of memory place of their past dreams or past experiences, and then to the specific dream drawing image that then unlocks the embedded material of the original dream.

This connects to Hau's point (2004:111) that a dream drawing can function as a kind of mnemonic [visuelle Eselsbrücke], meaning a transformation of the verbal that also serves as a form of remembering and reminding. These observations are certainly backed up by a number of participants. B2 noted that she can still remember the dream that she drew, as opposed to others that she had at the same time (two years previously) that she didn't draw. She is able to "recall the image in my mind very clearly". In addition, the drawing "brings back the emotion" associated with the original dream experience.

So what is a dream drawing? What is one doing when one makes one? What is one transforming? Since it is not a replica or a copy and is based on visual material emanating from an unconscious state, perhaps we should try to formulate an idea of what a dream drawing is. Hau (2004:119) considers it, for example, an attempt to capture the meaningfulness of what was dreamt with the goal to make this meaningfulness recognisable in the drawing.

This notion includes both the effort of remembering and then the multiple decisions involving the creation of a drawing that will be shown to others. In the case of the dream drawers in my workshops, as with most drawers of drawings, the drawings are made while keeping in mind that they will be shared with others and deeply examined and related to. Thus, one could say, it is always "intersubjectively constructed" (Davis 1995:106). This adds to the stress mentioned above, as the drawer anticipates being judged, much as the "defended subject" (Hollway & Jefferson 2009, 2013) reacts to being interviewed.

Pop artist Michel Kidner describes drawing as an attempt to “draw my understanding – trying to put down what I think I’ve understood about an object or an idea.”

(Eames 2012:126). This formulation suggests more a process of interpretation than that of recall and representation, both of which processes are important to drawing a dream.

The notion of dreaming as a metaphoric act means that in the process of dreaming and forming images, deeply unconscious processes and feelings are transformed into understandable or familiar metaphors. Freud, for example, believed that dream pictures were metaphors. As he wrote (1901 [2001]:659): “...dream-thoughts...are not clothed in the prosaic language usually employed by our thoughts, but are on the contrary represented symbolically by means of similes and metaphors, in images resembling those of poetic speech.” As such, metaphors lend themselves to pictorial representation. A Jungian perspective is similar. Analyst Shalit (2013:11) notes: “The psyche speaks to us in metaphors, a language we must learn as we embark on our journey to reveal the meaning of dreams.” He also says that “[m]etaphors and analogies depict scenes of life, and the dream images show that of which we are conscious” (ibid.:12).

One could say that this aligns very well with drawing, which Schuster (1990:20) sees as thinking metaphorically. The drawing itself can be seen as a metaphorical representation of the dream content [visuelle Metapher] (Hau 2004:31), and drawing stimulates metaphorical thinking.

Any metaphor can be seen as a kind of transformation of something from one form to another. This is a creative process, sometimes poetic, as Freud has noted. For Arlow

(1979:382) “transference ... and metaphor both mean exactly the same thing. They both refer to the carrying over of meaning from one set of situations to another”. As such, as Sapochnik has noted (2013:2), every metaphor-oriented activity is an attempt at some form of integration, whether organised or chaotic in content and appearance. This notion of integration of seemingly unintegrated material is one aspect of the experience of the participants in the workshops and is further elaborated in Chapter 8 Findings.

### 3.5 Drawing vs. verbal telling

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, normally the first stage of dream sharing is telling the dream to someone else, a verbalising. Throughout my research and my development of this praxis, I have been interested in testing my hypothesis that drawing a dream can make a particular contribution, can add a further dimension, not achievable just by the telling of a dream. From the research I have done, and especially from the extensive research work of Stephen Hau (2002, 2004) in Germany, this does seem to be the case.

To get an understanding of what drawing a dream may add to the telling of one, we need first to look at what differentiates these two forms of representation. To begin at practically the beginning, it is important to note that in the history of civilisation, with, for example, the Aborigines and other primitive groups, drawing came centuries earlier than writing. Freud was well aware of this historical precedent, and, as Ernst Kris (1952) noted, he believed that “[t]he visual image has deeper roots, is more primitive”. Freud thought (1923a:12) that for many people thinking in pictures “seems to be the favoured method....In some ways, too, it stands nearer to

unconscious processes than does thinking in words, and it is unquestionably older than the latter both ontogenetically and phylogenetically”. This historical order finds its parallel in the dream experience, i.e. “the visual comes before the verbal telling” (Hau 2004:107).

In his classic book *Visual Thinking* Arnheim (1969) extensively articulates the difference between language and drawing. He points out that words suggest permanency and stand for a “fixed concept” (244). As he writes “[t]he function of language is essentially conservative and stabilizing, and therefore it also tends, negatively, to make cognition static and immobile” (ibid.). It “attributes individual signs to individual concepts and describes thoughts and experiences as sequential events” (ibid.:251). Words can “help to freeze notions” (p. 244). Words function as a kind of “shell” which are used “to package ... thoughts for preservation and communication” (ibid.:245). They are static.

In addition to the symbolic and constraining function of the verbal, Arnheim notes the linearity of verbal telling. One word, one phrase, one statement comes after another. They go in one direction. As such “[v]erbal language is a one-dimensional string of words because it is used by intellectual thinking to label sequences of concepts” (ibid.:246). Each word, each statement, is amended by the next into something closer to the intended total meaning. This “build-up through the stepwise change of the image animates the literary medium” (ibid.:249-250). As Langer (1960:65) puts it: “words have a linear, discrete, successive order; they are strung one after another like beads on a rosary”. Verbal telling thus is a one-dimensional experience, going in one direction, although poetry has more fluidity and can be seen as much less linear (Grisoni 2008).

By contrast, Arnheim notes, “a pictorial image presents itself whole, in simultaneity” (1969:249). All is present at once in the visual and its contents are not presented linearly but rather in a complex interrelatedness, opening up possibilities for understanding and, as having previously been noted, having the potential for very complex content. Imagery works “below the level of consciousness” (ibid.:102), and is a two or three dimensional form.

Although a drawing is created in a successive way, the drawer is not under the constraint of composing a sentence, which must follow specific rules regarding the sequence of letters and grammar. The sequence of the ‘to be’ drawn things and objects are not as strictly determined as the sequence of letters and words in writing a sentence. Hau notes that contrary to the telling of a dream, the drawing of a dream truly mirrors the regressive experience of dreaming, what he terms the “dream work” (2004:246).

In comparing verbalisation of a dream with drawing, Walde (1999:131) has noted the impact of just a verbal telling. As she notes: “When dream images, usually consisting of pictures, are transformed into language, the interpreter is already working with a mediated and rationalized construct.” And “translating the dream images into language only produces secondhand information concerning the actual, unobservable process” (ibid.:128). Hau considers drawings of dreams to be more abstract and metaphorical than a verbal telling (2004:130-131). As a German participant (G2; event 18) put it: “[y]ou 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.”



One of the Bristol participants (B2; event 25) made special note of the difference for her between drawing and telling a dream and indicated her clear preference for drawing. From her perspective drawing a dream can “capture it in a way that writing can’t...There’s not often a word for what I have in dreams.” ”It does something that writing can’t do.” She continues: “The visual better embodies that dream than the verbal.” Chapter 8 of this dissertation (Findings) notes that participants recognised themselves the value of the visual over the verbal in a number of different ways.

And while one could fairly argue that drawings are not as successful as a verbal telling in capturing the details of a dream sequence, there is a case that can be made that a dream drawing contains the most significant dream material. What one loses in the detail, in other words, is made up for in significance. This point was made as long ago as the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the German writer and philosopher Gotthold Lessing, as described by Zelizer (2004:158):

In his early essay on the Laocoon, he argued that painting differs from poetry simply because it "can use but a single moment of an action, and must therefore choose the most pregnant one, the one most suggestive of what has gone before and what is to follow." In other words the visual, unlike the verbal, might best tell a story by strategically catching things in the middle. It depicts for its onlookers a moment in an event's unfolding to which they attend while knowing where that unfolding leads. This means that visual work often involves catching the sequencing of events or issues midstream, strategically freezing it at its potentially strongest moment of meaningful representation.

In his intensive study of drawings, Hau (2004:111) offers various ways of thinking about how drawings are related to texts. For example, a drawing could be seen to clarify sections of a text which are not so easy to understand. A drawing could offer a kind of coherence, structure or clarification not present in language. It could bring

together various separate parts of a text. For these purposes, the drawing offers a concretisation of the spoken or written word. I do not see these roles directly relevant to the work of a dream drawing, which does not set out to 'compensate' for the text. Rather it comes from another place in the unconscious and is produced in a regressive state of dream consciousness.

One might argue, as Furth has, that drawings are a far more honest communication than a verbal telling would be. As he has written (1988:4) "...pictures are direct communications from the unconscious and cannot be as easily camouflaged as can verbal communication". As such, they are more difficult to disguise than what a defended subject might say in an interview, although, to be fair, they are consciously constructed and can be distorted, as previously noted. Participants in all the socioanalytic methodologies dealing with drawings are always amazed at how much one can glean from working with pictures using free association and amplification.

Even the simplest drawing can be very, very complex in that it has the potential to contain so much meaning and information. Unlike the verbal, it does not just stand in for a single concept nor, with its affect, is it a form of linear expression. After all, images are the heaviest digital files you can send and receive. And in the popular vernacular, there is the famous phrase 'A picture is worth a thousand words'. This reminds us of the amount of information packed in even the simplest image. Every point relates to other points in the drawing. As one of my interviewees put it "[t]he picture always reminds you of the fact that you can't express everything in words".

It is important to note that dream drawings cannot speak for themselves. The details are often scarce and not very elaborated (Hau 2002:198), as noted above. The dream

drawing contains, so to say, the dreamer's private language [Privatsprache] (Hau 2004:120) and "subjective meaning" (ibid.). They need an explanation and comment, a so to say, additional translation. As Hau reminds us (2002:197):

The line of thoughts from the remembrance and the sequence of images in drawings, the perceived and remembered dream experience are supposed to be brought together and shown. Breaks, summaries, change of perspective, sequence of action or space and time of dream is condensed in the image and doesn't give room or space for perspective representation. What happened in the dream is condensed.

Thus, language is a necessary component of the sharing of a dream drawing.

Hau (2004) has noted that because dream drawings are not exact replicas (how could they be?) of the contents of the dream, in order for them to be understood or at least related to, they need to be accompanied by a telling of the dream and an amplification of what is in the drawing. Otherwise, the observer cannot really make much of the meaning of the drawing.

While perhaps dream drawings do not stand on their own without verbal telling, very often images from the original dream are not noted in the telling, but appear in the drawing, adding a new dimension of understanding. This took place, for example, in the Chile workshop (Event 5), when one of the dream drawers (C7) drew a cross on the blanket of a bed in a hospital. This led to associations to the aristocracy and to the culture and history of the domination of the country by this class. This small detail, neglected in the telling of the dream, opened up these important associations.

Not only do important details emerge in the drawings that are not in the telling, even original dream material previously forgotten can come back during the free association phase to the drawing, which is confirmed in Hau's research (2004:29).

Hau makes the ultimate conclusion that in working with dreams, both the verbal telling and the picture are necessary. They complement one another and support one another. The combination of drawing and telling, which Hau terms “the exchange manner of acting” from “picture information” and “text information” (2004:111) provides a fuller and more whole ‘picture’ of the dream.

Bearing in mind that, according to research, drawings of dreams reflect an earlier childhood developmental stage, he links this conclusion to the drawing in children’s story books, especially Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963). Here the scary drawings are, in a sense, mediated and contextualised by the written words telling a linear story. On the other hand, the literal words are ‘balanced’ by the wild and frightening pictures. While the verbal telling is formed by the structures and strictures of language and logic, the drawing is free to roam, so to say, from the unconscious. The experience of interacting with them is mediated by the familiarity and the concreteness of the words appearing at the bottom of the page, where Sendak writes in clear and comprehensible English.

Thus, the combination of two forms of representation (verbal and drawn) creates a kind of ‘transitional space’, whereby the full dream experience is revisited and where more of the original and primitive dream material becomes available. Comparing dream drawing to what Sendak achieved in his book, the dream drawing functions as a ‘transitional space’ between the ‘awake world’ and the fantasising dream world. In the drawn portrayal of the dream, phantasies come closer to the “original imagination process” than the spoken dream, which stands nearer to the structured reality with its “objective references” (Hau 2004:248).

This conclusion is confirmed by Biggs (2002:113), who cites the need for both text and the creative object, which somehow, together form a comprehensible whole:

Art and design is advanced using both text and artefacts. Agrest calls these 'registers' (Agrest in Allen, 2000: 164). Each has the capability to represent some aspects of a concept but not others....Agrest claims that neither of these registers is comprehensive, which is why art and design uses them both. Practice-based research also adopts this assumption. It assumes that neither writing alone, nor making alone, are sufficient to represent a whole concept. It would be easy to act as though theory is synonymous with text and practice is synonymous with artefacts.

To summarise, then, the act of drawing itself brings a dimension to the work with dreams that even Freud demonstrated with the Wolf Man. It stands in a particular contrast to the basically linear and logical direction of verbalisation. When dreams are shared using both mediums (verbal and pictorial), a space for integration of unconscious elements with conscious thinking opens up to create deep learning possibilities.

The next and last chapter of Part I: (Theory and Praxis), The Praxis of Social Dream-Drawing, will explore in depth how the actual praxis of Social Dream-Drawing reflects all of the theoretical formulations in the previous two chapters. These formulations are theories of dreaming in relation to thinking (Chapter 2.1), dreaming as a collective experience (Chapter 2.2) and the drawing of dreams (Chapter 3). How all of these theoretical threads are woven together into a praxis will be articulated and demonstrated.

## Chapter 4: The Praxis of Social Dream-Drawing

In this chapter I will be making a direct connection between the theoretical material explicated in the previous three chapters (Theories of Dreaming in relation to thinking, Dreaming as a Collective Experience, and Drawing) and the actual praxis of SDD. Other psychoanalytic theorists (particularly Winnicott, along with Benjamin, Ogden and Rosenblatt) will also be brought into the mix. Thus, this chapter is designed to demonstrate how deep and clearly grounded the theoretical roots of SDD are. I will focus particularly on the design of the praxis and the ways in which the design not only reflects key psychoanalytic understandings but also facilitates the three most important tasks of SDD: to work while playing, to think, and to integrate the thought from the unconscious and achieve insight. I will also explicate which aspects of which theories apply most directly and appropriately to SDD. The closing section describes the various challenges associated with undertaking this praxis and also the creative possibilities inherent in it.

### 4.1 To work while playing

Social Dream-Drawing is actually fun. I know this is a strange admission, but it is really true. London participant L1 (Event 20), for example, put it this way:

I enjoyed it. We had some laughs, which you know, I think there was humour in the room and I think that was really important. There was a light-heartedness that wasn't disrespectful or casual but it allowed lots of different conversations to emerge and different ideas to emerge.

In his work with infants and in his many publications, Winnicott emphasises the meaning and importance of play, not just for the young child, but for adults as well. He posits that play is deeply rooted in the interaction between the baby and the mother. It exists as a “potential space” (1971 [1966]:41) between the two and

belongs to them both; it is co-created and co-experienced. Here the child creatively experiments with its ever-developing relatedness to the wider world of not-me objects. Communicating in this way, the responsive mother allows for the infant's continual experimentation between its internal self-world and what lies outside itself. The infant's connections to various not-me objects in the play space between itself and the mother gradually lead to its attachment to a transitional object (i.e. the teddy bear). This object symbolises the union with the mother and provides a tangible connection with her when they are separated. At the same time it acknowledges their separation. It can be seen as an external symbol of a mental representation (not unlike the dream drawing in relation to the dream).

The notion of one's internal experience and objective reality as two separate spheres is challenged by Winnicott's (1967, 1971) concept of potential space or transitional space, the play space where the child is gradually discovering and developing its sense of identity. For Winnicott, play occurs neither inside (subjective) nor outside (objective), but resides in a space of transitional phenomena, and initially in the transitional object – the first symbolic instrument and plaything. This idea is echoed in the words of a German participant (G3), who noted that the SDD experience “brings together what was separated, i.e. the conscious with the unconscious, the individual with the group” (E19). It was for her an experience of integration.

Through the freedom and creativity of play, the child (and the adult) is continually reworking his sense of who he is in relation to the non-mother world. As Van Eerden (2010) puts it:

Taking place neither strictly in our imagination, nor in the truly external world (i.e. all that is out of our control), playing happens in that space where

our imagination is able to shape the external world without the experience of compliance, climax, or *too much* anxiety.

Winnicott notes that playing can be seen as an ongoing creative activity and a search for the self. The development of one's identity is key to Winnicott's concept of play. In fact, he asserts that only in playing is "the individual child or adult able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self" (1971 [1966]:54). For him playing "link[s] the past, the present, and the future" of all of us (ibid.:109). This is consistent with Solms' (2014) contemporary research on the mechanisms of the brain and his notion of "serious play" and "playing for real". This phenomenon is illustrated over and over again by participant experiences of Social Dream-Drawing (see Chapter 8 Findings).

Here it is important to note how much Winnicott helps us to understand what we profoundly carry around with us at all times and through all our life, but which is so very difficult to describe and touch. As he puts it, there is

...the third part of the life of a human being, a part that we cannot ignore, is an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated (ibid.:2).

One can certainly say that in the Social Dream-Drawing workshop, as the drawer plays with the others, a wider space is created between the dream and the drawing, the space of experience. As adults, we continue the process we began as infants, with ever new iterations and new transitional objects and transitional spaces, such is Social Dream-Drawing.



While one associates the idea of play with complete freedom and creativity, in the context of SDD, there are specific aspects of the design and its facilitation that need to be followed for play to take place. First off, it is essential that the workshop be experienced as a contained, safe and productive environment. Otherwise the anxiety of group life and the fear of having one's dream material judged or interpreted would interfere. Here the rise of the perhaps shocking visual image or the uncomfortable association can be managed on both a personal and collective basis. (One example of the former was a dream drawing where a man's body was speared straight through by the vertical bar of a decorative iron fence [Event 12].) A well contained environment makes it possible for new thoughts to emerge and risks to be taken. It can be compared to 'the relaxation that belongs to trust and to the acceptance of the professional reliability of the therapeutic setting' (Winnicott 1961, p. 55, cited in Fromm 2009).

By containment, I refer to Bion's notion of the mother creating just enough space for the baby to feel secure and yet separate enough to play and to think. Again, referring to Nutketch's (2002:4) application to organisational work, "'to contain' and 'containment' are concepts that describe the capacity of any entity to keep within itself parts that arouse anxiety". One important goal of the workshop is the safety of participants (see Chapter 6 Ethics), which, as related to Nutketch, does not mean that anxiety is not experienced, but that it does not overwhelm the work of the group on its task (see particularly Hollway's discussion of the difference between distress and doing harm in Chapter 6).

Participants need to feel that, like the baby with the mother in reverie, whatever they bring in will not be interpreted or criticised. Any such anxiety, as noted by Winnicott

(1971 [1996], inhibits play and leads to defensive mental formulations. There are explicit ground rules making that clear. The participant him or herself, by what he or she brings into the workshop, needs to feel personally safe enough, not only to play, to offer one's intimate dream material, but also to, himself, regress sufficiently to allow unconscious thoughts and processes to become available for thinking. Brigid Nossal (2003) terms such an environment a "thinking space' where there is openness to sharing and exploring in a different way" (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.

Given the above discussion, one can then formulate a connection between three processes, i.e. the mother and child, the psychoanalyst and patient and the matrix and the dream drawer in relation to thinking by using Bion's theory. See Appendix 3 for a visual representation of these parallel processes.

Lawrence conceived of the matrix as "a place out of which something grows as in a uterus" (1999a:18). Here participants are asked to suspend their individuality and their rational logic in order to participate in the matrix as a container for dreams to emerge. This is exactly what Freud encouraged his patients to do, i.e. "not to hold back any idea from communication, even if (1) he feels that it is too disagreeable or if (2) he judged that it is nonsensical or (3) too unimportant or (4) irrelevant for what is being looked for" (Freud 1923b:238, quoted in Bollas 2009:8). This is also the spirit of Social Dream-Drawing.

While this can be seen as the ideal experience, I take a more practical view of what people experience in groups. It is natural and normal for group settings to raise anxieties in participants and thus lead to a self-censorship (Sapochnik: 2013) or a defended subject mentality (Hollway & Jefferson: 2009, 2013). In describing the contained and free associative and playful experience of SDD, I do not mean to suggest that participants don't carefully manage themselves in their roles in order to contain their group anxieties and to cope with the influx of unconscious associations related to their dream material.

In terms of containment, there are many aspects of the way the praxis is conducted that provides for it. For example, the participant is given the freedom and the authority to choose which drawing of which dream to bring to the group. The drawing is always created before the session and participants are encouraged to create many dream drawings before choosing which one to bring. Also, the act of drawing and the physical object bring the unconscious intimate material out into the objective world, which already starts a process of transformation for the presenter, but also places the material more 'outside' the personal reality of the dreamer, thus creating a kind of safety buffer. Working with each dream drawing in exactly the same way creates a predictable and safe structure. Using a theme relating to work also puts the focus on the outside, rather than the personal inside world. As Susan Long (2013a) has noted, the theme can provide a broader container for the matrix itself and its work and, in a sense, provide a context for which dream drawings are shared.

Various interviewees expressed this idea. A Bristol participant (B2; Event 25) noted:

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.

A German participant noted (G3; Event 18) that, at the beginning, the workshop felt safe enough for her to be able to work, but after the sudden death of her husband it was difficult for her to contain and manage her personal sadness. She was especially pleased to be able to bring a "normal interesting dream" to the group, but sensitive to the associations relating to death. For her, there was a very "fine line" between the group as a task group and one where she would potentially regress into private feelings, which she did not want to do.

A London participant (L4; Event 21) termed it "An accessible methodology [sic] that doesn't feel too frightening". Another London participant (L2; Event 22) put it this way:

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.

As noted before, the key activities leading to the awareness of the "unthought known" (Bollas:1987) embedded in the dream drawing is free association and amplification. One could think of the process of free association as a "chain of ideas" (Bollas 2007 [2013]:9), where unconscious thought gradually reveals itself. It also requires that the context is one in which free association, in particular, comes easily and is easily utilised, what Winnicott terms a "non-purposive state" (1971 [1996]:74). This is an activity, however, that is not just designed to loosen up one's creative juices. As Bollas (2009:21) puts it: "free association manifests the unconscious. It functions as an ever-sophisticated pathway for the articulation of

unconscious ideas, regardless of their derivation”. From his perspective “the logic of association is a form of unconscious thinking” (ibid.:32). These free associations can be seen as a reflection of the transference of the participants to the manifest dream material presented in the workshop, which is one of Lawrence’s (2003:621) key hypotheses about Social Dreaming, i.e. that the transference is to the dream, rather than to the hosts, which he wanted to avoid.

As opposed to Lawrence, who terms the people who conduct Social Dreaming ‘hosts’, I prefer to use the term ‘facilitator’. This word better captures the active role of containing and taking responsibility for an environment where learning can take place. Here I draw more on Winnicott’s concept of a ‘facilitating environment’ so central to the ‘maturational processes’ in infancy and early childhood (Winnicott 1965).

I see facilitating a SDD workshop as a management role that means providing the right conditions for learning, as described above. There is play, but the play has a purpose. As French and Tchelebi put it (original English version of ultimately published review in a German journal): “The aim of this way of working is to create a different kind of space, in which new thinking may be possible” (2010:135).

While places for safety and play come automatically with childhood, for adults they have to be designed. This is what Winnicott refers to as a “specialized setting” (1971 [1996]:55). Playing in the service of actually experiencing feelings and being able to think about them is not a common adult experience. As Erdelyi (1999:623) poetically puts it:

Freud's idea is that we adult humans like to throw off the yoke of civilization and regress back to less burdened states, as long as we don't lose ultimate control and can readily return to our safer, grown-up world....With adults,

too, this game of peek-a-boo -- this controlled back and forth between manifest and latent, primitive and adult -- delights, as long as it does not scare too much.

The last underlying psychoanalytic theory that belongs in this section has to do with the notion of the 'third', which evolves from the intersubjective relationship between analyst and analysand, in which, as Ogden (2004:167) puts it, a "jointly created unconscious life of the analytic pair--the analytic third" develops over time. From Ogden and Benjamin's (2004) perspective, this space is co-created between the patient and the analyst and forms the crucible for the analytic learning. It is not unlike Hirsch's (1996) notion of the transference-countertransference matrix.

In Social Dream-Drawing this 'third space' appears in many forms. Firstly, there is the third space created by the drawing itself, which, for the dreamer, links her conscious with her unconscious. (The drawing could also be thought of as a transitional object between these two aspects.) The drawing itself also functions as a third space between the drawer as participant in the group and the other participants. It is something tangible and physical that exists separately, but which provides a way for all to relate to one another. It becomes then a third space between the dreamer as participant and the other participants in the group. Nossal has made note of this in her analysis of the role of pictures in group work. She terms the drawing as a "third factor....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" (Nossal 2003: 7).

During the course of the workshop as well, when the dreamer is sharing his/her drawing and participants offer associations and amplifications, a third space of collective work takes place, that relates to the group's associative unconscious in relation to the theme. In writing about the participant experience in a related praxis, the Social Photo-Matrix, Sievers notes: "Unlike the unconscious on the level of the individual, the associative unconscious allows SPM participants to experience the photos as something 'social', as something the participants have in common" (2013:131). Thus on many levels, the 'third', i.e. the drawing, the external object, the dream itself and the collective unconscious become the crucible for learning.

The third can also stand for the various roles in the actual praxis. Whereas the dream drawer presents the material, the participants, taking the role of the 'third' in relation to the dreamer and the drawing, offer associations as yet not known, thus creating a third space of new thoughts. In this process, interestingly, the group itself enters the dream-drawer's space between his or her unconscious and conscious thinking. Very often, when the dream drawer is asked to respond after the free associations, he or she is amazed at how much new material from the original dream has been illuminated by this free association process. Often, as a fellow participant in this matrix experience, the dream drawer comes into contact with both new dream material and new thoughts and learnings. He or she becomes a so-called 'third' to the original dream role and the dream drawing. The thirds and thirdness, in other words, abound. (See Chapter 9 for a further discussion of the role of the third in the process of doing psycho-social research.)

Working in a group where thirdness is enacted also has a positive impact on the participants. Two London 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 (L3; Event 23).

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 (L2; Event 22).

This connects very well with Winnicott's notion that the creative reaching out taking place in a safe space requires the resonance of another. It is not a solo experience. As Van Eerden (2010) puts it:

The "creative reaching-out" of playing, which Winnicott understands also as the search for self — creative activity as the search for self — does not result in an integrated sense of self, however, without the "reflecting back" or "summation" of one's reaching-out, one's play, by another: for instance, *a friend*. Only when our nonsense is accepted — "reflected-back" — can we begin, says Winnicott, to be *found*, or to *be*....and to "reflect back" without judgment if a creative life is to become possible.

Similar to the concept of the third, cited above, van Eerden (2010) posits the concept of the individual's "triadic relationship with the world", which consists of "self, samples of inner reality, and pieces of external reality, united in a relaxed and trustworthy environment where one's play is accepted and reflected-back by a friend". This idea captures the spirit of SDD, and at the same time confirms the importance of the role of the group in this work. Here the role of the group as a participating player takes on a special meaning in confirming the dreamer's process of his or her own self-development (see Chapter 8 Findings).

#### 4.2 To think

The design of Social Dream-Drawing, like Social Dreaming and other related socioanalytic praxes, is strongly informed by Bion's theories about thinking. Bion's concept that thoughts precede thinking, as opposed to the idea that one begins to



think and what follows are thoughts, is central to the matrix activity of free association and amplification. Here, Bion's famous 'thoughts in search of a thinker' (1967), albeit in their seemingly chaotic form, first make themselves known.

These seemingly chaotic thoughts can be viewed, using the American philosopher Peirce's language, as the "surprising fact" (1931-1935, 1958:189) or "strange intruder" (1992-1998:154), whose "abrupt entrance" (ibid.) calls for the use of abductive logic in order to make sense of them. This often takes place in the course of scientific study. Abductive logic means developing working hypotheses that "connect those items into a coherent explanatory narrative" (Long & Harney 2013:11), to be tested over a period of time.

As theorized by Lawrence (1999b:8), these intruders are connected to something already present in the system, i.e. Bollas' (1987) "unthought known". 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 (L2; Event 22) 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 (1962 [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 activity in the matrix. These are, for example, Peirce's "strange intruders" or "surprising facts" and Bollas' "unthought known". The second of Bion's mental developments is the actual

capacity to think, so to say, about these arising thoughts, making sense of them. In this context, ‘sense-making’ can be *defined as* “how individuals and groups construct meaning when confronted by complex, sometimes contradictory information” (Uren et al. 2005:1). In order for this thinking to take place, there needs to be some structure designed or available for that function, what Bion refers to, in the individual, as the “apparatus to cope with them” (1962 [1988]:179). Luzes (2005) has referred to this as the “thought-thinking apparatus” or the “thinking apparatus”. This is what must be called into being in order for sense-making to occur, i.e. “...thinking has to be called into existence to cope with thoughts” (Bion 1962 [1988]:179).

For the collective, I see the reflection session of the design as serving that exact purpose. The reflection session creates the space for the group 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?’. As such, it functions as the metaphoric apparatus that is a space to think, i.e. to transform the ‘surprising’ thoughts from the infinite into potential hypothesis related to reality, i.e. the chosen theme or the organisation itself.

Here is how these concepts fit together visually:

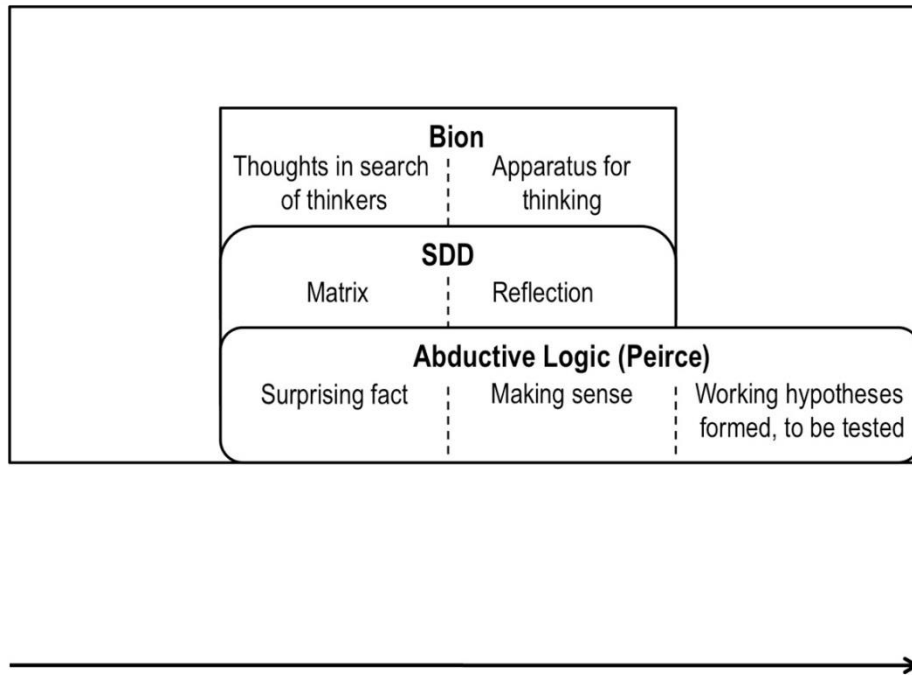


Figure 5 How theories of Bion and Peirce are reflected in SDD

It is interesting to note that Bion viewed these arising thoughts “as if they were objects that had to be dealt with” (1962 [1988]:184). There is some sort of irritation somewhere. Bion explained their source this way:

(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.).

In applying this to the SDD workshop, one could say that the unconscious thoughts that emerge through dreams and drawings 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.

In taking up Bion's theory on thinking in his development of Social Dreaming, Lawrence sees participation in such a workshop as having a profound effect on the reality of the system or organisation in which it takes place. He notes that Social Dreaming (2003:620)

...[m]obilizes the thinking capacities of participants in the matrix, and leads to the apprehension of new patterns of facts...as a tool of action research....The social dreaming matrix makes the unconscious, the infinite, of a system that much more available for inspection.

It is this aspect that has infused the experience of many of the participants who participated in my study (see Chapter 8 Findings).

#### 4.3. To integrate the thoughts from the unconscious and achieve insight

Central to Social Dream-Drawing, of course, is the dream material. There are many theorists who write about how dreams are a form of communication from the unconscious to the conscious. Shulman and Strousma emphasise "a near-universal experience of dreaming as communication, a more or less enigmatic presentation of meaningful messages to the self (and *from* the self, or from some profound dimension of reality, or from God)" (1999: 7). Grotstein (2000), in his absorbing book, *Who is the Dreamer and Who Dreams the Dream?*, echoes this idea. He "views the mystery of dreaming from the point of view that dreaming is a critical way we have of communicating with ourselves and of processing that unconscious communication in the very act of dreaming" (Ogden 2000:viii).

Social Dream-Drawing is partly based on the notion that dreams themselves are produced for a context. Thus is the standard joke that the patient dreamed such and such a dream for the analyst, as a gift or a favor. One could hypothesise, for example,

that the dream and the dream drawing that the Wolf Man offered to Freud and to their joint work was such an example. Phillips writes about the importance of the container into which the dream is brought (1995).

In developing Social Dreaming, Lawrence often made the point that there are different kinds of dreams and that the context of Social Dreaming leads participants to 'produce' social dreams. Lawrence identifies two kinds of dreams. There are personal dreams appropriate for the treatment process, and there are organisational dreams, appropriate for Social Dreaming. From his perspective, the dreamer knows what he is doing. The dreamer as patient brings dreams that are "personal and properly regarded as possessions of the dreamer...that foster the therapeutic process" (2003:619). And the dreamers in Social Dreaming "intuit which of their dreams to offer to the matrix" (ibid.) and offer only those dreams relating to concerns of the social world.

Thus the dreamer dreams for the context in which the dream material will be shared and worked upon and provides information for the context. As Walde (1999) notes: "Since all such contexts have an influence on the dream's formation, the dream, inversely, can furnish information about contexts, in reciprocal interrelationship" (137). Thus the dream material can offer information about the unconscious processes taking place in the organisation or group that is sponsoring and participating in the matrix.

One characteristic of dreams is their ability to bring together seemingly unrelated and contradictory elements into a whole, thereby synthesising unconscious and conscious

elements. They are seen by many theorists as disguised messages. Shulman and

Stroumsa (1999:6) phrase it this way:

Dreams offer a constant balance between the private world of latent images, fears, and hopes, and outside reality, cosmic as well as social. Dreams present the means to reestablish the constantly shattered equilibrium between these two realms.

For Freud (1900 [1976]:768-9), dreams bring together what in the rational mind can only be seen as contradictions. He writes:

Thoughts which are mutually contrary make no attempt to do away with each other, but persist side by side. They often combine to form condensations, just as though there were no contradiction between them, or arrive at compromises such as our conscious thoughts would never tolerate but such as are often admitted in our actions (ibid.:755).

Freud's concept of condensation (1901 [2001]:657) was his way of explaining how "two ideas in the dream-thoughts which have something in common, some point of contact, are replaced in the dream-content by a composite idea." This composite idea, while seemingly impossible to comprehend using only rational and conscious processes, takes hold for a reason in the dream material. Freud (ibid.:650) went further by noting how to work with these contradictions:

...in analyzing a dream, if an uncertainty can be resolved into an 'either—or', we must replace it for purposes of interpretation by an 'and', and take each of the apparent alternatives as an independent starting-point for a series of associations.

This is exactly what we do in Social Dream-Drawing. The condensed contradiction appears in the dream and the drawing. It just doesn't seem to make any sense. And we use free association and amplification to make available the unconscious embedded thoughts. One example is this dream drawing by London participant, L3, which was the very first dream presented in the London workshops (Event 11):



Figure 6 Social Dream-Drawing: The father and the family

The dream that was the basis of this drawing had to do with the burdens that a father (the dreamer) feels as he tries to take care of his family. The figure in the dream drawing is himself and his family appears at his feet. In his associations to the drawing, the dreamer noted that while he is tall and can see very far, he is also in fear of losing his balance. The associations and discussion in the group centred on the lack of connection to his family and children and the sacrifices and losses that he is experiencing in pursuing his professional goals, particularly his doctorate. One participant associated the figure to Atlas. Here we see the contradiction between the striding, strong Atlas and the work-life unbalanced and distant father. This insight framed the work that followed for him.

Both Freud and Jung wrote about the ability of dreams to bring together opposites. As explicated in chapter 2.1, Freud saw this process of condensation as basically a

mechanical one, not one of creating meaning. Jung's view that dream images were in fact taken from a stock of archetypal images contained in all humans led him to the idea that these newly created dream images are in fact symbols. To him, the creation of these symbols is the dream work and "[t]he psyche offers up symbols as a way to help us reconcile these opposites within ourselves" (Shalit 2013:7).

My perspective is actually different. Although I agree with Jung's notion that different symbols may be combined together (such as the symbol of the father as a striding Atlas in danger of losing his balance), I don't agree that these are symbols that everyone carries around with them, just to be utilised in a dream image, although, interestingly enough, the figure of Atlas would be probably be included in Jung's archetypal collection. Nevertheless, I think the images are original to the dreamer. The idea that this figure is Atlas came out in the associations, not on the dream telling. And while I do agree with the notion of condensation, I don't see it as a mechanical process, but rather an emotional process by which the unconscious is attempting to make sense and work through some problematic underlying issue. This complicated process is represented in the dream. And it is done in a creative and new way.

But why does the dreamer go to all of this immense creative effort? At the individual level, Grotstein (2000) suggests that dreams link the past and present, which, in his perspective, is a form of problem solving. Through the dream, one resolves pressures relating to the outside world. An "internal therapeutic dialogue" takes place (viii) that facilitates this.



From the collective level and for purposes of thinking about SDD, I take the view that these contradictions are related to the unthought known, i.e. a thought that could not previously be integrated into consciousness. As Bollas (2009a:6) puts it: “a line of thought...linked by some hidden logic that connects seemingly disconnected ideas.” And it is this line of thought that relates to an underlying collective problem.

To link this to reality even further, Arthur Koestler (1964) has noted that all great discoveries and solutions to problems come from combining two opposites or two unrelated ideas. He uses the example of Benjamin Franklin’s invention of the lightning rod as an example. Koestler notes that dreams also bring together opposites, which can lead to problem solving in the real world. Thus one could say that dreams have a match making function.

One could say that this immense effort is fueled by something active. The unconscious is on a mission. As Haartman (Date unavailable:1) describes it:

The unconscious tries to attract the attention of the psyche, to forge a unity that allows one to “be together with oneself” (xxvi). As part of this covenant, the unconscious works to ensure that dreams, symptoms, and free associations deliver tolerable doses of “revelation”. The unconscious aims to produce useable insights that we can recognize and absorb.

Thus the unconscious is not just communicating; it is urging us to pay attention to something and to do something about it. What SDD provides is a space for adults to do just that. In this experience (and please see Chapter 8 Findings) the participant goes through a mental and emotional process (just as the analysand does), which leads to insight. And insight can be seen as the tool by which the problem can be framed and subsequent alternatives can be thought about. As Rosenblatt (2002:189) notes: “The achievement of insight has historically been considered the major engine of change in psychoanalysis”. Insight is a “term [that] implies a sense of discovery, a

connection” and “a *new symbolization of experience*” (ibid.:193). Insight involves “a form of unconscious pattern recognition and matching that may become conscious” (ibid.:194) resulting, hopefully, in “new patterning”.

Thus, using Jung’s notion of the visual in dreams and Freud’s notions of the ambivalent and contradictory material that dreams condense, one could say that, given the emotional need to explore and find some solution for some problem, the insight that Rosenblatt identifies is insight into an existing, but as yet unconscious, underlying problem, a problem that is not just important, but also is striving to be solved. When this work is undertaken in a group setting, underlying group issues and/or individual issues are illuminated, depending on which praxis is taking place. In SDD, the group’s collective work is a form of analysis of the material in the dream drawing, which results in important individual insights for the dreamer. In SDM and SPM, where the focus is either the dream or the photograph and not the individual, the collective material that is thereby illuminated and made available for insight. This lays the clear theoretical basis for Social Dream-Drawing, as well as the other socioanalysis praxes identified in the introduction to this study. See Appendices 4 and 5 for visual representations of these theoretical concepts.

To hold and create a space where these contradictions can be manifested and worked on involves issues relating to design and facilitation, which I have intensively explored above and elsewhere in this study. The notion of transition permeates the praxis. The dream drawing, for example, can be thought of as a transitional object. Like the infant’s teddy bear (Winnicott 1971), which is a symbolic representation of the infant-mother union, the dream drawing is an external symbol of a mental

representation, i.e. the dream. Sievers (2007a:249), in describing the experience of participants in a related socioanalytic praxis, Social Photo-Matrix, has noted that

...[t]he making of photos thus can be seen as taking place in a potential or transitional space (Winnicott 1967, 1971), a space between the 'inner' world of the photographer and the 'outer' one of the 'object' which mainly unconsciously catches not only 'a picture' but, above all, the remembrance of earlier experience.

The transitions in experience in the praxis go back and forth many times. For the dreamer, for example, sharing the dream and showing the drawing moves him or her back and forth from the dream world to the drawing experience and to the group in the present. Experiencing the associations of others, associating oneself, recalling previously forgotten dream fragments and reflecting on them are all activities that transit the dreamer back and forth. One could say that during this process, the dreamer is continually returning to the regressive dream state and making the dream material more and more integrated into the present.

For the other participants as well, imagining the dream in their 'mind's eye', seeing the drawing, bringing in their own internal material in the associations, which often contains transferences from their own internal unconscious, are activities of transition.

The theoretical basis for SDD builds particularly on the work of Lawrence, as well as other psychoanalytic thinkers cited above. I owe a great debt to them, even as I, in this study, strive to further identify a clearer and broader set of theoretical roots than have been set down before. I next turn to the last section of this discussion of the praxis, which focuses on the challenges and possibilities intrinsic to it.

#### 4.4 Challenges and possibilities

The purpose of this section is to elaborate material relating to the praxis of SDD that would otherwise fall between the cracks of this study. Here I want to give a flavour of the ambivalent aspects of participating in and facilitating such a praxis. This goes beyond the theory underlying the praxis to honour much of the reality at play, such as politics, group dynamics and resistance to task and to acknowledge that, like all group work, there are limits to its effectiveness. Even a description of the capacities of someone facilitating this praxis is difficult to articulate. On the other hand, perhaps this lack of clarity provides a creative impetus for those who would wish to further utilise this work in organisations.

##### 4.4.1 The participant role

All group experiences, in one way or another, create anxiety in their participants. That is the nature of group life. While Gordon Lawrence insists that the Social Dreaming matrix is not a group but rather a collective space for the unconscious, group dynamics are always in play. I myself, as a participant in Social Dreaming workshops, am always well aware of whether or not my dream is associated to by others and if so, by whom and how. Like probably every other participant, I have wanted to offer the best and most popular dream.

This is not just my perception. This was also emphasised by German participant G2, who is a very experienced group relations consultant. When interviewed regarding her experience of SDD (Event 18), she noted: “You can’t help that our group experience is within it....You can’t work with a group of people and go into the deep

with your thoughts and dreams and associations, and then say oh it's not a group experience".

While I had the good fortune for purposes of this study to work mostly with participants who were already familiar with the concept of the group unconscious and the use of dreams in organisations and groups, many of them and many subsequent participants have struggled with various aspects of this experience. As explicated in detail above, not only is one sharing intimate material, but in the course of the workshop one regresses to earlier unconscious states. In addition, even for professionals, it is difficult for many to really trust in the idea of a collective unconscious and to 'submit' to the normal anxieties of group life relating to identity, belonging and membership.

It is worth speculating on the complicated experience that participants may have had in participating in this study. Some could well have been attracted by the facilitator's professional reputation and status. The expectation, therefore, could well have been to gain some learning for themselves from an expert. Instead, participants were asked not only to work, but were recruited into a co-learning endeavor. While there may have been a certain excitement in joining in on developing an innovation, Bion's dependency basic assumption might well have been wished for. The facilitator, instead of being in an expert role, was in the role of student, struggling to master the complicated role of developing and trialing a new experimental way of working, not always successfully. The moment that best captures this dynamic was when I fumbled with the tape recording in the first London session (Event 11) and received the scornful disapproval of one participant.

In addition, working with other professionals creates a subtle peer pressure relating to competence in groups. How the other participants, my process consultant and I associate to a participant's dream drawing, either in use of words or in tone, is noted by the presenter and can impact that participant's subsequent connection to the work. For example, in the first session of the German group (Event 4) the word "disgusting" [ekelhaft] was used in an association to a drawing of one of the participants (G1). She later said that she felt that not only her dream but she herself was being criticised and that other dreams were more acceptable to the group.

Given the inevitable group dynamics, social defenses (Menzies 1960) designed to protect participants from the anxiety of the task, are also inevitable, and they take various forms in Social Dream-Drawing. One common example, as related above, comes in the forms of overly produced dream drawings, obviously labored over and often quite removed from the original dream material. N1's computer-generated dream drawing (see Chapter 3) completely bypassed the unconscious process of using one's hands to create something.

Others protect themselves by not bringing any drawing and then, during the course of the workshop, which they presumably experience as safe enough, decide to participate. Some have drawn their dreams during a break, others in front of the other participants. Over time I have learned not to accept these alternatives, because they basically violate the concept of bringing something directly from the unconscious experience into the group. By the time they start drawing in the group, the group dynamics have already set in and they influence the drawing itself.

Here is an example of a dream drawing that was drawn in the group (N3, Event 2).

On the face of it, it could certainly ‘pass’ as a legitimate straight-from-the-unconscious dream drawing:

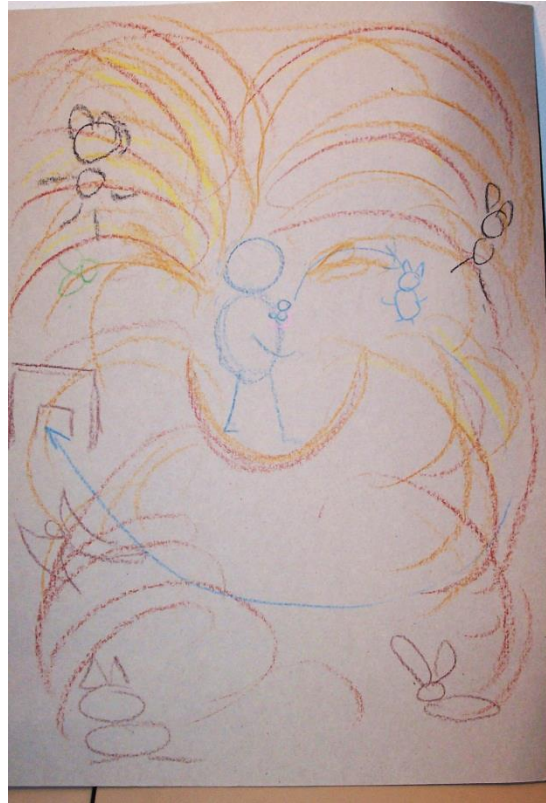


Figure 7 Social Dream-Drawing done during the workshop: The lion and the other animals

One London participant (L3) wanted very much to take notes on the associations to his dream drawing while they were occurring, rather than participating in the experience. This could also be seen as diagnostic of this group, i.e. a sense of safety may be lacking. This preference to take notes could be seen as a sign of keeping oneself safe in this environment.

This points to a general concern one must hold for the praxis of SDD, i.e. that defensive structures that participants build in order to defend themselves against the

anxiety of participating in a group can interfere with the actual task of accessing unconscious material in the original dreams, despite the drawings. In fact, the drawings can be a further elaboration of such defensive structures. Susan Long, who recently published a book on socioanalytic methodologies (2013c), which includes my chapter on Social Dream-Drawing (Mersky 2013), made note of this issue in a personal email to me:

...where you talk of the gradual loss of bits of the dream, it seems you are referring to what Freud describes as secondary elaboration of unconscious material. This is seen by him to have a defensive motive. Does this method run to the danger of elaborating the defense rather than the unconscious repressed? Through using the group and the matrix, is it elaborating the culture that is built from a social defense? This is perhaps a fundamental critique of social dreaming (Long:2008).

One concern, perhaps especially with Social Dreaming and Social Dream-Drawing, is that the original dream material will somehow be interfered with and distorted by the group process. Phillips (1995), in fact, considers this to be a significant issue in personal psychoanalysis, since analysts have their own ways of working with and understanding dreams. A key concern is “protecting the patient’s dream from the analyst’s interpreting machine – the analyst’s influencing machine” (74). He (ibid.:70) notes there is a risk that “the patient’s idiosyncratic relationship to his own dreams is subsumed by the analyst’s therapeutic relationship to the dream” and asks the key question, “Who’s [sic] dreams are they, who do they really belong to?” (ibid.:71).

Dream material being what it is, i.e. transitory and infinite, once it is brought into an external arena can quickly dissipate. Citing Spence (1982:70), Davis (1995:33) has written:



This process of association and interpretation ‘would seem inevitably to erode the visual texture and the integrity of [an] original dream’...precisely because ‘there is no ‘official version’ of [a] dream image to which we can refer all disputes’.

Gordon Lawrence was well aware of this danger in Social Dreaming. He writes

(2003:618):

To any particular dream there will be as many potential associations as there are members of the matrix. The danger is that members of the matrix may be led away from the dream by being seduced by the freedom of free association by just saying what passes through their minds.

I have many examples of this from Social Dream-Drawing. For example (reflexive journal entry, 18 February 2011), one Netherlands participant (N4) expressed her “[f]ear of losing control and sharing something you ultimately can’t control because it’s a dream.” A Bristol participant (B2; Event 25) noted that it was a much more containing experience to draw the dream than to work with it in the group. In the group, she notes, she “had to protect the containing part”. The group experience “disturbs the containing elements that it had for me when I made the drawing”.

Two interviewees expressed it this way:

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 (L2, Event 22).

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 to 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 (G3, Event 19).

On the one hand, it is quite understandable that participants would react in such a negative way to the experience of having their original dream material somehow transformed into something that did not match their own original experience. On the other hand, I think it’s important to note that this so-called distortion is intrinsic to

the group's task of working with the presented material. This exploration often leads to an illumination of out-of-awareness issues in the dream drawer, that may not be available to that person any other way. So, in that sense, the goal of the praxis is not so much to preserve the original dream material, but to extend and broaden it by means of the group work.

One could say that one social defense in the group is to free associate in a clever way and, in so doing, refrain from getting in touch with deeper dynamics. A clever free association somehow doesn't seem free, but more intellectual, more of a story perhaps, or the linking up of one factoid on top of another. Somehow the group dynamic mirrors whatever may have been distorted either in the original way the dreamer experienced the dream or repressed the dream material or by the process by which the drawing was made. An overly artistic dream drawing, for example, draws so much attention to the craftsmanship that the inner content is hidden.

As a host of Social Dreaming, I have often seen a group unable to associate freely to dreams and attempt to hijack the task in various ways, i.e. by turning it into a discussion group, a debate society, a sharing session of personal experience or an ending review of a conference. All these attempts can be seen as ways that groups members attempt to protect themselves from the "strange intruder" (Peirce 1992-1998:154) of dream material, i.e. resistance.

#### 4.4.2 The facilitation role

While the praxis of Social-Dream drawing, as described in the introduction and further elaborated in this chapter, can be fairly straightforwardly described, it is not

so easy to articulate how to facilitate such a praxis. Among the capacities a facilitator needs to have is an understanding of group dynamics and an ability to contain anxiety and uncertainty. A certain playfulness and creativity is very helpful, as is an ability to set clear boundaries and relate easily to participants. An understanding of the vulnerabilities of bringing dreams into a group and a recognition of social defense behaviour is also important. And, upon reflection, I would say that my earlier profession of elementary school teacher, which required a solid understanding of how children learn and how to present material clearly, was also helpful. I am originally an educator.

As with the classroom, the drawing of clear time and task boundaries is essential, in order that participants experience the leadership as clear, responsible and competent (see above for the theoretical basis of this assertion). This is especially the case when one is leading a workshop of experienced colleagues. I experienced this directly in my first London session (Event 11), where I became very confused in using my tape recorder for the first time. While one participant (a man) was very helpful, another (a female) became obviously irritated by my incompetence. From this experience, I learned first hand 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.

Over time I have improved my facilitation (and recording) competence. With the insightful help of a colleague, who started as one of the London participants (L3) and then co-hosted a Social Dream Drawing workshop with me, I have sharpened my pre-workshop instructions. In order to avoid many of the problems cited above with dream drawings, I now tell participants that we will only use drawings of dreams that

they have had after learning the theme. And I also advise them to start making their dream drawings right away, so they can choose the one they want to bring to the workshop. In addition, I have clearly emphasized that in the reflection section, we are focusing on the theme, so that it is clear that this event focuses on work issues

During the course of the workshop, while it is not possible to hold social defenses at bay, I have learned to continually bring the focus back to the dream material and to discipline myself to do the same. I also make special note of contradictory associations and puzzling fantasies, in order to help keep us in an open frame of mind as a group. I find modelling the behaviour better than criticising the participants. It is interesting to note that after much experience hosting these workshops, it is not difficult to sense when real work is taking place and when the thinking and insight is of a limited basis. For example, I find that my own creativity dries up in certain sessions or I become aware of a string of clever associations. This is not just the result of a simple drawing, but of some group process that is blocking creativity.

The experienced participants in my study all recognised the role of facilitation and how important it is. My choice to have a colleague as process consultant for myself and the group was very helpful in my own learning and is a recommended step for those seeking to host such workshops. Taking that role or, as I recently did at a conference, co-leading a Social Dream-Drawing group, are ways to learn the process of facilitation from a more experienced person. One of the most difficult lines to draw is that between a therapeutically-oriented group and a group whose task is to use collective thinking from the unconscious. While there are psychoanalytic processes (regression, containment, etc.) taking place, the task is not personal, but

collective and is related to learning and insight. In his work using drawings in organisations, Sapochnik (2013:4) makes sure the participants know “that the researcher is not a psychoanalyst, so that no psychoanalytic interpretations are entertained in the interface with respondents, but psychoanalytic understanding is applied to the analysis of the data”. I think this is a very important distinction.

Lawrence (2005:40) uses perhaps more poetic language to describe the role of the Social Dreaming host. In comparison to a group, where there are issues of competition,

...the matrix, on the other hand, is a collection of minds opening and being available for dwelling in possibility. It demands a different kind of leadership – one inspired by the recognition of the infinite, of not-knowing, or being in doubt and uncertainty, as opposed to knowing and repeating banal facts.

#### 4.4.3 Other possibilities for this praxis

For purposes of my doctoral studies, I have restricted my use of this praxis to working with experienced professionals with the goal of achieving some personal and professional insight. My research and experience has demonstrated how valuable this praxis can be for professional cohorts, either already in work settings or in professional development programs. I have not attempted to use this praxis either as an organisational intervention or as a research methodology, although I am firmly convinced it could function as such. There is already quite some literature relating to the use of Social Dreaming for both purposes (Lawrence 1998a and 2010; Sievers 2007b), and it is easy to imagine that Social Dream-Drawing could also be used that way. In fact, I have written elsewhere about how one might undertake such an intervention (Mersky 2012).

It is also easy to see how such a praxis could be used as a diagnostic tool for organisations. For example, the London group that I ran consisted of four participants, three of whom were doctoral candidates in a program sponsored by an institution well known in my field. My process consultant, who actually advertised for and then chose the participants, is a professor in this program. In the very first session (Event 11), this consultant spoke of the childlike quality of one participant's drawing. The participant became defensive and said she felt criticised and embarrassed. This incident could be looked at as an enactment of the institutional dynamics in the larger system and in the doctoral program as well, between teachers and adult students. Had this workshop program been designed differently, this aspect could have been included in our work, however, that was not its purpose.

In the traditional organisational development field and in the field of socioanalytic research and consultation, the use of drawings has proved extremely useful, and naturally drawings are a key component of Social Dream-Drawing. Access to the unconscious feelings of groups and organisations serve as a prime motivation for the use of drawings in research. Michael Broussine (2008:78) summarises 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 legitimizes 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.

Using drawings as an organisational intervention is also quite common, and as such, Social Dream-Drawing could easily be added to the existing repertoire of interventions (see Mersky 2012). As Morgan (1993:9) puts it: "...imagery can be used to create breakthroughs on organisational problems and find new initiatives in difficult situations". Practitioners and researchers use pictures 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, et.al. 2008), psychoanalysis (Fischer 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 a published an article on the conditions that would need to be in place in order to use any socioanalytic methodology as an organisational intervention or research methodology, I have written:

The risk one takes in using this methodology is client resistance due to a fear of infantilisation 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 2013:161-162).

Here I draw especially on Winnicott's (1971 [1996]:55) notion of "a specialized setting" where a "non purposive state" is induced, meaning a state where "there is room for the idea of unrelated thought sequences". Here, the patient/participant is free for "relaxation that belongs to trust and to acceptance of the professional

reliability of the therapeutic setting”. This is a space for creativity and ‘formless experience’, which allows ‘unintegrated states’ to emerge, as opposed to a purposeful environment, where, as Winnicott notes, “free association that reveals a coherent theme is already affected by anxiety, and the cohesion of ideas is a defence organization” (ibid.:56). As Van Eerden (2010) puts it: “It opens up a space of trust and relaxation in which the need to make sense — to *defend* oneself — is absent, so that genuinely free association can happen”. The purposeful part of Social Dream-Drawing is in the reflection section. As Winnicott notes (ibid.:56):

In these highly specialized conditions the individual can come together and exist as a unit, not as a defence against anxiety but as an expression of I AM, I am alive, I am myself...From this position everything is creative.

One of the participants in the London group (L3) has, in fact, already utilised Social Dream-Drawing with a group of child therapists that he supervises once a month at a community mental health service for children. I consider this an excellent example of how SDD can be a meaningful resource for professional cohorts, i.e. people in the same professional group, who have similar challenges. I have described my colleague’s work as follows:

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” (ibid.:173-174).

My colleague who used the methodology as described above did not use a theme with this group, as he “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” (ibid.:172). I think this demonstrates that the critical element is the expertise of the facilitator and the ongoing relationship with the group.

This draws to an end the first part of this study, which was to explore in depth the theoretical underpinnings of SDD, along with much of the practical aspects of the praxis. By now, it is hoped that the reader has a clear impression of the origins and development of the praxis, its theoretical roots and its complications and potentialities as a praxis. From here, this study turns a page, so to say, to concentrate next on the research undertaken to find out if, in fact, SDD can be of value to individual organisational role holders. To begin at the beginning, the first chapter in this new section focuses on the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of the psycho-social research approach utilised.

## **Part II: THE RESEARCH**

### **Chapter 5: Philosophical Foundations and Methodology**

#### 5.1 Philosophical foundations

The second part of this dissertation focuses on the theoretical grounding and actual practice of the research undertaken. Before describing in detail the methods and findings of this study, I will focus in this chapter on the philosophical foundations that underlay this course of research and its methodological underpinnings.

The epistemology of the research includes, but is not restricted to, psycho-social studies. My theory of knowledge in relation to the research is this: Research knowledge can be achieved by thinking related to the thoughts from the collective unconscious made available through the unconscious dynamics in the research encounter, the reflexive processes of the researcher, and the subjective process of data analysis.

I offer the following three propositions that underlay my epistemology:

1. The collective unconscious (from a socioanalytic perspective, as opposed to a Jungian perspective. Please see Chapter 2.2) is a source of thinking (as opposed to the position that all that is known is empirical, rational and conscious).
2. Systematically processed subjective experience generates knowledge (as opposed to the position that only what is observed or reasoned by researchers is valid for knowledge production).
3. Knowledge is generated collectively (as opposed to the position that knowledge comes from the theorising of the expert).

Before I discuss them in depth, I will explore the epistemological split between objectivity and subjectivity and Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge.

### 5.1.2 The split between objectivity and subjectivity

The major debate about epistemology has to do with whether there is only a visible, rational and objective reality or whether one can also accept that there is equally an unconscious, unseen and infinite one. Those who base their research on the unconscious accept that both exist. We do not claim that the only reality is an unconscious one. And, one can say, that in our research tasks, we are ever challenged to integrate both these worlds and to help our participants do this as well, to bring about effective insight and change.

The extreme argument that there is only objective truth that can be achieved by a “detachment from the subject of inquiry...implies the treatment of subjects like objects” (Hollway 2013b:1) and seeks to remove any trace of the subjective realities that we know so well from our perspective. As Bordo (1987:4) has written, it reflects “a desire to exorcise all the messier (bodily, emotional) dimensions of experience from knowledge and to institute certainty and clarity in its place – objectivity banishing subjectivity”. From the positivist viewpoint, these messy elements confuse and cloud information, just as the early analysts claimed that the analyst’s countertransference hindered (rather than helped) the treatment process. “The binary of objectivity and subjectivity” (Hollway 2013b:3), so central to Western thought, protects and prevents one from relying on a ‘false’-self oriented, subjective and biased perception and what is often termed ‘wild analysis’.

This rejection of the subjective completely leaves out “something essential: the thinker/knower” (ibid.) and as Despret (2004:131) notes: “to ‘depassion’ knowledge does not give us a more objective world, it just gives us a world ‘without us’ and

therefore without ‘them’...a world ‘we don’t care for’”. Instead, argues Keller (1985:116), we can say that our approach is “maximally authentic, and hence maximally reliable”.

Psychoanalysis, which informs psycho-social and socioanalytic research, is foremost about the unconscious and has always been both a theory and a praxis. This dual identity encompasses both a theory of knowledge (an epistemology) and a way of working (Devereux 1967:294).

On the theoretical side, Bion’s theory of thinking provides a pivotal grounding for a subjective epistemology. For him, “the capacity to think is precipitated by raw experience” (Hollway 2013b:4), specifically the experience of the infant as being contained by the mother in her reverie, which ultimately results in the baby’s ability to think. By a process of metabolising chaotic and primitive Beta elements into Alpha elements (thoughts that can be thought by a thinker), the infant develops an apparatus for thinking through the containing role of maternal reverie.

On the praxis side, this way of working has, in and of itself, a scientific basis. As Melanie Klein has noted (1961:12): “Since certain working hypotheses are put forward and tested in the material which the patient produces, psychoanalysis is a scientific procedure and its technique embodies scientific principles”.

### 5.1.3 The epistemology debate: Polanyi and tacit knowledge

Michael Polanyi, the Hungarian philosopher, while not from the world of psychoanalysis, struggled with the same split in epistemology. From his perspective

(1966:25), the difficulty was “to find a stable alternative to its [positivism] ideal of objectivity”. In stating that “we can know more than we can tell” (ibid.:4), he developed the concept of tacit knowing, which is embodied in experience and is developed in collaboration with others. This is a kind of knowing that is the result of practical experience and is only made obvious in praxis.

Polanyi introduces us to the concept of “indwelling”, which original German thinkers applied to the appreciation of art works and its use in discoveries in science. He used this term to describe how a theory with which one is working can be deeply internalised over long experience and practice and can be relied upon. Particularly in scientific study, the scientist internalises this knowing and comes to rely on it in practice, exactly as we do when we undertake research. Describing mathematical inquiry Polanyi notes: “This is why mathematical theory can be learned only by practicing its application: its true knowledge lies in our ability to use it” (Polanyi 1996:17).

Polanyi posits two terms of tacit knowledge, i.e. the proximal and the distal (ibid.:18). He writes that we proceed from the proximal, i.e. the small details, to the distal, the larger picture, “thus achieving an integration of particulars to a coherent entity to which we are attending” (ibid.). This is very much what this research has done with the raw data of the interviews, the details of the drawings and the time charts. We attend totally to the particulars and from there we move to the integration of the whole in the data analysis process. He terms this process “interiorization” (ibid.). It stands in direct contrast to the idea that focusing purely on the details creates knowledge (ibid.:19).

Polanyi makes the case for tacit knowledge this way:

The declared aim of modern science is to establish a strictly detached, objective knowledge. Any falling short of this ideal is accepted only as a temporary imperfection, which we must aim at eliminating. But suppose that tacit thought forms an indispensable part of all knowledge, then the ideal of eliminating all personal elements of knowledge would, in effect, aim at the destruction of all knowledge. The ideal of exact science would turn out to be fundamentally misleading and possibly a source of devastating fallacies (ibid.:20).

#### 5.1.4 Three underlying epistemological propositions of my research

While the three propositions below are distinct from one another, they exist integrally in relation to one another and re-enforce one another. These propositions are consistent with both Hollway's notion of the necessity for subjective experience and Polanyi's notion of indwelling and experience over time developed with others.

##### 5.1.4.1 Epistemological proposition #1: The collective unconscious is a source of thinking

Psychoanalytic theory and practice have demonstrated that individuals have an unconscious that strongly influences behaviour and thinking and that is a source of tremendous creativity and often deep conflict, especially when not made available to the conscious mind. Psychoanalysis has evolved to explain and work with problems with individuals that seem to defy rational explanation. From the beginning, it has been not just a theory but a practice as well.

Since the early 1940's, when the very first documented work on the application of psychoanalytic concepts to organisations was undertaken (Bion 1946; Harrison 2000; Harrison & Clarke 1992), the general field of studies and practice using

psychoanalytic processes and concepts to understand and intervene in organisations has significantly evolved. This field takes as its basic tenet that not only do individuals have an unconscious but groups, organisations and cultures have what Susan Long (2010) describes as an “‘associative unconscious’... a matrix of thought that links members of a community at an unconscious level”.

Three organisations have developed to provide researchers, consultants and organisational members a fuller and more theoretically grounded understanding of these processes, i.e. the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations, the Tavistock Institute, with its praxis, now internationally developed, of group relations and the International Research Group of Psycho-Societal Analysis (IRGPSA) at Roskilde University in Denmark.

The collective or group unconscious (in the socioanalytic sense), if brought into awareness, is a valuable source of thinking for systems (Lawrence 1999b; Alexandrov 2009:40; Bion 1970 [1993]), where very often conflicts and traumas in the system are perhaps sensed, and certainly felt, but not fully available – for whatever reason – to be fully explored and addressed. Accessing this unconscious resource in such a way that knowledge can be generated and role holders can take constructive action has been one focus of the literature in this field and the practice of group relations. This thinking and this practice are some of the foundations of my knowledge.

The use of free association in groups makes available thoughts that have not yet been thought about, so to say, (i.e. “unthought known” Bollas 1987). This means that which was sensed, but never put into thinking. As related to the task of research,

these seemingly chaotic free thoughts, once expressed, can later be reflected upon for learning. The thinking in this reflective process then leads to the capacity to create knowledge. This epistemology is based on the assumption that, as Alexandrov (2009:41) writes, thoughts are “the fundamental building components of knowledge”.

This epistemology also takes for granted that thoughts – even those of the individual – do not ‘belong’ just to him or her. As Long and Harney (2013:7) put it: “‘thought’ is a social rather than an individual process”. There is a social field of thought that exists in individuals (as opposed to the idea that thoughts are objective entities). These individuals, existing in this social field, participate in the co-creation of these thoughts, although as individuals they may only have access to part of what is known.

Using this perspective, thoughts are always a reflection of the group and can be made available through work with the group or system. One can be said to be offering one’s thoughts on behalf of the group, or as an expression of the group. This epistemological stance then sets the basis for the idea of using case study research with groups. One can make the judgment that a certain psychoanalytically-informed group intervention that has been helpful to one group would be potentially valuable for other similar groups.

Unlike positivism, which holds that all that is known must be seen or observable (Seale 1999:466), psycho-social and socioanalytic theory and practice has evolved to access what is not directly knowable. This also places organisational research largely



outside the scope of the purely empirical, as the unconscious must be accessed in different ways, other than just by the senses. As Hollway (2013b:5) notes:

This theory of thinking not only transcends the cognition-emotion binary on which objectivity depends, but also, in the place it makes for unconscious intersubjectivity, undermines the idea of an autonomous rational thinker who is the conscious initiator of objective thought.

Thus, the exact opposite of my first epistemological proposition would be: Thinking is a rational mental process undertaken by the individual and all that is known (and worth knowing) is empirical and conscious.

#### 5.1.4.2 Epistemological proposition #2: Knowledge is generated collectively

The basic philosophical stance in such research is that the practitioner is constantly engaged in a mutual learning process with the research subject. One does not proceed on one's own to discover truths without the participation and collaboration of others. In my case, this includes not only the participants in my workshops, but the three process consultants, my UWE supervisors, my German supervisor, my fellow doctoral students and my close colleagues. Meaning and learning (and my abilities as a researcher) have all developed as a result of these interactions. Thus, one could say, findings and insights "are not individually owned" (Alexandrov 2009:41), but collectively owned and discovered, even though they may be individually voiced. The researcher may be the driver of the search, i.e., the one with the original question, but not ultimately alone in the discovery of new knowledge.

Likewise, processes of group learning must take place in groups, a seemingly obvious statement. However, this is quite different from the statement, for example, that a group could learn from the diagnostic conclusions and feedback from a

researcher or consultant, whose “specialized method and knowledge” (ibid.:32) is sufficient to truly understand a system, without engaging with it. This stance, which is often taken by researchers “from a privileged and detached perspective” (ibid.:35), is based on the epistemological assumption that one can have knowledge of a system primarily using one’s own tools. Thus the exact opposite of my second epistemological proposition would be: Knowledge comes from the theorising of the expert and consists of individual contributions building on the cumulative contributions of other individuals. This is tantamount to a kind of addition process, whereby the total is the sum of the parts, rather than, as the idea of emergence in complexity theory would attest, to something first formulated by Aristotle that ‘[t]he whole is bigger than the sum of its parts’.

The proposition that knowledge is generated collectively is connected to the school of relational knowledge, which holds that knowledge “grows from interaction” (ibid.:37) and is based on relations with others. It is further connected to Polanyi’s theory of tacit knowledge, which develops in communities over time and forms a kind of collective expertise to be integrated and furthered in the next generations. It is also consistent with Bion’s (1970 [1993]) meta-cognition theory that thoughts are not individually owned (similar to Lawrence’s concept that dreams are not only individually owned) but belong to the collective from which they arise (Alexandrov 2009).

#### 5.1.4.3 Epistemological Proposition #3: Systematically processed subjective experience generates knowledge and insights

This proposition underlies deeply my research, in that the praxis (SDD) itself is designed as a way of generating knowledge through the subjective experience of

participants. In this approach to social research, the subjective counts as real (Olesen 2012), and knowledge can be generated from this perspective. The exact opposite of this epistemological proposition would be: Only what is observed or reasoned by researchers is valid for knowledge production.

While one may argue that it is impossible to ever find the truth using such a research perspective (both in terms of what is observable and also one's subjective experience), one can say that at the subjective level one does experience 'the truth' of a particular insight or finding. This is opposite to the position normally associated with quantitative data analysis, which involves "defining, categorizing, theorizing, explaining, exploring and mapping" one's data, coding them and then grouping them into similar concepts and further formulating them into thoughts and theory (Ritchie & Spencer 1999:176). This truth, as in psychoanalysis, emerges from a subjective process. It is the internal working through that naturally follows an emotional insight, where everything naturally falls together. It is often very demanding and results in a re-orientation to one's internal and external world. It is not, for example, problem solving, which is a rational process, where the problem is clear and the solution can be found. This work results in a dramatic reorientation to previous assumptions and defenses, based on earlier experiences. It involves a systematic working through of observations and experiences in a guided and contained environment. This is a discovered truth that somehow 'fits' the circumstances, although it is often not possible to say exactly how or why.

In this sense, the activity of doing free association interviews is also based on this philosophy of knowledge, i.e. that participants 'know' from their subjective

experience the value of the praxis. Very often it is only in the interview that subjects recognise this for the very first time.

How can one theorise from this idea of truth? How might one address the common accusation that reliance on subjective experience is a form of ‘wild analysis’? I propose here a form of coherence theory, which holds that truth requires a proper fit of elements within a whole system. This theory, mostly applied to the field of logic and mathematics, is being increasingly utilised in the social sciences. According to coherence theory, to say that a statement (usually called a judgment) is true or false is to say that “it coheres or fails to cohere with a system of other statements” (Coherence Theory 2013).

Hanly (1991:5) explores its application to psychoanalysis, coining the term “coherent narration”, and relates it to Freud’s (1912-13:23) ‘Totem and taboo’ hypothesis where “a number of very remarkable, disconnected facts are brought together ... into a consistent whole”. It is deeply subjective, but has carries with it significant explanatory power.

What I am theorising is a sort of internal version of coherence theory, which holds that a statement or a finding can be experienced as true not only when it provides an explanation, but when it is experienced as encompassing these hitherto seemingly chaotic and unrelated facts (Polanyi 1966:21). It is a discovered truth that somehow ‘fits’ the circumstances. It provides a kind of comprehensive resolution to a problem explored by a collective, long-standing and deep immersion in a process and involves a systematic working through of observations and experiences. It naturally must be tested and evaluated and, perhaps, reconsidered. It will need time to be integrated

and further ‘worked through’ into other experienced truths, just as a psychoanalytic insight is.

Instead of feeling defensive that one makes use of a psychoanalytic research perspective, one can rely on its many structural strengths. Bollas (1992) makes special note of the “objectifying frames of reference” (102) that characterise the practice of psychoanalysis. Without them, he notes, psychoanalytic practice would be based merely on the analyst’s subjective inner experience. As he notes, psychoanalysis has

...a highly complex, interfaced network of objectifying criteria for the continued assessment of the patient’s and the analyst’s states of mind (ibid.:103).

As he notes, all psychoanalytic schools have their own systematic way of processing the working dyad of analyst and patient and offer long-term and intensive training that requires students to undertake their own analysis. Each school has its own particular working ‘rules’ for undertaken analysis. In all cases, psychoanalytic practise

[S]upports the essential rights of the patient’s free association, the necessity of the analyst’s moral neutrality, and [contains] a considerable canon of rigor which we label technique that calls upon the analyst to listen to the material in a consistent manner” (ibid.). From Bollas’ perspective, these are “ideational structures that analysts learn and adopt and to which they adhere. In this respect they are to a considerable extent outside the analyst’s personal history of objectivity” (ibid.).

Analysts listen carefully and observe the reactions of their patients. They guard, as best as they can, against the narcissistic pleasure of the perfect interpretation. These practices (and others, such as analysing the transferences and countertransferences) are all consistent with the practices of the psycho-social researcher and are, in this way, internalised (Polanyi) in how one works.

In fact one could compare the psycho-social researcher to the psychoanalyst or psychotherapist. Borck (2011:408) notes that there is an “ontological closeness” between technologies that treat patients and those that seek to produce knowledge. Both work with the subjective experience of patient/object, both use their own countertransference experiences as data for knowledge about the patient/system and both use similar ‘technologies’, i.e. free association, dream material, interpretation. Both are directing their work to a ‘subject’ whose material is out of consciousness. The intimacies that develop in both sets of role relationships are thought about and carefully managed. Both are directing their work toward some problem (usually much deeper than the presenting problem).

This close similarity in ways of working requires a capacity for self-understanding (subjectiveness) and an ability to separate one’s own personal issues from that of the patient/research subject and to contain the projections and distortions that inevitably arise in the treatment/research relationship. As Clarke and Hoggett (2009:17) put it:

For the psycho-social researcher, awareness of what the researcher brings to the research process – her or his values, prejudices, identifications and object relations – is a crucial aspect to understanding their countertransference. Without this it is impossible for the researcher to know, for example, whether the feeling that a research subject has evoked in them is the subject’s, is co-produced, or more properly belongs to the researcher.

While one can therefore say that the researcher learns from his or her own subjective experience of the research process, there are also many ‘safeguards’ built into the research process to guard against ‘wild analysis’. Hollway and Jefferson (2013:156), for example, point out that in the analytic dyad, the analyst engages in interpretation during the session, but in psycho-social research, this activity is reserved for the later

structured process of data-analysis. Thus they make a clear distinction between “therapeutic and research interpretation”.

While many analysts may write up case material between sessions, in psycho-social research we are required to keep an ongoing reflexive diary, recording not only what has taken place, but our own experiences. In addition, while some analysts work regularly with a supervisor, at least in the early years of their careers, psycho-social researchers make ongoing use of colleagues, supervisors, and the Doctoral Role Analysis group during the entire time of their research journey. In addition, they are required to file regular reports to the university and undertake a progression exam mid-way. These ‘safeguards’ built into the research process can be compared to the “objectifying criteria” described above by Bollas. ‘Wild analysis’ in these circumstances would be quickly discovered and challenged.

To summarise the above discussion and to integrate the three epistemological propositions, the following chart builds on the chart first presented in Chapter 4 (Figure 5), which offered a suggested integration of Bion’s thoughts, Peirce’s Abductive Logic and the design of Social Dream Drawing. Here one can see how my three epistemological propositions underlay these theories.

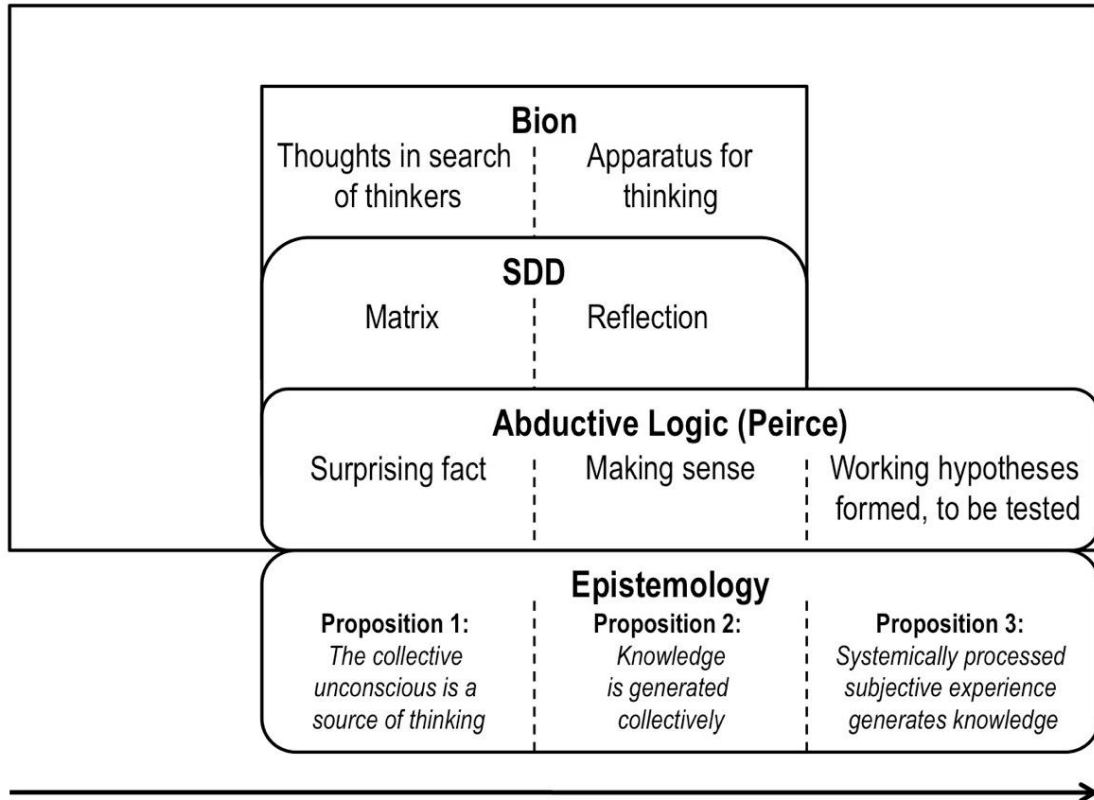


Figure 8 Three epistemological propositions underlying Social Dream-Drawing and connected to the theories of Bion and Peirce.

The above chart is an extension of the previous chart in Chapter 4 (Figure #5), with the addition of my epistemological propositions. There will be one further chart in Chapter 10 (Generalisations and conclusion) that will expand the chart to connect Social Dream-Drawing with the undertaking of organisational consultation. By offering these three charts in three different chapters, I am hoping to give the reader an integrated picture of the praxis.

In the second half of this chapter, I now turn to an exploration of the methodological foundations of my research, particularly the form of psycho-social action research done for this study. I introduce a critical aspect of this approach, which is the concept of the reflexive researcher.



## 5.2 Methodology

I worked with a version of psychoanalytically-informed action research, which is a qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) approach to understanding groups and organisations (Denzin & Lincoln 1994/2011). Originally formulated by Kurt Lewin (1958), it consists of what Reason and Bradbury (2006:xxii) term a “family of approaches”. One of its primary assumptions is that the researcher is not separate from the subject of his or her research and that the subject is not passive. As Heron and Reason (2006:144) state, “good research is research conducted *with* people rather than *on* people”. As such it is also termed ‘participatory action research’, in order to emphasise the intrinsic role of all participants.

Seeking and achieving the subject’s interest, if not commitment, to the research is paramount to its effectiveness as is very careful attention to how the process begins in relation to these participants (Wicks & Reason 2009:292). And, as Newton and Goodman (2009:2) point out, by creating a good “communicative space”, a “collaborative state of mind” (ibid.:3) is established.

I approached my research from the role of a practitioner-researcher. Action research is geared toward solving an immediate problem or addressing an issue of concern in an organisation or system, rather than stemming from a theoretical curiosity.

However, in addition to addressing, for example, a particular problem, it aims to make use of the learning in this endeavour to address other similar problems in similar systems. In the research process the researcher and subject are together creating knowledge.

In addition, the action researcher takes a scientific approach, insofar as scientific is defined as studying the problem systematically and using theoretical formulations to drive activities and ethical stances. Edgar (1999) makes the important point that in this type of research, the researcher him- or herself is producing experiences that his or her subjects are participating in, as well as studying these experiences for research purposes. Thus, the researcher carries a double-task, i.e. organising the experience (i.e. SDD praxis) and researching it. There are also ethical implications in how this is conducted.

My area of action research, while part of traditional action research, is a more specialised form, a socioanalytic approach. Socio-Analysis is defined by Bain (1999:14) as “the activity of exploration, consultancy, and action research which combines and synthesises methodologies and theories derived from psycho-analysis, group relations, social systems thinking, and organisational behavior.” Critical to this approach is that the researcher him/herself is an instrument of research and that the researcher’s internal experiences provide important data about the researched subject.

Any researcher using this approach must have the capacity to understand and contain the transferential and countertransferential elements of the research situation, a sophisticated capacity that one develops over years of professional experience. All this is taking place in the research situation, in addition to all the other normal anxieties of such an endeavour on both sides of the interaction, what Berg (1985:214) terms “the emotional dynamics of the research relationship”. I have thankfully developed this capacity over many years of organisational consultation

and coaching and have examined it in my publications. Issues such as transference/countertransference enactment in consultation, issues in ending consultations, and fears of being overwhelmed by the intimacy of one to one consultation are topics that I have explored (Mersky 2001, 2002, 2006).

Within the field of socioanalytic research, there are those researchers who have written about these transference and countertransference dynamics in organisational research. Tietel (1994), Stein (2004), and Sanfuentes & Acuña (2014) make note of these processes and how they inform their learnings as researchers. Some psychoanalytically-informed organisational researchers, however, e.g. Gabriel (1999) and Baum (1994), write about transference in the research relationship only with regard to the transference of the subject to the researcher, and not the other way around. Not only do they capture only half the story, they seem to entirely miss the matrix of interaction that develops in a research situation.

In the socioanalytic community, I would generally say that there is not a very robust tradition of writing from the actual experience of the researcher (or consultant for that matter). In particular the publications of consultant practitioners primarily contain case studies from their practices either to illustrate current theory or, rarely, to pose new theoretical positions, e.g. Klein 2000, Obholzer & Roberts 1994. As such, I find this type of literature often too limited, because there is no empirical process, no way of validating the interpretations, such as there would be in proper action research. As consulting situations can be altered 'to fit the facts', this literature, while perhaps fascinating, does not really contribute to extending our deeper understandings. I believe it serves more to reinforce existing learning and as a way to demonstrate one's mastery of current theories. Armstrong (2012:114) cites,

for example, Eric Trist's concern regarding Isabel Menzies' famous article (1960) on organisational social defences "about the risks of over interpretation and the ways in which it might contribute to 'stopping things in their tracks'".

In contrast to the socioanalytic situation described above, however, there are two important 'schools' or centres of study that strongly emphasise the experience of the researcher in the process of research. One is the Centre for Psycho-Social Studies at the University of West England in Bristol, and the other is The International Research Group of Psycho-Societal Analysis (IRGPSA), which is located at Roskilde University in Denmark.

The Psycho-Social approach to research pioneered at UWE "uses psychoanalytic concepts and principles to illuminate core issues within the social sciences" (Clarke & Hoggett 2009:1). It is an "emergent perspective" (ibid.:2) that takes as its subjects of study all areas of social and cultural interest. As opposed to socioanalysis, where methods of research, when they are described, lack a certain structural or procedural form and tend to emphasise theoretical analysis, psycho-social studies has nurtured the development of "a cluster of methodologies" (ibid.) that the researcher may use, knowing that he or she is participating in a growing tradition of research. The "theoretical underpinnings and methodological rigorousness" (Alexandrov 2009:47) of this approach requires the researcher to consider "the unconscious communications, dynamics, and defences that exist in the research environment" (Clarke & Hoggett 2009:2-3) and the "unconscious dynamics between researcher and researched" (ibid.:8-9) and seeks to "provide theoretical understanding of the subjective dimensions of social interaction" (Olesen 2012:10). As such the researcher and the researched are both part of a co-constructed process of learning and

examination. These methods include free association interview (Hollway & Jefferson 2000; 2013), triple hermeneutics (Sanfuentes & Acuña 2014; Alexandrov 2009) and the reflexive research journal. Key to this approach is the notion of the

reflexive researcher...engaged in sustained self-reflection on our methods and practice, on our emotional involvement in the research, and on the affective relationship between ourselves and the researched (Clarke & Hoggett 2009:3).

I find this stance to complement but also to enlarge and deepen the socioanalytic approach, which is a stance that often accepts the transference processes, but often does not dare to risk learning ‘with’ and ‘from’ the client or subject.

The International Research Group of Psycho-Societal Analysis (IRGPSA) at Roskilde has undertaken what they term a “joint project” (Olesen 2012:11) in “psycho-societal analysis”. This group is attempting to combine certain German theories with those in the U.K. relating to research. Anderson (2012:6) cites Wellendorf’s (1986) concept of “institutional transference” as the transference of the subject to the researcher and “institutional countertransference” of the researcher toward the subject. These researchers value the countertransference and transference processes that naturally occur in research situations, rather than seeing them as a “contamination” (Olesen 2012:2) of the process. In my case, entering the doctoral program as an organisational consultant, my transferences toward the institution of the university have been particularly strong and became powerfully enacted in my experience of the progression exam.

Having presented to the reader the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of my research, in the next chapter (Chapter 6: Sampling, Data Collection and Ethics), I hope to bring the reader closer to the actual research experience by

discussing these important areas related to undertaking psycho-social action research.

Here I will relate a number of decision-making points and the rationale for them in my attempt to conduct this research in as ethical and appropriate way as I could.

## **Chapter 6: Methods of Sampling and Data Collection; Ethics**

Having explored the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of this study in the previous chapter, this chapter will introduce the reader to the methods of sampling and data collection used in this study and to its ethical considerations. Here is where the action research process begins. What ties this chapter together are the series of important decisions made along the way, from the forming of the groups to the question of how and what data to collect to issues relating to ethical practice.

### **6.1 Sampling**

For purposes of this study, I used a form of theoretical (or purposive) sampling. As described by Mason (2002:124), this approach “is concerned with constructing a sample...which is meaningful theoretically and empirically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test your theory or your argument”. In order to achieve my research goal of evaluating its value, I wanted to research a particular group. In my case, I particularly sought out participants who already had a basic understanding and interest in the general area of socioanalytic understanding of organizations.

With the exception of the Bristol group participants, who were a group of therapists and graduate students, all the other participants in this study came from the general field of psychoanalytically-informed organisational consultation and research. Thus we were all members of the same ‘community of practice’. This was a key reason that they were chosen and volunteered to participate. In order to develop the praxis and really understand its potential value, I wanted to work with participants who would not initially be sceptical or resistant to such a way of working. Naturally this

raised the concern that these participants, because of their connection to this field (and, in some cases, their connection to me), would already be predisposed to accept and support such a praxis. I felt, however, that this potential bias could be mediated by undertaking a rigorous research methodology. I hoped that they would be interested in helping to develop a way to potentially bring unconscious thinking to systems in order to solve deeply entrenched problems, and would be honest with me about whether this way of working had some value for them. I felt I could trust their professional judgment, because they wouldn't be caught up in their own resistances to this kind of learning.

In relation to my findings (Chapter 8), I would say that working with such an informed group of participants had a great advantage. Not so much that the findings were consistent, but that in the interviews the participants were all able to clearly articulate the impact and the meaning of the work. They are all very self aware, so, in a sense, what they said is what they meant. It wasn't necessary for me to interpret their experiences for them.

At the same time, however, I think that there were some weaknesses associated with this approach. For one thing, people who already have an interest in this area would be naturally prone to find it valuable. This could be seen as an example of what Mason terms (2002:134) "'strategically' excluding those elements that might inconveniently counter it". Also, there were a number of participants who already had a professional relationship with me, and who would naturally want to support my success, i.e. meaning that they would naturally report a positive value. In most cases I was senior to them, so there would also have been a power dynamic between us, i.e. they would have taken for granted that because I was senior I knew better than them



what I was doing. My way of reminding myself of these issues and checking back on them was through intensive supervision, my reflexive journal and the rigor of psycho-social research methods.

By the time I enrolled (October, 2009) and had worked twice with my supervisors, we began to realise that none of the groups so far (Netherlands, Germany, and Chile) were composed of native English speaking participants. Since I am a native English speaker and my studies were in an English-speaking country, my UWE supervisors strongly recommended that I hold a workshop in a native English-speaking country. A London colleague, who had previously offered to help me with my research, undertook this task and offered this experience to participants in a training institute's Professional Doctorate in Consulting to Organisations program, where she is a lecturer and supervisor. This group was the last workshop group in my study. In addition to being a native-English speaking group, there was the added bonus that this workshop took place at a time when the praxis itself was well consolidated (see Appendix 8). In addition, my colleague chose the participants, and I had not met any of them before. I feel this factor gives the data from this group an added validity, as noted in the previous paragraph.

Not only are there unconscious processes, such as transference and countertransference, taking place in the research collaboration, but there are also social and professional links between research and 'subject' that influence how the form of the research is undertaken and how both sides participate in it (see Chapter 9 for a further elaboration). In my case, during the 2007-2008 developmental stage, participants in the Netherlands and German groups were primarily colleagues, with

whom I already had a professional and, in three cases, a personal relationship. Both these groups were formed before I made my decision to undertake doctoral studies and before I felt sufficiently confident that this would be a way of working that would appeal to a broader audience. Therefore, the sampling procedure was to identify colleagues with whom I wanted to work and whom I thought would – on the basis of their connection to me – be willing to do so. The three exceptions to this sampling were one participant (Netherlands), who was invited by someone I had asked, another Netherlands participant who, once he learned of this work, asked if he could join, and one German participant who learned of this upcoming project at a Social Dreaming workshop and asked if she could participate.

The formation of the remaining three groups (Chile, Bristol and London) was different in each case and none of the participants in these groups, with the exception of one Chile participant, were previous colleagues of mine. In the example of the Chile group, this colleague was interested in what I was doing and offered to form a group to meet and work together. The Bristol group consisted of those already taking the post-graduate course *Researching the Unconscious* at UWE. And the London group was formed by a colleague, who had previously offered to help me, and who took the role of process consultant for this work.

During the course of this entire research period, none of the participants dropped out of the study. One group, the Netherlands group, ended prematurely due to the death of one of the participants. All the other groups stayed together during the entire process.

On reflection, I would say that I certainly achieved my first goal of having participants who were open to the experience and not (notably) resistant. Most were willing to have the experience, were glad that they had done it, and moved on to other areas of interest. In a sense this has taught me that the researcher must ‘carry’ the passion and interest and commitment him or herself and not expect research participants to share it. The one exception to this pattern was one of the London participants, who immediately used a version of this praxis with an existing client, to great satisfaction. I am very grateful that so many were willing to take part in this endeavour.

## 6.2 Data collection

The data for this study was driven first by what was generated in the workshops themselves. As outlined below, they include original dream drawings and transcripts. Although there is data from the Netherlands group, which took place before I began my studies, once I decided to pursue my research, the quantity and quality of these data sources (particularly the transcripts) improved. As my key “intellectual puzzle” (Mason 2002: 159) and research question was ‘What is the value (or not) of this praxis?’, I needed to generate data that would directly address this question, which led to the decision to do free association interviews (Hollway and Jefferson 2009a & 2013) in “order to provide access to the inner or unconscious subject” (Mason 2002:58). As such, I would be able to triangulate (ibid.:66) these different sources to see if there were findings that I could argue and support.

As to the physical mechanics, there are many data sources. From the original workshops themselves, data comes in the form of tape recordings (in English and

German), handwritten transcripts (by participants and observers), dream drawings (originals and photographs), video recording (one group), time lines and transcripts (assembled by myself and sent to participants). Post-workshop data is in the form of interview transcripts (please see Appendix 1).

During the course of my study, I was learning in a parallel fashion how to improve the praxis at the same time that I was learning how to do psycho-social research. As Pine (2009:238) notes: “The recursive, iterative, and spiraling nature of action research suggests that a research question may change and be refined as new data and issues surface in the research study”. While the basic question stayed the same, i.e. the value to the participant, I learned to continually narrow my focus to identify this value. Thus, I came up with a number of different new titles for this study and had to constantly re-strategise my activities to truly gather the data that could serve as a basis for my findings. In this process, my question transitioned from the use of SDD for ‘working through organisational issues’ to ‘gaining insight into role dilemmas’ to ‘a space for professional and personal transitions’. The scope went from the larger organisational field, to role, and then to explicit professional and personal transitions. This meant that I gradually learned exactly where the praxis had an impact, at least in this study and where it did not, and this influenced which data collection methods I ultimately utilised. For example, as this was not a group intervention, there was no point in interviewing the group as a whole. Thus the quality of my data collection methods improved over the course of the running of the groups, in parallel with the improvement of the praxis and the refinement of my research question and goals. Hereby is a short summary of that progress.

At the very beginning (Netherlands, March 2007), two years before I began my UWE studies, the praxis was in its infancy, and I was primarily focused on trying out a new praxis with supportive colleagues. While I was very interested in learning informally from them if they felt this praxis had any value, the thought of generating research data was not yet in my mind.

Nevertheless, starting with the second session of this group (E2), I and one of the other participants (N3), took the role of taking notes of the dreams, associations and reflections. These notes were not word-for-word transcripts. They were hand-written 'in the moment' while we were also associating and participating. Although created for a different purpose, i.e. as a record of the experience for the participants, they subsequently served as the first sources of data for subsequent analysis.

When the German group began in September 2009 (E4), I was just being introduced to the concept of doing qualitative research. At this point I recognised that records (or recordings) of the sessions would be an extremely important source of data for my studies, as they would document word for word how the dream and the dream drawing was shared, the free associations and the subsequent reflections. Of particular importance to my studies would be the reflections, since they would contain the participants' first thoughts about the theme 'What do I risk in my work?' In addition, these records would allow participants and myself to 're-live' the experience, in the event of any particular follow-up. And lastly they would form an archive of data that I might use in future publications. Therefore the transcripts of the sessions would have a double value, a record for the participants and a source of data for my research and publications.

A key issue was the limited quality of my German. I had initially formed this group as a further effort to develop the praxis. After the group was formed and before we met, I decided to undertake my doctoral studies. This presented a dilemma in terms of data collection, because my German was not (and still isn't) good enough for me to work fluently in that language, much less to analyse transcripts.

At that point, while planning for the first German session, I spoke with my supervisors and with a German colleague, who was fluent in English and who had agreed to take the role of process consultant for this session. She herself was working on her doctorate, and had used tape recordings for her sessions, which she had subsequently transcribed. She recommended this procedure and brought a tape recorder to the first session. At that time, I thought this was an excellent means of documenting the event, my first post-matriculation workshop.

This process, however, not only proved too cumbersome and difficult but did not yield a good enough quality transcript on which I felt I could rely. The tape recording of the introductory session (E4) was initially transcribed by a young German woman with no previous experience in such a task. This document was so flawed, that it had to be reviewed by an experienced German colleague, who then did his best to translate this flawed German version into English, so that I could understand it. Copies of the German transcript were sent to participants, and one or two offered corrections, which were incorporated, but this entire process was, from my perspective, not efficient nor of good enough quality to serve as an ongoing way of recording the work of this group. The 'double transcribing', so to say (not so good German to better German to English) left too many holes in the data.

For the next three German sessions (E6, E9 and E10), therefore, I reverted to a process that I was familiar with, i.e. having participants rotate the role of recorder. Each recorder's task was to take notes for one other participant's session. Within a week after our meeting, each participant sent me his or her notes. I organised them into a transcript that included my photos of the drawings and distributed this transcript to all of them before the next session.

While this was a great improvement, I still felt that it still lacked consistency, because these notes varied considerably in quality, depending on the individual's competence at such a task and the degree to which the recorder was involved in the participant role as well. This role conflict between recorder and participant resulted from the fact that all the participants were involved and interested in the collective experience and the dreams and drawings of their fellow participants. Naturally, there is no such thing as a completely neutral or uninvolved recorder or observer, so that always has to be taken into account. However, I soon could see that those recorders who participated actively in the session provided very little detail in their transcripts.

For the Chile group (Event 5), an event that came up quite suddenly, I used a different data gathering technique, which also had its problems. My colleague, who organised the event, asked a graduate student to take the role of recorder of the event. Since this group is a native Spanish speaking group, we agreed that she could take these notes in Spanish, and that they would later be translated into English either by my colleague or another graduate student (as it turned out it was translated by one of the student observers). This transcript has a very uneven quality. The sections relating to the actual telling of the dream and the group's associations are quite lively. When instructing the recorder, I emphasised that she should not feel obliged

to catch every word, but just write what she could write, even if incomplete. She fulfilled this quite well in these sections. However, for the reflection sessions, where participants are asked to think about the theme, she resorted to summaries of ideas, rather than the actual words.

Eventually, I created a transcript that included a short introduction to the praxis (in English), photos of the three dream drawings, and a Spanish and English transcription. This was distributed to the participants, and I have used parts of the English version for my own research and subsequent publications.

By this time, I was beginning to think about the formation of the London group. It was still clear to me that transcripts of these sessions would be central to my data, because they would document the lived experience of the workshop and participants' first reflections on it. When I was suddenly offered the opportunity to facilitate a half-day workshop with my fellow students in a graduate course in Bristol (Event 7), I took advantage of the instructor's offer to videotape the event. At that time, I thought that a videotape would provide a much more grounded form of data than written transcripts by participants and would offer the additional advantage of visual data.

For this Bristol workshop I have an excellent video. I began to explore the issues of visual data as an expanded source of data for my doctorate. I made initial overtures to a videographer to video the London group, which was scheduled to start in December, 2010 (E11). I soon abandoned this idea, however, after presenting this question to my doctoral student colleagues at our June, 2010 seminar. The strong consensus of the group was that written transcripts were far easier to analyse than



video recordings, because the video recordings in and of themselves brought another element into the event that often interfered with the work of the group, i.e. the visual intrusion and the anxiety about being seen. As Pink (2007) notes:

Video is undoubtedly good for...visual note-taking, but such uses ought to be qualified with a rejection of the naïve assumption that video records an untainted reality in favour of a reflexive approach that accounts for how video can become part of a focus group discussion or interview.

In other words, it has its own presence and its own impact, and the researcher must think about “how video could successfully be used in that specific research scenario” (ibid.). This point was confirmed by the Bristol participant that I interviewed (B2; Event 25), who felt it was a “distraction” and “invasive”. She remembers putting on extra make-up before the session and trying to tidy her hair, certainly signs of extra stress. She was very aware of being filmed.

My fellow doctoral students strongly felt that I could achieve the reliability of data by recording sessions myself and having audiotapes professionally transcribed. With this strong endorsement, therefore, I decided to use audio tape recordings as my research tool for the London sessions. Through one of my supervisors, I found a professional transcriber in Bristol, whom I used throughout the entire data collection process. I found that using the same person for all the London transcriptions provided an important consistency in this data collection process. I was not vulnerable to the various techniques and competencies of different transcribers. However, upon subsequent review of her work, I did find errors, which led me to ultimately listen to the recordings themselves for the data cited in this study.

To further determine the value of the experience I had participants in the German (E14) and the London (E17) groups fill in a time-line relating to their lives and the

broader political world. The time lines began before we started our work and extended beyond our last session (see Appendix 6). This had a double purpose. Its first purpose was to help participants place the experience of the workshop in their broader professional and personal worlds, in order to help them identify how it related to their professional roles. The second use was as a visual research resource providing data connected to the workshop experience. This served as another data source. I did not do this exercise with the Netherlands, Chile or Bristol groups. In the first case, after the death of one of our participants, there was no interest in meeting again. In the last two cases, because these were only half-day workshops, there was not enough time for such an exercise.

My decision to do individual follow-up interviews was consistent with my question about what way this experience might have been valuable to participants. My focus was on individual experience, not group experience or dynamics, and interviewing willing participants was a natural choice, as opposed to interviewing the group as a whole. For most of the interviews, I made use of a format developed in line with the Free Association Narrative Interview method (Hollway and Jefferson(2009a & 2013).

The decisions about who to interview and who not to interview were directly related to my research goal to “evaluate the benefits of this type of developmental methodology for the work of organisational role holders” and my intellectual puzzle, which was to see if I could identify a special benefit to group work with the drawing of dreams. In order to identify and evaluate these benefits, I knew that I had to choose interviewees who would be able to clearly articulate this in a way that I could understand and who were emotionally available to reflect in a deep way about the

work we did together. I decided to only interview participants who brought dream drawings to the workshops, in order to increase the triangulation impact of the research and to concentrate on the learnings and insights of those who fully participated. .

With these aspects in mind, I made the following decisions. In order to avoid the problems associated with translation, I interviewed only the English-speaking participants in the German and Chile groups (i.e. G2, G3, C6). I interviewed all the UK participants. I interviewed three participants of the six participants in the Netherlands group (N2, N5, N6). The two participants that I did not interview included the working partner of my deceased colleague and a close student of hers (N1 and N4). The latter two had no interest in further reflection on the workshop experience, which I attributed to the trauma of the death, so I did not feel it was appropriate to ask them for an interview. I only interviewed one of the dream drawers in the Bristol group, which, in retrospect, I think was a mistake. I should have interviewed them both. I see this decision in hindsight as an acting out of the generational dynamics in the group, by which the younger participants were marginalised by the older ones. This was the last interview that I undertook.

In total, I interviewed 11 (out of 22) participants. I interviewed at least one participant from each group and all of the London participants (Events 8, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25; see Table 2 in Appendix 11). Of the 11 interviews, 4 were in person and 7 were by Skype. The in-person interviews were between one and one-half hour in duration and took place in non-institutional settings. The Skype interviews were generally between 30 and 45 minutes in length.

Information on the exact duration of time between the last session of each group and the subsequent interview can be found in the chart in Appendix 1. To summarize, with the exception of the Bristol group (see further explanation below), the gap between the last workshop session and the interview grew shorter and shorter as time passed. For example, the gap between the last session of the Netherlands group and the two Skype interviews were approximately two and three years respectively. The gap between the Chile session and the interview was approximately one and a half years. For the two in-person German interviews, the gaps closed to 9 months, and with the London group, the gap was just over two months between the last session and the four Skype interviews.

Ironically, I almost did not interview anyone in the Bristol group. At first, I thought this was due to the ‘one-off’ nature of this workshop, i.e. use of a different theme, non-colleagues in my field and the videography. Nevertheless, the Bristol interviewee had many interesting observations to make about the process. During the interview I realized that ‘forgetting’ to include this group probably had to do with the fact that the workshop took place where I am doing my doctorate and noted “perhaps it would have been too frightening”. This transference experience to the university had, in some way, traumatised me. However, as noted above, there were also important reasons not to include this data as part of the general findings most important to me, i.e. the value of this praxis to those working in my professional field.

When I compare the experience of doing face to face interviews with Skype interviews, I would say that the Skype interviews resulted in more ‘on task’ data than the in-person interviews did. When I met with participants, there was always a

personal aspect to the event, especially as these meetings took place in non-institutional settings. Thus it was sometimes a challenge to keep the interview on task. While these digressions were perhaps interesting from a personal perspective, I was there in a particular role with a particular task, and I often had to politely wait until I could get back to my subject. Such topics included one person's cat and another person's apartment decoration. I would say that the Skype technology adds a kind of Socio-Technical (Trist & Murray 1993) dimension to the task of interviewing that was a benefit. It gave the interviews more structure and more distance. These interviews were shorter and much more on task.

In the interviews, I wanted to create for the participants a space in which they could, in retrospect and given their experience since the workshop, reflect on the specific effect this experience had on them. This was something that could not have been known before some time had elapsed and was a different kind of learning than what was shared in the reflection sessions of the workshop. Transcripts of the workshops, including photos of the drawings, served as an important reminder for those I interviewed of what took place during our sessions.

The decision to do follow-up interviews is supported by Edgar (1999) in his research on a process he called Imagework, i.e. working with the images from dreams. Noting the impact of dream images over time, he writes:

The evocative power of a symbol may engage the mind in an ongoing process of self-inquiry; therefore, it may be prudent for the researcher, as well as ensuring that their respondents complete the task at ease with any imaginative results, to make follow-up individual or group interviews (208).

For this aspect of data collection, I used the Free Association Narrative Interview, developed by Hollway and Jefferson (2009a & 2013). This is a method which

involves asking a set of open-ended questions to research subjects. It is designed to elicit stories and experiences from participants and offers a set of guidelines for its implementation. It is not oriented toward a right or wrong answer or to a rational explanation, but more to help the participant freely explore his/her own learnings and experiences. Interviewees are encouraged to tell a story of their experience and the interviewer seeks to use the language of the interviewee rather than “to impose a structure on the narrative” (Clarke & Hoggett 2009:10). One key concept in this method is the “unconscious dynamics between researcher and researched” (ibid.:8-9). This method makes use of the psychoanalytic concept of free association, which encourages participants to express whatever comes to one’s mind. The capacity to freely associate is related to the way in which the interview is conducted and the circumstances and environment surrounding the event. What can result is “access to a person’s concerns which would probably not be visible using a more traditional method” (Hollway & Jefferson, 2009a:37).

Hollway and Jefferson (2009a & 2013) emphasise the concept of the “defended subject” when describing the benefit of such an interview process. I find this a very useful concept in relation to my interview subjects. Although they were quite familiar with these concepts and willingly participated in the groups and the research, they participated in the workshops with the normal concerns of group life. In the interviews, participants were in various degrees open and honest with their comments and self-reflections. The “free association” interview process released a part of the unconscious not always associated with the “defended subject”, which is its deeply creative and transformative potential. I found this way of interviewing to be a great help to me in maintaining the role of researcher, which has been a

challenge for me as the developer of the very praxis that I am interviewing people about.

Susan Long and Wendy Harding describe the socioanalytic research interview, whose purpose is “exploring the uniqueness of the individual while attempting to gain a picture of the whole” (2013:91). This captures the challenges of interviewing the SDD participants, in that each had his or her own very individual experience, but at the same time, as researcher, I was keeping in mind the general themes that were emerging. Thus one can say that one individual’s experience is not “idiosyncratic” (ibid.:93), but instead “each person’s experience as a set of representative dynamics that contain meaning about the whole system” (ibid.). So if, for example, I were doing such a workshop in an organisation, I think this approach would be an added benefit for me.

Long and Harding emphasise that the interview itself is an important space for thinking to take place and for both participants to reflect together on the experience. There is continual movement back and forth, both in memory and then with the stimulation of the interview, between deep unconscious meaning and group experience. As Long and Harding note: “it is not a passive space” (ibid.:93).

Long and Harding list a set of skills that the interviewer should have, which do not contradict any of the ideas of Hollway. They include active listening, prompting for extended detail, getting specific examples, showing empathy, and clarifying. No one could argue with these skills. However, I found it exceptionally helpful to cohere my interviews by a set of consistent questions, which I developed and reviewed with my supervisors (see Appendix 10). I learned from earlier interviewing mistakes that

without such a structure, I was tending more toward a role of colleague than of researcher. Interviews blended a bit into conversations and remembrances.

At the end of the London group workshop I decided that I had enough research material to answer my question: ‘Do participants gain insights into a particular professional dilemma relating to the theme, “What do I risk in my work?”’. By the time the London group ended in 2012, I had already interviewed three former participants and, while not fully analysed, I recognised I had very rich material pointing to insight and learning. After interviewing all the London participants, I knew I would have enough data AND the data from this group largely echoed the results from the other group participants. On this basis, I decided it was not necessary to conduct further interviews with previous participants or to stage another workshop, as collecting more data would not have yielded anything substantially new.

### 6.3 Ethics

This section covers the ethical issues related to research in general and to my particular research study. I begin by identifying the general ethical issues relating to research (Diener and Crandall 1978; Oliver 2003) with human subjects and with qualitative research. Next I discuss how I have observed these basic ethical ground rules in the running of the groups, the conduct of my research and the publication of my data. I follow that by reviewing UWE’s research governance framework, noting also the ethical guidelines recommended for all UWE researchers (The Research Ethics Guidebook). The special ethical challenges relating to psycho-social research, particularly Hollway and Jefferson’s (2012) notion of the difference between distress



and doing harm, follow. I close with a set of guiding principles taken from Hollway (ibid.) and Miller (2012) which, while perhaps less formal than accepted research guidelines, express the essence of undertaking research in an ethical manner.

### 6.3.1 General ethical guidelines for human and qualitative research

Conducting oneself ethically in the pursuit of qualitative research is, on the one hand, a matter of following certain ethical procedures, and, on the other, a matter of a consistent ethical stance during the course of the research endeavor. The ground rules of ethical practice, as articulated by Diener and Crandall (1978:7) are:

1. No harm should come to research participants.
2. They should agree to participate and know what the research is about, i.e. informed consent.
3. Their privacy should not be invaded.
4. They should not be lied to or cheated (no deception).

During the course of my research journey, I have striven as best as I can to follow the above four ethical ground rules. As follows, I discuss each one in depth.

#### Ground Rule #1: No harm should come to research participants

This question is a very important one for my research. Although all of the participants volunteered to participate, the nature of the unknown experience ahead of them could not be predicted, thus opening the possibility of what Oliver (2003:39) terms “the risk of an unpredictable level of harm”. There is an intimacy that is generated in these groups; participants experience vulnerability in sharing their dreams. As Edgar (1999) has written in relation to ethical issues with his action research method of Imagework: “The concern with careful use is important as such a

method can reveal latent feelings and unrealized intuitions that have often only been partially made conscious or possibly even repressed” (208).

The groups need to be run in as safe and containing a way as possible. Because of that, I have provided a structure and a way of working to minimise personally threatening or destructive experiences. This has meant holding to clear and consistent boundaries (time, task, and role) and communicating clearly and appropriately.

The design of SDD builds in as many protections as possible. Participants choose which drawing to bring and share. Drawings are associated to, not interpreted. And all participants are free to explore as deeply or as superficially as they are comfortable with. In the interviews, they have this same freedom. As Hollway and Jefferson (2012:89) point out: “if interviewees do not feel positive about the relationship, this - particularly if it is respected by the interviewer - will serve to limit what they disclose of themselves”.

One of the German participants, whose husband died during the course of the workshop (G2), worked hard to manage her own boundaries with the group. However, in the later interview, she did share that while we were working together, she was worried that group members would refer to her personal grief. In fact, it was not easy for her when some people associated something in her drawing to death or a funeral. I had made it clear to her that she could decide not to continue, which is in line with the ethical position of giving research participants a way to end their participation whenever they so choose. Nevertheless, she made the decision to continue participating.

In another example, the dream material of one participant contained violent images, but these meanings were not explored by the drawer, either in the group work or in the interview. This participant obviously felt comfortable disclosing only a minimum amount.

The question of harm is worth considering in the case of the Netherlands group. The death of one of its key participants (N3) just a month after our third session was never worked through, as group members did not want to meet again. In what way their experience of the last session (especially the dream drawing shared by this participant) accounts for this reluctance is not known, but clearly many participants felt that meeting again would not be important or helpful. In the spirit of not doing harm, I accepted this decision. I certainly did not want to re-traumatise these participants, by forcing them to re-experience our last session together. I did, however, subsequently interview two of the participants.

Hollway and Jefferson have suggested, as an ethical matter, to consider debriefing participants afterwards (2012:89). They cite the Code of Conduct of the British Psychological Society (1996:9), which recommends debriefing in order to provide “participants with any necessary information to complete their understanding of the nature of the research” and an opportunity to discuss “their experience of the research in order to monitor any unforeseen negative effects or misconceptions”. My interviews were a form of debriefing, because they gave participants full freedom to ask any questions about the work we did and to express any concerns they had.

At the same time, one could also think of the interviews as another arena in which the ‘defended subject’ (Hollway and Jefferson 2009a, 2013) may be mobilised.

Edgar (1999) rightly notes that “any data-collection method involves intrusion and can provoke problematic self-disclosure. Even a simple interview can suddenly trigger a sensitive area for the respondent and leave the researcher with ethical considerations in terms of how to supportively handle the resulting situation”. It can also result in less than satisfying data to support one’s research.

Ground Rule #2: They should agree to participate and know what the research is about, i.e. informed consent.

As Oliver (2003:28) notes: “A central feature of social science research is the principle that participants should be fully informed about a research project before they assent to taking part”. With the exception of the Netherlands workshops, which took place before I matriculated at UWE in October, 2009, all the other workshops took place during the course of my studies. With the German group, I held a special introductory session, where I received the participants’ verbal permission to use our data for my doctoral study. With both the Chile and Bristol groups, I did a similar verbal briefing on the day of the workshop and received their permission. With regard to the London group, in order to orient those who expressed interested in the SDD workshops, I sent the candidates an introductory letter (see Appendix 2), in which I laid out the purpose of the work, details about recording and a potential schedule. At our first session, they all signed an ‘informed consent’ form, giving me permission to use their material in my doctoral studies (see Appendix 2). Three of them were doctoral students and my process consultant was a doctoral supervisor, and they all readily agreed.

Beyond the document, however, was the way in which I presented the study to the new participants. As L1 (the only London participant who was not a doctoral student) put it in the follow-up interview (Event 20):

And I think that the way that you introduced it...at the beginning as...an investigation, it wasn't that you were trying to force a view on anybody. You weren't a snake [oil]...salesman trying to sell something, but you were investigating something and you were going to make interpretations based on the data that you found. So I think that felt reassuring at the beginning as well. So describing this is the hypothesis, now I'm going to try and prove it, or disprove it, I had a sense of we were here to investigate this together, and I thought that's interesting.... and I certainly picked that up from you about that notion of investigation and exploration.

Hollway and Jefferson (2012) caution researchers to be careful not to, so to say, tip one's hand when one explains one's research to potential participants, which could influence their participation. As they note (86):

...it is important to make a clear distinction between the questions that the research is asking, formulated in the academic domain, and information and explanations that we provide to interviewees. This is because it is important not to prejudice the research by signaling, in the framing of the information, the researcher's expectations. Where this is done, researchers may get the answers that they already have in mind, and common or dominant discourses do not get challenged and disrupted.

My emphasis on this as a joint investigation and exploration was my way of addressing this issue. And Edgar (1999) points to the importance of "sensitively explaining beforehand the task and technique to participants" (208).

In order to obtain useful data, I tape recorded all of the workshop sessions of the London groups and the subsequent interviews with all participants. In addition, the Bristol session was videotaped. This decision has its ethical consequences. As Oliver (2003:46) notes: "The first thing to be said about tape recording is that the informed consent of the participant should be obtained". The question of which of these two forms of recording was most appropriate is discussed above in section 6.2 Data Collection. From an ethical point of view, I had to make sure that all of my

participants were comfortable with being recorded. As Oliver notes (ibid.:51): “The same basic principles of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality still apply. We have to make certain that the technology which we use enables us to comply with these standards.”

Given consent to participate in a research study is not a one-time event. Throughout the entire experience, participants are continually evaluating this judgment, based on their ongoing experience. As Hollway and Jefferson have written (2012: 88):

The decision to consent, then, cannot be reduced to a conscious, cognitive process but is a continuing emotional awareness that characterises every interaction. In our view, it is based on a very different theory about how people process information than the one on which the idea of informed consent is based, which emphasises people's capacities to process information and reach a rational and considered decision as an autonomous subject, sealed off from the influences of others. It assumes that a person is in a better position to judge prior to the interaction with the researcher (prior, we might point out, to the evidence on which trust is largely based).

From this perspective, what goes beyond the initial agreement via the consent form is the participant's ongoing experience that no harm is engendered by this experience.

As Oliver notes (2003:48), however, “Even when participants give their informed consent, they cannot necessarily be expected to anticipate their feelings about participation”. This was certainly the case of the German participant, whose husband died during the time of our work together. The best that a researcher can do is to maintain a safe and respectful attitude toward all participants and stick to the boundaries.

Ground Rule #3: Their privacy should not be invaded

As Oliver (2003:77) notes: “A cornerstone of research ethics is that respondents should be offered the opportunity to have their identity hidden in a research report”.

Hollway and Jefferson 2012:95 note: “Rendering case material anonymous is, as we know, a fundamental guiding ethical principle”. The issue of confidentiality is especially relevant to my work, since many of my participants are in the same professional field as myself. Because this dissertation will be available online, I have to keep in mind that not only could participants recognise themselves in what I have written, but they could also recognise other participants, whose confidentiality I have pledged to respect. Keeping in mind the commitment to render all participants anonymous, in this dissertation I have coded each person’s name according to which group they participated in. For example, the London participants are coded L1, L3, L4 and L5. I listed them in the order that we worked with their dream drawings in the first session.

As a basic precaution, all of my research information is held securely in my laptop, which is password protected. Thus all data is protected and can only be accessed by myself.

As a researcher, one must be sure to make “the original providers of the data... aware of the uses to which it is being put” (Oliver 2003:52). Between 2011 and 2014, I have published and presented material related to this work. In each case, I have used at least one dream drawing and often more than one and have used substitute names. Each time, I have asked and received permission from the drawer to refer to his or her work in the article, presentation or book chapter.

What certainly complicates the issue of confidentiality is that I continue to have personal and professional relationships with many of the participants. Miller notes (2012:12) how complicated it is to assess “how much information to disclose to

whom and in what contexts, the blurring boundaries of privacy, access to and sharing of information”. Seeking to preserve these relationships, I have strived to be as careful as possible to protect their privacy, however, in this internet age when, for example, a research subject (or a client) can easily find publications relating to themselves (even when their names are disguised), extra care must be taken. This has meant making some drastic alterations in this dissertation and, in a sense, removing milestones and identifiers that would too easily be identified. Of particular issue is the data that emerged from interviews. As Miller (2012:11) notes: “...ethical decision processes and ‘thinking ethically’ throughout the qualitative research process have become ever more necessary in a changing research environment”. Since the groups have finished, while I have had follow-up interviews, none of my participants have asked to see the results of my research or have expressed concern about how they would be represented in the dissertation.

Ground Rule #4: They should not be lied to or cheated (no deception).

In terms of my work with participants, I have endeavoured at all stages to be honest about the intent of my study and to work with them in a genuine way. Any deception on my part would quickly be sensed unconsciously by participants and would not serve the goals of my research.

Aside from deception of my participants, is the issue of the researcher’s self-deception. As Hollway and Jefferson (2012:97) note: “...self-deception is not confined to research participants; researchers too can deceive themselves”. This is a particularly important issue because I am researching the value of a praxis that I myself have developed. Naturally I have an investment in it being experienced and



seen as valuable. This bias was mentioned by one of the examiners in my progression exam, and, despite putting great effort into improving my interview process, I think my desire for success has influenced me to take a positive view of its value and perhaps also influenced my participants to speak positively about it when interviewed. It is not easy to separate out the praxis as its own object from my own egoistic professional ambitions and the desire of friends and colleagues to see me succeed. The decision to have the London process consultant manage the selection of those participants was designed, in part, to address this issue of bias.

There have been safeguards built into this entire research process (see Chapter 9) that are designed to mitigate against this tendency. I know that as a researcher, I can be fundamentally wrong about my own experience and must always seek to incorporate other perspectives and utilise other resources (i.e. supervision, reflexive journal) that promote honest reflection and feedback, what Hollway terms “structured, formal support, which is regular and reliable” (Hollway 2008:17).

This issue is also complicated by the commitment to use the researcher’s subjective experience “as an instrument of knowing” (Hollway 2008:17). As Hollway points out: “...the (inevitable) use of researcher’s subjectivity runs the risk of not achieving good enough objectivity (in the psychoanalytic sense)...[due to] unprocessed, uncontained intersubjective dynamics that are liable to compromise objective knowing of external reality”. This, therefore, calls for a rigorous and containing set of safeguards to guard against mistaking one’s own experience for that of others and for mistaking one’s own wishes for the thoughts of others.

### 6.3.2 UWE research governance

Oliver makes it clear that, “[i]n terms of research governance it is important that institutions have clear procedures for addressing issues of informed consent” (2003:128). UWE is firmly committed to having its students undertake their research in a thoroughly ethical way, and, as such, has a very highly developed set of procedures to ensure this. As stated on its web site, UWE (Research Ethics:2015) “is committed to promoting high ethical standards in the conduct of research undertaken by its staff and students”. The document Research Ethics Committees: Policy and Procedures for Research Ethical Approval (2012:1) contains this general statement regarding ethics: “The dignity, rights, safety and well being of participants must be a significant consideration in any research study involving people or human tissue”.

The area of research ethics at UWE is encompassed within the broader notion of the Research Excellent Framework (REF), updated in 2014, which is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education. UWE ethical policy leaves it to the respective faculties to monitor the ethical practices of its researchers. As stated in its policies and procedures document:

It recognises that how ethical issues have been addressed in the past varies considerably because of different research traditions and cultures. It understands that formal research ethical scrutiny is not the only mechanism needed to ensure research is pursued to the highest ethical standards (ibid.:2).

The policy is appropriate, therefore, to the particular focus of a student in a particular department. As stated in the UWE Code of Good Research Conduct (2015)

Some student research which is ‘low risk’ may be approved by the student project Supervisor in accordance with the operating procedures relating to student projects. The University regards proper ethical conduct, including appropriate ethical review, as a central tenet of good research practice which must be observed by anyone conducting research at UWE Bristol (11).

The handbook that I received in 2009 advises one to discuss all ethical issues with one's Director of Studies, which I have been doing since the beginning.

In terms of specific ethical behaviour, The Research Ethics Handbook (2015) offers six principles in their Framework for Research Ethics. These six principles are:

1. Integrity and quality
2. Fully informed researchers and participants
3. Confidentiality and anonymity
4. Voluntary participation, free from coercion
5. Avoiding harm
6. Independence and impartiality of the researchers

Points 2, 3, and 5 have already been discussed in this chapter. Point 1 is related to whether the research is new and worth asking, which I argue to be the case in the introduction of this dissertation. Point 4 relates to whether the research will actually help others, which has been a value intrinsic to this project. It relates also to giving participants a way out, if they choose to end their participation. Miller (2012:12) notes that to "...conduct research in ways that do not willfully exploit, harm or coerce (potential) participants is more and more a challenge". And point 6 relates to the issue of bias or a predisposed prejudice, which I have discussed above and also in the introduction to this dissertation.

### 6.3.3 Special ethical issues relating to psychosocial research

In terms of the socioanalytic focus of my research, there are at least two major issues that need to be considered. While my participants were by and large all familiar and comfortable with psychoanalysis, any research work with this underpinning has its special consequences that must be considered. I will explore two of them, the power

dynamic between researcher and participant and the notion of the difference between harm and distress.

#### 6.3.3.1 The power dynamic:

It is generally accepted that the relationship of the analyst to the patient is a power relationship having to do with the idea that the analyst is constantly interpreting the subject from afar. This issue has to be taken seriously in understanding the potential experience of participants agreeing to participate in a group experience related to unconscious processes. The transference processes toward someone undertaking organisational research using such underpinnings cannot be minimised.

In doing research from a psychoanalytic perspective, the question is how to minimise this so-called power inequality. This issue is also exacerbated by transference dynamics between participants and between participants and my process consultants. For example, in the Bristol group, there were younger participants and older ones, all female, who could well have been seen as mother figures. In the Chile group, two of the participants were students of the third participant, who was, in turn, the protégée of my co-facilitator. In the German and Netherlands groups, some of the participants had been students of mine, so there was already a bias towards me as an expert. Thus one can say that in all of the groups, an unequal status situation existed. In addition, neither I nor my German and London process consultants shared the same level of vulnerability, as we never shared a dream drawing. By not sharing a dream drawing, there was an unequal power situation and level of vulnerability and intimacy. We were more protected. Given these dynamics I strove to take my role in, on the one hand, in as supportive a way as I could, and, at the same time, to maintain clear

boundaries and work consistently with rules of the road that everyone could rely upon. Hollway and Jefferson express it very nicely, I think, when they write (Hollway and Jefferson 2012:85):

We are interested in how relational dynamics, such as understanding and respect, has the capacity to transcend structural power differences. Such relational dynamics, which draws on the deep pool of common human characteristics, does not equalise power, but it makes it negotiable, rather than an inevitable effect of status differences.

The nature of the role boundary in both this praxis and this form of research is quite permeable. The nature of the work itself encourages a regressive and sometimes dependent group process, which intensifies the normal transferential and countertransferential processes and projective dynamics inherent in such group activities. This must always be kept in mind by the researcher.

#### 6.3.3.2 Harm versus distress

In Oliver's (2003:15) standard volume on ethical research, he states that "[r]esearch should avoid causing harm, distress, anxiety, pain or any other negative feeling to participants". This formulation might suggest that the experience of being a research subject must only be a positive one and must never stir up those uncomfortable and un-resolved issues that linger in all of us. However in psycho-social research this is a promise that we cannot and do not want to make. Hollway and Jefferson make a special point of discussing the difference between harm and distress in the context of psychoanalytically-related research. They note that in the learning relating to any psychoanalytic process, one does not get away scot free from difficult and distressing experiences. "Psychoanalysis challenges the belief that it is best to avoid distress. In contrast, it is based on theoretical principles which stress that well-being depends on making the causes of distress conscious, in a containing environment, where they can

be discovered not to be threatening to the survival of the self” (Hollway and Jefferson 2012:98). Hinshelwood (1997) underscores this point by observing that the use of informed consent to a potential patient cannot truly cover the possible experiences of the patient in the course of treatment. As one re-experiences earlier traumas through the transference to the analyst, there is pain and distress, which are associated with this early experience. These feelings must be experienced again in order to be worked through and ultimately integrated. That is the essential core process of psychoanalysis. “Harm must be evaluated independently of distress” (Hollway and Jefferson 2012:99), since distress always accompanies a deep psychological examination.

Hollway and Jefferson argue that participants who experience this distress are not by definition being harmed, as long as the process of the work is conducted in, as they put it, “a supportive and trustworthy context” (Hollway and Jefferson 2012: 87). As they point out “[t]he criterion of avoiding harm is a basic ethical principle: inflicting harm is unethical and contrary to rights and welfare. However, is it necessarily harmful to experience being upset or distressed? It can be reassuring and therapeutic to talk about an upsetting event in a safe context” (ibid.:86-87). From their perspective, safety means that the researcher is

someone who was capable of listening well (especially paying attention to emotional significances), was not competing for attention, who could reflect back in questions and comments a recognition of her experiences which was emotionally appropriate, and by whom she did not feel judged. These are the characteristics of a good counselling relationship (ibid.:87).

Because in the course of this kind of research participants experience change and internal transformation, the goal cannot be for it to be an entirely emotionally neutral experience. As was demonstrated in earlier chapters, participants are respected for

whatever decisions they make. They are free to go as deeply as they wish to and maintain the role of full participant.

#### 6.3.4 Principles of ethical research

In this final section, I am exploring concepts related to ethics that are not so much guidelines, in the sense of rules of the road for ethical practice, but the values that should infuse any ethical research endeavor. In describing an appropriate ethical approach to psycho-social research, Hollway and Jefferson emphasise the three central principles of “honesty, sympathy and respect” (2012:102). Honesty relates to the above principle of no deception. They note:

For us, honesty entailed approaching the data openly and even-handedly, in a spirit of enquiry not advocacy, deploying a theoretical framework which was laid out and justified, making only such judgements as could be supported by the evidence, and not ignoring evidence when it suited us (ibid.:100).

This principle relates to the 6<sup>th</sup> point in the above Framework for Ethical Practice related to UWE research governance. Sympathy (as opposed to over-identification and over-interpretation) has to do with maintaining an understanding of the experience of the participants for whom this praxis involves deep learning and, at times, deep loss. These feelings were revealed more often in the interviews than in the workshops themselves. To Hollway and Jefferson, the notion of respect means to observe carefully and pay attention to the participant and “to notice what normally is overlooked, what might be too painful to notice” (2012:101). It is based on Benjamin’s (1995) concept of recognition of the other. This is especially relevant to SDD, where participants sometimes feel ashamed or embarrassed by their drawings.

Miller (2012), who identifies herself as a feminist researcher, emphasises “a reflexive model of ethics” (16). This model takes into account not only the rational aspects of an ethical position, but also the emotional connection and experiences of researcher and participants. From her perspective “[t]he reflexive self becomes a key constituent in enabling ethical reflection.... Thus ethics becomes part of our relationships, our interactions and our shared values portrayed in the sense of belonging to a community” (ibid.). From her perspective the reflexive researcher, that is, the researcher who is also aware of his or own internal experiences and transferential reactions, must not only follow the formal steps in undertaking ethical research, but also monitor one’s own internal experience. As Edgar (1999:207) describes this issue:

The researcher, then, is involved in the production of experience as well as its recording and analysis. We can see that such a powerful technique from humanistic psychology can evoke neglected and avoided aspects, experiences, and emotions contained within the self.

Miller identifies this process as an “ethics of care framework” (2012:16), which, in some ways, mitigates the issue of the power relationships, as described earlier. When the researcher is aware of his or her own self-experience, there is an unconscious bond that connects him or her to the participants, beyond the formality of role. It leads to more “collaborative, trusting, and non-oppressive relationships between researchers and those studied” (Denzin & Lincoln 2008:53).

To summarise, this chapter has covered the issues of sampling, data collection and ethical practice as related to this study. It has focused particularly on the set of decisions made during the course of the study relating to psycho-social research principles and ethics and also integrated with the UWE system of ethical conduct.



The next chapter discusses at length the process of data analysis undertaken that resulted in the Findings as discussed in Chapter 8.

## **Chapter 7: Data Analysis**

In this chapter, I lay out the details of how I analysed the extensive data that I described in the previous chapter. This was a process that took place in three phases, each of which I will explain, document and support with relevant theory. I will also highlight the ways in which working as a psycho-social researcher enhanced and helped this extensive process. In a general way, I would say that during the entire process of data collection and data analysis, I strived and mostly succeeded to stay in the moment. When it was important to collect data, conduct interviews properly, handle tape recordings, run the workshops, I was just concerned with these tasks. I held no pre-held views of what the findings would be, because my main question was whether there would be any value found, and in order to determine that, I needed to concentrate on offering the best experience I was capable of. Once I got into the data analysis, I was free then to see what I had produced. Naturally there was some trepidation, but also excitement.

In this entire process, I sought to follow Mason's dictum (2002:192): "The basic principle here is that you are never taking it as self-evident that a particular interpretation can be made of your data but instead that you are continually and assiduously charting and justifying the steps through which your interpretations were made." Here I will do my best to demonstrate the "careful retracing and reconstruction of the route" (ibid.:194) by which I did my analysis.

I divide my process of analysis into three phases: Familiarisation, Thematic Analysis, and Hypothesis Testing.

## 7.1 Familiarisation

I call this my familiarisation phase, because this step achieved what Ritchie & Spencer (1999:178) note is important, i.e. to “gain an overview of the body of material gathered....by taking stock and gaining a feel for the material as a whole”. This phase consists of two parts: Reflection and Organisation.

### 7.1.1 Reflection

I began this analysis journey by taking the advice of my supervisors to reconstruct from memory the course of all my work (2007-2012) and mentally (without consulting any of the above mentioned sources) identify the themes that emerged from this mental scan. I noticed at the time that my mind wandered quite a bit. Bits of memory would return to me here and there, particularly physical memories, such as the weather or the size of rooms. Bits of memory came back on a walk or in the shower. Gradually, three general themes emerged from that process:

1. Giving birth; gaining perspective from a distance
2. No beginning and no end; overlapping events
3. Life and natural cycles and events

This beginning was, in retrospect, a good transitional experience into the deeper task of data analysis and was helpful to me in orienting my own experience. When it came time to look at these themes more deeply, I realised that they had to do with my own experience of being a psycho-social researcher rather than with the findings relating to the praxis of SDD. A full articulation of these themes and their relationship to my own research experience appears in Chapter 9.

### 7.1.2 Organisation

As Mason notes (2002:152), the “first step in data analysis is to organize the collected data....which in itself is data analysis...and there are many ways to slice one’s data”. In hindsight this point is obvious, but at the time I was mostly aware that I had a huge task in front of me, which was to somehow put in some containable order all that I had collected in order to analyse it. I took my first concrete steps in late April 2012, when I created a special space in another room of my home to physically organise my numerous recordings, articles, books, files and research literature. This brought together physically all that I had collected.

I needed a way to get a handle on my data, in order to gain a far enough perspective from the immediate experience. The importance of this is emphasised by Mason (ibid.):

You want to get a systemic overview of your data so that you have a clear idea of their coverage and scope....which...can help the researcher to distance themselves from the immediacy of the initially striking or memorable elements, and therefore to gain a more measured view of the whole.

From there, I needed to construct some sort of system by which I could systematically analyse my data and from which I would know where to retrieve it when needed. My entire research enterprise springs from the visual. As Mason (ibid.:169) notes, visual methods “make complex material easier to understand, or more multi-dimensional.” My first instinct was to somehow visually represent my data, which I ultimately did in three distinct and developing ways (see Appendices 1, 7 and 8).

This first step of organisation presented the challenge of determining exactly what was my data. Determining exactly what one's data is follows collection and precedes analysis. As Mason (*ibid.*:148) notes:

Cataloguing or indexing systems are not analytically neutral...in choosing or devising a particular system, you are at the very least making certain assumptions about the kinds of phenomena you are cataloguing and the kinds you are not (and indeed what count as data and what do not), as well as how and in what form you will be able to retrieve them later....any researcher who intends to sort and organize their data must know what it is that constitutes data in the context of their research.

My first attempt at organisation was the creation of what I eventually labeled my Event Chart (Appendix 1). In this process, I was guided by Mason's (*ibid.*:151) point that "...the function of the categories is to focus and organize the retrieval of sections of text, or elements of data, for the purpose of some form of further analysis or manipulations. It is sometimes easier to think of this process as constituting different way of slicing your data set, for different purposes."

In order to organise this first of ultimately three charts, I needed to develop the principles by which I would decide what constituted data in my study, i.e. what were the elements that I would analyse. The choice of which data to organise and in what ways to represent it had to be in the service of the "intellectual puzzle" (*ibid.*:159) that I was exploring, which I formulate as follows: Does group work with drawings of dreams really provide a special benefit, and, if so, can I identify it? It must also be in line with my ontological perspective (i.e. there is an unconscious) and my three epistemological assertions (see Chapter 5).

Mason (*ibid.*:171) notes that organisation of data is not just "simply technical or administrative, but are ultimately part of your analytic strategy, and require you to

engage fully with questions about the theoretical orientation of your study as well as the practical shape of your data". Thus, given my ontological position that the unconscious exists, it was clear to me that one piece of essential data would be the dream drawings brought by participants. Even this is a data decision, because it would be impossible to say that the dreams themselves were data. The drawings stand for the dreams, or, rather, stand for the dreamer's presentation of the dream material and were always the basis for the subsequent free association and reflection activities.

Given my epistemological principle that group processed experience produces knowledge meant that what took place in the actual sessions is data. The means to access that were the various transcripts and the one video from Bristol. Lastly, given my intellectual puzzle as to the value of the praxis and the goal of my research, the words and the thinking of the participants in the interviews counted as essential data.

I knew that creating something visual and comprehensive would eventually give me a structured route to look at the data. In deciding how to organise this route, I followed the strategy of 'first discovered, last discovered' data presentation, i.e. "a chronicle-like fashion, showing the course of the researcher's personal journey in the study" (Chenail 1995). Thus the event chart in Appendix 1 identifies each event in the order in which it occurred, regardless of which group the event was related to. Thus the very first event is the first Netherlands session on March 23 and 24, 2007. For this event, I list all the participants and highlight the names of those I interviewed. I created a label for this event (1st Netherlands session, Haarlem), and I also listed all the items relating to this session and coded each one according to whether it was in the form of a hard copy, on a disc or in my laptop. This is the

pattern that I followed for every event that took place for which I had data. The last event (#25) was my in-person interview with the Bristol participant, which is on a tape recording on my laptop.

It was extremely important to have at my fingertips a reference by which I could immediately retrieve data, and the organising theme was the event that occurred (workshop or interview). Each event produced its own particular data items (i.e. tape recording, transcription, drawing, video recording, written summary, group written transcript, etc.). Each of those, therefore, is coded. For example, for the first event, I had 7 items, and they were coded 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, etc. This coding system became very valuable as I began my data analysis, because I knew exactly to what I was referring when I went through everything and I knew where it was located (for example, laptop, hardcopy or disc).

Naturally, in order to observe confidentiality, I had to modify this document using coded labels (rather than first names) for the participants. For purposes of this dissertation, participants are referred to first with a letter (N = Netherlands, G = Germany, C = Chile, B = Bristol and L = London) followed by a number. Each of the events is numbered in the order in which it took place (e.g. Event 2 is 2nd Netherlands Session, Haarlem) and is indicated in this text in the following way: 'Event 2'. And this entire document, entitled Events, appears in the Appendix of this dissertation.

As a reflexive researcher, this archive is embedded in events that occurred outside of the sessions, but that influenced or had a bearing on the work. I therefore decided to make note of the most significant personal events that occurred during the span of

my research, either to me or to participants. This includes the death of a participant, the beginning of my studies at UWE, various professional achievements of my own relating to my studies, and the death of both my parents during this time.

From this document I could easily count the number of events with at least one source of data (25), the number of interviews (11), 66 different data sources, the number of unique sources of data, e.g. videotape of a session (10) and the number of languages (3).

During this process, I continually discovered new data items that I didn't even know I had, such as old emails with photos of dream drawings attached. For a period of time, therefore, the Events document was a continual work in progress. When the time came to do my data analysis, I went through my data event by event in chronological order and checked off and dated items with the date that I reviewed them.

Meanwhile, even after these preliminary steps, I still felt overwhelmed. Then I saw an idea from materials shared by my supervisor (Sociology Project Workshop 4 guidelines) regarding a Data Map. This gave me the idea of creating what I termed a 'Data Time-Line' on April 25, 2012 (Appendix 7), which extended from 2007 to 2012 and graphically showed a time line of all my research events (workshops and interviews). It also included all the personal intervening events I mentioned above. I colour coded each of the 5 groups, so that I could visually see my progress.

By colour coding each group, I was able to break down the larger string of events into a certain number of distinct experiences, although their timings often overlapped



(i.e. I was interviewing people in one group before holding a session with another group). What this chart helped me to see was a way forward to looking at the data, in that it was now organised visually along a time boundary, as opposed to a listing on multiple pages. As I wrote in a September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 email to my supervisor: “In a sense, that takes me a step away from the Events Chart, with all the minute detail”. It allowed a different way of processing the data. This chart also contributed to a better perspective on the development of the praxis (as outlined in the introduction of this dissertation). One of my supervisors, when she looked at the chart, observed that my work had 3 phases: Development, Establishment and Consolidation. This was made obvious by the time line.

In order to further illuminate my data events, I made another chart on the same day, which I titled ‘Moving Outward from the first to the last Experience’ (Appendix 8). This is a bulls-eye target drawing, with the first group in the middle and 5 expanding circles, so that the last group is in the largest circle. I used the same colour coding for each group as in the previous drawing and put an ‘x’ for each interview and an ‘o’ for each workshop session.

From this drawing, I made a startling discovery, i.e. I had not interviewed anyone in the Bristol group. This illustrates Mason’s (2002:132) point about approaching one’s data in various ways:

Sorting, organizing and indexing can thus help you to get surprises from your data which take you beyond an impressionistic view based on the limitations of your own memory and your capacity to sort and organize in your head.

In my head, Bristol did not have a significance, although it had been a major event and had taken place at the very university where I was studying. This entire experience illustrates Mason’s (ibid.:171) point that “different ways of composing

and drawing diagrams will suggest specific explanatory logics, and you must be aware of these when making your diagrammatic choices”. This was not just a glaring omission, I was sure that it had some meaning. I remembered the advice my advisors had given to me, which was not to exclude things that don’t make sense. In fact embrace them. They often contain the kernel of new learning. Questions will emerge from the data. Keep an open mind for these questions and then they will guide further explorations of data. Ultimately this proved to be exactly so (See Finding 3 in Chapter 8).

The question at the moment for me was what is the meaning of ignoring this group. As I wrote in my reflexive diary (April 25, 2012): “Why have I completely ignored this session? Tucked it away somewhere, no transcript, no reflection....What does this mean????”. I was helped to understand this when I interviewed a Bristol participant (Event 25). She noted that “perhaps it would have been too frightening”, because the workshop took place at the same university where I was doing my doctorate. Interestingly, her dream drawing portrayed an older woman in the role of learner, a role reversal that certainly characterised myself.

In retrospect, then, this chart served as an important way of quality assuring the completeness of my data. If I had not made it, this data could well have been lost to my analysis. As Mason (*ibid.*:169) notes: “Sometimes, using diagrams...can help you to spot connections or relationships in your data which are difficult to see’ when data are in, for example, text-based format.” I immediately scheduled an interview for my next Bristol visit, which is the last event in the Events chart.

This chart also made it clear, as I wrote in my own document ‘Notes on Data Analysis’ (April 25, 2012): “that, with the exception of one time Chile and Bristol, as I move through time, I have more and more data. Beginning with 5 for Netherlands, 7 for Germany and 8 for London”. So as the praxis developed from beginning to consolidation, the amount of data I collected grew. This chart also made me realise that the majority of my data was associated with 3 groups (Germany, Netherlands and London).

At the time, I thought about focusing just on the groups with the most data, which I later rejected. That didn’t seem to me to be anything other than a simplification and could risk avoiding data that I didn’t want to have. There didn’t seem to be any justification.

I would say that for me the meta process of data analysis was a gradual journey from the tiniest details to the larger themes. In retrospect I think the creation of these three charts was critical to gain entry to the step by step process of analysis, because they helped me contain and organise the entire experience enough to take it apart again. In that sense, there is a parallel process happening here: the dream drawings are a way into making sense of experience, and visual methods of data also function for sense-making. Both are ways of creating potential sense-making.

I brought these three charts to Bristol for my supervision session on May 29, 2012. As already mentioned, one supervisor made the observation, based on the Data Time Line chart, that the praxis had developed in three stages, i.e. the development phase (Netherlands), the Establishment Phase (up to London group) and, finally, the consolidation phase. This confirmed for me one of the major goals of my research,

which was the development of the praxis. She further pointed out that I actually had been going through a data analysis process all along, since I had continually used the data from one workshop to improve the praxis for the next. In this way I was utilising an emergent action research approach (Flood 2001:117-118).

We also discussed my concerns about various problems with my data, i.e. transcription inaccuracies and poor English speaking for some participants. We agreed that, unless this data seemed to be particularly out of sync with other data, not to pursue a purer or more accurate version. Ultimately, it was not necessary to do so.

## 7.2 Thematic analysis

What guided me in this second phase of data analysis – following the first phase of reflection and organisation – was the realisation, as Mason notes (2002:148) that “[c]ataloguing or indexing systems are not analytically neutral.” Thus the making of categories and identifying themes, as I did in this second phase, are already important ways of slicing and analysing one’s data. In this phase, instead of separating events and data items, I sought to identify commonalities across the whole range of activity. These commonalities would arise from and be driven by the data. As such, I used an interpretive indexing strategy (ibid.:156), meaning that the categories arose from the data directly, not the other way around.

In order to aid in the discovering of these commonalities, on this first pass, I decided to review the entire data from each group in the order in which these groups first met. Thus, I reviewed the data in the chronological order that the workshops took place, i.e. Netherlands, Germany, Chile, Bristol and London. This was the first time I had

looked carefully and deeply at the data from the workshops and the interviews altogether. It gave me my first clear overview of each separate group.

Right from the start of this process, I immediately saw that I had two different kinds of data. One related to what the individual participants experienced and the other related to their insights into the design and implementation of the praxis itself. This echoes the ongoing intertwined helix of this study, i.e. praxis and research. As I had a double-task helix in this study, so did my participants. They took the dual roles of participant and colleague, and were able to help my research in both ways. They were, by and large, aware of their own experience and at the same time mindful that this was a praxis that I was developing and studying.

In order to cope with this ‘double task’ analysis, I colour coded the two themes. As my primary research question related to the value to participants, the data regarding the participants’ experience and insights became the source of my findings (next chapter). Those having to do with the praxis itself appear in the introduction (where I discuss the development of the praxis) and in other parts of the dissertation.

On this first pass through all the data, I was reading my data literally (ibid.:148). This means that I was paying attention to the literal words of the participants. In many cases, I was discovering things that were said that, at the time, had completely passed me by. It was immediately noticeable that the most common theme overall was being in transition of one sort or another, either professional or personal. One visual motif that appeared over and over again in the dream drawings was that of the road, the neck, the path, the river, and the elevator: all venues over which people physically

move. I began to see that as a symbol of the way in which many participants used this experience as a transition for themselves.

Therefore, after my first reading of my data, I concluded that these workshops functioned as transitional spaces (Winnicott 1971), in that they were spaces where participants could go back and forward in time to integrate new learning relating to the transitions. This initial conclusion was certainly supported by the raw data, for example this statement at the London Review session (E17):

...it's certainly been about professional development and transition in professional development.... So like you getting a role and you thinking about what you might leave or new opportunities or opening up and so on.

Equally, at the German review session (E14), one participant noted: "it was the beginning of the end".

Despite this general conclusion, however, I also noted that each group had its own special themes, i.e. the nature of organisations (Germany), gender conflicts (Netherlands), elitism and class distinctions (Chile), generational differences (Bristol) and work experience in residential care (London). Not surprisingly, there were references unique to the local culture (i.e. fairy tales and children's songs in the German group, Knight Templars in the Chile group, financial stresses on UK health and government organisations). Foreign participants referenced their country of origin.

I think as a strategy this first investigation worked well, as I had so much data to look at. From this pass, I generated a multi-page listing of the various phrases and metaphors and themes I discovered from this literal reading.

Before going through my second data pass, I had a supervision session in Bristol on Nov. 12, 2012. In presenting this initial analysis to my supervisors and discussing it with them, it became clear that there was one overwhelming and clear theme, i.e. transition. We began to realise that almost every participant, one way or another, was going through a major personal or professional transition. In coming to this realisation, we engaged in a second phase of analysis, i.e. an interpretive process (ibid.:148), one in which the literal data began to connect up with the a shared experiences, dream drawings and identities of participants. “An interpretive reading will involve you in constructing or documenting a version of what you think the data mean or represent, or what you think you can infer from them” (ibid.:149).

Before beginning my studies, my idea of research was similar to what Reason and Bradbury (2006:1) term “traditional academic research”. I thought that one first formulates one’s hypothesis and proceeds to ‘discover’ the data to confirm (or not) this original hypothesis. This is sometimes termed the “hypothetico-deductive method, whereby theoretical propositions or hypotheses are generated in advance of the research process, and then modified...by the empirical research...moving from the general to the particular” (Mason 2002:180).

My approach has instead been the ‘theory comes last’ notion of inductive reasoning “where the research will develop theoretical propositions or explanations out of the data, in a process which is commonly seen as moving from the particular to the general” (ibid.) and is commonly associated with grounded theory.

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967) is based on the idea that theory, instead of being first created in the mind and then set out to be proven, develops from experiences and the consistent and scientific study of events. This is theory that is built on data, “and aims toward analytic practices that will reveal an overriding story or set of themes grounded in a data set” (Tracy 2010:848) using a “constant comparative method” (Mason 2002:180). It is rooted in the lived experience of the data. As Williams and Keady (2012:220) note: “...in classic grounded theory, both theory and theory development are grounded in empirical data and in acts of everyday social life” .

The great advantage here is that one can make use of the myriad sources of data made available during such a study, not just the ‘formal’ procedures, such as interviews and hermeneutic analysis of written documents. This exploration is less concerned with understanding objective reality and more interested in how people interpret reality. With grounded theory, one is always in a state of not knowing, but proceeding from clearly thought-out ways of collecting and analysing data. One develops one’s certainty partly from one’s confidence in the way one is proceeding with one’s research. One should be cautious not to theorise too early in the process of investigation, to allow for the inconsistencies and questions to emerge and be investigated.

Grounded theory is an abductive (Hoggett 2012) method of research, in that one can make an inference about something from data generated, even if it isn’t the case every time. As articulated by Peirce (1992-1998), abductive logic provides a logical process by which seemingly unexplainable data can be worked upon to provide meaning and understanding. Peirce terms this type of data as “the Strange Intruder”



(ibid.,154). Making sense of these so called intruders, of course, is exactly the task of psychoanalysis. For the researcher, it is central to the task of data analysis. In my case, the Bristol workshop is a good example.

Abductive logic proceeds as follows: If A exists (even if A is a quite puzzling intruder), then one way to understand its existence is if a certain B preceded it. From this formulation, one may make a preliminary hypothesis, which can later and further be tested, for example in the process of data analysis. Once the surprising fact surfaces, using abductive logic, one seeks to understand from where it might emanate. This is what Peirce terms the “sense making” (Long and Harney 2013:20) phase. At this point, the surprising fact, although not proved, at least makes preliminary sense. One has an explanatory hypothesis that one can consider. After a period of time, from these first efforts to make sense, one may formulate more developed working hypotheses to be refined and tested, which was exactly my process in phase three of data analysis (see below). One example is the red cross that was drawn on the blanket of the sick consultant in one of the Chile dream drawings. Here the idea of the Crusaders was first associated to, which later developed into a fuller set of associations relating to the influence of the Catholic church in organisational life.

This form of logic is particularly well suited to my research topic. As noted by Long and Harney (ibid.):

Abduction, as a logic of creativity, discovery, or insight, is well suited to enquiries governed by the aesthetic norms associated with narrative and imagination. Dreams, drawings, metaphors, and idiosyncratic musings can all serve as vehicles of the unsettling feeling, the ‘surprising fact’, which motivates the abductive process which ‘break(s) into’ and disrupts our habits of expectation. The abductive ‘reasoning’ then proceeds by way of a logic of

association which sustains the process of ‘making sense’ of what had been puzzling, unsettling, disturbing.

One could say that abductive logic offers a way of channeling these vibrant first discoveries into learning and insight. It is the first stage in logic, from which hypotheses can be developed and later affirmed. As Long notes, “its conclusions give us something novel or different although not yet probabilities. These are established later through the work of normal science” (Kuhn, 1962 as cited in Long 2013b:xxiv). Just as Freud “has argued that the concept of the unconscious is necessary because it explains certain effects that otherwise seem inexplicable” (Long & Harney 2013:11), so abductive logic serves as an important data analysis tool. Importantly, it is more than just guesswork (ibid.:13).

The careful exploration of data using hypotheses derived from abductive logic induces the theorising, not the other way around. One does not set out to ‘prove’ one’s theory by finding it in the data. This addresses the following questions posed by Mason (2002:183):

Did you actually use this slice of data to develop your explanations, or did you develop the explanations and then use this slice of data to illustrate it?  
Could the explanation have been developed without this slice of data?

In a sense the use of abductive logic frees up the researcher to embrace, rather than discard those inconvenient and illogical bits of data that, on first glance, cannot be integrated into a developing set of hypotheses. It helps the researcher hold him or herself in abeyance and to consider wider possibilities.

After returning from Bristol, I engaged in a second phase of data analysis. The hypothesis regarding transition was confirmed in this process. While there were sub-themes specific to a particular group, for example, the gender dynamic in the

Netherlands group, this material didn't contradict the overwhelming data relating to moving from one position, country or identity to another. The evidence and the data were there. I could see that this was consistent with Hollway and Jefferson's (2013:80) observation:

The main plank of our defense of the knowledge we generate using interpretation is in the notion of evidence. Our work, as well as being theoretically led, is solidly empirical in the sense that supporting and challenging evidence is available.

I think it is important to note that during this time of review and following shortly thereafter, this theme of transition became the 'story' that I told myself and that I told others. During this period, I wrote two articles that were ultimately published and gave a plenary paper at an international conference, all of which were related to my doctoral work (Mersky 2012 & 2013). In making these presentations, I relied on the hypothesis that was first floated in Bristol and developed during this second phase of the data analysis, i.e. the value of SDD as a praxis was that it helped to facilitate transitions. This hypothesis ultimately is the source of my second finding. It was and is a legitimate hypothesis. In retrospect, however, I realised that these were specific conclusions relating to only some of the participants. Nevertheless, as Mason (2002:160) notes, "[i]t is a good idea to have a trial run of making sense of your categorized data, perhaps by writing a thematic paper on the basis of part of them".

### 7.3 Hypothesis testing

In this third phase of data analysis, I wanted to test the hypothesis that emerged as a result of the phase two abductive process of thematic analysis. This hypothesis was that the praxis of SDD supported participants in making both personal and professional transitions. As related in the previous section, this seemed to be confirmed by the multiple 'in transition' identities of the participants and especially

by the experiences of those participants whom I featured in my intervening publications and presentations.

Again, I strove to use as systemic a process as I could. As before, I decided to review the data in chronological order from the date of the first session and began with the Netherlands group. This became, however, a more refined process, because I was able by this time to discern which participants had offered data that was, so to say, not ‘tainted’ by other, more personal issues. This is where the inclusion of personal events (highlighted in grey) in the Events chart (see above and Appendices 1 and 7) became an important element.

The Netherlands group had suffered a major tragedy, i.e. the death of a member (N3) a month after our 3<sup>rd</sup> session. N3 was not just a member. She was a mentor to two of the participants (N2 and N4) and the consulting partner of another (N1). She was also a very close colleague and personal friend of mine. She had helped me organise the group, and we held the first two sessions in her office in Haarlem. Her death had so shattered the participants that they would not agree to meet again, despite multiple efforts on my part to organise at least a last session. Therefore, our work together was sharply broken off, and there was no opportunity to reflect and mourn together. Only N6 (about whom I have previously written) was an outsider to this professional circle. He came into the group through me, as a former participant in another workshop I had led. I concluded, therefore, that there was nothing more that I could glean from the Netherlands data that would be a contribution to this study.

I moved on to an analysis of the German group data. By this time I had also made the decision to concentrate primarily on the material of those whom I had interviewed. I

made this decision based on my major research goal, which was to find out the value of the praxis. This required data from interviews. Due to language limitations, I had interviewed only two German participants. I began the German review by looking at G3's original dream drawings, interview material and transcripts of group work relating to G3. This participant, only 7 years away from retirement from a university, where she had held a position for 27 years, seemed at the time to be an excellent example of someone using SDD to help her in this transition. However, while there were some indications of this in the material, this basic hypothesis was actually not confirmed in a deeper investigation of the data. In fact, quite the opposite, she appears to mostly have used this experience to think about how she could find a better relationship with the university and with her students, in order to continue to bring more creative energies to her work (see Finding One in Chapter 8).

As such, G3 is an excellent example of a "negative instance" (ibid.:197), in that she did not fit the hypothesis. As Mason (ibid.) notes:

Whatever you do, you will wish to show that you have tested out your developing explanation by trying out alternative explanations, and in particular by looking at negative instances....The role of negative instances is that you would look for examples, themes, cases, or whatever, which run counter to the explanation that you are developing.

I realised at this point that I had to reconsider my earlier hypothesis, because she certainly did not fit this pattern. This discovery laid the groundwork for another finding, which resonated with subsequent discoveries in this phase.

From there I went on to review the data from the other German participant that I had interviewed, G2, whose husband had died during the course of the workshops.

Although she was in the process of deciding which retirement plan to accept from her organisation, her main preoccupation during this time was to contain her grief in

order to participate (see Final Reflections and Conclusions in Findings chapter). I learned a lot from this interview that led me to conclude that this praxis is not effective when participants are going through a deep mourning process.

A brief review of the Chile data confirmed what I had earlier concluded about C6, that the experience had helped him in a transition. This legitimated my hypothesis and, in fact, is amplified in my discussion in Chapter 8 relating to my second finding, i.e. that SDD can contain and support those going through major transitions, either professional or personal.

As the Bristol group had always been an exception, I decided to process this data last. So I next directed my analysis to the London group.

With the London group, I had interviewed all of the participants, but there was only one participant who had brought a dream drawing to all three sessions, L4.

Therefore, I started with her data. Although, like the other participants, she was in a major transition to the role and identity of an organisational consultant, what emerged ultimately was an insight about a historical work pattern that she began to recognise and became resolved to change. This echoed very much the insight of N6 in the Netherlands group. In other words, the change was much deeper than just a job or a title, it had to do with a reorientation to one's work identity. Both of these participants were ready to discard a pattern of operating that had largely been unconscious, although it had burdened them. Following the analysis of this data, I realised that SDD could help some participants gain deeper insights and transformations. And thus was born Finding One, i.e. that SDD can be a very valuable individual transformative professional learning experience (see Chapter 8).

In reflecting on these four groups, i.e. Netherlands, Germany, Chile and London, I began to realise that in order to participate in these sessions, participants found it helpful to label themselves as being in a particular transition, i.e. transition to consultant, grad student, retiree, ex-pat. This was the ‘organisational role identifier’ by which people could participate and be known by the others. In the German group, for example, three of the four quickly realised that they were nearing retirement, and that created a working bond between them. The one exception was brought into the fold by noting that he was at the beginning of his career, while they were approaching the end. I consider this a good example of what Hollway and Jefferson (2009a & 2013) term the “defended subject”. Taking on such a role identity helped them contain themselves sufficiently in order to work in the group. It created an organisational identity in order to function in a largely unconscious and unknown new praxis.

My mistake, I believe, in hindsight, was to mistake this identity taking (in order to present a role identity to the others that also related to the theme) as the whole story, which it certainly wasn’t. It was, in a sense, a way to begin, but it did not always predict which issue would be deeply explored in the experience. I was not sufficiently aware of the inter group dynamics between participants, as opposed to the dynamics in the interview, where much deeper insights and values were identified (See Finding One in the next chapter). The interviews revealed much more of the individual, yet generalisable, experience.

In this phase of data analysis, the floating of my hypothesis of transition made me see that each participant did his or her own unique and particular work, which

sometimes was and sometimes was not related to the particular transition at hand. Many went deeper than the transition itself to explore an issue about how they work. It's as if a number of participants took the theme 'What do I risk in my work?' to mean 'What can I risk changing about the way I work?' or 'What do I dare look at about the way I work?'

This confirms for me the great value in doing individual follow-up interviews, as opposed to group interviews or no interviews at all. They truly provided the place for a truly deeper insight. And the finding that, for some participants, a much deeper transformation was brought about, is consistent with what Reason and Bradbury (2006:348) observe about the action research process: "It is arguable that as inquiry groups cycle between action and reflection over time they move from surface concerns to more fundamental issues".

Using a deductive approach, i.e. testing this first hypothesis by a further data review, made me realise how limited this formulation was. While it was legitimate for certain participants (see Finding 2), it did not apply to all. And had I not decided to further review my data, I would not have discovered this. Upon reflection, I think I engaged in what Mason (2002:177) cautions against, which was a "sanitization of the argument", which "risks missing the point entirely". Hollway argues that a psychoanalytic perspective helps the researcher avoid this tendency. As she notes:

...it is possible to be guided primarily by the emergent data and that a psychoanalytically informed method can help to counter the seductions of certainty, of needing to know, and of imposing cognitively driven order on to always provisional and uncertain knowledge (2013b:25).



At the same time, however, it was very helpful to have this potential hypothesis as a basis on which to more deeply explore my data. A working hypothesis, even though eventually found incomplete, was a good organising tool.

This process of data analysis exemplifies the use of a hermeneutic approach.

Hermeneutics itself is a process of interpretation of written data where the researcher looks beyond just the words and tries to explicate what the subject did not realise he or she was even saying. In other words, the researcher seeks to understand the content in a broader context, based on the entire experience of the research event. As Crotty (1998:91) writes: hermeneutics means “gaining an understanding of the text that is deeper or goes further than the author’s own understanding.” In some cases, e.g. G3, this was clearly the case. She really did not articulate her insight as clearly as, for example, N6 and L4 did. But, on the other hand, without such a deep look beyond the words, especially in the interview process, these insights may never have come to light.

The concept of triple hermeneutics, as articulated by Alvesson & Skoldberg (2005), makes possible even more of a comprehensive understanding. As they formulate it, simple hermeneutics is how researchers understand themselves, and double hermeneutics involves the understanding of what they are engaged in when trying to understand another reality. They add the third perspective to this process, a particular lens through which to understand the context. Sanfuentes and Acuña (2014) have broadened this concept using a psychoanalytic perspective and applying it specifically to the interview, noting that “triple hermeneutics implies the active reflexive posture that the interviewer takes during the gathering of facts” (p.282).

The first posture has to do with the researcher’s understanding of himself. The

second has to do with using the reflexive stance to better understand the meaning that the interviewee brings to the story. And the third, is finding “unconscious meanings” (ibid.:293) in the data by using the lens of psychoanalysis. They see this comprehensive approach as providing “coherence of the information as the narrative occurs” (ibid.:292).

Alexandrov (2009:46) has termed this approach the “the triple hermeneutics of psychoanalytically informed critical theory”, which resonates with the perspective of the third in psychoanalysis. To summarise: “Psycho-social research can be defined as triple hermeneutics, since it attempts to interpret the interpretative activity of both the actors in the studied field and the researcher in the context of their interaction” (ibid.:46-47). While they do not specifically say so, one assumes that both Alexandrov and Acuña use this third not only as a particular theoretical approach to understanding the context, but also as an instrument to understand the transference, countertransference and projective dynamics that arise naturally in the interview experience.

As it turned out, the Bristol group was an exceptional case. When I next turned my attention to the data from this session, I had a major revelation, which had somehow already been primed by my experience of analysing other data. Knowing already that this workshop was not about transitions, not least because we had a different theme, I had previously sidelined and undervalued this experience. In fact, I had neglected to interview anyone from this group. Now that I was engaged in a process of rethinking my transition hypothesis, I approached this material with a different mindset, i.e. what will I discover? I began to realise that Bristol was, as Mason (2002:197)

describes, an example of a negative instance which could well provide data as yet undiscovered.

One very unique aspect of this group was that it was videotaped, and I had the opportunity to observe myself facilitate. Thus my own observed behaviour provided data that was not available for the analysis of the other groups. Mason (ibid.:149) refers to this process as “reflexive” look at the data. As she puts it:

A reflexive reading will locate you as part of the data you have generated, and will seek to explore your role and perspective in the process of generation and interpretation of data. You will probably see yourself as inevitably and inextricably implicated in the data generation and interpretation processes, and you will therefore seek a reading of data which captures or expresses those relationships.

One could really say, as Hinshelwood (2013) notes in writing about research in psychoanalysis, that I had triangulated my data, using not only dream drawing, videotape and interview material, but my own experience as well. In reviewing the Bristol data for a third time, I began to realise how the issue of the group (tension between generations) was not only enacted by the participants, but by myself as well. The concept of triangulation in psycho-social research, by which one gets “different vantage points” (Hoggett & Clark 2010:39), supports this process of mine. I explore the process of triangulation more deeply in Chapter 9.

As I reviewed the videotape of the Bristol workshop, I was able to observe more carefully the dynamics among us as participants, i.e. where we sat, how we interacted, the tone of voice, and my own interactions and behaviour. I began to see played out before my eyes how the theme of the difference between the generations was enacted physically by all of us, and also how the way I facilitated the workshop enacted those dynamics as well. As Lomax and Casey (1998:) note: “the involvement

of the researcher in the interaction can be analysed and understood from the video text". I began to realise the great advantage of a video record of the workshops, a way of recording that I had once considered but subsequently rejected as an ongoing data collection source. I also began to realise how our work with the dream drawings truly set the stage for a deeper realisation of the group's dynamic. As a result, Finding Three was born and is described more fully in the next chapter.

By the end of this third phase of data analysis, what I term 'hypothesis testing', I felt that I truly had the material I needed to develop my findings, which is the next chapter of this dissertation. What I especially noticed about this third pass on the data is that I became a lot more flexible about applying the data to different parts of the dissertation, which was now becoming more and more integrated and comprehensible in my mind.

During this phase, I found myself making certain decisions that I couldn't have made earlier, i.e. concluding which participants to use as example case studies in the subsequent findings chapter. As noted in the previous chapter (Data Collection), I did not interview every participant. And, due to various circumstances, not all of those that I interviewed were able to work deeply with their dream material, especially three in the Netherlands group, one in the German group and one London participant. For example, N4, in an email sent to me a year and a half after the last session, associated the three figures in the last dream drawing of our deceased colleague to a funeral. But in the actual session, the associations were to a wedding. In choosing examples for case study, I also favored those in the London group who brought more dream drawings. The Bristol group, which I first had dismissed as irrelevant, upon a deeper analysis, actually exemplified its own particular finding (Finding Number 3),

which was a big surprise. During process three (Hypothesis Testing), I concentrated on a deeper analysis of a limited number of interviews.

I have used two of the London participants as case studies in the Findings chapter. I feel I can justify this decision for a number of reasons. Firstly, the London workshop was the last to be held and took place when the praxis had been consolidated. Secondly, all of the participants were actively committed to this field and had self-selected, and all of them were interviewed. In addition, they were all native (U.K.) English speakers. I feel that I can particularly rely on their feedback and insights on the value of this praxis. The participants in this group, because all but one were also undertaking doctoral studies, were able to hold the double role of participant and praxis feedback giver with ease. The one participant who was not writing her doctorate noted that she never felt like a “guinea pig”.

The time line, which I used with the German and the London groups, ultimately did not yield valuable data. Although both groups seemed to enjoy making the time line and it was mentioned positively in follow-up interviews, I would say in retrospect that it did not yield much, if any, meaningful data for this study. It was such a demanding exercise, that we completely ran out of time with the German group. I think we would have needed quite a bit more time to truly and meaningfully process that data in relation to the dream drawings. However, I could very well imagine it as a very useful adjunct to such a workshop used in an organisation, where each individual role holder might trace his or her history with the company during the course of the workshop.

Finally, I chose not to share my findings with my interviewees in order to confirm them, because my data, over five years, four countries and four languages was consistent enough not to require further confirmation or exploration. I was also concerned that such a process would stimulate a new round of interviews that would overwhelm my capacity to integrate. In addition, I would then be gathering information on the long-term impact, rather than confirming their experiences at the time of the interview. Further contact with two participants some time after their interviews, indicated that the meaning of these experiences deepened rather than faded over time.

#### 7.4 Conclusions

I would like to make two major points in this conclusion, one related to the moving back and forth process of data analysis and the other regarding holistic case study analysis.

While I have described the various steps in the process of data analysis that I have taken, i.e. reflection, organisation, thematic analysis, hypothesis formation, hypothesis testing and identified different processes by which these phases were undertaken, i.e. abductive logic, deductive logic, etc., I think such a formulation sometimes oversimplifies the true process of data analysis. No process was totally pure. As I was going through the data and concentrating on the task at hand, I certainly was always aware of, for example, my research goals, my ontological assumptions, my epistemological formulations, as well as other data either just analysed or about to be analysed. In that way, I would say that these processes did flow one into the other in what Mason (2002:181) describes as a constant “moving

back and forth between data, experience and wider concepts”. Although I approached my data from a grounded theory perspective, theory was always somewhere in my mind. It was an integrative and ongoing process.

In retrospect I would say that I engaged in what is termed a holistic case study analysis. As Mason (ibid.:165) writes:

...case study forms of data organization involve ways of seeing and sorting your data which do not necessarily use the same lens across the whole in this way....forms of data organization involve looking at discrete parts, cases or contexts...and documenting something about these parts specifically....it is a practice guided by a search both for the particular in context rather than the common or consistent, and the holistic rather than the cross-sectional.

During the third data analysis process, I was ready to take into consideration the more complicated and inconsistent data results, which freed me to consider more than one hypothesis.

Cross-sectional analysis, in which one seeks explanations that are exemplified from all the data that has been gathered, proved, ultimately, not to be sufficient for my study. This was confirmed by the lack of fit of the transition hypothesis developed in the second phase. Instead I had to examine the experience of each workshop experience as its own whole and separate event, which might or might not connect to the experiences of participants in other groups. As such, I used “an analytical logic whereby explanations are derived from analysis and comparison of ‘wholes’, cases or contexts...,rather than parts, slices or themes...compared cross-sectionally” (ibid.:168).

What resulted from the above process is exemplified in the next chapter, Findings.

Most of this chapter describes the three general findings related to the experience of

selected participants from each group. These findings are illustrated by a number of social dream-drawings. In addition, the chapter shares the insights of these participants into the praxis itself and what made it work for them. The chapter concludes with a general discussion of the findings in relation to the experience of the participants and the researcher.



## Chapter 8: Findings

These findings address the fourth research goal of this study, which is “to evaluate the benefits of this type of developmental methodology for the work of organisational role holders”. The emphasis here is to help them gain greater insight into what they risk in their capacity as role holders. This is the key “intellectual puzzle” (Mason 2002) of this study.

What this study establishes is that the group work is the engine that not only allows the unconscious thinking from the dream to emerge, but is the cushion and the holding system for real work to take place. Here individual work takes place in a group setting and the value of the collective unconscious to facilitate individual insight is demonstrated. This is consistent with my second and third key epistemological concepts, i.e. that knowledge can be generated collectively and that systematically processed subjective experience generates knowledge (see Chapter 5). To put it differently, I would say that without the work of the group, the underlying issues represented in the dreams and the drawings would not have been made available to be worked on and brought into consciousness. As Sievers (email 2015) has remarked “the matrix is the midwife for the meaning of the dream”.

I have three major findings relating to the value of the praxis and have identified three sub-themes identified by participants with regard to the praxis itself. My arguments in support of my findings are based on raw data from my three major data sources, i.e. original dream drawings, session transcripts, and interviews (see Chapter 6.2 Data Collection). As such I have developed my findings using a process of triangulation, in which “a convergence of meaning” (Hinshelwood 2013:146)

became apparent in the data as a whole. In other words, the grounds for the findings were apparent in all three data sources, not just one or another. These findings are also consistent with my underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions (see Chapter 5).

In summary, my findings are as follows:

1. SDD is a very valuable individual transformative professional learning experience.
2. SDD can contain and support individuals going through major transitions in relation to working and personal life.
3. SDD can help groups identify and explore underlying systemic dynamics.

While I did not use case study as my primary research strategy, I am using case studies from the various groups to illustrate my findings. Without such in-depth and contextual examinations, my findings would be much too general and would not capture the richness, creativity and depth of the work of the participants, much less their important insights as to the value of SDD. Yin notes, (1989:14) “the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events – such as individual life cycles.” And a case study presentation of findings is also quite appropriate, given the variety of data sources available to me for this study. This data, collected over an extended period of time, has allowed me to witness – along with the participant – the particular impact of the experience, as part of their own personal and professional life cycle development. As Hinshelwood (2013:68) has written, “in the history of psychoanalysis, case studies have provided the staple data”. It has been largely through such live examples that psychoanalytical theory has been illustrated and built upon by others. Given Freud’s “inseparable bond between therapeutic work and knowledge production” (ibid.:70), the case study was

the natural way for him to present his classic theory. His insights had come from his praxis itself. One example is the Wolf Man case described earlier in this dissertation (Chapter 3).

For various reasons these findings do not include data from all of the participants that I interviewed (see Table 3 Appendix 11). As previously noted, in two cases there were deaths that so deeply impacted participants, there was no space for learning (see introduction and Chapter 6). Due to her general skepticism about the praxis and her own statement that she could not gain any major insight from the experience, L2's material was also not included, although she contributed a great deal to my learnings about how the praxis is best designed and implemented (see L2's comments in Chapter 4). This London participant had been more or less drafted into the workshop by her supervisor (who was the process consultant) and came thinking it was "one of those wacky ideas" from this perspective. She compared "cloddy old me" to others in the group and found herself looking for her supervisor's approval throughout the workshop. As she noted in her interview: "I found it in the main an experience that will stay with me and I would use it in some capacity or other". Despite her earlier skepticism, however, one learning she did have was "staying open to some things that I'd otherwise write off".

While each participant had his or her own individual experience, I found enough consistency to be confident of the three findings I have generated, especially as these outcomes were not specific to individuals in one group, but were found across the groups. As such, I am presenting two case study examples for each of my findings, each from a different group. This is a "contextual, case study...holistic approach" (Mason 2002:165) that not only identifies the value of the praxis to participants, but

suggests grounds for which such a praxis would be valuable in other organisational and personal situations

8.1 Finding one: SDD is a very valuable individual transformative professional learning experience.

The notion that such an experience would be transformative is certainly not new to action research. As Bradbury and Reason (2006:345) note: "...action research suggests a logic of continuous change, which supports the work of radical transformation of patterns of behaviour which support a world worthy of our lives". In my research, it was not always the participant going through the most dramatic external transition for whom this was a major outcome. Mason (2002:167) makes a similar point, when she refers to "'holistic sequences' which do not map directly onto real-life events".

In order to illustrate this finding I will elaborate two case study examples and conclude the exploration of this first finding with a few shorter examples from other participants. The first case concerns a Netherlands participant who gained a deep insight into the role of discarding parts of his professional past to move on to the future. The second case concerns a London participant's realisation of an ongoing tendency to continue to work in under-resourced and inadequate situations, rather than demanding improvements or leaving them altogether. What is significant in these two cases is the first took place in a single session, and the second is an example of a transformative insight that took place over a year's work. This suggests that even one session has transformational possibilities, as suggested in de Shazer's (1985) work with Solution Based Brief Therapy (SBBT).

Case #1: “Loyalty that can bind me”

At the second Netherlands session (E2), the group consisted of 4 participants. N6, who was new to the other participants, was there for the first time. He was an extremely experienced organisational consultant who had taken a previous workshop from me and had asked to join the group. For this session, we used the theme ‘What do I risk in my work?’. N6 presented the following dream drawing:

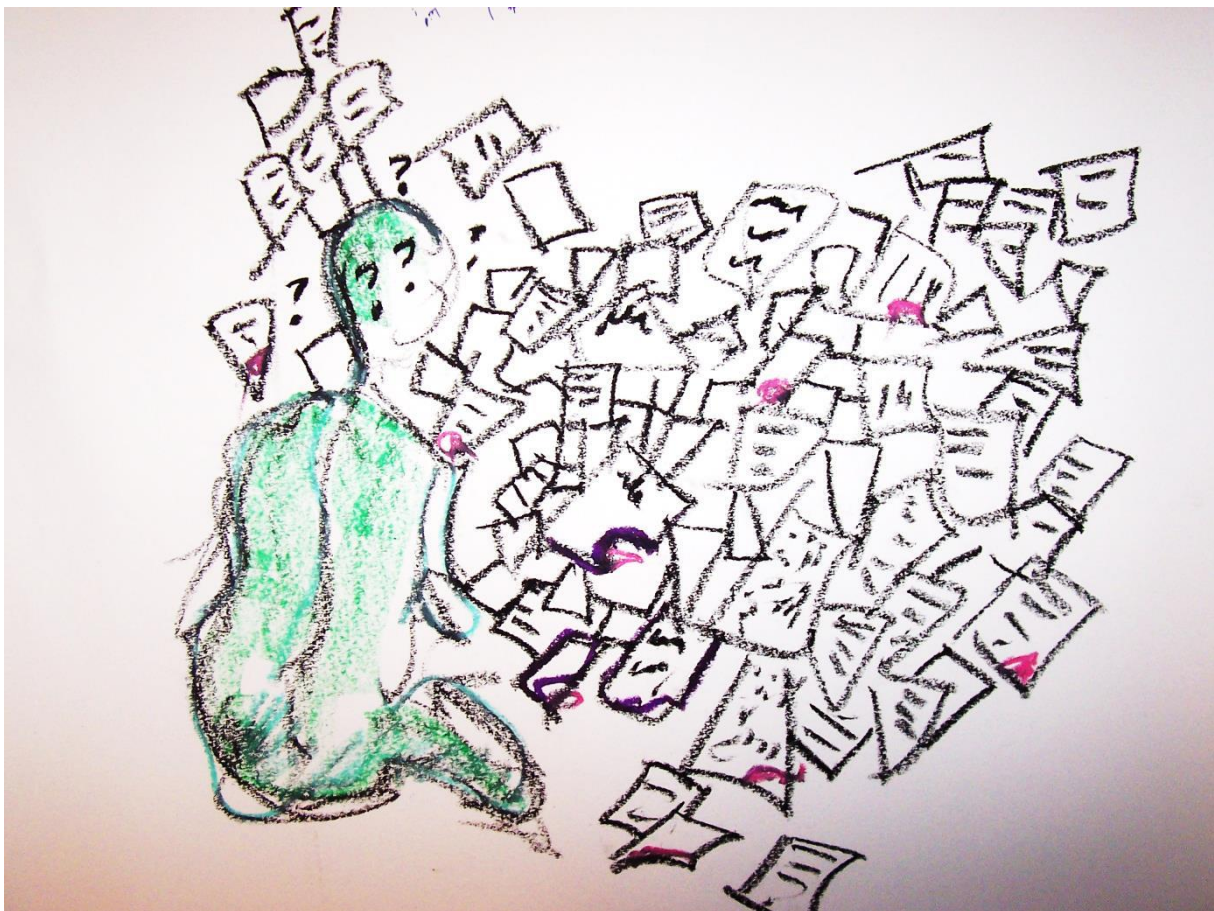


Figure 9 Social Dream-Drawing “Loyalty cannot bind me”

In his dream, N6 is sitting on the floor among many professional papers and is questioning which are really still vital and which he can let go of. These are papers related to various professional development programs he has participated in, articles

he has read and workshop materials. In the dream, he feels lost. He questions what worth they still have for him and, at the same time, wonders what will be left if he throws them all away. As he puts it: “to [let]...go is scary, a risk; there is nothing except yourself....Is it garbage; can I let go?”. The papers form a kind of protection for N6 in relation to his clients. He is afraid “not to rely on an empty head”...he “need[s] the resources”...it is “too frightening to stand alone” without papers. As I noted in my own notes of the session, the risk is whether he can discard the focus of his client work with “things” and just work with his clients directly.

For him, it is “like the past lying on my back”. Using this metaphor, N2 asks whether he could just turn his back to these papers. He responds that would be “uncomfortable” and “could be threatening”. N5, noting that all the pictures are different and special, wonders how could he honour them and move on. N5 comments that just because they are leftovers doesn’t mean they are worthless. N6 eagerly takes up this point noting “That moves me, how to honour them. That would set me free from loyalty”. To integrate and digest the content would be a form of honoring what they have meant to his development. N3 notes that clearing up stuff around you gives new space.

On March 3, 2010 (2 years and 2 months after this session) I interviewed N6 about the experience (E8). When I first approached him by email, he said he had no real memories of the workshops, but after reviewing the protocol, he recognised how important it had been in his professional transition.

It all came through, Rose. When I look now back in time. This picture of me sitting there with these papers. It was a very...emotionally charged session, because we had something to do with throwing away and...something to do with keeping with what was worthwhile. First saying thank you and then

throwing away. Not making a judgment about what was bad or things like that. And that really stayed with me.

And one year later I was in another workshop, also thinking about where is my future and how do I proceed in my work....and what came back was that I thought that I could go to the future, but I must go back, to honor my tradition. To go back....And I did that, I started writing about my teachers, writing about my parents, and what I got [from]...my parents, great instrument in the role I took and values But the whole process brought me to what is dearest to me and what I want to express in my work. And it was very helpful to find my way. I'm 60 now and I'm happy I found my way. It's so similar with this drawing. The process started then. It sorted itself out.

What became clear in this interview material was that N6 was already in the midst of this particular professional transition when he participated in the Dreaming and Drawing workshop, so the timing for him was perfect

The drawing itself became a touchstone. As he noted in the interview:

The 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.

He noted that before all of this "sorted itself out" he was going through a period of "mental and spiritual burnout". "I was working, I was doing fine, but it didn't really have my heart. And that was really tiring. And that was kind of crisis. Do I work for money or do I work for value? That was the crisis I was in. I could live with it. It wasn't that bad, but that it didn't make me happy."

The associations to the drawing by colleagues in similar professional dilemmas crystallised for him something that was hitherto overwhelmingly difficult to grasp – that in order to move on professionally, he must discard elements of his past professional identity.

A subsequent email from N6, dated March 26, 2012 (just over 4 years after the session) confirms its value. Here are some excerpts from that email:

This morning I once again looked at the picture which is still in my Iphoto collection. I realised that things are now really integrated and internalised. As for many years ago I need outward information in order to feel secure and to know what to do....[This] created insecurity that I wanted to get rid of. Now its (sic) turned around.

To illustrate this, I am working on a manuscript these days to share my experiences and lessons learned from great teachers and other sources of wisdom. Fits with my age now in my early sixties. The funny thing is – I can look and find that in the drawing also. It seems an (sic) kind of universal aid in the exchange of info inside out en (sic) outside in.....

Case #2: “heroic tendency to soldier on come hell or high water”

L4, a doctoral student in the London group, was the only participant to bring a dream drawing to each session. All three of her drawings were of past work situations. The first depicted her leaving her position as leader of a half-way house.



Figure 10 Social Dream-Drawing: Halfway House



Her second and third dream drawings depicted herself in the offices of men in powerful positions sitting at desks and her in a subordinate relationship

For example, in the second dream, she and her husband are patients of the man.

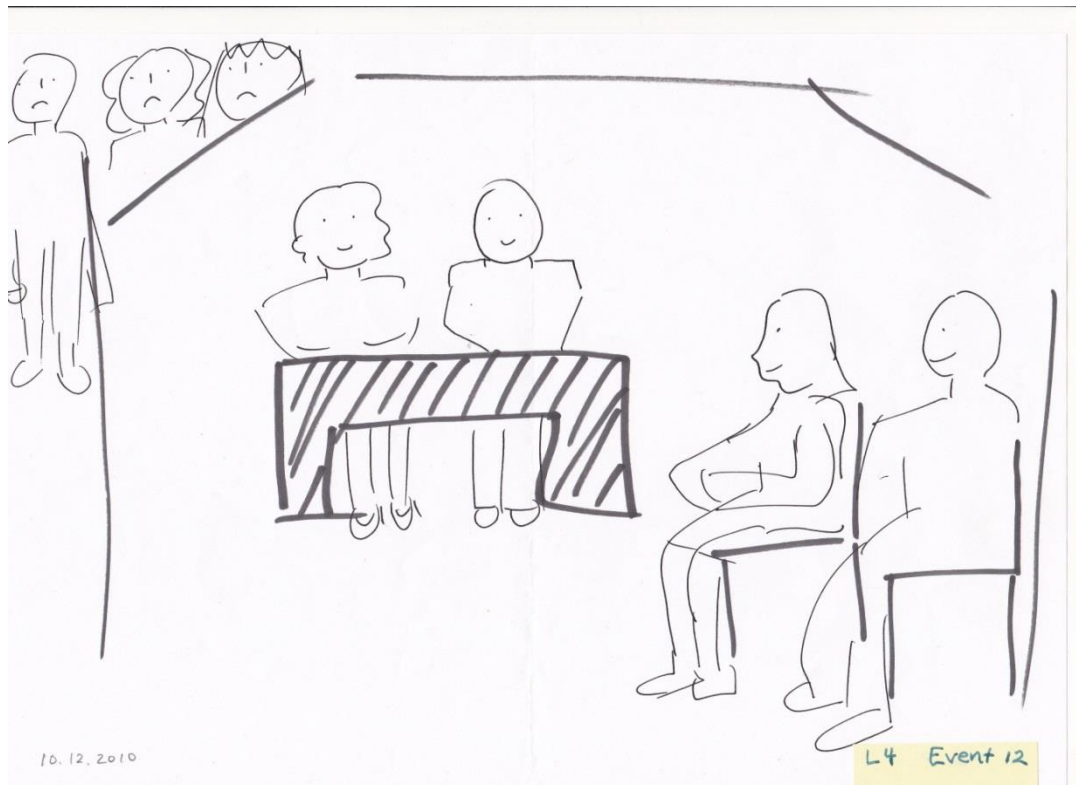


Figure 11 Social Dream-Drawing: Sitting in the powerful doctor's office

In the third dream, she is bringing her interns in to meet the boss, to give them an opportunity to advance in the organisation.

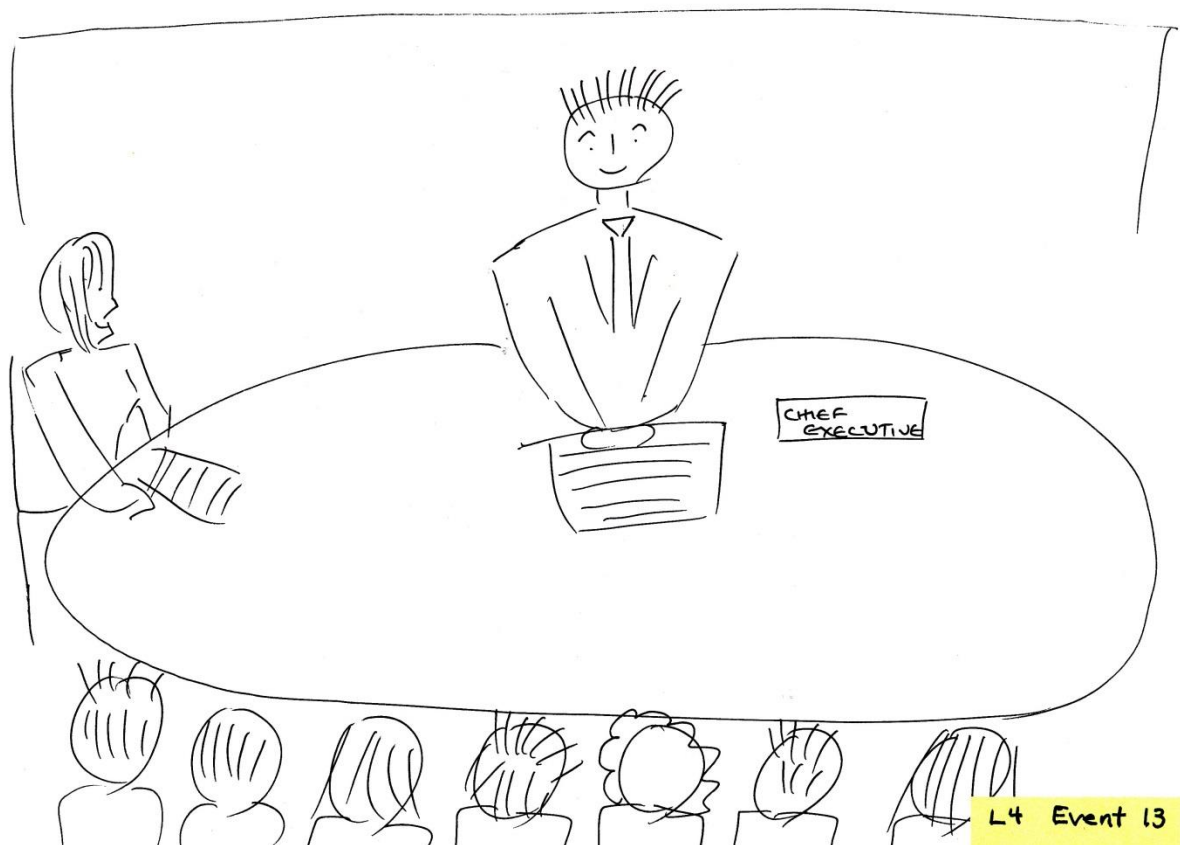


Figure 12 Social Dream-Drawing: The Interns Meeting the Boss

On a superficial level, all three dreams appeared to have to do with transitions. For example, in our first session, (E11), with the half-way house drawing, she noted that its role was to help young adults “who then moved on into the big wide world to establish themselves as adults. And in my dream I’m saying good-bye to the manager and I’m moving off with my suitcase into the big wide world.” This notion of the half-way house was picked up and developed in the associations. As one put it: “the notion of the half-way house is so explicitly transitional”. The rich associations to this first dream of L4 led to the realisation that two other participants and the process consultant had all previously worked in similar half-way houses. They were very important first professional positions.

However, in L4's interview, which took place by Skype a year after the last dream and drawing session (E21), she revealed a much deeper learning. It emerged that especially the male authority figures in the second and third dreams represented work relationships that for her had been very unsatisfactory. When she woke up from the second dream, she thought to herself: "Oh my God, this is about what we risk in our work, that we're merged with the mad and the bad people". As she put it:

I'm at a stage in my professional development where I am much less tolerant, and I think appropriately so, of situations where the environment or conditions in which I work are not sufficient for the task that I'm trying to deliver. So I think some of my dream material was taking me back to times where I've been heroic in the face of inadequate management, yeah. And whilst I did what I did at particular times, that actually I'm at a point in my life where I'm less tolerant of inadequate environments and more ready to fight the cause early rather than late.

So there's a transition I'm going through professionally which is about being much clearer about the limits of what I can do if the resources aren't there. So I have very kind of heroic tendency to soldier on come hell or high water.

She continues:

So some of what I was revisiting in my dreams were some very long struggles with some very difficult people and actually knowing what I know now I should have just walked away from them on day two!

So I think that the experience of being part of your group and working with you and working with colleagues has helped me get a bit more in touch with the sort of professional that I want to be at this point in my life and my professional journey.

From a socioanalytic perspective, one could say that from this dreaming and drawing work, L4 became aware of a need to draw clearer and, for her, healthier role boundaries in organisations, a major developmental professional step.

Two other examples:

Other participants also had insights relating to their work. For example, London participant L1, whose dream drawings were very spare and childlike, reflected on her lack of taking more care in doing her drawings (see Figures #16 and #17 below).

Referring to another group member, she noted (E29)

I still think he spent more time making a visual representation than I did. And that creates a question for me as to how slap dash maybe am I in my work, how much importance am I attaching, and [how] well do I prepare for presenting something...[W]hat does that mean for my work in a wider context?

A German participant G3 came to realise that she always tends to present her university, where she has worked for 27 years, as a bad object. She represents it as something that interferes with her creativity and where the students are always a disappointment. This split is represented in her first dream drawing (see below), which showed the contrast between the brick building on the right side (an old bake house reminiscent of the buildings in the part of Germany where she grew up) and the fun of riding around in an old fashioned bicycle. This expressed the split she experienced between her true professional self and the university.



Figure 13 Social Dream-Drawing: The brick house and the bicycle

As someone who has continually brought creative and innovative practices to her students and colleagues, she has often been disappointed in how they were received.

For example, another dream drawing is of raw meat:

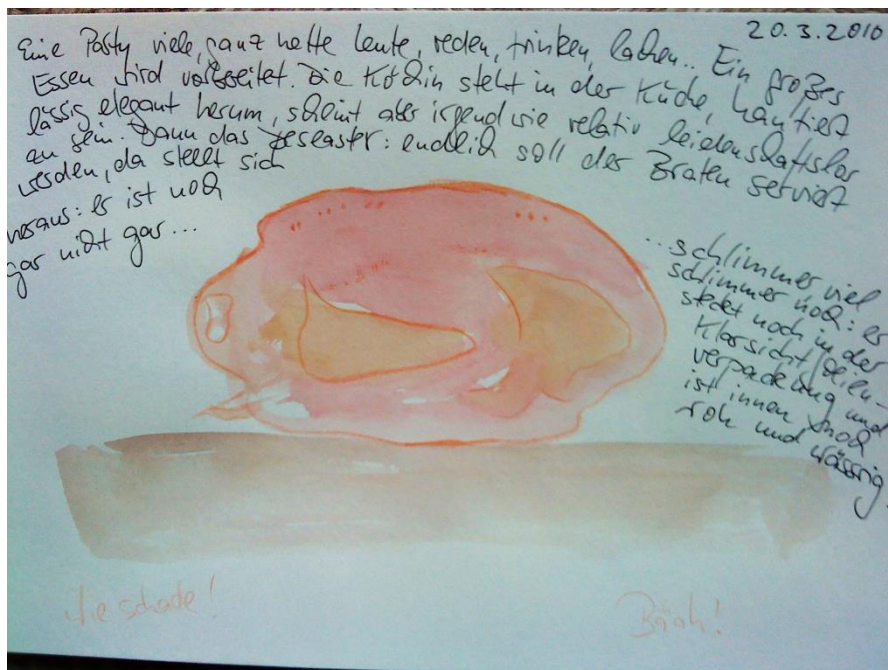


Figure 14 Social Dream-Drawing: The blob of raw meat

To this drawing, she made this association: “Superficiality [or shallowness] is hard for me to bear... It is also a disappointment about unfulfilled expectations. The expectations are good and then nothing else is coming in the depth”.

In her interview [E19], she began to realise that her institution has given her a great deal of leeway in creating new programs and some students have really benefitted. She seemed to have gained a more balanced perspective on the value in which she is held by her institution and the benefit and opportunities it has offered her.

## 8.2 Finding two: SDD can contain and support individuals going through major transitions in relation to working and personal life..

While this finding may at first glance seem very similar to the first finding, I wanted to differentiate transitions in people’s lives that were taking place internally and largely out of awareness, from major public transitions, such as entering retirement

or moving from one country to another. For some SDD participants, important internal transitions were somehow crystalised and made conscious by our work. And, as described above, this was experienced as important and helpful. In these examples, participants were truly working with the theme of ‘What do I risk in my work?’. For other participants, however, the predominate focus of our work related to their more public transitions and did not always relate to the theme of the workshop. Finding #2 refers to these individuals.

This differentiation, however, is already clearly an abstraction, as, presumably for all participants, transitions both internal and external were constantly taking place. In addition, public transitions (moving, new job) generally reflect or result from internal transitions. However, not least for purposes of potential application (see Chapter 10), I wanted to identify more particularly the nature of the transitions that the participants themselves emphasised in their interviews. It is also important to note that for some participants, especially those at an especially vulnerable time, for example those in mourning, this work was not helpful to them.

I offer two case study examples to support my second finding. The first concerns a Chile participant who was taking up a new role as a university instructor, and the second concerns a London participant who was moving from Ireland to London.

Case #1: “Trapped...in this seductive role”

C6, who was just taking up a new position as instructor at a university after being a full-time psychotherapist, brought the following drawing with images from two

different dreams which he had had three days apart to a workshop held in Santiago, Chile (E4).

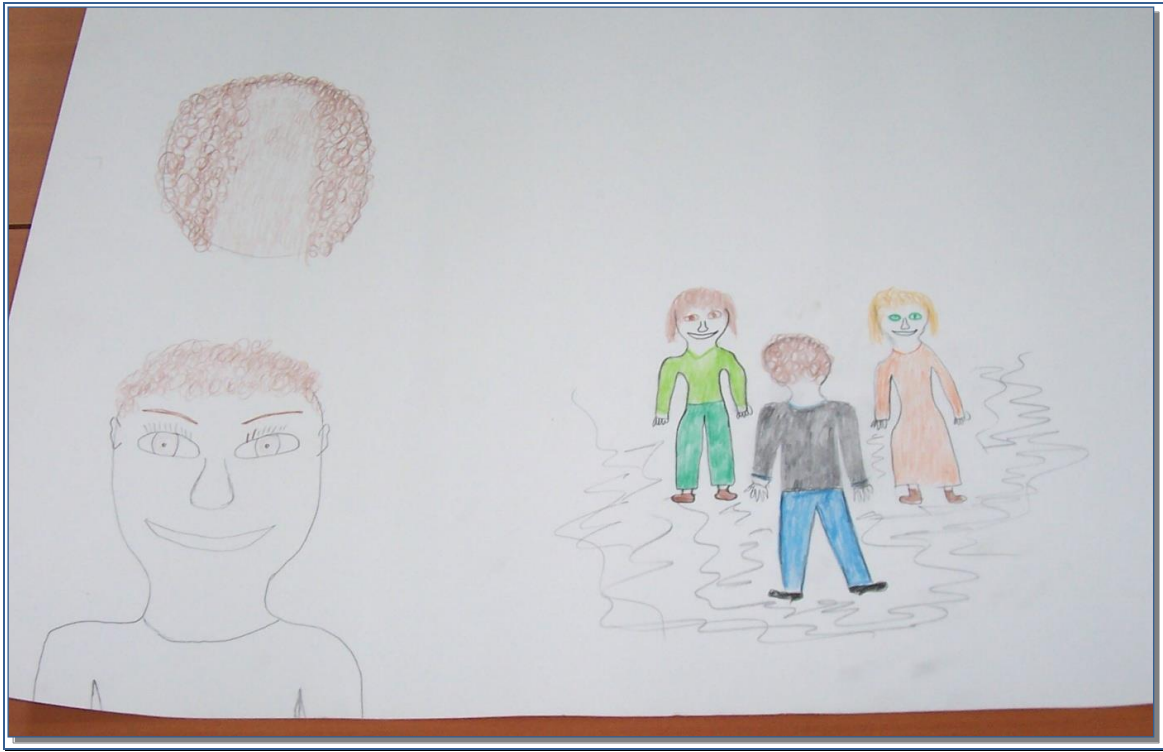


Figure 15 Social Dream-Drawing: Losing hair and trapped in this seductive role

C6 describes the first dream as follows (from the original transcript):

[C6] 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 realise 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.

C6's second dream (again from the original transcript):

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



C6'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 the 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 behaviours 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 his students are saying to him 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 (E15), the dream drawer recognised even more deeply how significant a time this had been for him. What connected the two drawings was his difficult experience of transitioning from full-time clinical practice to being a 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 recognise the impact of these two simultaneously difficult experiences. This echoes my epistemological position that systematically processed subjective experience generates knowledge (which it did for C6) and that knowledge is generated collectively, not on one’s own.

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 recognising the frightening implications of the stress he was under at the time.

Case #2: “Where do I live? Where do I belong?”

This case illustrates how SDD can be useful to those undergoing personal transitions. For L1 the workshop experience was central to her transition from Ireland to London, at a time when she felt very “dislocated”. She had recently been fired from her previous position in Ireland and was trying to make it in London.

Both of her dream drawings were about Ireland.

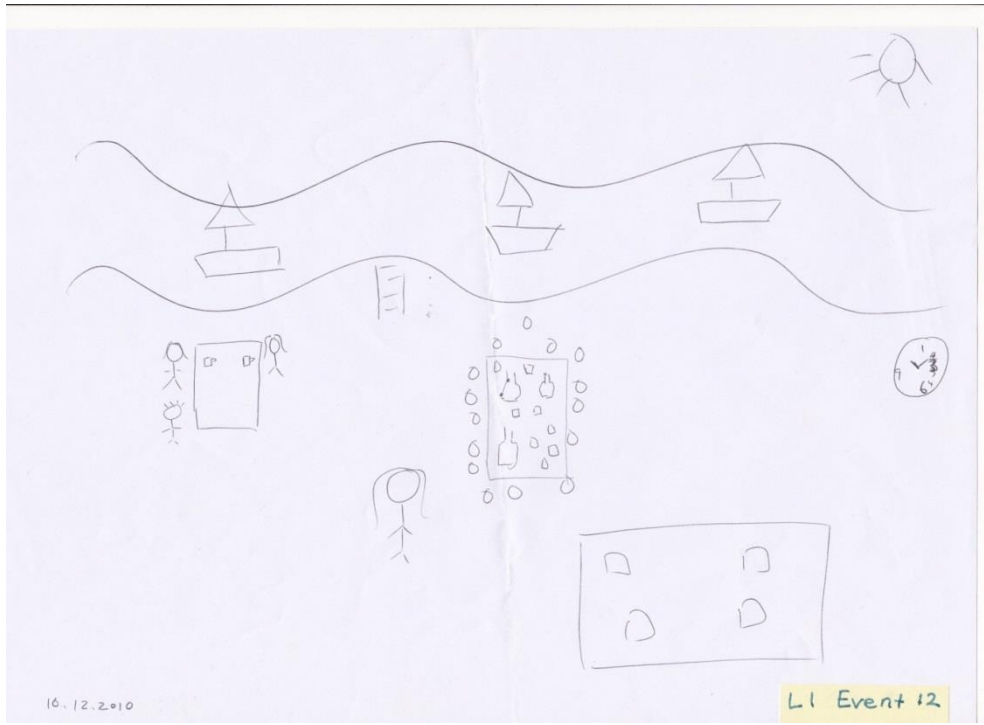
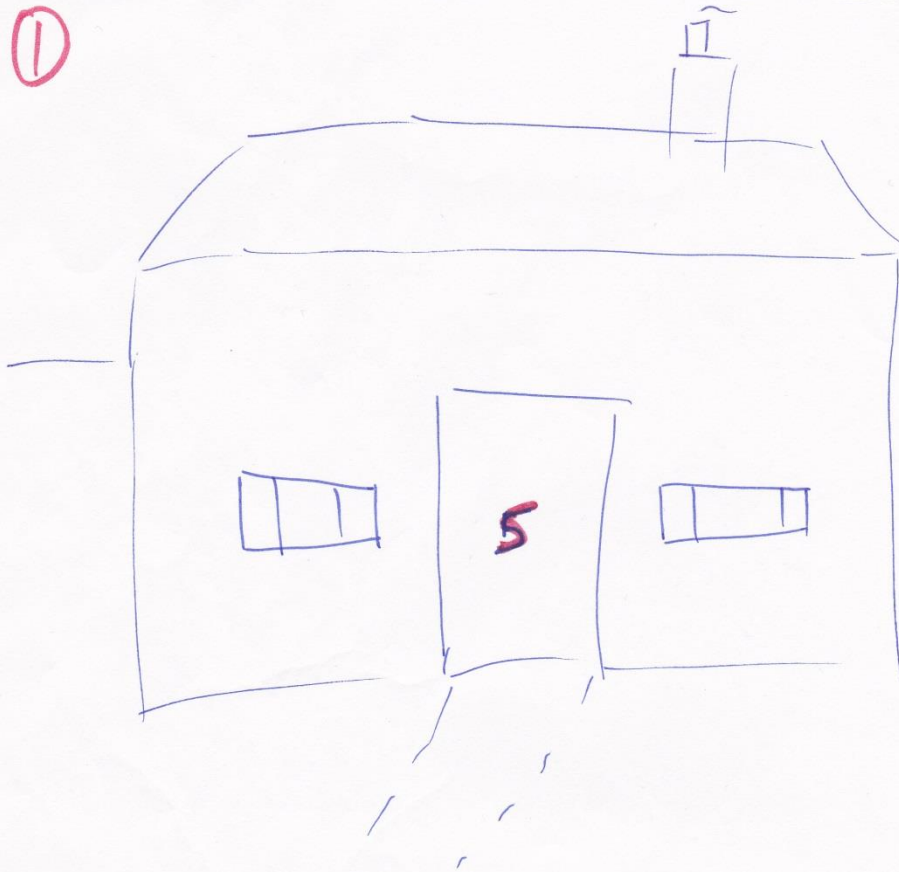


Figure 16 Social Dream-Drawing: At the sailing club with Irish friends

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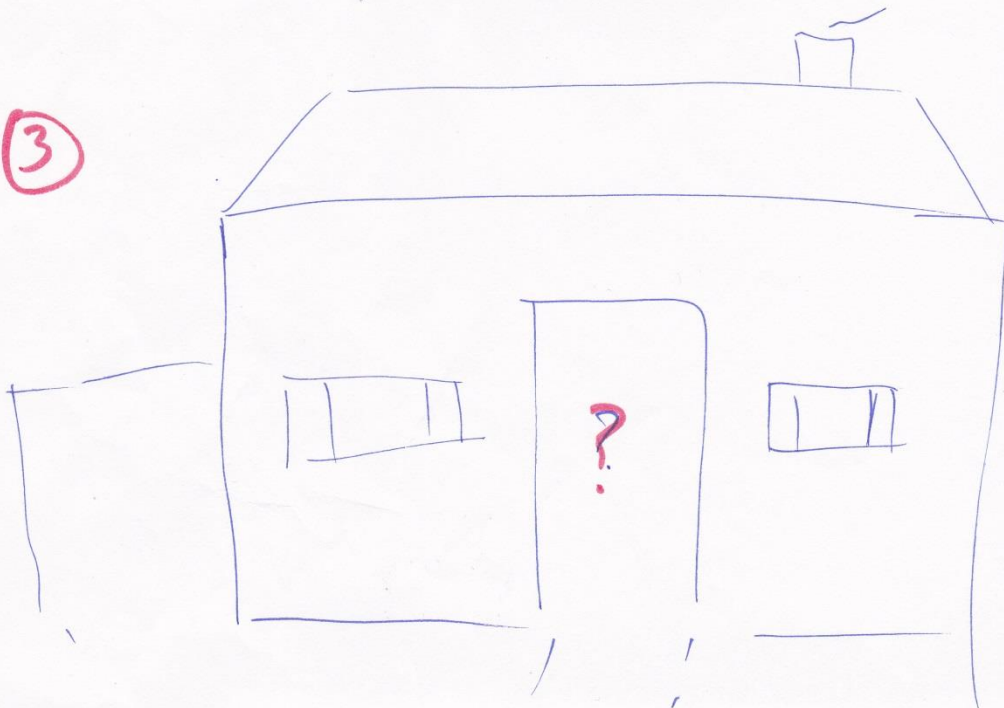




Figure 17 Social Dream-Drawing: Returning to her rented house in Ireland

From her interview (E20), she noted:

...there was the group of friends from Ireland and the group of friends from the sailing club and being sort of caught between them. And then...going back and renting out my house and arriving at the house and it not being my house, and not having a sense of where I belonged. Yeah so I think there was that time, certainly at the end of last year and earlier this year of just not knowing, of knowing where I wanted to be, but not knowing whether I would be able to make it.

The SDD group became for her a containing space during this transitional time:

Maybe this was a space that contained that, because I had lost my consultation group in Dublin around the same time. Well I'd lost it when I'd moved to London but I dipped in and out of it for twelve months. So it was getting to a point where groups that I would have formally relied on, as to an informal network, where I guess groups had the kind of conversations that we've been having here were lost to me. So this I guess became a replacement for that. Yeah substitute for that.

Again, such a transition had its emotional consequences.

During the session and subsequently and I think the discomfort was within myself, but if I remember correctly there was also a sense of does everybody know that I'm homeless, which of course I'm not in the legal and literal sense of it. But actually in many ways I am, not so now a year later, but at the point I was very much in a 'where do I live, where do I belong.' But where do I live emotionally and where do I belong. I think I remember at the time...wondering you know these are all people who are very settled, very rooted in London with...family lives and so on. And here's this vagrant or nomad who is not, I'm thinking that's kind of sad. So that was a moment of discomfort for me.

And finally, she describes the experience similarly as others, i.e. a space to tackle an issue, in her case a major move and change of identity and recovering from a failure.

From the interview:

And I guess even not realising it at the time, but looking at it retrospectively, the fact that a number of my, well actually my two drawings were about transition from Ireland to London. It really allowed a space to name that, even though I knew that was going on for me, I think in a different way to explore it differently I could just name it and leave it there. And to recognise that I'd allowed for myself. So I think that must have provided some containment for me, rather than allowing those thoughts to just buzz around my head like electrons.

At the end of the year and two month span of our work, she noted that she is "feeling very settled and very happy professionally and personally in London. And I'm just

conscious that when we started her[e] in October of last year I had no idea of where I was going to be”. From her perspective, this transition was certainly helped by our work together.

Two other examples:

The theme of transition permeated both the U.K. and German groups. In the U.K. group three (L2, L3, L4) of the four participants were in a doctoral program in the field of organisational consultation from a psychoanalytic perspective. All of them had a great deal of experience and ranged in ages from 40 to 50 and were looking to transition to consulting roles and integrating this learning. The particular transition they were facing was described by the UK process consultant (E12.b) this way:

...in a way when you're starting a new profession...you have to also remind yourself that actually I am someone with lots of experience.... it's something about the trouble of moving from someone with a lot of experience to starting from scratch.

Three participants in the German group (G1.G2, G3) were transitioning from long-held full-time positions to retirement. The fourth participant, who was in the middle of a doctorate, was thinking about starting in an organisation. As he put it:

What I find good in this group is that there are these two aspects, i.e. exit and enter. That means someone who is just thinking whether he wants to enter and also those who are thinking about when and how they could leave...or stay. (E4c)

Ultimately, the process consultant noted that the group served as a “container for the restructuring” process of all the participants. The retiring school director transitioning to a consulting practice noted: “it was the beginning of the end”. G3 noted in her interview how this worked for her:

That's a very very deep process which started around this social dreaming drawing work for me. And around me there are a lot of people who will retire – for me there's still about eight years, so that's a very great question, how can [I] manage this time, this last eight years? It's a good time to do

something. But the energy will be more and more but I have to manage the downsizing of my agenda. And what will be the quality in this? And also when all the other friends are in retirement so what will be in relationships. They have new time, new ideas, they say goodbye [to] working time and me the last one who is still going on (laughs). A lot of friends are very ill. They have started retirement with the drama of cancer or empty a lot of ideas. That seems so that is not my way.

### 8.3 Finding three: SDD can help groups identify and explore underlying systemic dynamics.

This finding especially illustrates the first of my three epistemological concepts, i.e. that the collective unconscious is a source of thinking. Through the process of free association and amplification to two dream drawings, a group was able to identify and explore a key group dynamic, which was the impact of the generational differences on the group. This was an unexpected finding and not, at this juncture, generalizable to all groups.

#### Case #1: “We are at the extremes really”

I had this chance to discover the value of SDD to groups as the result of an offer by a UWE course instructor to run a session with my fellow students. This was not a group of self-selecting participants, but students in a psychology class at the University of the West of England. Unlike all the other SDD groups, this group consisted of participants with no developed knowledge of unconscious processes in groups. Their main interest and specialty was individual psychology and psychotherapy. The title of the course was Researching the Unconscious.

The group consisted of six female participants. Three were over fifty years old, two were in their early twenties, and one was in her early thirties. We needed a theme,



and one of the youngest participants suggested the following: ‘To what extent does generation play a role in research?’ The next day, another of the youngest participants and the participant in the middle each brought dream drawings. Here is the dream drawing of the participant in her early 30’s, who went first:

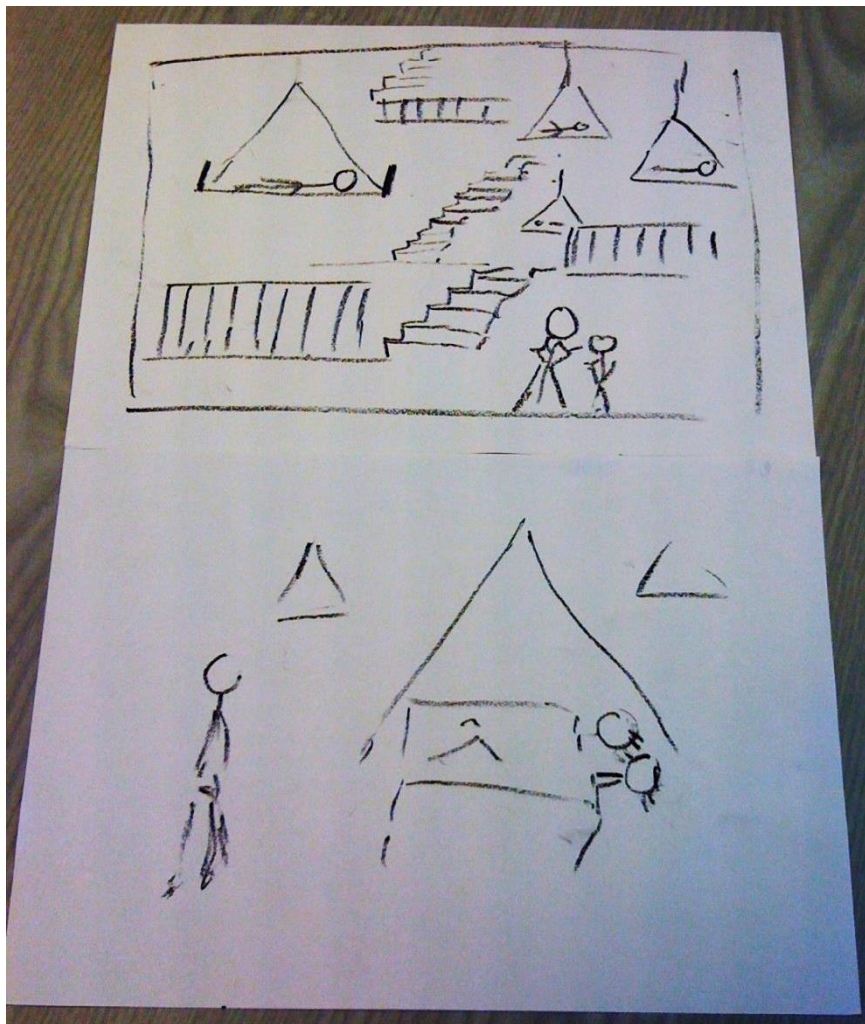


Figure 18 Social Dream-Drawing: Hospital Beds Suspended from the ceiling

This drawing depicts a very big space, with hospital beds suspended from the ceiling. The dreamer is lying in one of the beds. When her doctor enters, she starts to feel “uncomfortable” and “vulnerable”. Her doctor in the dream is actually (in real life) the dreamer’s therapy client, who in reality is older than the dreamer. Associations to the dream drawing were connected to this relationship, i.e. “inferiority”, “mother and

child”, “parent and child”, “the mother putting you to bed”. Here the doctor is both patient and healer and the dreamer is both patient and healer. There is a “role reversal”. It is “spooky”, “complicated” and “awkward”. Mention was made of the movie *Atonement* and to a war time hospital ward.

The discussion following the free associations helped to crystallise one of the major dynamics in the group, i.e. the generational differences between the two sub-groups. As one of “the oldies” noted, “we are at the extremes really”. One older participant noted: “One of the things you learn as you grow older is that you can survive what you didn’t think you can survive”. Another said that it is “hard to be an older learner”. Younger participants had their say as well. Said one: “just because I’m younger doesn’t mean I don’t know what I want”. They want to say to their elders (and all three of us older women could have been their parents) “you don’t know how it works”. However, for one older participant noting this difference was not easy: “there’s some reluctance to, to think about you as being different because you’re younger....maybe it’s just my, my reluctance to acknowledge difference....cause difference can lead to conflict.” This comment seemed to touch on the underlying dynamic in the group, which had not been spoken.

The second dream drawing was by one of the youngest participants, and depicted her in a swimming pool with a shark nearby.

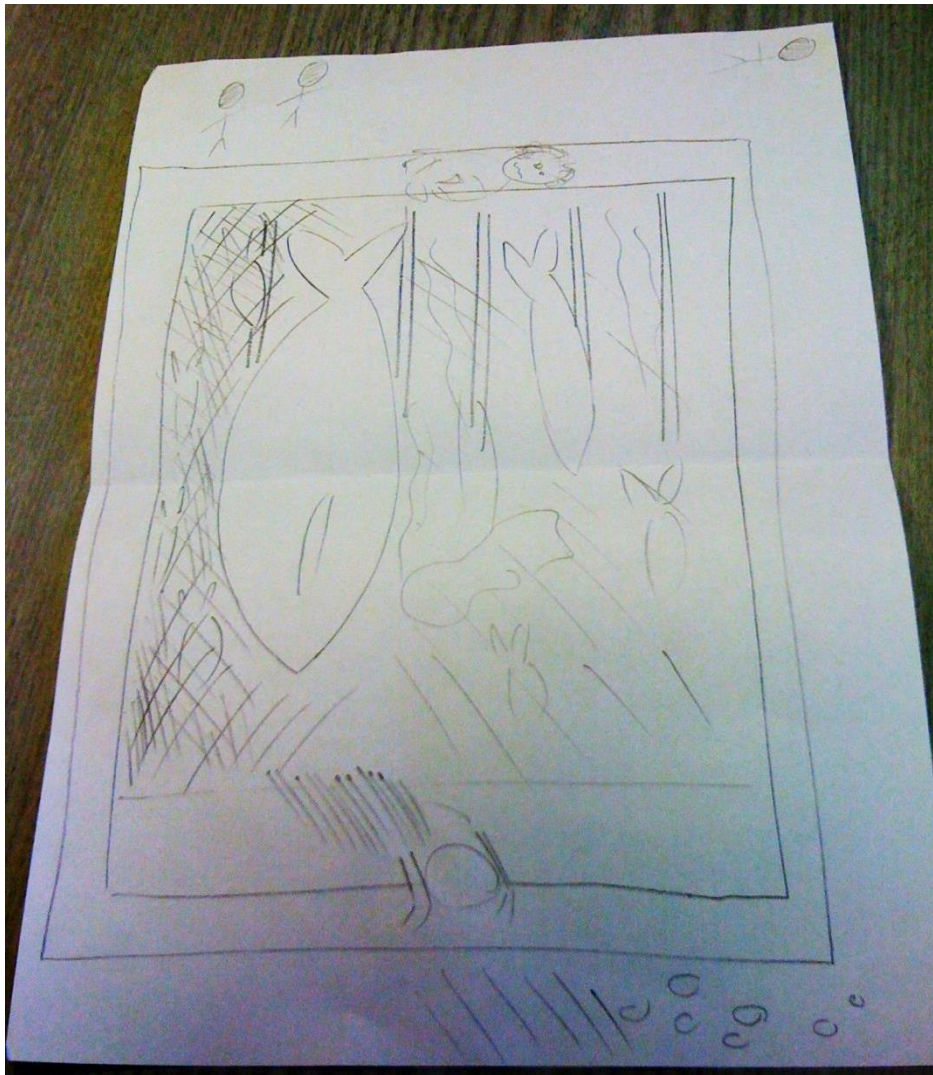


Figure 19 Social Dream-Drawing: Shark in the Swimming Pool

Here perhaps the conflict was more in the open. An older woman noted: “You could be out of your depth in certain ways”. And there were very reflective comments by two participants, one younger and one older:

I really enjoy people that are older than me talking about their experiences, what they’ve learned, how they’ve dealt with situations, because I can really learn from that. But on the other hand, I kind of feel sad because although I can still live it, like that time is over for them....I kind of feel sad or guilty that I like can do it now, but that time is gone for them.

I really know what that phrase being “over the hill” means. I really have that experience inside, you know. The feeling that actually I’ve reached my zenith and now there is no other way but down, down all the way to the bottom....which is a scary sort of feeling....The arc that I’m on in life and

there is that sense that...there is that sense that...uh...I can't actually go back, you know. It has to carry on to the end of that arc, wherever that may be.

My own experiences both during the group session and later, when I excluded this group at first from my analysis, seem related to this theme. During the workshop, I took a particularly motherly role with one of the youngest participants. Although it was she who had suggested the theme, she was very withdrawn during the workshop. My motherly role was noted by the other participants. This was definitely an act of going out of role, which could be seen as an enactment of the generational issues in the group. By behaving in a motherly way, I was falling into a familiar generational dynamic and creating a private pair, which might have felt comfortable, but was against the task of the work. So I was enacting the very issue of the group, the generational divide (Mersky 2001).

In fact, it seemed that we as a group all participated in creating a split between the generations. We all colluded to have the participant in the middle of our ages present the first dream drawing. She served as a mediating figure in that sense and perhaps it was easier to work first with her dream drawing, rather than the one by the younger one. Nevertheless, although the first dream drawer was easily 10 years older than the two youngest ones, we lumped them all together as the young group. She herself colluded with this, noting in her interview that she was "feeling myself a lot younger than I was".

Thus, as Bion (1961) theorised, we could say that the group was in a basic assumption mode, that it had created a set of defensive groupings to avoid its task and to avoid anxiety. What is very interesting is that before this session, most

participants were having difficulty identifying a research question to explore for their paper on this course. Following the session, almost all were able to. This leads to the very tentative (but not provable) hypothesis that generational issues were impeding the group's ability to get on with the task, and that in the SDD workshop, where these issues could be explored, some of the anxiety was alleviated enough for the participants (including myself) to focus on the task for the course. Again, however, this is a single example and not yet generalizable to other groups.

#### 8.4 Insights into the praxis of SDD

On being interviewed, I asked participants the following question: 'What do you think worked in this methodology?'. Answers to this question revealed three sub-themes. They are:

1. the capacity of the praxis to bring separate things together, to integrate
2. the value of a collective experience
3. the specific value of drawings of dreams as opposed to verbal tellings of dreams

##### Sub-theme #1: Bringing the separate together

A German participant (G3) emphasised how the praxis brings together what was separated, i.e. the conscious with the unconscious, the individual with the group (Event 19). It was for her an experience of integration. By the individual bringing a dream and the group working with it, there is the connection between the individual and group. And for her the clear boundaries and capacities facilitated this happening. It is "a good way to bring something together, which normally is separated" and a "way of bringing together the conscious and the unconscious".

## Sub-theme #2: The value of collective experience

While group work was not always easy or comfortable for all participants, its impact was important for many. G3 described it (Event 19) as

the way where I can find myself in a more collective sense, or more collective system. So it's good work to construct social processes, social form...It's the way for learning, bringing together the individual and the social and the collective part.

In the reflection section of the Chile workshop (Event 5), a similar point was made:

When you work collaborating with others there is an endless learning which proves the importance of not working so individually but being able to take care of and reflect with others instead.

The appreciation of the group experience was strongly expressed by London participants in interviews and at its review session (Event 17). As the workshops extended for more than a year (from October 8, 2010 to December 9, 2011), participants could note the developments and changes in one another. As L4 noted in her interview (Event 21): "I mean I think that the process enabled all of us to witness, I guess a story of personal and life transition for each. I think for me that was the common theme".

Working with the drawings of dreams in a group context also opened up new perspectives for at least one participant (L3), who noted:

I think when you're showing it to other people you see it again yourself...And I think see it through other peoples' eyes really struck home and made very very powerful - I think that was the first sort of skirmish with the model in a way, but that was the significant (sic), I thought 'my God this is very powerful.' And it felt both exposing and exciting at the same time (Event 23).

The London participants were asked to fill in a time-line chart (see Appendix 4), where they entered their personal experiences along with external events that took place while we worked together in the workshop. Even the making of the chart was noted to be an important group experience, and there was a playful quality as well, for example, letting other people write on your behalf on the chart.

Sub-theme #3: The specific value of drawings of dreams as opposed to verbal tellings of dreams.

Naturally, this is an area of great interest to me, which I have explored at length in Chapter 3.5. Bristol participant B2 offered many phrases in her interview (Event 25) to express this:

- drawing a dream can “capture it in a way that writing can’t”
- There’s not often a word for what I have in dreams...It does something that writing can’t do...I can recall the quality
- The visual better embodies that dream than the verbal.
- encapsulated by the image
- translates the quality
- drawing brings back the quality, more than the content.

G3, in her interview (Event 19) put it this way: “the drawing brings the inside out.”

### Final reflections and conclusion

There were so many moving parts to this study, i.e. the creative participants, the multiple languages and countries, my evolving development as a researcher, the changing protocols and design decisions over time, the gamut of personal, geo-political and environmental events during the span of this study and of course the infinite and creative unconscious of the dreams and drawings. To at last come out with actual findings is, for me, the researcher and initiator of this way of working,

like finally giving birth. I started with a hunch, and through a very long and complicated and challenging process demonstrated that there are solid grounds for my first assumptions.

What I found very important was that for those who did have a major transformative or transitional experience, the nature of this development was evident in the dream drawings. Thus they form an essential aspect of the findings and are essential to this process. The dreams and the drawings were always related to whatever this deep transformation was. The dreams in themselves are products of the unconscious, and the existence of the unconscious is my basic ontological assumption. This finding is certainly consistent with Lawrence's (1999b) notion of dreams being a source of thinking. By definition, then, these findings demonstrate my key ontological assertion of an individual, group and collective unconscious.

For this study, I have been very fortunate to by and large have participants who were very sophisticated in working with their dreams and understanding organisations and very willing to participate in the workshops and be interviewed. They were very articulate. Like any researcher, I had to be aware of what Hollway and Jefferson (2009b & 2013) call the "defended subject". Working with unconscious processes and especially sharing dream material has the natural effect of making people anxious. Some drawings were very simple, revealing very little. Sometimes participants didn't even bring a drawing to a session, which, on reflection, indicated that were not ready for the intimacy of the experience. Nevertheless, as the group work was the engine that facilitated insight, even those without drawings participated fully in each session.



In taking part in these groups, participants had to face the difficult experience of dealing with potential consequences of such an exploration to themselves. Difficult feelings, such as their own turbulence, fears and dilemmas, could arise. In alluding to the theme, one London participant noted: "...risk is seen as predominantly loss....lots of loss". She continued in her interview (E22):

Because I think what you get from bringing the drawings here is the opportunity to discuss what's currently going on in your mind, in a way you probably wouldn't do. So I think you may bring in your own turbulence. I don't experience that it raises turbulence from being in the group, it's what you may bring in, that the material is your own turbulence. But in fact on talking and focusing on that on the drawings you can bring it out more and it gives you something more to think about than you would have got if you hadn't gone through that process.

The workshop experience was not uniformly easy for everyone. As another London participant (L3) put it: "...there was a sense of precariousness along with potential opportunities....there's definitely a potential for catastrophe as well." And a German participant (G2), whose husband died during the process, had a very difficult time staying with the task of the group and staying in role. She was very anxious that participants would make associations relating to death to her dream drawings (E18).

Interestingly, my findings concur with Edgar's work on what he terms Dream Imagework (1999:205). Although his participants don't draw dreams, they are asked to make mental images of their own and others' dreams. He finds that participants "have illustrated the time and the nature of transitions in peoples' social state, personal identity, current concerns, capacity to change, and ability to conceptualize the self." He also notes the lingering effect of the image (ibid.:208), which was confirmed by many of my participants.

Lastly, time has passed since these groups took place. G1, G2 and G3 have all retired and moved on to new projects and new identities. G4, L2, L3 and L4 have all achieved their doctorates. C6 has established his professorship career. It would be very interesting to interview all of them again to learn, from the perspective of time, if their dream drawing work helped them at all in their transitions and what stays with them from the experience. Sadly, this is beyond the scope of this study.

This chapter ends the second Part of this dissertation, which has focused on the research practice and results of this study. Part III of this study contains two more chapters. The next chapter describes at length the complicated and enlightening experience of being a psycho-social researcher. The last chapter provides an overview of my entire research, suggests some generalisations from my findings and a final conclusion.

## **PART III: CONCLUSION**

### **Chapter 9: Reflections on a professional, academic and intense personal journey**

In this chapter, I am exploring this role as I have experienced it. I have divided this exploration into three sections:

1. My journey as a psycho-social researcher
2. The role of transference processes in psycho-social research
3. Use of the third in psycho-social research

#### 9.1 My journey as a psycho-social researcher

Psycho-social research emphasises the importance of the researcher's own experience in the entire process. Before I began the official task of data analysis (see chapter 6.3.3), my supervisors suggested that I try to capture my own first impressions of the data by attempting to reconstruct from memory the course of all my work (2007-2012). Three major themes emerged from this process, all of which, in retrospect, related to my experience as a researcher.

#### Theme 1: Giving birth. Gaining a perspective from a distance

I connect this theme directly to giving birth to this praxis, as something entirely new in the field. Not only did I give birth, but I have nurtured and developed it over many years. And like raising a child, there is the struggle to separate and look at it from a researcher's perspective. As I wrote in my reflexive journal (3 April 2012):

...no more generation, exploration. The phase of building is over. Now I must put all of this data, this experience at a distance to 'see it', like having a baby, leaving the inside of me and out into the world. A separate object.

In and of itself, the process of research is a process of gaining a distance from something sufficiently to study it, which for me has been a great challenge. As I wrote to my supervisors in an email of 25 April 2012: “Perhaps I am in an interim period of just ‘shaking’ off all the group experience and transitioning to a post birth giving phase of reflection.”

In addition, there is the act of giving birth to myself as a researcher (i.e. helix issue in introduction). This has been a difficult process of individuation from a professional identity that I have long identified with and relied upon. At times I felt quite guilty that I was betraying those from whom I had learned and whose writings I had so admired. What is gradually taking place, however, is a broader integration of both parts.

## Theme 2: No beginning and no end, overlapping events

I relate this issue to the many overlapping events that took place in the course of my work with the different groups. As I wrote in my reflexive journal on 3 April 2012:

... the idea of starting the German group and starting the doctorate one after the other. Then somehow the Chile session midst the German sessions. Then in the spring, the UWE session with videotape, also midst Germany. Then German endings and somehow London beginning, during which there were the first interviews...[with N6, C6, N2]. London ending and then the next 6 interviews, one after another, all recorded and transcribed.

In addition to this is the overlapping and sometimes confusing history of running the first workshops in the Netherlands even before matriculating and yet using this data for the doctorate. Also overlapping were the various articles written on the basis of my research, before I had completed my data analysis and were therefore based on initial findings.

As is apparent in the Events chart (Appendix 1), there have been multiple events, and sometimes they stretched over long periods of time. There is the original event (workshop). Then there is the interview. Then there is the period of analysing the data. Specifically, for example, in 2012, I analysed the data of an interview with N6, that was conducted in 2010 relating to a Social Dream-Drawing workshop that took place in 2007.

As the researcher, I am working, so to say, 'in the shadow' (and in the affective aftermath) of the original experience of the workshop and the interview, fragments and internal bits of which certainly remain in myself. The challenge is to be able to analyse the data at the same time being aware of how these shadows may be influencing my thinking and how the multiple transformations from the original experience of the workshop may have distorted the original data (as a dream drawing often does). How the researcher engages with these shadows once the analysis starts is also an important influence on how data is reconstructed. Here I believe my psychoanalytic lens was very helpful.

### Theme 3: Life cycles, natural cycles and events

Over the course of seven years and the participation of over 50 people, it would be surprising if there had not been illness and even deaths taking place that would affect some of these parties. The death of the key Netherlands participant and organiser before I began my studies made a great impression on the course of my work, and I worked very hard with my German supervisor to separate this loss from the work I wanted to do on the praxis I was developing.

In the London review group (E17), we learned that one of the participants had had a cancer scare just before we started our work, another's husband had just had surgery and her son was going in for tests, and another's husband had just had surgery. Even when unspoken, these events made their impression on our experience.

As a psycho-social researcher, one is made intensively aware of aspects of oneself on the personal and the professional level. As I began my studies at the age of 64 and am scheduled to complete them at the age of 70, issues about my own age, my capacities, and my age in relation to the workshop participants, process consultants and my supervisors was always a factor I was aware of. Fortunately, I had no health problems to speak of during this process, although both of my parents died within a few weeks of one another in 2011, which led to a suspension of studies.

Even the weather played its part, forcing the cancellation of one of the German sessions.

## 9.2 The role of transference processes in psycho-social research

It is not that transference processes only take place when one does psycho-social research. These processes take place in all research endeavors. The difference here is that these processes are acknowledged to exist. It is acknowledged that they can interfere with an ethical and well conducted research process. They also can form the basis for information that would not otherwise be available to the researcher, and thus, can be an important source of data (see Finding 3 in Chapter 8). Being able to, on the one hand, acknowledge that transference processes take place and, on the

other, having the ability to manage the consequences pose a tremendous challenge.

This is not only an intellectual, but an ethical stance relating to this perspective.

Transferential processes in relation to one's research subjects are one phenomenon. I offer here two examples. In one case, just before interviewing a man (L3; Event 23), I was feeling depressed and then I had a dream about a sexual encounter with him. I realised later that the intimacy of the interview process (even over Skype) can stimulate erotic feelings, that are also related to a pairing with this man that took place in the workshop (he was the only male in the London group).

It was only after the interview that I realised that the unconscious sexual dynamics between us were imported into the interview. As I wrote in my reflexive journal (1 March 2012):

I realise now that I am treating him more as a colleague than as an interview subject. Flattering him at the beginning about his status in the group and the first one to present a drawing....At the same time I realise that he was feeling a bit guilty about not using a theme, because he repeated it again.

Although he and I have never discussed this, this process could be understood by the fact that he was by far the most sophisticated and accomplished group member and, in fact, truly a colleague of mine. He is the only participant in any of the workshops who immediately made use of the praxis with a client (see Chapter 4), and, in fact, he and I co-led a SDD workshop at an international conference in Oxford only two years later. It is not too much of a surprise then that an unconscious sexual pairing between us took place.

The second example relates to the transferential-countertransferential dynamics that took place in the Bristol group (Event 7), which were actually an enactment of a

deeper issue in the data, not yet in the consciousness of participant or researcher. During the workshop, I expressed motherly feelings and actions toward one of the younger female participants (B1), which, in retrospect, were defending me and us against the competitive feelings between the generations in the group (see Chapter 8.3). At the time, I was aware of this pull and was not truly successful in containing it. In retrospect, particularly when writing about this experience in my reflexive journal, I began to understand it for what it really was. From an ethical perspective, while we cannot always master these forces, we are bound in retrospect to try to understand them.

In both cases I see these episodes as examples of what Hollway and Jefferson (2013:159) cite as “transferences...more accessible to thought”, rather than the more deeply entwined, long-term and intimate “transference-countertransference matrix” (Hirsch:360) characteristic of the psychoanalyst/patient clinical dyad, which can offer a pathway into the patient’s primitive unconscious states. The acting out or enacting of such dynamics in a research event can also make the researcher aware of issues that would otherwise not come to the surface. While we cannot guarantee not to act out, we can strive to understand what these events mean in relation to the task of the research.

Being able to recognise one’s own dynamics and one’s own transferential and unconscious aspects as related to the research process has been very important to me. At times, I have had intensively positive and intensely negative “institutional transference” (Wellendorf 1986) feelings towards the university, my progression examiners and toward my supervisors.



This was particularly the case with my head of studies. In the first year or so of my studies I was anxious that I would overwhelm her with all of my needs and demands. My dependency on her was so extreme, that I was often emotionally very regressive, and I experienced a transference toward her as a child to one's mother. This evoked primitive feelings relating to my own mother, who could not contain my needs. That this early relationship with my mother was revitalised with my head of studies made it particularly difficult for me to take her negative criticism of my work. This was also at play in my strongly negative reaction to the female progression examiner.

This reaction also relates to another theme that I became aware of during the course of my studies, which has to do with my competitive feelings in general toward women. I became quite aware of this during the course of a workshop offered at a doctoral seminar by Susan Jervis. The theme of the workshop had to do with the prominence of men and women. In one exercise, I was shocked to notice that all of the cases that I was planning to illustrate for my findings were about men, although I had more female participants than male.

One extreme aspect of this negative transference toward my supervisors is of special note. It relates to my emotional reaction to their criticism of two of my chapters. In defending myself against what I experienced as a narcissistic wound and very deep feelings of failure, I found myself feeling extremely critical of them for what I saw as their failure to provide me the proper guidance on what should be included in such chapters. It has been difficult for me to truly appreciate that difficult boundary they are straddling between the demands of the university and the needs (emotional and otherwise) of their students. 'Not killing the messenger' would be a useful mantra to keep in mind.

Upon much reflection, I realised that this intense feeling of disappointment with my supervisors, an almost baffling contempt regarding their failure, was actually not new. In 1990, as an adult student in a professional training program for psychoanalytic consulting, this same affect was expressed by a number of my fellow students, who were permanently angry at the directors of the program because of the poor quality of the copies of the articles we were supposed to read. The supplies were defective and so were the suppliers.

I also encountered this dynamic as the co-director of a similar program in Germany between 2003 and 2010. The particular failure of myself and my co-director was that we had not specifically identified exactly how many sessions the participants were required to observe in an organisation. This was the clinical part of their training.

Being captured by this same extreme feeling toward my supervisors has made me realise how extremely difficult it is to be an adult learner and to be the teachers of an adult learner. The transference dynamic between the child learner and the teacher is completely different. The vulnerable, professional, insecure adult learner requires perfection from the adults. As my head of studies noted in her feedback on a previous version of this chapter, these adults are those who are: “the ‘subject supposed to know’, the one who has all the answers and all the ‘supplies’”. It seems as well as if this dynamic especially occurs when the student feels vulnerable to his or her own failure in the new learning process. As Phillips has written (2012:65): “In this familiar division of labour there is a plenitude – the one who, because he is supposed to know, is in the know – and there is an inadequacy: parents and children, teachers and students...”

In my work with SDD with different groups, I encountered a hint of this dynamic only once. It took place in the first London session (Event 11), when I failed to master the intricacies of my recording device when we started with the first dream drawing. One of the participants expressed her frustration with me, and, in retrospect, could well have been feeling this contempt toward the imperfect, inadequate adult that she had agreed to learn from.

Another form of transference dynamics was my feelings toward my own dissertation, an object to which there are conscious and unconscious object relations. At times I had this strange experience that I was being persecuted by it, as if it had taken on a life of its own. This really puzzled me. As I noted in my journal (9 February 2014):

But I am the one who has gathered all this information. No one else. So presumably I can decide what to use and what not to use. Or can I? Do I somehow feel that once I have externalised my thinking by making notes and listing resources that it then turns around and takes on its own life of persecution of me?? How strange.

Eventually, however, I began to realise that the overwhelming challenge of writing a dissertation had evoked a part of me that has always been there. This part has always pushed me to succeed and not to allow myself to fail (although I certainly have many times!). As I wrote in my reflexive journal of 16 February 2014: “I can really feel my ‘inner persecutor’ at work”. As difficult as this period was for me, it also was a very important learning.

### 9.3 Use of the third in psycho-social research

The concept of the third, as described by Ogden, refers to the “jointly created unconscious life of the analytic pair” (Ogden 2004:167), that is co-constructed by the analyst and the analysand as they work together over time. As a “point of reference outside the dyad” (Benjamin 2004:7), it links them together in the service of the task of psychoanalysis. It stands outside each of them as individuals and yet it is shared by them, as “a co-created reality” (ibid.:2).

This is not a physical entity, but similar to what Winnicott refers to as “an intermediate area of experiencing” (1971 [1996] 2). It lives and breathes, so to say, over time, and serves, at least in my case, as a sort of haven, a familiar place of joint experience with important others that I can return to over the course of my engagement with my research, a form of continually evolving ‘potential space’ (ibid.:103). Each of the various third spaces that I co-created (see below), served a certain function that, in combination, helped me to integrate a very complex and life-changing experience (see Mersky 2016 for a deeper exploration of this point).

Two aspects of the third have been for me particularly relevant. Firstly, this is an intersubjective mental space, meaning a space created between individuals, where “the reciprocity of two active partners in two-way interaction is visible” (Benjamin 2007:13). We are not dealing here with two totally separate entities, completely unaffected by one another. The space itself is complementary and creative and not dominated by one party or the other. Thus, we are not talking about “something we have to submit to, from which we cannot extricate ourselves” (ibid.:5). The interaction is mutual, as the interrelatedness between patient and analyst is thought of in relational psychoanalysis (Rosenfeld:1987). As Benjamin puts it (ibid.:2), there is a “freedom from any intent to control or coerce”.

The second aspect is that of utility or use. Over time, this space becomes a resource for creativity and for thinking. It can be seen as available to be rekindled either with or without direct contact with the other. As such, ongoing work on one or another particular aspect of the research journey can be returned to over and over again in a particular third space, revisited, and reworked. What is vital is the connection with an interested other, where material discussed is “reflected back” (van Eerden 2016) and thought about. This connects to Winnicott’s (1971 [1996]:56) notion of “summation or reverberation [which] depends on there being a certain quantity of reflecting back to the individual on the part of the trusted therapist (or friend)”. Benjamin even describes a form of surrender that takes place in order to have the “the psychic capacity to use” (2007:1) these spaces:

Mutual recognition is integral to the space of thirdness. This means that even though we do not surrender to someone, the other's recognition does help create the space of thirdness that makes surrender possible (ibid.3).

Building on this notion of use, I found third spaces during my research journey to be relevant in two important ways, which I will describe in detail below. Firstly they were critical to the academic task of undertaking research and writing a dissertation and secondly, they provided central support for my internal experience of the doctoral journey.

During the entire course of my research process, I have made consistent use of various third figures with whom I have openly shared my work. They include my two UWE supervisors and a work supervisor in Germany, my doctoral colleagues and a particularly close colleague, who is one year ahead of me in the same program. These figures have been for me important “sounding boards” (Hoggett & Clarke

2010:17) and have consistently helped me to deepen my learning. They have provided on-going motivation, guidance and challenges for my own reflection and learnings. And, as Crociani-Windland (2009:74) comments on her own research experience, these processes “proved central” to my research inquiry.

These ideas have already been applied to the psycho-social perspective by Clarke and Hoggett (2009:17), who refer to “the perspective of the ‘third’” as central to undertaking psycho-social research. They emphasise that having “different perspectives regarding the data” (ibid.:19) or having one’s data “perceived from different vantage points” (ibid.) provides a kind of external check on the rigors of undertaking psycho-social research. In addition, the supervision and support of third figures allow the researcher to ‘see’ what is strikingly present to others but was in the blind spot of the researcher. They also have a very important function in mitigating the potential pitfalls of psycho-social research. As Hollway and Jefferson (2013:154) put it: “If psychoanalytic concepts are congruent and subordinated to a holistic treatment of data, they can be safeguarded against ‘wild analysis’”.

One can truly say that the process of supervision is a key element in safeguarding against wild analysis. It is in this intense working relationship that the student is guided toward substantial data by undertaking a rigorous process of analysis. For example, when I did my first pass on my data, I came up with four themes which I shared with my supervisors. With their guidance, I was urged to undertake a more rigorous and detailed pass on my data, which led to rich results. Another example is the caution not to idealise drawings as being totally a reflection of unconscious processes. This caution led to a deeper exploration of the reservations one must always keep in mind with such a praxis. A parallel example would be in the praxis of

Social Dream-Drawing itself, where the work with the group is a collective way of mitigating the wild analysis potential of a particular dream drawing.

By far, the most complicated and rewarding working relationship during this entire process has been with my two female supervisors. From the very beginning, my supervisors showed tremendous faith in me. They continually validated my double identity as consultant and researcher, and helped me integrate them both. This intense work has led to the forging of very strong bonds between us. But it also has made for complications. While the work of the supervisor and supervisee is not therapeutic, the intensity of the dyad evokes these processes as well. At times my transferences, particularly to my head of studies, have been overwhelmingly positive and overwhelmingly negative. It has been a major effort for me to contain these unconscious processes in order to stay in role, preserve the relationships and achieve the tasks at hand. However, I have very much been helped in this by the presence of various 'thirds', who have helped me to modify these intense feelings. Thus I would say that the third functions as a very important way of mitigating against destructive transference and countertransference dynamics.

Another key working relationship has been with a co-doctoral student, who is one year ahead of me and also a socioanalytic thinker. By Skyping regularly and meeting up in Bristol and other venues, we have engaged in a deep ongoing process of peer review (Creswell & Miller 2000), not only by supporting one another's research processes but also reflecting deeply on our experiences as researchers.

Although I had achieved a certain status as a published organisational thinker in relation to consultation, I was starting from the beginning as a graduate student

learning to be a researcher. This was not very easy to do at my stage of life. Here it was a great advantage to have close contact with my fellow doctoral student, who is near to my age. Both of us, established in one field, were and still are struggling to establish our identities as psycho-social researchers. Both of us were driven by a passionate interest in a particular topic to undertake doctoral studies. Together we have created a system by which we regularly share our work and receive feedback, encouragement and, often, specific help. Our regular Skyping

...mobilises our professional selves, and very much helps us integrate our professional selves with the student identity. We can be our professional selves in how we think about our work and how we plan together. That is very self-affirming (26 May 2012 reflexive journal entry).

Another extremely important part of the self-reflective process has been my work with my German colleague, Ellen. We began our work before I started at UWE, when I asked her early in 2009 to supervise me in developing the SDD praxis. As we had already developed a professional relationship, meeting regularly and talking about our work, I thought she would be a great asset. During the course of my studies, we have met approximately 6 times, either at her office or in mine. We live approximately one hour apart. As it has turned out, Ellen's work with me has brought a very special quality. As opposed to the monitoring role of my UWE supervisors, Ellen was not in a position to evaluate or guide me. She has no 'stake', so to say, in my doctorate, although she certainly wants me to be successful professionally. She and I are free to share, associate and think together.

Both my colleague and my German supervisor have been especially helpful in picking up my various feeling states during this process. For example, at various times I was resistant to going forward to the next steps in the research. This resistance to moving ahead usually took the form of developing more and more



creative ideas to explore. On one occasion, this resistance was flagged by my

German supervisor. As I wrote in my 26 September, 2012 journal:

It seems that once again I am creative at throwing up obstacles to just getting back to work, i.e. another office, doing the session at the seminar in Bristol, getting into Deleuze....she thinks I should just get on with it and publish and get famous.

Each step in this process has been very symbolic for me, and once I have finished a major step, e.g. going through all my data on the first data analysis scan, my tendency is to want to dig deeper, rather than going on to the next step. My doctoral colleague, who could identify with this tendency, was a great help. As I noted in my reflexive journal on 12 April 2012 regarding a recent Skype conversation with her:

I wanted to talk about being stuck, in a no man's land, about my impressions of [the] data analysis phase. After catching her up with everything, she made a very important comment. Sounds like, in a sense, I am just avoiding getting on to the next step! That was a bit of a shock, but, you know, I think she was right. It is a kind of resistance to go on ahead and get going. We talked for quite a while....We began to realise that both of us are somehow stuck just before we actually create our product that will reveal all our thinking and also reveal us as the thinkers that we are. And both of us are anxious about this next stage. We prefer to stay in our heads or in our experiences. Not to move ahead. For both of us this is a breakthrough (12.04.2012).

I had many doubts about my capacity to do data analysis, particularly given my investment in the success of the praxis. Here is an example:

As I go through...[L3]'s dream transcript now, I think to myself: am I only picking up on the details that match my previous hypotheses, i.e. transitions and natural phenomenon? I really don't know if I am allowing other possibilities to surface...(November 3, 2012 reflexive journal entry).

I could partly understand this as a wish to hold on to the research experience and my difficulties in separating from that phase and entering the next phase of analysis and writing and all the ups and downs that phase would entail.

The on-going Doctoral Role Analysis group, with which I have worked during the doctoral seminars, has been a major support and source of insight as well. In each

session, I have been helped with a key concern that I had at that time. For the first years of my study, I was blessed to have been in a stable group with the same participants and the same facilitator. This is another example of the value of the third.

I have described a number of very important third spaces where I was able to reflect on my work and gain insights and guidance that was impossible for me to provide for myself. These were both vertical (supervisors, progression examiners, process consultants, progress reviewer) and horizontal (fellow doctoral students, colleagues, role analysis group). Boxer (2015:81-82) describes this experience by characterising the role holder as being in an “edge” role:

An individual in an “edge” role is at an intersection between the way vertically organized and horizontally organized systems interact with each other. Such an individual is likely to be in roles within multiple overlapping horizontally organized systems while at the same time being in vertically defined enterprise roles. An individual experiences his or her subjectivity within these systems in relation to others, subject to both horizontally defined and vertically defined systems, “through subjection to roles in these systems” (Long 2006, p. 287).

In the vertical third space, I was being guided by professionals who made a commitment to help me specifically with the course of my study. Some (UWE supervisors, progression examiners, progress reviewer) took on this role and this commitment as part of their professional obligations to students. As such, in their work with me, they were representing the demands of the university and also insuring to the university that this student would fulfil its expectations. They either chose or were asked to work with me. I did not choose them. Being authorised in these roles by the university and by my agreement to participate as a student meant that I would have to follow their guidance and, in a sense, surrender my own authority to their judgments. This made the transference processes very difficult,

especially relating to criticism of my work. At the same time, however, it assured me that whenever I might be making a wrong step, I would be properly guided.

Those professionals who were already colleagues of mine and took a third space role (i.e. my German supervisor and the three process consultants) committed themselves not only to the study I was undertaking but also to my own ongoing professional development. They took these roles as an act of professional generosity. They did not represent the university or its interests. They stood for the part of me that, as an existing professional, wanted to do the best work that I could. I chose them. With our professional history and their acts of generosity, I was really free to think with them, and they were free to speak to me about what they saw and experienced about how I was working. One key example of this was my German supervisor's observation (cited above) that I seemed to be avoiding progressing on my work.

In the horizontal third space, I really was lucky to have a fellow doctoral student, who was in the same general professional field. Although we did not know one another previously, we immediately spoke the same language, so to say. This connection worked like a support group and everything remained confidential between us. While the conversation was sometimes about the specifics of our respective dissertation topics, we mostly talked about the experiences of doing a doctorate and the many difficulties it entails.

In the horizontal third space occupied by my fellow doctoral students and the role analysis group, while very creative and worthwhile, I was in the role of student and was interacting at the university. As opposed to the interaction with my key fellow

student, the level of openness was limited to what I felt comfortable with in these public interactions.

Part of the great complication of this experience has been to integrate and make full use of both the horizontal and the vertical third spaces. The range of roles I took in these various spaces ranged from personal friend, close colleague, student, and public professional. The long time span (7 years) and the geographical distance helped me to integrate these various roles and to mobilise them when appropriate. These two strains made for an excellent balance, and I made excellent use of them. I never lost my own sense of the passion for this topic, while at the same time I was often very frustrated with the university requirements. I was very much held by this matrix of horizontal and vertical support and thinking systems. My head of studies noted in a comment on a previous version of this chapter that “[i]ts [sic] almost as if there is a third space continuum from vertical to horizontal and from ‘passing-oriented’ (your supervisors!) to ‘free-thinking’”. It is clear that no one person could have taken all these roles in supporting me. The multiplicity of resources was essential.

Another form of significant third space were the published papers (Mersky 2012, 2015), book chapter (2013) and four presentations at international conferences (London 2010, Melbourne 2011, Copenhagen 2011 and Santiago 2014), where I cited some of my preliminary research findings. I consider these endeavors another example of thirdness, because the articles and presentations themselves were objects that I created that extracted data from my ongoing research and also served as opportunities to offer tentative hypotheses about the praxis I was developing. And by making this work public, I was creating another form of thirdness, which was with

the professional community at large, whose interest in my work provided an important form of support.

As psycho-social researchers, we are encouraged to maintain an ongoing reflexive journal, which is another psycho-social data collection method (Boydell, 2007). The reflexive journal gives the researcher a place to reflect on his/her individual experience during the course of undertaking one's research. It is theoretically grounded in the tradition of reflexive psychoanalysis, which holds that there is always a transference, countertransference process taking place between analyst and patient.

The act of writing a reflexive journal was extremely important to me in monitoring and recording my experience. Here I could be totally honest. This was my private internal third. Without this ongoing reflexive process, grounded in the act of journal writing, I couldn't have done it. From my perspective, reflection was the glue that held the spiral together.

The reflexive journal serves as a form of self-auditing, in that, as Seale (1999:468) writes, in reference to peer-auditing, it "involves the provision of a methodologically self-critical account of how the research was done". My journal notes the transference and counter-transference experiences relating to the groups I was working with and the individuals I was interviewing as well as my 'here and now' experiences in running groups and interviewing.

In another form of triangulation, I have also made a series of drawings over the course of my doctoral studies, to help myself capture my experience in visual form.

This has helped me identify the difficult transitions in role. At the same time, I have a series of visual images of the 'state of the project' as I have been going through it. At times, I have drawn them at important 'milestones' in the process and sometimes because I was inspired to do them at certain significant points in the process when I felt myself shifting in my relatedness not only to the doctoral material, but to UWE, the field of psycho-social studies and my existing professional world. These were often times when words in the reflexive journal could not capture the complexities.

Here are two sample drawings. The first, which was drawn 12 December 2009, shortly after officially beginning my studies, shows my unintegrated and overly-stimulated state at this early phase.

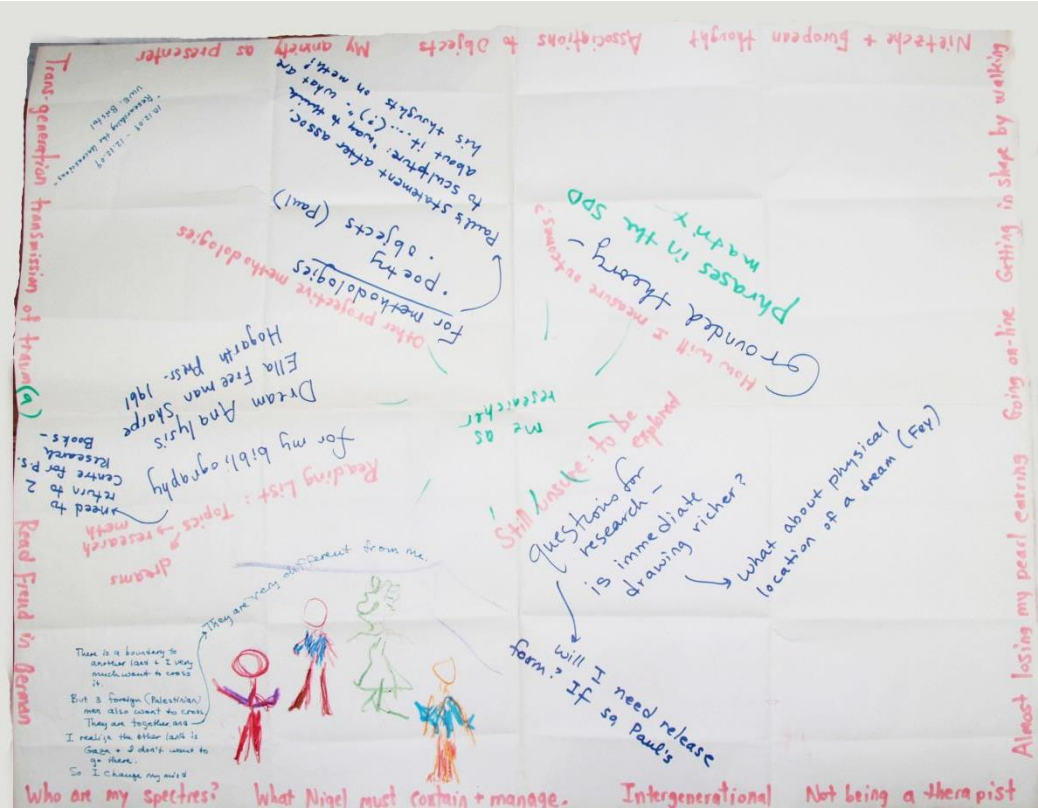


Figure 20 Rose as researcher drawing 12 December 2009

The second, which I drew on 7 April 2015 shows a much more confident researcher.

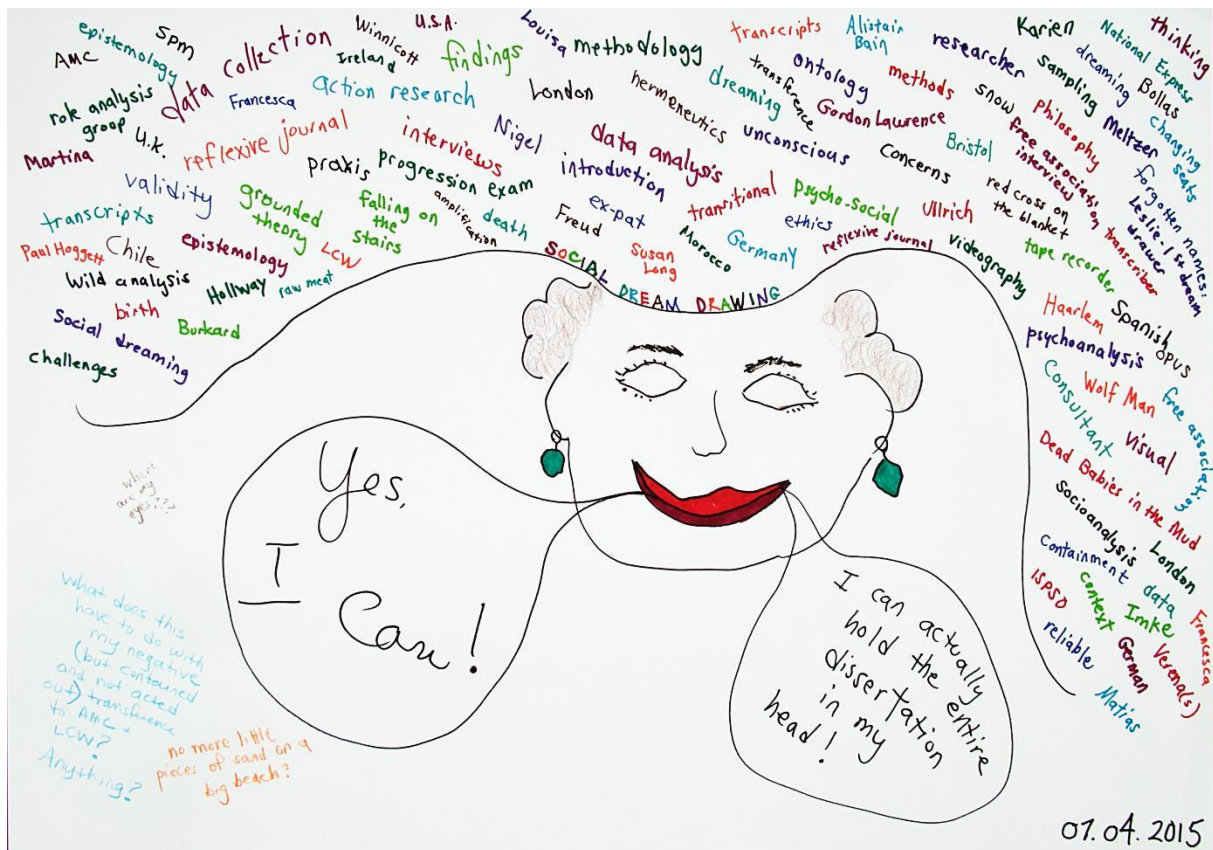


Figure 21 Rose as researcher drawing 7 April 2015

To date, I have drawn a total of twelve such drawings, mostly using large sheets of drawing paper. Each of them has been helpful to me in capturing my internal experience at a particular stage in the process, truly what Mason terms a “reflexive diagram” (170).

During this period, I have also written down and have sometimes drawn various dreams that were relevant to this experience. Since I know quite well that after a demanding experience I usually dream about it, I have been quite interested in what my dreams are helping me to understand as I go through this experience. The failure dream (a recurring theme) the morning after my progression exam put me immediately in touch with the deeply disappointing and humiliating feelings engendered in this experience.

## Conclusion

In summary, the process of doctoral research is a ,full-body‘ experience, stimulating and utilising many aspects of one’s being. Intellectual theory, the losses and gains associated with transitions in professional identity, the disappointments of being judged, and the great pleasures of creating and developing something ,in the arms‘ of, so to say, many others have been some of the most important aspects for me. One does not undertake this alone or start from scratch. One enters a field and, and, as best as one can, finds one’s way while falling on the stairs. Unexpected intruders are continually challenging one’s previous assumptions and one discovers parts of oneself long hidden and needing more work.

I have certainly grown and matured in this experience in ways that I never could have anticipated. I have taken it on in earnest, and was helped, particularly by my supervisors, to trust myself. I have been deeply challenged personally, particularly in relation to my strong transference feelings, and I have grown as a person. At times I didn’t want to contemplate an ending to this experience. Lately, I have been eager to let it go. I am sure these feelings will move back and forth until the end and perhaps long after.

The various support systems described above have been especially helpful to me in managing the double helix nature of this project. The ongoing and multi-media process of reflection was essential in both keeping the various roles distinct and inter-related, while at the same providing important sources of additional data. At the same time, these intertwined roles also had the potential of interfering with data



analysis. Academic, professional and peer supervision processes have aided in my ability to manage this process and have provided the necessary containment for me to be able to think and to progress. These supervision spaces have provided an essential function of thirdness and have helped to curb the potential danger of wild analysis as well as further transference processes needing to be processed and worked with.

What follows is the final chapter of this study, which will explicate a set of generalisations relating to the praxis of Social Dream-Drawing in terms of its possible use in both organisational consultation and research. I will conclude this last chapter with an articulation of the theoretical structure underpinning SDD.

## **Chapter 10: Generalisations and conclusion**

In this last chapter, I will first offer some suggestions for the future possibilities of this work by generalising from my findings and experience. I will close this study by reviewing the theoretical structure that underpins SDD in order to summarise for the reader both the connections between various theoretical stances by different theorists and to illustrate the breadth of theoretical underpinnings that has gone into this praxis.

### **10.1 Generalisations from my research**

My research has demonstrated that Social Dream-Drawing is a particular way of working with organisational role holders that is effective in helping these individuals gain insight into an important issue. This issue often includes, but is not limited to, a major transition that the participant is undergoing. This transition can include taking on a new professional identity, moving from one country to another or preparing for one's retirement. But the transition can also be thought about as an internal transition from one set of assumptions about oneself to another set, often involving the discarding of past patterns now deemed inimical to one's current developmental state. This praxis has also proved itself valuable in helping small groups identify an issue of common concern and gain insight into this issue.

Like all research studies, this study has had a specific and limited focus.

Nevertheless, it is possible to make some generalisations. Here are the five areas I will explore:

1. For whom is this praxis appropriate and not appropriate?
2. What are the cross cultural implications of this praxis?

3. What is the role of the skill of the facilitator in the effectiveness of this praxis?
4. What are the implications of this research for other socioanalytic praxes, such as Social Dreaming?
5. What are the possibilities of this praxis for organisational development consultation?

#### 10.1.1 For whom is this praxis appropriate and not appropriate?

Using Mason's (2002) formulation of a generalisation that offers "lessons for other settings" (196), I think it is possible to posit that this praxis is appropriate for:

- groups of professional cohorts seeking greater individual insight and growth
- participants in ongoing professional training programs, such as coaching
- intact work groups interested in exploring professional issues together
- intact work groups exploring their own internal dynamics.

Thus, potential groups or individual participants that could benefit from this praxis would include:

- People changing careers
- People moving abroad
- People moving to another position in an organisation
- People nearing retirement
- Doctoral students experiencing a new identity
- Adult learners, seeking a new profession

My research indicates that participation in SDD, which leads to a regressive, largely undefended group experience, would not be appropriate for those in a vulnerable situation, such as personal illness or recent bereavement, unless, perhaps they were participating in a support group with others in the same situation. This is consistent with Winnicott's (1971) observations on the impact of loss and bereavement on one's learning capacity. He notes that trauma inhibits the capacity to play and that therapy, and by extension, learning is therefore impaired.

I would also say that it would not be appropriate for groups in organisations where there are significant tensions between role holders or between layers of authority. Thirdly, I would say that this praxis would not be appropriate for participants who are highly sceptical of working with unconscious processes and may be therefore highly defended (Hollway and Jefferson (2009a & 2013)).

I cannot say at this point how well other socioanalytic praxes (Social Dreaming, Social Photo-Matrix, etc.) would serve the learning needs of the above-mentioned groups, because there has not yet been any similar research on any of them. But from the perspective of my experience as an organisational consultant, I can say that photographs, for example, are – at first glance – far less threatening than drawings or dreams (much less dream-drawings!), so praxes using them may be more appropriate. In 2008, shortly after moving to Germany, I participated in a Photo-Matrix focusing on the theme of transcultural experiences (Die transkulturelle Soziale Photo-Matrix), hosted by a university student, as part of his doctoral studies. It was for me a very rich and valuable experience in identifying the anxieties I felt, especially associated with not speaking the language.

#### 10.1.2 What are the cross cultural implications of this praxis?

Taylor (2012:10) makes the important point that drawings “transcend the barriers of different languages and enhance communication in an increasingly global world”. It is certainly true that drawings themselves have a universality, in that, no matter what the language, participants can relate to them visually. And it is certainly true that the findings of my study (Chapter 8) are consistent in groups from four different countries (Netherlands, Germany, Chile, U.K.). I would hesitate to say, however, that

this means that this praxis has a universal or cross-cultural application, cross-cultural being defined as “pertaining to or involving different cultures or comparison between them” (OED: 2015).

It is important to note that my participants were all from a certain social and intellectual class, i.e. university educated, professional, middle-class. I think a better term to describe the potential impact, therefore, would be ‘trans cultural’, defined in the OED (2015) as “Transcending the limitations or crossing the boundaries of cultures; applicable to more than one culture”. One may assume, therefore, that participants from a similar societal class in any number of different countries would also benefit from this experience. As a matter of fact, SDD workshops that I have held after finishing my doctoral research in Oxford, U.K., Amsterdam and Pretoria, South Africa seem to indicate this.

#### 10.1.3 What is the role of the skill of the facilitator in the success of this praxis?

Indicated over and over in the interview data is the point that the praxis alone does not make this a successful and valuable experience. Equally important is the skill and capacity of the facilitator (see Chapters 1 and 4 for a fuller discussion of this role).

What might be required for a facilitator to take this role well could include:

- Extensive experience working with groups and a deep understanding of group processes
- If not one’s own psychoanalysis, at least a deep understanding of transference issues within a small group and also between participants and facilitator.
- A capacity to hold strong, clear and consistent boundaries.
- A deep understanding of the purpose of the praxis and its theoretical underpinnings.

This calls for an individual with highly developed capacities and much experience.

At the same time, it does not necessarily mean that there is a special training process just to facilitate this praxis.

#### 10.1.4 What are the implications for other socioanalytic praxes, such as Social Dreaming?

Schofield (1993) notes that one way of generalising from a set of findings is to cite its relevance to a “wider body of theory, knowledge and existence” (214). From what I understand, this is the first significant research study of a socioanalytic praxis that demonstrates its value to participants. One can generalise that this finding also applies to other socioanalytic praxes that use a similar structure and form and are based on similar theoretical underpinnings. They include Social Dreaming, Organisational Role Analysis, Social Photo-Matrix and Role Biography. These praxes use photographs and drawings and dreams as representations of the unconscious. A related praxis, Organisational Observation, is slightly different in structure, and would require a different study.

This raises the question of appropriateness. When would, for example, Social Dream-Drawing be more appropriate and effective than Social Dreaming? Or any of the other similar praxes? Assuming, as I do, that they all share a similar impact and value, the question of which to use where and why comes down to the needs of the system seeking the help of the practitioner. It can relate to the size of the group being worked with (i.e. Role Analysis, Organisational Observation, Role Biography and Social Dream-Drawing is more appropriate for smaller groups). It can relate to the presenting problem being explored (Role Analysis, Role Biography and Social

Dream-Drawing perhaps being more appropriate for issues involving individual role issues). It can relate to the readiness of the client to undertake untraditional interventions, such as drawing or using dreams. One current client in Germany, for example, has just told me that my idea of using drawings with his group is too 'kindergartenish' (See Mersky 2012 for a deeper discussion of this issue).

10.1.5 What are the possibilities of this praxis for organisational development consultation?

In the course of this dissertation, I have been using various charts to draw visual links between underlying theories and the praxis of SDD (see for example Appendices 3, 4 and 5). In this more extensive section, I would like to review and then expand on these formulations for the reader.

In Chapter 4, on the Praxis of SDD, this figure links up the theories of Bion and Peirce to the praxis of SDD:

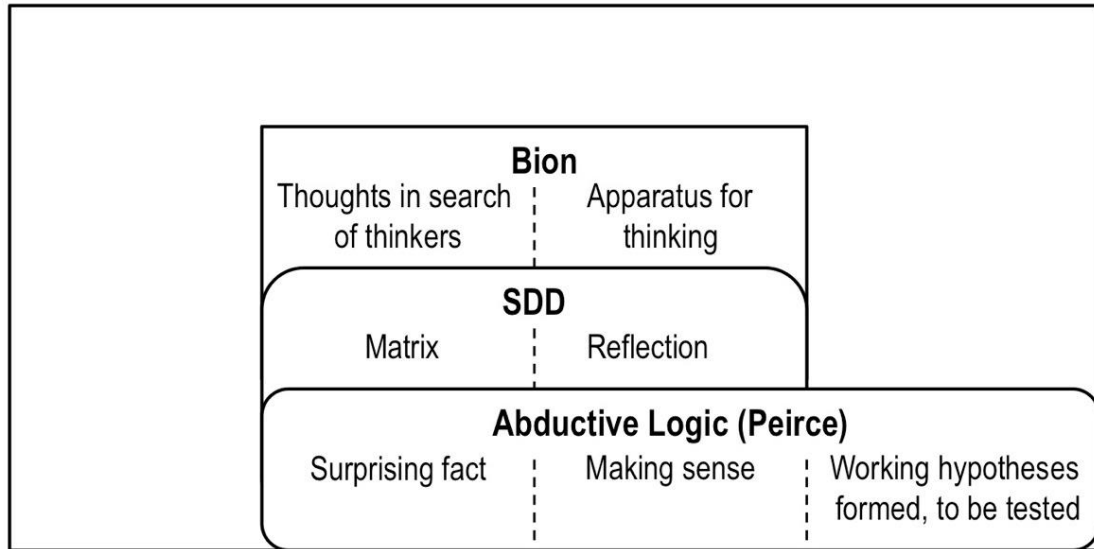


Figure 22 How theories of Bion and Peirce are reflected in SDD

In Chapter 5 (Philosophical Foundations and Methodology), I offered this chart, which links up the previous chart to my three epistemological propositions:



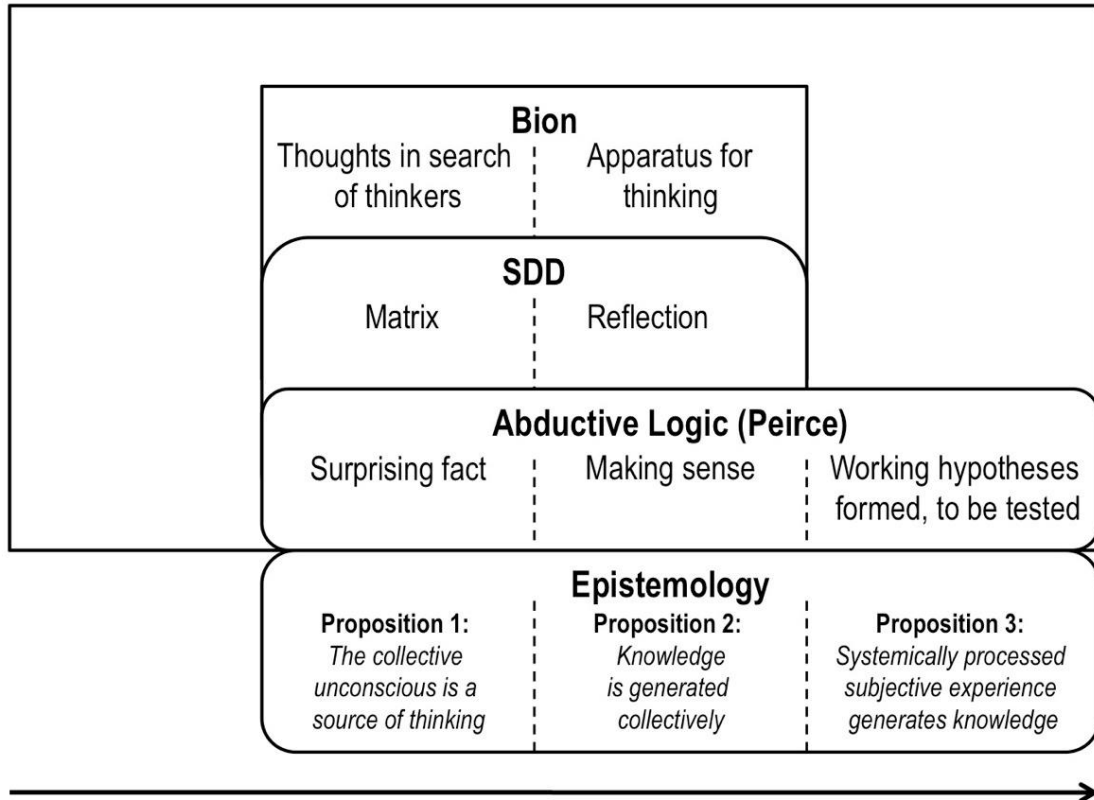


Figure 23 Three epistemological propositions underlying Social Dream-Drawing and connected to the theories of Bion and Peirce.

What I offer next is a further iteration of this chart, which I have titled an ‘Integrated Schema’. This chart suggests how these theories and the praxis of SDD can be utilised as an organisational intervention, as part of an organisational diagnostic process. Bearing in mind that in many cases, the organisational problem identified by the client may only be a presenting problem (see Chapter 1) and that the underlying issues may lie much deeper in the unconscious of the system, using SDD (or any other socioanalytic praxis) to make available the unconscious thinking relating to this issue could be a very creative possibility.

This chart below, which should be read from left to right, offers a way of thinking of SDD as an intervention. The key point to keep in mind is that SDD (or any other

socioanalytic praxis) would be part of a much larger process of organisational intervention. The understanding and insight that comes from its use takes time to integrate. Thus, with this chart, I suggest a ‘Time Period’ to elapse before the hypotheses developed in the reflection or sense making period be tested in order to create knowledge. The practical and more detailed aspects of this intervention process is described at length in two publications of mine (2012, 2015).

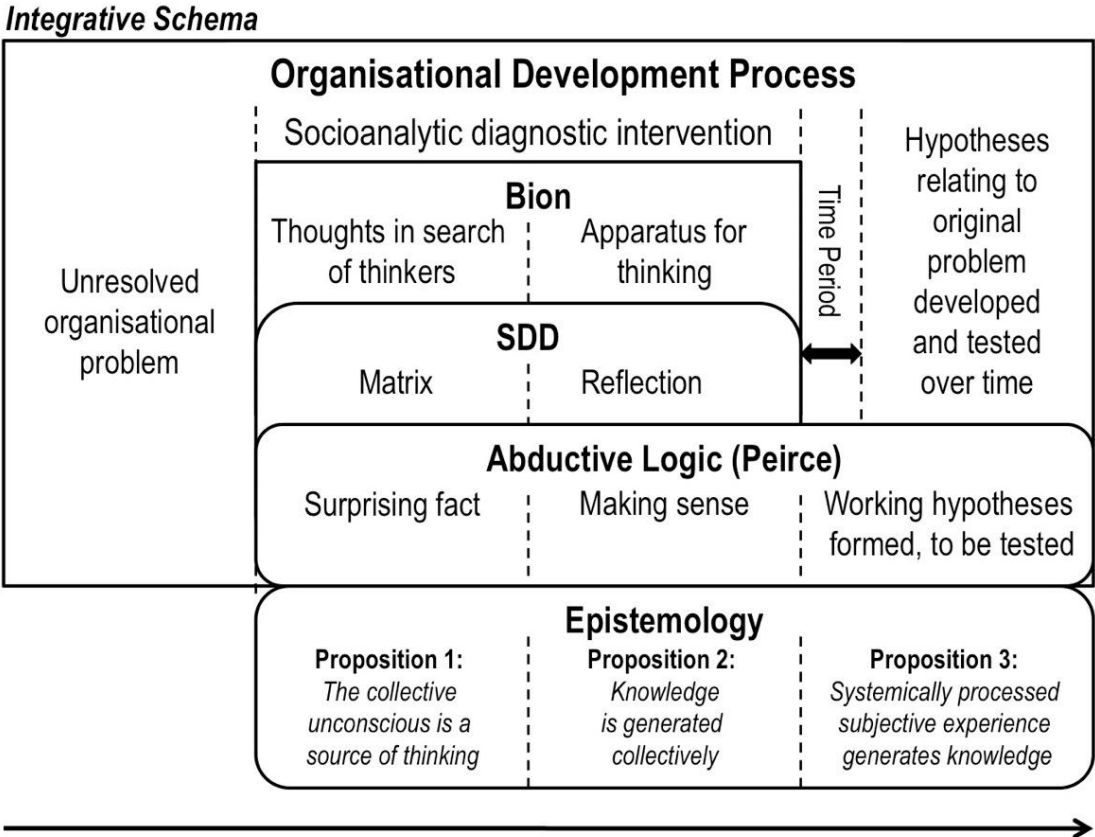


Figure 24 Integrative Schema: Organisational Development Process

Bear in mind that for this study, I took a more limited view. My interest was in discovering whether this praxis would have a value for individual role holders. I did not explore or research its use as an organisational diagnostic tool. So the above formulation is a generalisation that I am making based more on theoretical grounds

than on practical experience, although I have been an organisational consultant for most of my professional life (see Chapter 1).

One could say, therefore, that this generalisation is based on three aspects: the results of my research on SDD with individuals, the theoretical groundings for the praxis of SDD and my extensive experience as an organisational consultant. The next researcher who may wish to pick up on this formulation could certainly attempt to use SDD as a diagnostic intervention. SDD could also well be developed as a research tool of its own.

## 10.2 Conclusions

This study is an original contribution to theory, practice and method. By combining theoretical sources on dreaming, drawing and reflexive praxes, I have built a solid theoretical foundation to a valuable way of working with those going through major life and work transitions. This marks an original contribution to the field of socioanalysis, and also offers a rich resource to those leading training and professional development programs of all kinds. SDD can serve as an excellent compliment to professional development tools focusing on skill development and conceptual understanding. It offers a linking praxis that helps participants chart and identify their own inner transitions, developments and insights over time, as part of an ongoing group. It also makes it evident that one must have a theoretical concept in mind when facilitating such a praxis, in order to competently contain the emotional experience and help participants gain insights.

For almost seven years, I undertook a recursive process of psycho-social research in the role of action researcher, psycho-social academic researcher and student in the development and evaluation of this new socioanalytic praxis called Social Dream-Drawing. Inspired by an experience in a German university classroom, I decided to take this idea seriously and undertake a doctoral study to achieve this. At the time I was not consciously aware that I was at a stage in my own professional development where I was seeking broader and deeper intellectual engagement and learning.

Both from my own experience, knowledge and personal journey, I was deeply committed to the psychoanalytic perspective of Klein and Bion, which underlie Social Dreaming, the socioanalytic praxis on which Social Dream-Drawing is based. At the same time, through my professional experience over time, I was beginning to question some key aspects of this praxis. For example, the insistence that no group dynamics were present in Social Dreaming contradicted my direct experience. In addition, despite the plethora of literature on Social Dreaming, there seemed to be no thoroughly researched study identifying the actual practical uses and benefits of this praxis. Without such research, Social Dreaming could remain essentially underutilised and limited, so to say, to 'true believers'. Over time, as I undertook my research journey, I became more and more committed to the idea that I not only wanted to develop SDD, but I wanted to demonstrate by thorough research how and in what specific ways it would serve as a significantly helpful praxis for organisational role holders.

In bringing the theoretical enterprise together for the reader, I want to discuss the general scaffolding supporting SDD. This structure involves theories of the unconscious, theories of dreaming, theories of thinking, Socio-Technical theory,

theories of drawing, theories relating to transitional space and play, theories of thirdness and the general topics of abductive logic, making sense, and hypothesis testing.

Freud (1900, 1901) first formulated the notion of the unconscious and the idea that dreams are composed, at least partly, of unconscious material. He posited a production process of condensation as a metaphoric explanation for how dream material is compressed, rearranged and manufactured. I like very much the notion of condensation as a sort of Socio-Technical notion to account for the improbability and variety of dream material and their often dramatic representations. Here the original dream thought is condensed into a dream, which is then ‘uncondensed’ in the process of free association and amplification.

From Freud’s point of view, in dreaming energy is being distributed, but nothing very creative is taking place. On the contrary, from my perspective, it is exactly this creative process that mines the truly human and individual nature of the unconscious, what Lawrence (2011:333) calls “the creative, joyful dimension of the unconscious”. As such, I do not subscribe to Freud’s notions that dreams are either composed of forbidden thoughts or unconscious desires. In my perspective, dreams, dream material and dream drawings are there for us to play with, as Winnicott (1971) would say, while at the same time they can illuminate much that is serious in our lives. As one London participant (L3) put it: “So you were inviting us to be playful but you weren’t toying with us” (Event 23).

Problematic always is the question of how to get at this unconscious material. Again Freud offers us the notion of free association, which he actually considers to be a

chain of thoughts with its own logic, however undecipherable, as one route. Just say what comes to your mind and then we can think about it. This is central to SDD as well as the other socioanalytic praxes discussed in Chapter 1. And Jung (1964a) has offered the notion of amplification as a further route, which ties the work with dreams more directly to contemporary events and contexts.

We travel a little bit from Freud to consider the notion of the unconscious as not just an individual entity, but a collective one. This means that societies, as we know from many historical groups (see chapter 2), subscribed to and relied on the collective nature of dreaming. Bion's (1961) formulation of a psychoanalytic understanding of groups, known as basic assumptions, has been further and further expanded to include groups, organisations, and societies. So that we can say that when one offers a dream in a collective context, that material can be seen as relating to the collective unconscious as well as having private aspects.

One can certainly link historical perspectives on dreaming as a collective enterprise to the notion of dreaming for a context. Similarly to the way Winnicott writes about the connecting up of the inner and outer reality in the play of transitional space (1971), one can also say that dreams do not just pop out without some relation to external reality, and, according to Bion (1962), often because there is some problem being worked on, something seeking resolution.

And how do we think of what emerges? Here I draw deeply on Bion's notion (ibid.) of the infinite, undifferentiated floating Beta elements in the unconscious, which somehow go through a process of alpha functioning (similar to condensation). This is a form of thinking. Dreams contain thoughts. These thoughts become available to be

thought about. A separate apparatus takes on that function. For the group, that is the reflection session.

One could also say that this apparatus has the function of making sense of these infinite bits, as Peirce would put it. He uses the strong term of “strange intruder” (1992-1998:154) or “surprising fact” (1931-1935, 1958:189) to characterise what at first cannot be understood, perhaps in a science experiment, for example. But the same idea can be applied to dream material, which then, through a process of abductive logic, can be made sense of by the formulation of hypotheses tested over time. Here we come upon another important Socio-Technical tool for practical utilisation of this praxis, i.e. abductive logic. And when we at the same time consider that these apparently chaotic thoughts may actually be what Bollas (1987) terms “the unthought known”, then we get more of the idea of the importance of context in which dreams come forward and where. My context-creating vehicles have been a pre-identified theme and, with the exception of Bristol, groups of participants from the same professional cohort.

Freud believed that dreams were primarily verbal, although, as I have argued, his work with the Wolf Man could be seen as the very first SDD example, and he acknowledged that dreams had a visual quality. Jung, with a more expansive view of the unconscious, saw dreams’ visual elements as essential for understanding them. While I naturally agree with this, I find his notion that individuals share the same set of unconscious artefacts much too limiting.

I explored the literature on drawing as a new learner and was especially confirmed in the SDD praxis by what I discovered here. The essentially non-linear quality of

drawings suit the often non-linear nature of dreams, which, while sometimes described as narrative entities, often seem lacking a logical set of events. Hau's (2002, 2004) research on the drawing of dreams was a Godsend to this study for at least two important reasons. Firstly, he demonstrated the regression to childlike stances in the drawings of dreams during REM sleep, which led him to conclude that more primitive dream material becomes available in a dream drawing. This connects secondly to his important conclusion that drawings of dreams capture primitive regressive elements in a more convincing way than just by verbalisation. I would cite his research as central to my advocacy of this way of working, aside from how participants have described its value to them.

In terms of the design of the praxis itself, I draw of course heavily on Lawrence's (2011) notion of the matrix and the use of free association and amplification.

Winnicott's (1971) ideas of transitional space and the importance of playing are essential in facilitation and keeping participants feeling safe and contained. His notion especially of the reliable figure fits with my notion of the role of facilitator.

Thirdness factors here in at least two ways. As formulated by Benjamin (2004, 2007) and others, it is a mental space co-created between two, but two what? Here is where the possibilities become very interesting. These mental spaces, in relation to SDD, can be between

- The dream and the dreamer, perhaps a source of the material of the drawing
- The dreamer and the drawing, perhaps to be further elaborated over time and as a result of working with the SDD group.
- The dream drawing and the group, as participants offer their own associations and projections into what they see
- The dreamer and the group, as they begin to explore collective unconscious dynamics stimulated by the drawing.



Secondly, as formulated by Winnicott (1971), the third can be seen as tangibles, i.e. the transitional object or teddy bear that stands for the union with the mother. Here the dream drawing stands for or represents the connection between the dreamer and the dream. It stands outside both, but links them together, so that there is an ability to more fully integrate internal and external processes.

This study combines many theoretical sources on dreaming, drawing and reflexive praxis in an original way. As perhaps the first extensively researched study of a socioanalytic practice, it paves the way for future researchers to delve deeply into other aspects of this approach, particularly using psycho-social research methodologies. In addition, it can serve as an important guidance for older doctoral students, whose special needs and transferences are extensively illuminated.

Undertaking an innovative study under the auspices of the authority and requirements of a university at a later stage of adulthood creates a number of unanticipated challenges. I hope this study may serve as an inspiration for others intent on taking such a journey.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1: Events: March 2007 through April 2012

DATE	EVENT/ LOCATION	PARTIC IPANTS	DATA	# DATA ITEMS
Rose's Breakdown (Jan. 2007)				
1. March 23&24, 2007	1st Netherlands Session, Haarlem	N1, N2, N3, N4, N5	a. Rose's written summary L (first meeting23.24.03.07.doc) b. Photo of dream drawing L (N4) c. Print-out of dream drawing H (N1) d. original dream drawing H (N5) e. original dream- drawing H (N5) f. N1's first d.d. L g. N1's Descrip. of his first dream ?	7
Death of ES				
2. Nov. 17, 2007	2nd Netherlands Session, Haarlem	N1, N3, N6, N5	a. Group written transcript L H (17.11.07 Protokol.pdf)	1
Death of Aileen				
3. March 29, 2008	3rd Netherlands Session, Amsterdam	N1, N2, N3, N4, N6, N5	a. Group written transcript L (29.03.08 Protokol.doc)	1
N3's death; Begin work supervision with Ellen; apply to UWE; begin doctoral supervision; fall on steps at UWE; Publication of "Social Dream-Drawing: a methodology in the making" in Socio- Analysis				
4. Sept. 27, 2009	1st German Session, Solingen	G1, G2, GPC1, G3, G5	a. Tape Recording L b. German Transcript (Imke) L H (2) (Dream+Drwaing fertig.doc) c. English interpretation (B) L (English Protokol of Organizing Meeting.doc) d. Rose's written summary L H (Bristol Summary.11.9.1.doc)	4

UWE Matriculation				
5. November 2, 2009	Half-day Workshop, Santiago	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7	a. Recorder transcript L (Social Dream- Drawing.Chile. Spanish.English.2009.pdf )	1
6. Feb. 14, 2010	2nd German Session, Solingen	G1, G3, GPC2, G4	a. Group written trans. (Deutsch) LH (Protokoll.14.02.2010.do c)	1
7. February 19, 2010	Half-day workshop, Bristol	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	a. Videorecording D (and backup) b. Photos of 2 dream drawings L c. B2's original dd (2 pgs.) H	3
8. March 3, 2010	Skype interview	N6	a. Rose's typed transcript L H (PVH.pre.interviewthoug hts.doc)	1
G2's Husband's death				
9. May 13, 2010	3rd German Session, Solingen	G1, G2, G3, GPC2, G4	a. Group written transcript(German)LH (Protokoll.13.05.2010.do c)	1
10. July 4, 2010	4th German Session, Solingen	G1, G2, G3, GPC2, G4	a. Group written transcript (German)LH (Protokoll.04.07.2010.do c) b. Original drawing (G4) H	2
11. October 8, 2010	1st U.K. Group, London	L1, LPC, L2, L3, L4	a. Tape Recording L b. Transcription (T. Foster) L D(Transcript.08.10.2010. doc) c. Summary of session (L3) L (L3's notes from his dream Drawing 1st session.doc) d. PC's summary of session L (LPC's Notes .8-12- 10.doc) e. Original dream drawings H	5

OPUS Presentation				
12. Dec. 10, 2010	2nd U.K.Group, London	L1, LPC, L2, L3, L4	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcription (T. Foster) D L c. Original dream drawings H d. Hand written dream (L1) H	4
13. Feb. 25, 2011	3rd U.K. Group, London	L1, LPC, L2, L3, L4	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcript (T. Foster) D L c. Original dream drawings H	3
14. Mar. 20, 2011	German Review Session, Solingen	G1, G2, G3, GPC2, G4	a. Rose's written summary L (Summary of German Dreaming and Drawing Review Session.20.03.2011.pdf) b. PC's transcript of session L (GPC2's notes.docx) c. Original Time Line chart H d. G3's prep for time line chart H	4
15. April 25, 2011	Skype Interview	C6	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcript (T. Foster) L D c. Photo of Dream Drawing L	3
16. April 26, 2011	Skype Interview	N2	a. Rose's typed transcript L (N2's Dream.29.03.2008.docx)	1
ISPSO Presentation; Parents' deaths; Article accepted by Organisational and Social Dynamics; Progression Exam				
17. Dec. 9, 2011	London Review Group, London	L1, LPC, L2, L3, L4	a. Tape Recording D b. 2 Transcripts (T. Foster) DL c. Original Time Line Chart H d. Time Line Chart (reduced) H e. 2 Original Dream Drawings H	6

18. Jan. 19, 2012	In-person interview, Wuppertal	G2	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcript (T. Foster) L D c. Partial Transcript (R. Mersky) L*	3
19. Feb. 9, 2012	In-person interview, Dortmund	G3	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcript (T. Foster) L D c. Partial Transcript (R. Mersky) L*	3
20. Feb. 10, 2012	Skype interview	L1	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcript (T. Foster) D	2
21. Feb. 15, 2012	Skype interview	L4	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcript (T. Foster) D c. Partial Transcript (R. Mersky) L	3
22. Feb. 26, 2012	Skype interview	L2	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcript (T. Foster) L D c. Partial Transcript (R. Mersky) L	3
23. Feb. 29, 2012	Skype interview	L3	a. Tape Recording L D b. Transcript (T. Foster) D c. Partial Transcript (R. Mersky) L	3
24. April 3, 2012	Self-interview	Rose	a. Typed transcript (Rose) L	1
25. June 1, 2012	In-person interview	B2	a. Tape recording LD	1

Totals:           5 Different Groups (Netherlands, German, Chile, UWE, London)  
                  11 Interviews  
25 Events with at least 1 source of data  
                  66 different data sources  
                  10 unique forms of data  
                  3 different languages (English, German, Spanish)

**Key:**

GPC1 = First Germany Process Consultant

GPC2 = Second Germany Process Consultant

LPC = London Process Consultant

Bolded names are people interviewed

Personal and professional events during this time.

**Current data format:**

H = hard copy

D = Disc

L = Laptop

This document does not include:

- the numerous reflexive thoughts about these various events, that also exist.
- Photos of participants. Only photos of dream drawings.
- Correspondence to participants

\*For these two items the same notes: I believe this (Verena.my notes.doc) but this is only selections from the interview, same as Jutta's 18c, so not really legitimate sources of data for the doctorate.

Working Definitions:

Transcript: a document that was written "in time" as the session was taking place

Summary: a document written about a session after it had finished.

Special Note; Special Problem?; Special Opportunity? (as yet unknown)

For Numbers 18,19,21,22, and 23, I started my own transcript listening to the original recording, because I was preparing material for the chapter of Susan's book, and Tina's transcripts had not yet arrived. When I began to compare the two sets of transcripts (mine and Tina's), I noticed many mistakes in Tina's work. I wanted to use Tina's transcripts, because I felt they would not be influenced by my own subjective perspective. However, when I found a really clear mistake, I decided to use my own version for the chapter. This difficulty will have to be worked through for the dissertation.

Doctorate.DataAnalysis.Events



## Appendix 2: London consent form

**Dear S, S, M and C**

My name is Rose Mersky and I am in the second year of my doctoral studies at the University of West England in Bristol at the Centre for Psycho-Social Studies. I am conducting research on a methodology that I am developing, that is designed to access unconscious processes in organisational role holders. This methodology, based on Social Dreaming and the Social Photo-Matrix, is called Social Dream-Drawing. I am investigating this due to my long-standing interest in the value of dreams in organisational work and my extensive experience hosting various methodologies of this type.

I have asked you to participate in this research because I would like to work with a native-English speaking group as my control group. In the past, with one exception, I have worked only with non-native English speaking groups. If you decide to do this, you will be asked to participate in 3 Social Dream-Drawing workshops between September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and January 30, 2011, plus a Review Workshop, held approximately six months after the third workshop. Each of these workshops will take place from 14:00 to 18:00. We will work with drawings of dreams brought by you, using the theme “What do I risk in my work?” In addition, for those of you who are willing, I will conduct individual follow-up interviews approximately one year after our final session. For these interviews, I will provide a separate consent form.

I will be audiotaping all 4 sessions (the 3 workshops and the review session). At the moment, of course, I cannot be entirely sure how I will be using the transcripts of our sessions in my doctoral work and in my ultimate thesis. However, I can tell you that you will not be identified by name in my thesis. I will be sharing the tapes and the transcripts with my two supervisors at UWE, but then I will only give them your first names, to protect your identities.

The results of this project will serve as raw data for my analysis of this kind of work. Through your participation I hope to better understand the particular benefits (if any) of this methodology for organisational role holders. I hope that the results of the study will be useful for organisational consultants and coaches. I plan to share my results at international conferences, such as the Organisation for the Psychoanalytic Understanding of Society (OPUS) and the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO) and to publish various articles on what I have learned and how these methodologies should be organised and can be used. Naturally my eventual doctoral thesis will be available at the University of the West of England's Library.

I do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this group, and I guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally. I promise not to share any information that identifies you with anyone outside my research group, which consists of me and my supervisor. F will be taking the role of Process Consultant during these meetings. In this role, she will be offering me feedback on the way I take my role and on the methodology itself.

What I have learned from previous participants is that the themes that are explored in these workshops are often important emerging issues for them. Many have valued the opportunity to work on these issues in both single workshops and in a series of 3 sessions. I very much hope a similar process will occur for each of you, and I encourage you to use this experience for your own development and learning.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you. If you take part, you may stop at any time without penalty. In addition, you may ask to have your data withdrawn from the study after the research has been conducted.

If you want to know more about this research project, please contact me at [rosemer@earthlink.net](mailto:rosemer@earthlink.net). My phone number is +49-21222-60735.

I will bring two copies of the attached consent form to our first meeting for you to sign. You will receive your own copy. Please note the three separate statements for your signature.

Yours sincerely,

Rose Redding Mersky

**Social Dream-Drawing Workshops 2010-2011**

**London, U.K.**

**Rose Redding Mersky**

**rosemer@earthlink.net**

**Three Consent Statements: M.**

**1. General Consent Statement**

**I agree to take part in this project. I understand what I have been asked to do and that I can stop at any time.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**2. Audiotape Consent**

**I agree to audio taping of all 4 sessions.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**3. Audiotape Review**

**I have been told that I have the right to hear tapes before they are used. I have decided that I:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **want to hear the tapes**

\_\_\_\_\_ **do not want to hear the tapes**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mailing Address**

Appendix 3: Parallel processes of mothering, psychoanalysis and Social Dream-Drawing in relation to thinking

***Appendix 3: Parallel Processes of Mothering, Psychoanalysis and Social Dream-Drawing in relation to Thinking***

<b>Mothering*</b>	<b>Psychoanalysis**</b>	<b>Social DD***</b>
mother	psychoanalyst	matrix
child	patient	dream drawer

- \* It is very clear from the 1962 paper, 'A Theory of Thinking', that for Bion the inception of thought processes, or, at least, of processes which will lead eventually to thinking, is firmly based within the dynamics of the mother-infant dyad (Talamo 1997:53).
- \*\* With the containment of the analytic setting, theoretically replicating the original dyadic environment of the baby and child, the process of free association to the dreams, both by analyst and patient, was for Bion a way to make these dream thoughts more consciously available (Mersky 2016. Chapter 2 of dissertation).
- \*\*\* Thinking and thought are integral to the social dreaming matrix. Following Bion (1970), it can be said that the pre-thought elements of the mind (Beta-elements), embodied in the social dreams, are projected on to the matrix which contains them, to be transformed into primitive elements of thought (Alpha-elements). The matrix is the parallel of the breast of the mother experienced in early infancy and, as such, is central to any evolutionary change in thinking. These elements are picked up by participants in the matrix to be used in the construction of their own thinking (Lawrence 2003:617).

Appendix 4: Key theoretical concepts underlying the Social Dream-Drawing Matrix

*Appendix 4: Key theoretical concepts underlying the Social Dream-Drawing Matrix*

i.e. decondensation & amplification; free association collective;	<b>matrix</b>	"alpha elements" (Bion), "unthought known" (Bollas), "Strange Intruder" (Peirce), "associative unconscious" (Long)
transformation into visual object	<b>drawing</b>	Dreams "operate entirely at the level of images" (Symington 1986:97)
condensation compression	<b>dream</b>	Alpha Function: "That function by which sense impressions are transformed into elements capable of storage for use in dreams and other thoughts" (Bion 1963:4)
the infinite	<b>unconscious</b>	"beta elements" (Bion), dream thoughts, unconscious thoughts

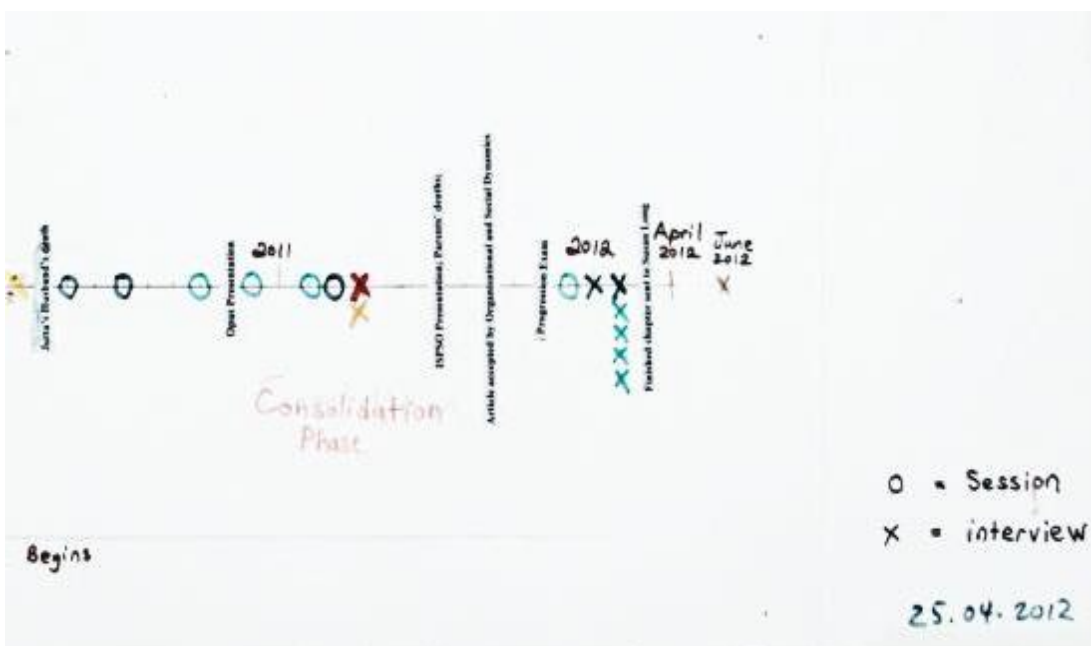
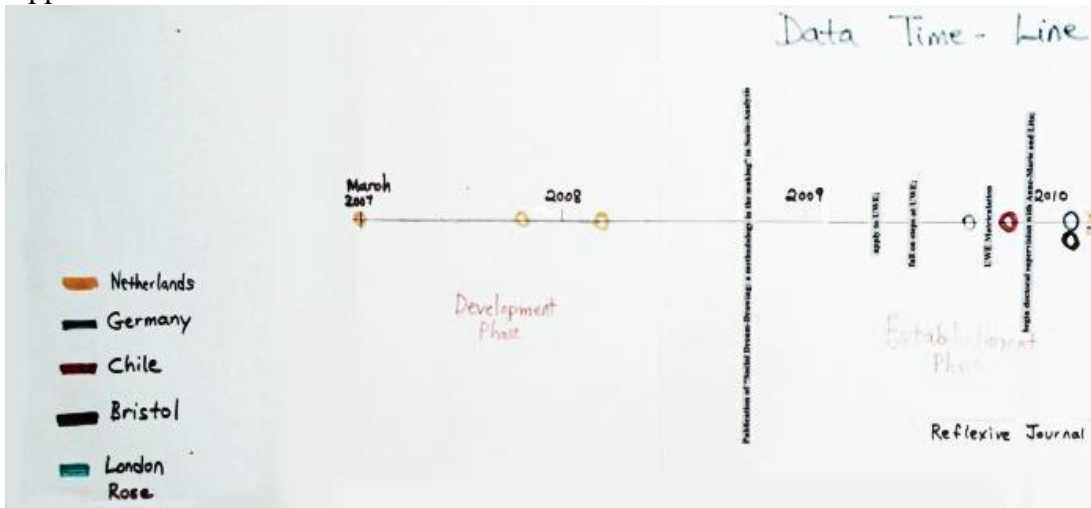


Appendix 5: Key theoretical concepts underlying the Social Dream-Drawing reflection section

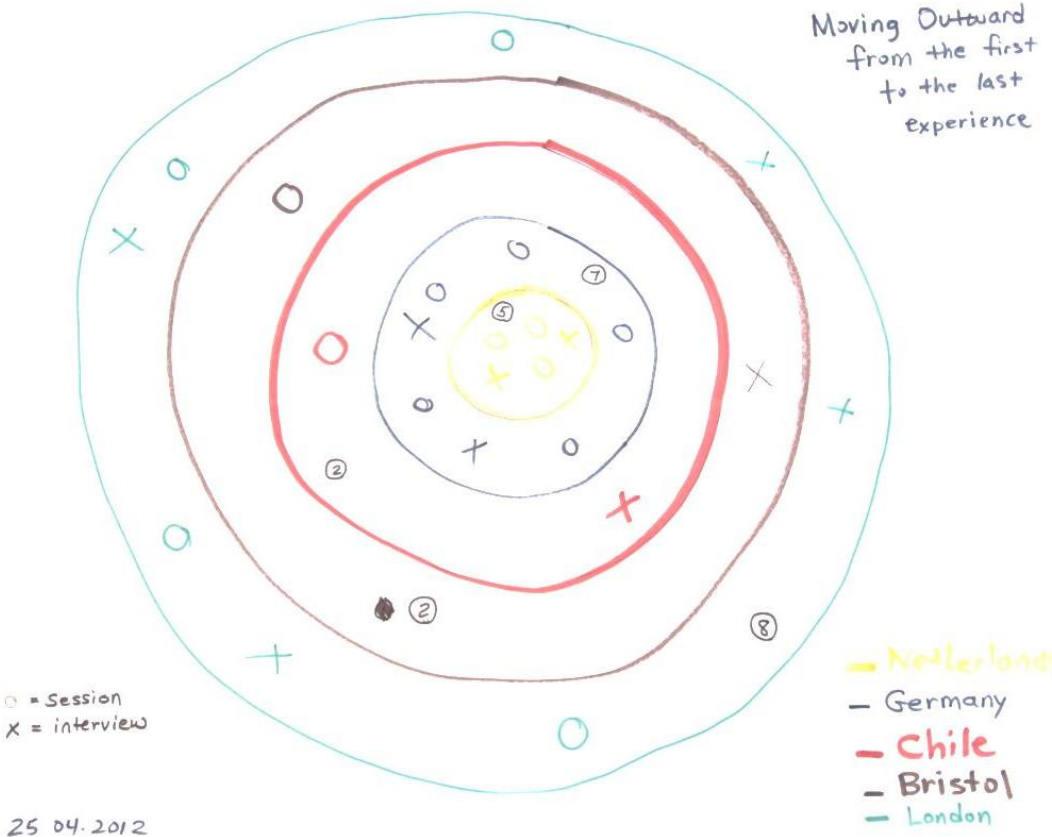
*Appendix 5: Key theoretical concepts underlying the Social Dream-Drawing Reflection Section*

making sense hypothesis formation	<b>Reflection Section</b>	“apparatus for thinking” (Bion), “insight” (Rosenblatt)
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Appendix 6: Data Time Line



Appendix 7: Moving outward from the first to the last experience





# Appendix 8: London Review Session Time Line



Appendix 9: London consent letter

Dear :

Thank you so much for participating in the Social Dream-Drawing workshops. I look forward to meeting you all and beginning our work on Friday, October 8 @ 14:00. We will work together from 14:00 to 18:00.

As you probably have already learned from F, this methodology is an outgrowth of other methodologies being used to access unconscious processes in organisational role holders, such as Organisational Role Analysis and Social Dreaming. I am developing this approach as the focus of my doctoral studies at the University of West England in Bristol.

The theme we will be exploring is “What do I risk in my work?”. Please bring a drawing of a dream – either a very recent one or a previous one that has somehow “stayed with you” over time.

In this first session, we will be learning about the method. In the next two sessions, which I hope we can schedule for December, 2010 and February, 2011, we will deepen our work. Then, seven months later (September, 2011), I would like to meet with you again as a group to review your experience. In that session, we will work with all of the drawings and with any individual journal entries you wish to share. Perhaps later I will hold individual interviews with those of you who are willing.

I sincerely hope that it will be possible for all of you to commit to these sessions and to participate in the whole process. You will be making a great contribution to my research, and I very much hope that you will find the experience enriching.

F. will also be with us in the role of Process Consultant. In that role she will participate with the group in working with the drawings of dreams, but she will also be offering me feedback on the methodology and my facilitation.

For purposes of my doctoral studies, I would like to record our session for later transcription. I will bring a consent form which explains the scope and goals of my research, how the data will be used, and how it will be kept confidential. We will review it together.

## Appendix 10: Free Association Interview questions

**Purpose of Interview:** To explore your experience of the methodology and what, if anything, has come out of that.

Tell me about what it was like for you to go through this process?

Can you remember your expectations for this experience?

Can you recall a particularly significant moment?

Can you recall a particularly confusing/uncomfortable moment?

What do you think worked in this methodology?

How does this experience relate to experiential experiences you have had in similar methodologies?

Can you describe any significant experience you have had since the workshop ended?

Can you describe any effect of this experience in your work since the workshop ended?

Is there anything important that I should have asked you about that I haven't?

Table 1: Social Dream Drawing Workshops for this Study

<b>Location</b>	<b>Period of Time</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Netherlands	23/03/2007 to 29/03/2008	6
Germany	27/09/2009 to 20/03/2011	4
Chile	02/11/2009	3
Bristol	19/02/2010	5
London	08/10/2010 to 09/12/2011	4

Table 2: Number of participants interviewed and not interviewed for this study

<b>Group</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	<b># Interviewed</b>	<b># not Interviewed</b>
Netherlands	6	3	3
Germany	4	2	2
Chile	3	1	2
Bristol	5	1	4
London	4	4	0
Totals	22	11	11

Table 3: Number of interviewed participants whose material was and was not used in this study

<b>Group</b>	<b># Participants</b>	<b># Interviewed</b>	<b># whose material not in findings</b>	<b># whose material is in findings</b>
Netherlands	6	3	1	1
Germany	4	2	1	1
Chile	3	1	0	1
Bristol	5	1	0	1
London	4	4	1	3
Totals	22	10	3	7