The Social Unconscious – A Post-Foulkesian Perspective.

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Abstract: The paper begins with a critique of orthodox renditions of the social unconscious which a) retain divisions between a personal sphere and a social sphere, and b) which are said to be in conflict with each other. The ways in which these are instituted in various psychoanalytic and group analytic theorizations are briefly delineated. Next, the two versions of the social unconscious (an orthodox and a radical) that are found in Foulkes are described. Elias' notion of process reduction is then used to deconstruct the philosophical basis of the orthodox version of the social unconscious. The paper proceeds by drawing on Elias and Matte Blanco to extend the thoughts of Radical Foulkes. This is done by bringing the notion of power into the theoretical schema; this is followed by examining the impact of the notion of power on Foulkes' conception of the communicational field. Finally, the paper describes the consequences of power on the construction of the psyches of individuals as well as interpersonal relations.

Key Words: Social Unconscious, Power, Elias, Communicational Field, Process Reduction

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It is an irony that the phrase 'the social unconscious' reproduces the very difficulties that it seeks to redress. The first difficulty that the notion of the social unconscious seeks to compensate for, is the absence of the social in much psychoanalytic discourse. Thus at the very least the phrase brings some notion of the social into the discursive frame. However, the way that the idea of the social unconscious is utilized tends, at times, to reinforce the very division that it was intended to dissolve: the dichotomy between the individual and the social. When the social is given a presence in some psychoanalytic and group analytic theorizations, then it is often construed in a way that supposes that the interests of the individual are of necessity in conflict with the interests of the larger social group; thus if the social group flourishes, then it is supposed that the individual has inevitably suffered in some way, and *vice versa*.

These ideas are found in the very beginnings of psychoanalysis, in Freud's first instinct theory. The duality here is between the self-preservative instincts(sometimes called the ego instincts) and the sexual instincts (1910). The concern of the first instinct was to preserve the individual self, whilst the concern of the second instinct was to perpetuate the species through procreation. Freud says that the two instincts have no regard for each other, and so each unwittingly finds itself in conflict with the other. Most crudely, this might occur when the organism's urge to express the sexual instinct puts its own self in danger. Thus this instinct theory encapsulated the idea that the interests of the group are inevitably and necessarily in conflict with the interests of the individual, and instituted it in psychoanalytic metapsychology.

Another example is found in Freud's second topographical model (1923). Here he went so far as to give the social a presence in the psyche in the shape of the superego; however, the requirements of the superego (civilizing and socializing constraints) were said to be in direct conflict with the desires of the Id which were said to be biological, animal like and *self* serving. So one can see that this too is a description of an antithetical relationship between the individual and the social. One can witness a further slippage from the idea of individual *interests* to that of individual *identity*. Now it is supposed that individual identity, being unique, is something one is born with; this entity is called variously one's nature, or authentic self or true self. Next, it is supposed that this authentic 'nature' is thought to be diluted or corrupted or damaged in some way by the developmental processes which socialize the individual. Thus the psychological developmental process itself is conceived of as the battle between nature and nurture within the individual, and is a form of the larger conflict between individual and society. This is the philosophy of essentialism.

Some grounds for this kind of view can be found in a reading of Freudian developmental theory. The Freudian infant begins life in an autistic space, at birth the Freudian infant is a closed system with *no* established emotional

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pathway between the inside and the outside. This infant begins life 'all nature', and is faced with society – 'nurture'.

Moving further along the spectrum, Klein says that the infant comes into the world with an emotional pathway pre-programmed into the instincts; i.e. the instincts are said to have images of objects of satisfaction embedded within them. Although this links the inside and the outside, it does so in a particular way – it is saying that the external has an *apriori* existence in the internal. Further, although these objects are *external* to the infant, they are not sociological objects, but biological ones – the breast, penis etc.

Further down the line, the relational theories like those of Winnicott and Fairbairn begin with a notion of an intersubjective space. However, the space that is theorized tends to be a dyadic one, consisting once again of asocial biological relations between entities like mother, father and baby. The mother-infant dyad floats in a sociological vacuum.

What all these theories would say, is that the biological is always mediated by the social. This sounds good, but actually it does not go nearly far enough for Foulkes. This is because the formulation keeps the biological and the social in two separate territories, with the social coming *second* onto the stage and acting on a pre-given biological.

The social unconscious according to Orthodox Foulkes

Foulkes tried to move past these ways of thinking to give primacy to an idea of the social in the developmental process. However, he succeeded in this only partly. It is possible to discern two group analytic theories in Foulkes (1948, 1990), the tenets of one being in conflict with the tenets of the other. The first of these I have called Orthodox, as it retains its allegiances with individualism and instinctivism, and the second of these I have called Radical, as it challenges the orthodoxy that prioritized the individual over the social group (Dalal, 1998). There is a further advantage gained by following this process, which is that each of the resulting two abstracted theories has an internal coherence and self-consistency which resolves many of the contradictions found in his writings as a whole.

So, whilst Orthodox Foulkes talks about the social unconscious, he still retains the notion of a Freudian unconscious and makes the two distinct from each other. He says:

'the group-analytic situation, while dealing intensively with the unconscious in the Freudian sense, [also] brings into operation and perspective a *totally different area* of which the individual is equally unaware… the individual is as much compelled and modelled by these colossal forces as by his own *id* and defends himself as strongly against their recognition without being aware of it.. *One might speak of a social or interpersonal unconscious*' (Foulkes 1964, p.52; italics added).

Thus the phrase '*social* unconscious' suggests the presence of an unconscious that is *not* social, or prior to the social, or outside the social in some way. It is in

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this sense that the notion of the *social* unconscious reproduces the difficulty that it seeks to overcome. As we will come to see with Radical Foulkes, there is only one unconscious, and it cannot be other than impregnated with the social.

Many contemporary discussions on the nature of the social unconscious continue to utilize this orthodox way of thinking, saying that there are two or more aspects to the psyche, one personal and the other social, and that the social part is different from, and in conflict with, the personal part. But in doing so, they only repeat what Freud said almost a hundred years ago.

Instances of this orthodoxy can be found in articles in the recent special edition of *Group Analysis* 34(1), March 2001 whose subject is the latest thinking on the social unconscious. Volkan, for example, differentiates between 'individual and large-group identity' (p.80). He says that individual identity is a garment that fits one snugly and is 'the basis of their inner sense of sustained sameness. The second layer is a loose covering made of the canvas of the large group's tent…through which the person shares a persistent sense of sameness with others in the large group' (p.83). Tom Ormay talks of two drives – the self centred drive, which is said to separate and form the ego, and the social drive which unites (p.173-4). Here, it seems to me that apart from changing the word from instinct to drive, Ormay is doing no more than repeating Freud's first instinct theory.

These ways of thinking are so powerfully habituated in us that even when we try to get past this dichotomy, we continually fall into this way of speaking, *and therefore thinking*. For example in the same journal, Dennis Brown uses the phrase: 'the unconscious culturally-determined *part* of the personality' (2001, p.31; italics added) – thus implying that there are parts of the personality that are *not* culturally determined. Earl Hopper speaks of 'the constraints of social systems on individuals and their internal world' (2001, p.9) thus implying that individuals, internal worlds and social systems are three different kinds of things.[1]

This orthodoxy is often represented through the analogy of sculpting with clay. The clay stands for the raw material provided by nature (constitutional aspects that one is born with), which is then moulded into particular shapes by social forces. The arguments about nature vs. nurture usually take place within this frame, where the disputes in the main are about how hard or pliable the clay (human nature) is. But there is a consensus and agreement between the disputants, which is that 'the clay' and the forces that mould it are different *types* of things. This last point is taken to be a self evident truth.

This model invites the use of the notion of 'constraint' to describe what is taking place in the developmental process. Thus we might say things like the social

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[1] These last points are not meant to discount the many valuable ideas presented in Brown and Hopper's articles.

constrains the sorts of shapes that the clay can take; the word constrain here is being used in the sense of 'limit'. However, as Earl Hopper cautions, *constraint* is 'not meant to imply only 'restraint', inhibition, or 'limitation', but also 'facilitation', 'development' and even transformation of the sensations into feelings' (p.10-1).

This more powerful use of constraint moves us towards the territory of Radical Foulkes. Radical Foulkes would say that that they clay itself (biology) is construed out of social forces; further, the reverse is also the case – the social is construed by the biological. But how can this be? Unfortunately, Foulkes himself does not expand on these ideas, but as we will see a little later, Norbert Elias does. However, before attending to that issue, I will say a little more about Radical Foulkes' rendition of the social unconscious.

The social unconscious according to Radical Foulkes

The essence of his idea is captured in this one sentence: '[the] group, the community, is the ultimate primary unit of consideration, and the *so-called inner processes* in the individual are internalizations of the forces operating in the group to which he belongs' (1971:212). With the use of the phrase 'so-called' Foulkes has cut the old psychoanalytic orthodoxy to the quick. He is saying that the things that look like the instincts – the so-called natural ways of behaving – are internalizations of group forces. Radical Foulkes says that the Id itself is acculturated. If this is the case then one cannot talk about a Freudian unconscious that is different from a social unconscious, nor can one talk about there being two parts to the psyche – one personal and one social (like Ormay does), nor can one talk about an individual identity that is distinct from a group identity (like Volkan does). Radical Foulkes would say to Volkan that there is only one garment.

But now we need to bring in Elias because he goes much further than Radical Foulkes. Elias would say that the analogy itself is deeply flawed because it is based on a dichotomy between body (self) and garments (identifications made by self). Elias (1978) would say that these mistaken ways of speaking (and so thinking), arise out of what he calls *process reduction*.

Process reduction

An aspect of *process reduction* consists of the fact that our minds see 'states' when there are only processes. Our minds are such that can only deal in finitudes, although the processes of existence are infinite. Consequently, our minds are obliged to break up infinite processes into bits and pieces (states). Bits and pieces have beginnings, middles and ends. It is often the case that we *unthinkingly* take these beginnings to be absolute, of having nothing to do with what has gone before, and of having an actual reality. We are obliged to do this, because if we constantly kept in mind what has gone before, we would be

embroiled in an infinite process, and our thought would never be uttered. It is for exactly this reason Elias cautioned against looking for absolute beginnings.[2]

Having abstracted 'states' out of processes we are prone to the error previously mentioned: of supposing that the abstracted elements can have an independent existence from each other, from which follows a further error in which we perceive the abstracted states as being antagonistic to each other. This is true of many of the great philosophical dichotomies: individual-society, nature-nurture, body-mind, and so on.

The sequence is as follows: take any number of circles of different sizes drawn on a piece of paper. Each has an 'inside' and an 'outside'. We could say now that the 'inside' is in direct *conflict* with the 'outside' – one gets bigger at 'the cost' of the other getting smaller. However, in order to exist, the thing called the 'inside' needs its apparent opposite, the thing called the 'outside'. Without one there cannot be the other. Whilst it is clearly nonsensical to talk about a circle's 'inside' and 'outside' being in conflict with each other, this is exactly the sort of thinking that leads one to *imagine* that biology and society are antithetical to each other.

Going further, it is also the case that each of the circles has a particular and unique 'area'. In saying this we have abstracted several elements (area, circumference, radius etc.) from the whole. So far so good. The error lies in the next step which is to imagine that there is such a thing as area *per se* which *exists* with no reference to any actual shapes at all; we mistakenly imagine that area can have a life on its own without the presence of the other abstractions – diameter, circumference and so on. Further, because each particular circle has its own unique area, it could then appear that the particular area of each circle is but a manifestation of the general *idea* of area. This then leads to the next error of thinking that the general is prior to the particular, and the idea-of-a-thing is more fundamental than the thing itself. Reality has been reversed by the device of forgetting that the generalized has been derived and abstract*ed* from innumerable particulars, and by imagining that the abstracted can have a life separate from that which it has been abstracted (area can only exist because of the presence of the circumference, and *vice versa*). It can be seen that Bion's notions of thoughts looking for thinkers and the contained looking for a container, poetic though they might be, are in fact expressions of these fallacies.

Finally, because these generalizations are true for all historical circles – past, present and future – they have the appearance of existing outside time. This is exactly the kind of erroneous thinking that must have led Plato to say that the *idea-of-the-thing* is immutable and eternal. This is his philosophy of Ideal Types in which the material objects on earth are said to be poor facsimiles of the Ideal. In this way of thinking, purity can only be found in the *idea* rather than the

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[2] Zeno's paradox where he used logic to 'prove' that movement did not exist, is an outcome of not noticing that the states he saw were only a series of snapshots of an ongoing process.

actualization of the idea, and when the idea is made material, then it is thought to have been corrupted in some way. Bion expresses exactly this philosophy in suggesting that 'it is indispensable to have a thinker to produce a *lie*; whereas *true* thought does not require the prior existence of a thinker to think it' (quoted in Grinberg, Sor & de Bianchedi, 1985, p.69; italics added).

Sociology in biology

Psychoanalysis has had a lot to say about how our sociology is infused by our biology (instincts, drives, sublimation, etc.), but has hardly considered the reverse – how our biology is infused with our sociology. Indeed the very idea sounds bizarre because it appears self evident that biology precedes sociology in the sense that animals evolved before humans, and before there were civilized humans there were primitive uncivilized humans.

One can come to understand how this counter-intuitive state of affairs comes about by making use of the idea of process reduction.

The moment of birth of an individual is critical to all theories of the psyche. We are prone to seeing this moment as an absolute beginning in the Eliasian sense, where a primarily biological being (the new born infant) is confronted with a fully formed sociology. It appears to us that the moment of birth constitutes the first meeting between these dominions, and that a bloody battle must inevitably ensue between them.

In contrast to this line of thinking, a post-Foulkesian analysis begins much earlier in time and in the mechanisms of the evolutionary process. The argument is this: our biology is not a god or nature given thing. It has evolved. It is a process. Let us begin by asking this question: why do things evolve in the direction they do? The answer, simple but not simplistic, is that they are useful to survival. And one of the things that is clearly visible all and everywhere is that human beings live in groups, and have always lived in groups. Why do we live in groups? Because to live and work in groups enhances the possibility of survival.

In other words our biology is programmed to make us social beings. [3]

As Elias says: 'Humans.. are made *by* nature *for* culture and society.… human society is a level of nature' (Elias 1991, p84-5; italics added). This then is the astonishing thing: to realize that we have been and are in the grip of a prodigious all encompassing hallucination – a hallucination that says that our biology is anti-social. This self same hallucination has driven large swathes of psychoanalytic metapsychology, and so it is forced to explain how it is that people manage to 'go against their nature' and live and work with each other.

Power

Foulkes when further than the psychoanalysts to make the object of study not the individual, nor the individual-in-relation, but individual*s*-in-relation to each other. But Elias went one step further again, to make to object of study individuals-in-social-relations with each other. Social relations by definition involve power relations between people and groups of people. The significance of this shift in focus is made clear by referring back to psychoanalytic metapsychology. Psychoanalytic theory has tended to make a division between psychological development and socialization. Whilst this is most clear in Freud where the pre-Oedipal phase is made out to be a pre-social one, the division is implicit in the work of many other theoreticians.

In contrast to this way of thinking, what both Foulkes and Elias have done is to demonstrate unequivocally that this division is a structural impossibility. They have shown us that because developmental process takes place within a sociological milieu, the structures and preoccupations of this milieu are

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[3] The idea that our biology is fundamentally transformed by our sociology has support from many directions, for example from palaeontology. Burkitt (1999:39) describes how up to the 1960s the standard view was that the biology of humans evolved up to a certain point, when it became possible for them to develop tools. The advent of tools was then thought to impact on the *social organization* of human beings. But then palaeontologists found that tool use was present in creatures not yet human. This gave rise to the surprising notion the presence of tools modified the selection pressures on the evolution of these creatures which eventually became biologically human. Thus this is an example of something social ('tool use') having a deep impact on the biolgical organization of human beings – at the level of DNA. Burkitt concludes: 'the development and use of tools was not an outcome of human evolution but perhaps the cause of it' (p.39). See also Dunbar (1996) who gathers findings that show how the growth of brain size was driven by the increasing levels of complexity of social organization in the pre human primate world.

necessarily involved from the first. Further, as sociological processes are necessarily drawn into the developmental process, they must permeate the psychology of the individual at all levels. In Eliasian language, the actual abstraction of the developmental from the sociological is an impossibility. All of which is to say that in some rudimentary way existing 'we's must be part of the forming 'I's from the start of the developmental process. To elaborate: a particular individual is born into a pre-existing social milieu; thus the 'I' of the individual must of necessity be built out of the existing 'we'; however a 'we' can only exist in relation to something designated 'not-we'; the relation between the 'we' and the 'not-we' is always a power-relation. Thus the individual is constituted at the deepest of levels by pre-existing power relations in the world.

Thus the possibilities available to any individual are constrained by the power relations in the milieu into which the individual is born. Thus the nature of the so-called true individual authentic self cannot be other than fundamentally constituted by *where* it is positioned in the power relational field. As Jerome Bruner says 'When we enter human life, it is as if we walk on stage into a play whose enactment is already in progress – a play whose somewhat open plot determines what part we may play and toward what denouements we may be heading' (1990, pg.34).

Some of these pre-existing meanings consist not only of where the 'we' ends and the 'not-we' begins, but also why two are 'necessarily' differentiated. And by 'necessarily' I mean that within the meaning system it appears to be a natural self-evident differentiation.

Particles and fields

The introduction of the notion of power has several critical repercussions on the theory delineated by Foulkes. For example, Foulkes sought to move past a view of human beings as atomized beings – separated particles colliding and engaging with each other. He did this by introducing the notion of the communicational field. In itself this notion is extremely potent as it subverts individualistic ways of reading what goes on between people.

However, the absence of power from his theorization gives the communicational field an appearance of a more or less homogenous system, which flows through individuals (called nodal points), and when there is a blockage in one of these, then that is illness. And so therapy consists of re-establishing the free flow of communication. One can see that even though this field is a systemic notion – it is a model of individuals within a field (see Stacey 2001 for a further development of this argument). But as soon as one brings power into the picture, then it becomes apparent that this field is not at all a free flowing entity. The word 'flow' invites another analogy, this time with ocean. Although the ocean is a whole – all of a piece, it is not the same everywhere. There are eddies and currents, tides and whirlpools, waves and still waters, etc.. In effect, the energy within the ocean is not free flowing, but neither is it fixed; it is more bound up in some processes than in others. This results in there being 'potential differences'

between areas of the ocean which determine to some degree the way things are likely to flow and so on. Reverting back to Foulkes' language, communications are more likely to flow in certain directions and less in others; they will eddy around certain areas drawing them together, and by pass other areas altogether.

The point is that although the ocean is all of a piece – it is not everywhere the same, quite literally some parts are hotter than others.

We can now say that *power patterns the communicational field* and determines to some extent the sorts of things that can take place in the differing regions that it generates. We can see the way in which this happens by drawing on Elias and Scotson's work *The Established and the Outsiders* (1994). What we can see through this study is how the psyches of the inhabitants are constituted by the vicissitudes of the power relational field they inhabit, and how this effects the way they feel about themselves and how they behave towards each other.

But before I do that I need to introduce two terms from Matte-Blanco's theory of thinking as it has a direct bearing Elias and Scotson's findings.

Matte-Blanco

I can only do this in a very compressed way here because of space.[4] Matte-Blanco (1998) says that all our thought processes comprise of a mix two different sorts of logic, symmetric and asymmetric logic; these are not dissimilar to Freud's notions of primary and secondary process thinking. In symmetric logic things collapse from one into another, parts come to stand for wholes, one thing can come to stand for something else and so on. Here both things can be simultaneously true – Jack is bigger than Jill, and Jill is bigger than Jack, or somebody is killed and yet they are alive. It is the logic of dreams where all sorts of strange and impossible things can take place. It is a logic that obliterates differences; one could say that it is the logic of similarities. Asymmetric logic on the other hand is the every day logic we are familiar with. Here, if someone is killed they stay dead, and if Jack is bigger than Jill, then Jill must be smaller than Jack. This is a logic wherein difference matters. All thought comprises of bi-logic – i.e. the presence of both logics. These rather abstruse ideas have a surprising bearing on the mechanism of identity formation. I have argued that all thought is an interplay of similarity and differences, and from this I have argued that identity, the senses of we-ness and I-ness are constructed by applying symmetric logic to the internals of a grouping and asymmetric logic to the spaces between the groupings (Dalal 1998). Thus the sense of 'we-ness' is constructed out of similarities (symmetric logic), through which process the differences within the 'we' or 'I' are rendered invisible; meanwhile, the similarities between groupings are rendered invisible by the application of asymmetric logic to the spaces between the groupings. Within the grouping 'we' – there is only similarity; between the 'we' and the 'not-we' – there is only difference.

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[4] A fuller rendition of Matte-Blanco can be found in Dalal 1998.

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Having given this fleeting description of Matte-Blanco, I can return to the previous discussion.

Asymmetrical We-images: a confluence of Matte-Blanco, Foulkes and Elias

Foulkes has said that one of the fundamental human impulses is the need to belong. Elias and Scotson studied the nature and types of belonging in two working class groups in a small English town in the 1950s. One group had been there longer and lived in the 'village' and the other were a group of relative newcomers (ten to twenty years) from other parts of the UK and lived on 'the estate'. Elias says that the fact that the 'villagers' had been there for longer meant that they held most of the cards; thus they could dictate the rules of the game in ways that favoured them. In other words, by the time Elias and Scotson came to study the township, the processes of exclusion and subjugation had been institutionalized.

In fact this way of speaking makes the process appear too planned and smacks of a conscious conspiracy. Elias suggests that it is more true to say that the rules of the game *evolved*. Over time, ordinary engagements between people throw up novel instances of being and doing, and the ones that 'survive' are the ones that actively sustain the power-differentials.

The established are able to evolve for themselves a global positive self image, and impute to the outsiders a global negative image (Elias calls them charisma and stigma respectively). These images are nothing other than the contents of the Foulkesian social unconscious, and so they go a considerable way in *invisibly* determining how one experiences the self, the world, and the relationships between them as 'natural'. The established are able to act in this way because they have the upper hand in the power differentials. 'The ability of one group to pin a badge of human inferiority on another group and *make it stick* was a function of a specific [power] figuration which the two groups formed with each other' (Elias 1976:xx).

But as we saw earlier, the construction of an identity requires the homogenization of the internal space through the use of symmetrical logic to annihilate internal differences. This is the general cognitive mechanism. However, power imperatives ensure that this takes place in a very particular way in which it is the best that is used to symmetrize the more powerful, and the worst to homogenize the less powerful: 'The self-image of the established was modelled on the *minority of the best*, and inclined towards idealisation; whilst the image allocated to the outsiders was modelled on the *minority of the worst,* and inclined towards denigration' (Elias and Scotson 1994:7; italics added). We can see that this description brings Elias and Matte-Blanco together: within the 'we' group, only the best, in the 'they' group, only the worst. The point to be underlined here is that this idea of self-image is not a secondary phenomenon – a surface group identity – but integral to the sense of self, the sense of me-ness.

Whatever the (mis)information gets called (mythology, ideology or discourse), Elias and Scotson describe its dissemination through *gossip*. The more cohesive

a group, the more efficiently its communicational channels will work. Foulkes reverses the causality in this idea to say that communication is the glue that coheses the group, and so the more efficient the communication, the more cohesive the group. The importance of cohesion in this context, is that it is an outcome of having more power, and simultaneously, it is a means of sustaining and appropriating more power: 'one group has a higher cohesion rate than the other and this integration differential substantially contributes to the former's power surplus." (Elias 1976: xix).

Elias and Scotson describe the presence of 'gossip mills' whose task it is to symmetrize information by editing out examples of situations where 'we' are bad and 'they' are good, and inflaming and exaggerating the instances where 'we' are good and 'they' are bad. straining out instances that confound the prevalent ideologies – we-bad, they-good; and by inflaming the instances that confirm them – we-good, they-bad.

The outsiders do not have this possibility because they have not as yet been able to dig their own network of gossip channels. In fact the situation actually militates against this them coming together to form a more cohesive body in the following way.

Estate image

To begin with we should recall the reason why the groupings form in the first place.: the construction of the 'we' through 'the closing of ranks among the established…has the social function of preserving the groups power superiority" (Elias 1976:xxiv). Now, what is most lethal in this whole scenario, is that these ideologies enter the minds of those who inhabit this social space to become part of their psyches and emotions.

'Just as established groups, as a matter of course, regard their superior power as a sign of their higher human value, so outsider groups, as long as the power differential is great and <u>submission inescapable</u>, emotionally experience their *power* inferiority as a sign of *human* inferiority." (Elias 1976:xxvi; italics original, underlining added).

And it is also the case that the differential appears to be a natural one: 'power superiority is equated with human merit, human merit with grace of nature or gods' (Elias 1976: xxiii). Thus these images reside in the minds of the inhabitants and are part of the structure of their psyches.

This now generates a double movement both of which promote fragmentation in the Estate. First, the very fact that the image of others in the locality is infused with negativity, will mean that one will not tend to be drawn to one's neighbours, rather the tendency will be one of trying to distance oneself from them. Second, the fact that the personal self image is also similarly negative one will mean that the impulse will be to hide the self rather than to share and risk exposing it to humiliation and ridicule.

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But the fact that try as one might one cannot get away either from 'them' or the self, must in the end have a dire and debilitating effect on the psyche – leading eventually to depression or at expressions of anger and self-hate, which by the processes of symmetric logic can as easily be directed at others in the vicinity who are 'like me' and therefore 'me'.

<u>Village image</u>

Whilst the effect of we-image of the Estate on its inhabitants is one of fragmentation, of turning everything against everything else, the effect of the we-image of the Village works very differently. Because the Village we-image is infused with positivity, it is attractive and so draws its inhabitants together. At the same time the Villagers are impelled to pull away from those on the Estate because they are impregnated with negativity. The end result is that the positive we-image of the Village works in the direction of enhancing contacts between those in the Village and entrenching the divide between the Village and the Estate.

Thus there is a critical difference in the sociological and psychological effects of the we-images of those on either side of the power divide. We can see the effects of power not only on the psyches of individuals, but also on the types of social relations that are possible to these individuals. This way of viewing things continues to undermine the veracity of psychological developmental theories that take no account of the social.

We might ask, why don't the outsiders reverse the situation by stigmatizing the established and manufacturing charisma for themselves? They can and do, but once again their possibilities are severely constrained by the power differentials. First, power is need to manufacture and sustain mythologies; and second, if their self image is a stigmatized one, then there attempts will not be very convincing ones. But as power figurations change and the outsiders gain more power, they are increasingly able to do so. These changes are part of a recursive process. As they feel better about themselves, they inevitably gain in confidence and so do more, and this in turn sets aglow the charisma.

In fact we can observe these changes taking place in Britain over the last fifty or so years with the changes in attitude to blackness.

The relevance of this way of thinking to the clinical situation can be indicated in the following way. Imagine a scenario where two people were in psychotherapy, one from the established group and the other from the outsider. The findings of Elias and Scotson suggest that the person from the established group is likely to have a better sense of self-esteem and in general do better than a member of the outsider group. It is clear that if we leave power relations out of the diagnostic process then we are likely to misconstrue these differences as arising either from constitutional aspects of each of them (say the amount of death instinct that each

of them has been born with), or out of the family dynamics into which they were born.

Well of course the family dynamics are critical to the way the individuals come to experience themselves, but we should remember that the family dynamics are themselves constituted by the power relational field, and so will come to determine the sorts of messages that are transmitted to the developing individual – who in turn will come to embody them.

Conclusions

I began the paper by challenging the view that the notion of the individual and the social were antithetical to each other, and then briefly describing the ways in which this idea is instituted in various kinds of psychoanalytic theory .

I then argued that this same difficulty is also found in the work of Orthodox Foulkes, who retained the division between a Freudian (biological) and social unconscious. It was then argued that many contemporary explications of the social unconscious are couched in the language of Orthodox Foulkes and so say little more than Freud did almost a hundred years ago.

I then used Elias to show how these fallacious ways of perceiving the world emerged out the erroneous ways of thinking that he called 'process reduction'. We were then able to see how the dichotomy between the social and biological could be resolved by thinking about them as emergent processes rather than states. This demonstrated how our biology is of necessity infused with our sociology, and *vice versa*.

Next, the paper considered some of the consequences of bringing the notion of power into the discussion, and examining its consequences on the contents of the social unconscious, the notion of communication, and the impact of this on the socio-developmental processes of individuals born into a pre-existing system.

In order to do this, Matte-Blanco's bi-logic was briefly introduced. We were able to see that the contents of the social unconscious varied depending on where an individual was located in the field of power-relations, and that this in turn had a significant affect not only on self esteem, i.e. how individuals thought about and experienced themselves, but also how this structured the kinds of relations these individuals could have with others in their vicinity.

In sum, I have argued that notions of the 'social' unconscious are as problematic as descriptions of 'the social *in* the unconscious', because not only is the social integral to the unconscious, the unconscious is constituted by social at *every* level.

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