



Group Relations Conference Report

Personal Reflections on the 66th Leicester Conference

by Augusto Cuginotti

This is my report on my participation on the 66th Leicester Conference of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations 2012. This is primarily released to people who contributed to my attendance to the conference.

The purpose of this report is:

- to share my personal experience at attending the conference and its subsystems, the connections with my expectations and the stories that were important.;
- to connect the experience with some of my reading on group relations and other works to generate a critical review and open spaces for curiosity and new explorations in the field of working with groups.

Following my review and connection with other theories and ideas you will find a bibliography of suggested readings that informed my writings.

Experiences in The Leicester Model

The model used at Tavistock has been in place since 1957 and is known as the Leicester Model for it was initially explored in conjunction with the University of Leicester, UK. The University does not seem to be directly involved in the conference anymore, but they continue to happen in their grounds every year.

Brief Intro on Group Relations

This section is a cut and paste from grouprelations.com. It is here just to give basic background on the language used during the document. If you are acquainted to group relations this is not for you... skip to the next part. ;)

What is group relations?

Group relations is a method of study and training in the way people perform their roles in the groups and systems to which they belong. These can be work groups, teams or organisations, or less formal social groups. A group may be said to be two or more people interacting to achieve a common task. The basis of group relations theory is that groups move in and out of focusing on their task and a number of different defensive positions based on unarticulated group phantasy. This is explained in more detail below.

How did the study of group relations develop?

Group relations was the phrase coined in the late 1950s by staff working at the Tavistock Institute to refer to the laboratory method of studying relationships in and between groups.

This laboratory method had been developed at Bethel, Maine, from 1947 onwards by the National Training Laboratory (NTL). It was based on the model of intensive experiential learning that had sprung from the work of Kurt Lewin, whose group theories had strongly influenced the early Tavistock staff.

This early group of Tavistock pioneers were social scientists and psychodynamically-oriented psychiatrists who had been using group approaches to tackle practical war-time problems, like officer selection. They later applied their group-based experiences and approaches to post-war social reconstruction. They drew on many sources - work by sociologists such as Gustave le Bon and William McDougall; psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein; and social scientists such as Mary Parker Follett, Elton Mayo and Kurt Lewin.

Gustave le Bon and William McDougall provided key observations about group behaviour by studying the group-as-a-whole in its wider social system and the relatedness of individuals to that system. Le Bon was a French sociologist who developed theories about the behaviour of large unorganised groups in his book *The Crowd*. Le Bon noticed how individuals lose some of their individuality when joining a group, especially a large group, and could be more easily influenced as a result. Le Bon's ideas were criticised as overly negative. In the 1920s McDougall, a British-born American social theorist, developed Le Bon's work and developed important insights about the behaviour of organised groups, which he saw as being different from unorganised groups. This distincti-

on was important and was later used in leaderless groups and the selection of army officers in the second world war.

Freud's contribution to group relations theory is widely debated, but his work does help to illuminate some of the issues that are not discussed by Le Bon and McDougall - for instance Freud's view that the family provides the basic pattern for all groups. Certainly Freud's contribution to psychoanalytic theory, with its emphasis on the unconscious, was important to the development of group relations.

Mary Parker Follett was among the first theorists to apply psychology to the workplace. In her 1925 essay *The Giving of Orders* she observed that workers are more committed to work where they are involved in the development of a solution to a problem at work, which was a revolutionary idea at the time. Elton Mayo's Hawthorne studies, conducted from 1927-1932, showed that the productivity of people at work is related to motivation, feedback and encouragement provided by managers, and the workers' control over their own tasks and environment. These developments in the way people thought about work and organisations helped to shift the focus towards the human elements of work and organisational life.

Kurt Lewin's field theory provided a way in which the tension between the individual and the group could be studied. Lewin felt that "the group to which an individual belongs is the ground for his perceptions, his feelings and his actions" (Lewin, 1947). Lewin felt that groups have properties that are different from their subgroups or their individual members. This finding, and the experiential workshop method of training which Lewin developed, influenced staff at the Tavistock and their development of group relations conferences.

Melanie Klein's object relations theory was another important influence, which built upon and departed from Freud's theories. Klein felt that people learn from early childhood to cope with unpleasant emotions and the confusion and anxiety they create by using the psychological defences of splitting and projective identification.

The psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion made a major contribution by developing models of group work and new theories of group behaviour. In his work at the Tavistock Clinic and later at the Tavistock Institute, Bion found that groups operate on two levels - the work level where concern is for completing the task, and the unconscious level where group members act as if they had made assumptions about the purpose of the group which may be different from its conscious level - the basic assumption group's primary task is to ease members' anxieties and avoid the painful emotions that further work or the end of the group situation might bring. Bion identifies three types of basic assumption: dependency, pairing, and fight-flight. Bion reported his work in a series of articles for the Tavistock Institute's journal *Human Relations*, that later appeared as the book *Experiences in Groups* (Bion, 1961).

What is a group relations conference?

At first glance, a group relations conference may look like any other conference. It has a programme, staff, and large group and breakout sessions. But in other ways it is very different from all other types of conference.

Group relations conferences are designed to provide opportunities for learning by taking part in all the sessions and interacting with other participants and staff members of the conference in a variety of groups and

settings. The conference is seen as an institution in its own right and the sessions are designed to mirror real organisational settings.

Most group relations conferences focus on issues of authority, leadership and organisational life. For example, the aim of the Tavistock Institute's Leicester Conference is to bring together understanding of the conscious and unconscious processes of work groups in human systems, in order to be more effective in working with the underlying dynamics within and between organisations and between these and the wider, indeed global, society. Some other group relations conferences have themes of contemporary social issues.

Group relations conferences are designed to provide opportunities for learning by taking part in a series of group work events in separate systems and in the conference as a whole. Participants are able to study their own and others' behaviour as it happens in the different events. There is always consultancy available in the events, but each member uses their authority to accept what proves useful learning and reject what is not. Through this process members can reconsider the way that they gain or lose power and exercise their authority in various systems in everyday life.

The conference does not focus on the individual's personality. Yet, of course, some of the learning will be personal to each individual. Each member may consider, for example, how early experiences of authority, say with parents or teachers, are carried forward and influence their own behaviour, whether as leader or follower.

Some short group relations conferences are non-residential, but longer conferences (of five or more days) are normally residential. The Leicester Conference, which lasts two weeks, is the longest group relations

conference offered anywhere in the world. Longer conferences offer greater opportunities for in-depth experiential learning.

Recommended Reading: Experience in Groups - W.R.Bion - ISBN-10: 0415040205

If you are getting a Kindle, this book will be included in it.

Description of the Model

The Leicester Model relates to a way of organizing the residential conferences that have been hosted by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations since 1957 based strongly in the work of Wilfred Bion about groups during the second world war. The model has been used by other institutions, affiliated or not with the Tavistock Institute and has been cited as the Tavistock Model.

Organisations connected and hosting conferences using the Leicester Model can be found online at www.grouprelations.com

The original structure of the conference evolved with time and new discoveries on the field of group dynamics and psychoanalysis, but some key characteristics remained the same.

In terms of time length, the original structure was a two week residential conference. It continues to be the case since today for the annual Leicester conference, but the Tavistock Institute and other groups also host shorter residential conferences and also some non-residential ones.

Consultants and Membership

The two basic roles in the conference are the ones of consultant and membership.

Consultants are the professionals working in supporting the membership in bringing their interpretations of what is happening in the 'here and now' sessions and also to support the review and application groups and administrative tasks. The specific role of consultants in each subsystem (type of session) of the conference will be explained below.

Members are all who are attending the conference and therefore being part of the what they call the overall system of the conference.

Agenda

The agenda of the 66th conference can be found at the end of this document.

The days are very full from morning time until evening and usually a short 2-hour break during the day plus the meals and coffee breaks. On the days with no 2-hour break I took time off not going to the Yoga Event in order to stay outside the buildings and walk.

Given the intense mental and emotional energy needed to be present in the 'here and now' during the sessions, it is very easy to become overwhelmed by the experience quite soon. It was important to me to keep checking my energy level and in most of the days I had to retreat and go to bed soon after the sessions were finished.

The agenda also has a day break in the middle of the conference. Some people chose to go back to their families, others to go back to work and some, like me, decided to stay on campus and rest for the day.

Organisers say the day in the middle works for both allowing people to rest from the intensity of the conference, but also to give members the experience of a day outside in the 'real world' and imagine the bridge and/or implications of their membership in their lives outside of the conference.

The people who went to work during the break reported having awkward feelings in relating to colleagues and clients. Many said that, by looking at their relations from the eyes of how groups relate, the unconscious and the 'here and now', some very interesting possible patterns came out as a surprise in a way people were relating to each other.

In my case, staying in the campus and resting proved to be a good choice and allowed me to arrive back to the second half of the conference with energy.

The Subsystems of the Conference

The blocks in the agenda code for the Subsystems of the Conference. The description is given by the Conference Administration:

Conference Plenaries (P)

The Opening Plenary comprises the total conference membership and staff and serves the process of crossing the boundary and joining this temporary conference institution.

The Plenary towards the end of the first week provides opportunities for studying the experience of taking up the role of conference membership within the conference institution as a whole thus far.

The Plenaries towards the end of the conference, in addition to the above, provide further opportunities for reflective study of experiences and the process of endings without applying closure to learning.

Large Study Group (LSG)

The LSG comprises the total membership with 3 consultants and provides opportunities to study the experience of engaging in roles and relationships through the various sub-groups that develop, the alliances and anti-alliances that form, through the emergence of mythologizing, and the processes of anonymising and individuating.

Review and Application Group (RAG)

In Review mode, members will have opportunities to review and reflect on the meaning of their experiences of the various roles they take or find themselves in within the conference. In Application mode, members will have opportunities to relate these experiences to the roles they will be resuming in their professional, organisational and personal lives outside the temporary conference institution. The members of the RAGs will work with a staff consultant.

Design Event (DE)

This event which opens and closes in plenary comprises the total conference membership and staff and provides opportunities for members to explore with staff how influence is part of taking up a role in co-designing the conference structure and exploring the emerging inter-group relationships.

Yoga Event (YE)

This event comprises the total membership and staff of the conference and provides opportunities to practise mindfulness and integrate the psychical-physical-spiritual through non-doing combined with directed energy.

Small Study Group (SSG)

In small groups, each with one consultant, members will have opportunities to study the shifting patterns of relations in the group and their own part in what happens in the 'here and now'. Membership of the SSGs will be determined during the first day of the Design Event.

Sustainable Society Event (SSE)

This event, which occurs in the second week of the conference, provides opportunities to study and experience the relationships and relatedness between the membership and the staff in this temporary conference institution as a fractal of our global society. How inter-dependent are our beliefs and ideas about role, authority and organisation? How does this inter-dependence influence the taking of risk and the taking of leader-

ship in this conference? Staff will manage the event, working in public. Consultancy will be offered. The SSE will open and close in plenary.

Recommended Reading: Learning for Leadership - A.K.Rice - ISBN-10: 1855752336

If you are getting a Kindle, this book will be included in it.

My experiences in the subsystems of the model

Here I share some of the key moments and impressions that happened during each of the subsystems of the conference. I will comment in the position of the chairs as this was indicated to be a source of interpretation on the unconscious of the group during the conference.

Opening Plenaries (P)

The Open Plenary was set with chairs like in theatre style with the membership facing all staff. Although knowing that the reception would be formal, I was still impressed by the welcome and instructions that were giving by reading a piece of paper only. At the time of the end of the session, just like in any other session during the week, the staff just stood up and left the room.

On the first DE Plenary instructions were given the same way and the group was prompted to work on two tasks: decide on how the Design Groups would be created and also who would form Small Study Groups.

The plenary was the first opportunity for the group to self organise and the results were a lot of confusion and anxiety, with some people rushing to take the lead and offer a controlled solution. Not much was decided and the way the SSG were formed was completely random, with people standing and clustering in groups.

Large Study Group (LSG)

The LSG is the major 'here and now' event and evolved as the week went by. The primary task of the group was to talk about the 'here and now' of the group and both members and staff offered interpretations about the moment.

It was really interesting to exercise observation of the self and of the group for the sessions. Also interesting was how interpretations were taken by the group based on the authority of the one interpreting (staff or member but also between members).

Review and Application Group (RAG)

The RAG was the opportunity to step back and look at the process with the eyes of 'there and then', meaning outside of the usual 'here and now' process. The space allowed us to talk about how we perceive the role we were taking in the big group and also how the experience of the conference could support our work in the outside world.

I found out in the middle of the conference that the RAG groups were divided based on the type of work people were doing - because I was at the time working in a school I was placed with academics, PhD candidates and university staff.

The group was really supportive in translating the conference to real life situations and making the exercise of connecting the system of the conference to other organisations we've been part of.

Design Event (DE)

With this event we were invited to divide into groups of our choice and work in a primary task presented in the DE plenary. The task was simply to study how influence is part of taking up roles of co-designing the conference.

The DE was the most challenging one for the membership as it was not easy to pin down what the task was exactly about. The division of the groups were chaotic.

After a lot of discussion in plenary and with people offering some possible actions, I took the initial step of leaving the room stating that I was choosing to simply trust the work of people who presented a structure and was taken my topic to that specific room. I obviously don't know what happened next in the room, but some people followed me and we started a group of our own.

The work on the group was challenging and the output was interesting. We decided in an operating process of someone chairing the sessions which helped on the process and as a final result we came out with a plan to propose to staff the co-design of the final DE plenary, taking place on the day before last of the whole conference.

Yoga Event (YE)

The YE was our week offer of body exercise. It reflected in a range of responses: some people did not like it and decided not to join at all while others felt it was a great opportunity to integrate body in a very mind-focused conference.

In my case the YE was mild in terms of exercise and had the disadvantage of being inside the building. Some of the days I took part of it, but some I decided to stay outside and walk to town or in the gardens of the university campus.

A discussion happened in the group at some point about the importance and relevance of the YE for the conference. The most interesting comment was related to how some people would not dare skipping any other session but felt 'safe' to ignore the Yoga.

Small Study Group (SSG)

SSG were the little mirror of the LSG event. Focused on the 'here and now', it was a very intense process and I was expecting it to give a profound insight about the group and our relationship as members.

Unfortunately this did not happen. The SSG did not have many interesting moments and the group (including myself reflecting back) was avoiding the task and being very shallow in talking about our relationships. I shared my frustration about the lack of commitment that I felt from the members of the group. They, of course, shared the same feeling back to me.

Sustainable Society Event (SSE)

The SSE event started in the same ground of the DE, but with a slightly clearer task and with people already holding the experience of being in small groups the week before.

I joined a group exploring different ways of engaging (through art, play, music, for example) to allow the system of the conference to become more sustainable. It was very interesting to go to other groups and see how the idea and offer could influence them and how their ideas were offered to our group in order to influence us and the conference as a whole.

During this event the management staff worked with open doors, meaning we could sit as observers to see them working and even some members could join them as staff for a session.

I took the opportunity to sit through a whole session to see management work and it was really interesting to see that the group process of the consultants are not at all different from our own processes, including conflicts, miscommunications and hidden assumptions. On the other hand it was really impressive to see how the staff was sharp in allowing all those blockages to be spoken openly and without deep resentment.

Closing Plenaries (P)

The closing plenaries had more participation from the membership who felt they could explore more together with staff. In one of them the chairs were piled at the side of the room and sitting arrangement were up to the members. The dynamic of choosing where to sit was part of the conversation on how members and staff relate.

The DE closing plenary was personally very interesting because our DE group decided to propose to co-design the plenary and the process of going around to get the OK in order for us to represent all members was really interesting, full of feelings of jealousy and mistrust that ended up in a very short but good intervention during the plenary from a small group of 4 members coming from different groups. I was among them.

Reflections on Group Relations

Authority, Role, Organisation

The theme of the Leicester Conference is Authority, Role and Organisation. The aim is to be a learning laboratory where members and staff can study how they take up roles, how authority is perceived and distributed and how that impacts organisation and systems. That also informs how leadership and followership is perceived and how organisations deal with change.

Some other group relations conferences have other themes, but the Leicester one have been the same and proving to be very relevant in organisational life to date. The individual and group perception of authority in relating to others, being that authority a formal one or not, is still an issue that brings many learning opportunities. How groups deal with authority figures, the lack of formal authority and anxiety is also very present in today's organisational life.

The importance of primary task

One of the most interesting things regarding the conference structure and design is the decision (apparently made many years ago) to focus the Leicester Conference in a single overarching task that naturally connects all the small tasks of its subsystems.

Interesting because it shows a very clear purpose at the same time that opens up a possibility of learning in action by looking at the responses to the task in the here and now.

Imagine that I am interested in what makes a good kitchen. So I will get together with other people interested in the same topic and we will talk about designing and structuring a kitchen while actually doing it. So we would talk and build the kitchen with intervals of 'here and now': how are we actually designing and structuring this kitchen here and now?

I think this is a major breakthrough in creating learning spaces. It takes the place of talking about past or future kitchens (now only in the abstract, through pictures, etc) and of walking a linear path: designing, building and then reflecting.

If the process could look good in manual work (like I expect building a kitchen would be), imagine in conversational work - in work that it is about our individual and collective perception of things. It would be like exploring group work while in group work, bringing patterns and theories back to what is happening here and now.

Sound obvious, I guess, but invites to creation and re-creation more than the linear model.

The avoidance of the primary task

One recurrent thing that happened throughout the conference was the avoidance of the primary task. The task to study the group, authority and influence of its members at the same time it develops is a hard one and requires energy and presence.

W. Bion wrote about ways a group avoids the primary task in order to avoid anxiety. One of the known ways to cope with anxiety is by choosing a leader to deposit the group's 'trust' and guide all members to the desi-

red path. This was the most common way to deal with the anxiety of working in a challenging task in our group.

This 'trust' in an appointed leader is in reality a subterfuge, a shortcut using a false figure of power, an author who, in telling the story as a monologue, eventually become an eternal hero or villain, an incompetent leader or an excuse for the disintegration of the group itself.

Looking as a participant, it is the fear of the unknown the generator of the leadership figures we conceive today. Real trust in oneself and others as co-authors has as a prerequisite the ability to entertain uncertainty as something beyond a mere threat.

This competence is crucial in our way of action. People who become competent in seeing uncertainty as more than a threat can interpret events in ways that generate new possibilities for action in the future.

Who owns this task anyway?

One suggestion around the reason for the buildup of anxiety around a primary task - not only in the case of a ill defined task - could be the questions: why am I here? Who owns this task anyway?

Could the avoidance of the task be a result of not 'owning' the creation of the task? It would be easy to argue that if people would have the chance to discuss and agree on the task they would undertake during the conference, they would not feel anxious about tackling it when the time comes.

Of course it does not work - the task of setting up the task would then be the generator of anxiety simply because creating things with others na-

turally generate some anxiety as we, as individuals and collectives, are less capable of predicting the output of the venture.

Another way of looking at it is to suppose that, in attending the conference, I am trusting the conference staff to prepare a task that, if not exactly as shown in the invitation to the conference, is clearly aligned with it. By accepting to attend I am agreeing with this starting point.

Trust that the invitation for the task will be aligned with the invitation to the conference is as far as one needs to go. From the invitation to the task onwards it is a matter of co-responsibility of staff and members to work on the task at hand.

So no excuse to link anxiety with lack of participation. We are left with the suggestion that anxiety is our fear result of a prediction of a future that could bring us harm. We have to sit with it and invite groups to do the same.

The perception of leadership

I don't like to write about leadership because it always sounds cliché to me. This will be no different. :)

My perception of leadership and followership at the conference had to do with people or groups of people who decided to take risks, either by making a declaration, a choice or a physical act.

The taking risks may link to the idea of leading through example, acting and inspiring action in others. I could see examples of tentative leader-

ship that worked and some that didn't and I won't be able to highlight the characteristics of the people or situation that made a leadership move 'work', but it was clear that some people had more authority than others and some risks were perceived as more powerful than others as well.

The two situations I was involved in leadership and the general feeling:

1. During the open plenary of the DE, as I stated on the previous section, I took the lead in leaving the room with a statement of support of other people's work and an eagerness to start working.

This move seems to have spoken to the group as the people who joined me in the group started calling it 'my' group and declared they followed me because I seemed to be know what I was doing. The latter, as any 'leader' knows, is not 100% the case.

2. During the end of the SSE events, I took one of the sessions out with other people to go back to the DE task and invite the conference staff to co-design the DE Plenary on the day before last.

When I was presenting my idea as an opportunity for my SSE group, the response was a strong opposition and critique that was beyond expected. Later we reflected together and apparently they felt I was abandoning the group for something else rather than engaging in a task that could benefit the whole member's community.

It took me some time to recover from the shock of being told off with such negative energy. My luck was that this reaction was exactly the same a colleague got when presenting to her group. Ha-

ving someone else to share my outside-ness was key to support us in keep going.

So here are the 'leader tips':

- Listen to what is happening to you and to others and take action at the time that appears appropriate. If the listening is accurate and the time is precise, it is your action that will inspire the action of others.
- Expect opposition and critique of your actions as much as adoration and respect. Being drawn to either one is a mistake. Focus on the critique (that will always be there) and you stop listening to what is important; focus on the adoration and it becomes about you something that does not belong to you.
- There will be times of doubt. For those times you have to find the people, space, ritual, etc that will bring remembrance. Those are colleagues, friends, partners, God...

Event Leadership - Issues among Staff

It has been my observation that organisations and systems tend to mirror the style of the leadership convening the group, not only in inducing direction on the organisation but also modus operandi.

As mentioned, staff were group relations consultants who would offer their interpretations about the here and now. Those interpretations were

received with a seal of authority given by their role and expertise and usually would influence the group in greater scale than interpretations made by members.

By the end of the conference it was clear (and eventually admitted) that the staff was holding issues among themselves that might have influenced (more than usual) their interpretations during the conference.

The hypothesis that this was happening was presented by some members (including myself) on the grounds of their interventions, specially during the LSG, being apparently disconnected to my (and some other people's) perceptions. From a consultant point of view, it might have been our way to confront their authority.

What was really going on in our group is always a mystery, some would say it's all invented, but it was a good exercise to acknowledge the possibility that the staff could transfer their issues to the group and wonder if this could be dissolved by the issue being made conscious to the whole group.

Using data to give interpretations

Being part of the LSG I could exercise something that I found very interesting the first time I joined a group relations study group, the taking up of data and to offer an interpretation of the moment to myself and sometimes to the whole group.

Obviously the data is taken through your eyes and already sensing a possible interpretation - other notes might agree or disagree with the first

impression and so on. So no rocket science, just mild social science. Nevertheless you can always test your hypothesis with the group and see where the conversation goes.

I started my questioning by looking at whether the interpretations given by us to what is happening in the group is bringing the unconscious to the conscious (as the Model and psychoanalysis indicates) or if it is just our interpretation of the happening after it has happened and based in the power of our individual and collective narratives.

I am going to add my notes gathered through the conference down here. The majority won't make much sense, but in hope that some do, here they are.

The Leicester Conference - Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

Here and now in the room -> not to unveil the unconscious of what's happening but to define an interpretation narrative of what's been.

With the hypothesis that staff (as perceived figures of authority) would make their narratives more present.

-> An experienced group leader who can elaborate good hypothesis and invite others to do the same. In what circumstances do we want this?

Is this that you are bringing to the group used as defense or as a resource?

Day 2 LSG

being in & out this group fantasy of being all the same what is
my role? how am I different? worried about the immediate future?

what is the war? role & responsibility being free but yet belong
what are the rules of the game? are we not at the same level? let's fi-
nish before the consultants (fight?) engagement & disengagement
how do I find my way? walking in the dark easy -> light path
difficult -> dark -> don't know where I'm going talk about the role of
consultancy so we don't talk about our own.

Design Event Plenary

Aim: This event which open and closes in plenary comprises the total conference membership and staff and provides opportunities for member to explore with staff how influence is part of taking up a role in co-designing the conference structure and exploring the emerging inter-group relations.

My group: How group relations support/inform our work on creating spaces for (org/community) changes? on Hastings 1

Day 3 LSG

Have a sewing kit in the room + why am I here -> if you don't use it being here, it's a waste

why are we talking about race / religion? Recognize the differences

How are we arriving and coming here? Is it worth coming in?

Are you getting your money's worth? I invested a lot to be here...

Through me a fucking bone -> I'm paying -> smile to me (relating to consultants)

It's a privilege -> finding the value of being here

People are working and we are just sitting here -> are we really entitled to be here?

Do we want to be here? How can the "privileged" relate to others?

Feel entitled to be here. Privilege to be here + struggle.

“People can think whatever they want” People can see whatever they want of me. How am I holding myself?

Day 4 LSG

Can you sustain and exist without people recognizing you?

Which seeds we want to water? What is the sacrifice? It's not like I can lose anything... Surrender to the pain...

Do we want to kill the native speakers? Producing / Reproducing - do I exist?

They've been 66 conferences - are we reproducing? Are we unique?

The new ones will be sacrificed. I'm afraid of not be able to avoid seeing.

Fear of what people might do with my insights?

Can I stand in my 2 feet without my father (consultant)? Can father and son collaborate?

Day 5 LSG

Is the management responsible for everything? Management being parents. Members child.

Small that doesn't matter... keep the parents busy (to prevent social intercourse)

Other groups are doing better than this group (child clash?)

Play in a serious way. Can my inside conflicts coexist?

The formation of gangues. Gangue because people think they don't fit in this society (context)?

The road to frustration is paved with extreme ambition. K.

Day 6 LSG

Creating a new rule from the game: allow ourselves to speak.

Speaking the differences. Sorry to take up the aggression - > being overly polite.

Never talk to strangers -> they are not strangers anymore

Dam blocking the water. "The Dam will burst"

Whether we can really be understood by the other. Passive and Active aggression.

(After Break)

Day 7 LSG

Story of braveness -> exploring anger and responsibility Can I have involvement without responsibility?

Numb involvement without responsibility guilt Responsibility to be present

How do we allow space for people to be fully present?

SSE Plenary

Aim of our group: We will provide innovation to create a sustainable function of a system through recruitment, desire, capability.

Day 8 LSG

This is not real. Desire for natural authority to keep order and ensure safety.

Respect authority / respecting the structure versus

Challenge authority / redefine structure

Restructuring the house (ceiling) so authority (the tall ones) cannot come to the party.

I can leave this room right now.

The natural authority coming from the acceptance of the task.

Dropped all the structure and chaos emerged / organised crime.

We want to give power to an oppressor so we can keep calm and carry on vs. fear of being oppressed by the other group?

Where is the label that I want to be under the authority?

Want to join my subscription but don't want to talk.

Day 9 LSG

Break the coconut to see the juice. I don't like the dictatorial...

Do we always have to split up to be creative? When you realize you are falling, dive.

This is just an experiment.

Day 10 LSG

I've been playing a game that I didn't know the rules.

Some have been battling without armor, others not. Evolution rather than creation.

It was more exciting when I couldn't see anything. The stronger and the weaker.

Secrecy x Transparency Secret and not-knowing in me Exposing the secrets

Competition with others and with myself. Competition gets me moving.

Day 11 LSG

Many didn't know it was the last. What do we learn about boundaries?
(from here to there?)

Should I leave the group and go alone.

Nothing will change (things will go back to routine) vs. It'll never be the same again with this new learning

Body system representing our system in here

Envy of differential learnings. Our shit is the compost for our growth.

Closing Plenary 1

Put the agenda aside. How do we feel about coming back to work this week?

When there is freedom of choice, the unconscious is free to play.

What things we are aware of... narrative in our minds...

A relationship of maturity rather than age. Authority given to age/maturity.

The dualities and characteristics are not our identities.

The importance of disclosure and the importance we give to it.

Closing Plenary 2

DE Event creating the fragility of self-organizing groups / communities. Are we hierarchical species? The difficulty of setting up roles / changing roles.

Different types of silence.

Acknowledge the learning paths is what makes us human too.

On the overall theory

If you had read my articles and have access to the documents I have been reading, my explorations are now on dialogical relations and the importance of language and communication to define human systems.

As mentioned above I have made parallels between the idea of conscious and unconscious processes and the idea of social and group narratives, giving the interpretation of actions more like the ongoing telling of a story than on hidden forces that emerge to our consciousness.

There are similarities in a way that our present concerns and issues are communicated through language and could also be explained by searching for unconscious reasons, but also differences in giving to our unconscious the lead in our choices rather than the relationship between worldviews happening at the moment of the conversation.

It will be a pleasure to explore with you the implication of these thoughts into groups and social systems.

Explore more and bibliography

Apart from the two books mentioned above* I am attaching the recommended bibliography given to the conference members this year.

*that you will have in your Kindle

Authority Role Organisation

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

It is not necessary to do any preparatory reading before the conference.

Books in **bold** might be regarded as especially relevant.

Selected books can be bought on Wednesday, 2 May during the conference from Karnac Books (credit card facilities available) and at: www.karnacbooks.com

Forthcoming:

Aram, E., Baxter, R., & Nutkevitch, A. (eds) (July 2012) *Belgirate III: Tradition, Creativity and Succession in the Global Group Relations Network*. Karnac Books

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

	Fri 20 April	Sat 21	Sun 22	Mon 23	Tues 24	Wed 25	Thurs 26	Fri 27	Sat 28	Sun 29	Mon 30	Tues 1	Wed 2	Thurs 3
2012														
<i>7.30 Breakfast</i>														
8.30 – 10.00		LSG	LSG	LSG	LSG	LSG			LSG	LSG	LSG	LSG	DE Plenary	Conf. Plenary
<i>10.00 Coffee</i>														
10.30 – 12.00	*12.00 Registration	DE Plenary	SSG	SSG	SSG	SSG		LSG	SSG	SSG	SSG	SSG	RAG	RAG
<i>12.00 Lunch</i>	*1.00 Lunch													12.00 – 2.00 Farewell Lunch
1.30 – 3.00	*2.30 – 4.00 Conference Plenary	DE			DE	Plenary before the break		SSG	SSE	SSE		SSE	Karnac Books	
<i>3.00 Break</i>														
3.30 – 4.30		YE	YE	YE	YE	*3.30 – 5.00 RAG		YE	YE	YE	YE	YE	*3.00 – 4.30 Conference Plenary	
<i>4.30 Tea</i>	*4.00 Tea													
5.00 – 6.30	*4.30 – 6.00 LSG		DE	DE	DE			SSE Plenary	SSE	SSE	SSE	SSE	RAG	
<i>6.45 Dinner</i>														
8.00 – 9.30	RAG	SSG	RAG	DE	RAG			SSE	RAG		RAG	SSE Plenary		

* Note different event times on: Friday, 20 April, Wednesday, 25 April and Wednesday, 2 May

Key:

LSG: Large Study Group
YE: Yoga Event

RAG: Review / Application Group
SSG: Small Study Group

DE: Design Event
SSE: Sustainable Society Event

11 June 2012

THE LEICESTER
2012
CONFERENCE

Authority Role Organisation

Coalition, Cooperation and Sustainable Society

This is to certify that AUGUSTO CUGINOTTI attended the two-week residential conference *The Leicester conference: Authority Role Organisation* that took place from 20 April – 3 May 2012 at Beaumont Hall, University of Leicester, England.



**Mary McRae and Mannie Sher
Directors
The Leicester conference 2012**



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