



## INSTITUTION AS A CHAOTIC SETTING

*Guelfo Margherita<sup>1</sup>, Salvatore Rotondi<sup>2</sup>, Francesca Verde<sup>2</sup>, Federico Pone<sup>2</sup>, Ornella Braucci<sup>2</sup>, Sara Loffredo<sup>2</sup>, Rosalba Di Biase<sup>2</sup>.*

A psychoanalyst working in the public sector establishes a relationship of reciprocal use with the institution. It is easy for him to observe the psychiatric establishment either as an organism providing therapeutic benefits (therapist-like institution) or as the object of psychiatric cure destined to improve the pathology of its relations and conditions of life (patient-like institution). The aim of this paper is to identify the peculiar conditions related to institution perceived as a frame, where setting is meant as his reiterative space-time context, in which it would be possible to point out distinctive psychoanalytic relationships giving rise to some peculiar psychoanalytic processes (setting-like institution). Part of this article has been communicated in abstract form (Margherita, 2010).

In general, and still not exhaustively, we can define the institution as an oriented portion of space-time. Within it, some phenomena take place determining specific processes of the human sets. For example, all the Hospitals and Health Services deal with health; Schools and Universities with learning; Police with social control; Government Agencies with ruling the nation, city, district; any Church with religion and its rites; Armies with war. The Institutions would so take the form of specific organs of the human sets, in charge of carrying out functions that allow them to be operative and survive as a community.

The space-time inhabited by the institutions grows itself three-dimensionally, along axes that invest physical, mental and social sphere (we could also say – in Popper's worlds 1, 2 and 3<sup>3</sup>). These axes cross the dimensions concentrically included within the institution (groups and individuals). The intertwinement, throughout these different levels, of all the possible connections, comes out as a global net of chaotic crisscross relations. So any stimulus, brought into this complex system through every sort of connections, immediately, consciously or not, will multiply itself, and will be simultaneously elaborated at every level and field of the institutional set in a confusion of languages. This happens because each level and field uses its specific mother tongue. An analogy is in the light up of the entire brain when reached by sensorial stimuli – canalized and distributed; and how those stimuli are to be elaborated inside brain's networks, neural nodes and specialized cortical areas. The multi-level isomorphism shared by the communicative structures within the brain and the one in the institution, in a different spatial and metabolic way, seem to be a phenotypic realization of the same genetic project.

---

<sup>1</sup> IPA Psychoanalyst, Istituto Italiano di Psicoanalisi di Gruppo

<sup>2</sup> Centro Ricerche di Psicoanalisi di Gruppo (Napoli - Italy)

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Popper, K. (1977). *The Self and Its Brain: An Argument for Interactionism*. Berlin-London: Springer (with Sir John C. Eccles).



Therefore, in the institution, a number of entities, individuals (me, you, him) or plurals (patients, nurses, and then ward, offices, territory), with different positions and with distinctive and variable (physical and emotional) energies, relate one another by participating at the construction of a field (institutional field) that appears somehow similar to the basin of attraction<sup>4</sup> of the Math of Complexity.

In fact the institution appears as a complex dynamic system in which entities, energies and fields interact retroactively, generating reiterative phenomena that can be described by the typical trajectories of what is called 'Strange Attractor' in the Math of Chaos.

So the institution acts like a non-linear dynamic system. It produces, within itself and according to its precise mission, a specialized work group coexisting with the emotional states of mind that Bion calls basic assumptions; being this last one essential for the survival of the entire group.

The whole set is so directed along both the real vectors of the institutional mission: the explicit one – handled by the former (the working group) – and the implicit ones – handled by the latter (the basic assumption).

Placing a psychoanalytic vertex in the institutions means to be able to set up a complex model including the institution itself (Margherita 2011). The whole thing provides *Settings* where *Transferences* could be identified and *Interpretations* could be constructed.

In psychoanalysis the setting is the space-time permitting the development of the transference, and making clinically effective the professional relationship between patient and psychoanalyst.

More generally, the setting is an artificial device that makes meaningful all the phenomena set up by the clinical relationship; that's the basic structure of the analytic relationship.

In this perspective the setting is the structure apt to give a coherent sense to the standpoint/vertex that is observing it. It is a virtual analytic structure determined by the mind (vertex) of the analyst (for example Freud) and by his culture; an observatory, placed at an intermediate level between reality and fantasy, within whom it is possible to observe a simplified bit of the external reality; it is built so that what is brought there by fantasy of free association can assume an affective relational meaning.

The setting is, therefore, an artificial space-time, cut from reality like a workshop; attended by specific characters (patient, analyst, group, institution) interacting in a surreal atmosphere able to legitimize a twilight state of consciousness (dreams, fantasy, free associations). This happens whenever it is in a productive condition (Margherita, 2011). We can say then that the setting is a spatial configuration, repeated over and over, making meaningful the emotional and dynamic flow of patient-analyst relationship (transference / counter-transference).

The relationship within the setting can be seen as another reality, totally different from the rest of daily life placed in the not-analytical space-time.

---

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. Gleick, J. (1987). *Chaos*. New York: Viking Penguin.



Its invariant structure works therefore as a transitional space, a differential cleavage between transference and external reality (Margherita, 1993).

Basic feature of the setting is the discriminant function of its limits and boundaries; those traits help in defining it as a place of autopoietic<sup>5</sup> work, of sense-building – inside the conscience. It is the ability to confer that sort of identification (couple, group, institution) starting awareness of different identities at different levels. It is something like the ectodermic membrane and its two outcomes: both the skin apt to contain one's self and the brain to think this same self.

If we consider the institution as a setting, we see how it as a much more complex situation (either for dynamics and topological aspects) compared to a regular setting (appropriate for dual or group analytic function).

Here, of course, we are talking about the analytic function considering the setting-institution as a device able to put into practice the construction of a space for collective thought; being so an effective organ of the community in an optimal way. That is an institution that could become aware, through this work, of the missions received whether by the sovra-system (vertex of the social structure) or by the sub-systems (vertices of individuals and groups).

### **Classical psychoanalytic setting**

The classical psychoanalytic setting is a device made of a set of standards and rules that make able to recognize, as expressions of the fantasy, the operations developed within it, and bringing, through the transference, a scene from another space-time in the “hinc et nunc” of this same setting.

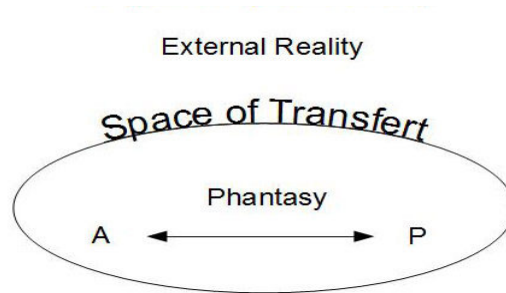
Therefore, it is a cleavage allowing the analytic couple to discern an internal fantasy space apart from the external reality outside.

Let's consider now this device as a spatial configuration (for example the couch and the armchair), reiterated over time (for example the agenda of meetings of analyst and patient). It is useful to provide a meaning to the emotional flow between analyst and patient (transference/counter-transference).

If we use a geometric metaphor, we can describe this relationship by a straight line joining points A - P (Analyst - Patient). This line is just one and the only one. Everything that is outside of this line is placed outside the setting and it is understood, by the couple at work, as a reality that can be reactivated on the line of the therapeutic relationship, only like a transference fantasy.

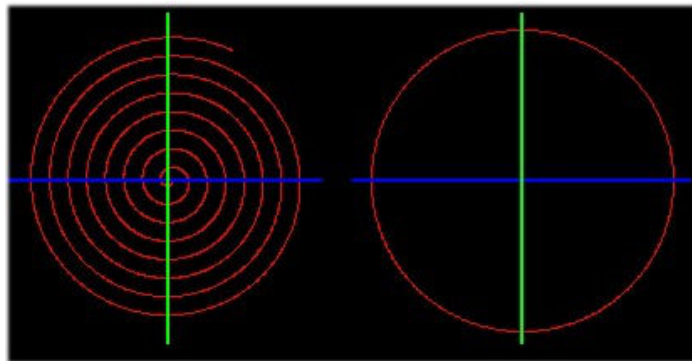
---

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. Maturana, R. Humberto - Varela, J. Francisco (1980). *Autopoiesis and cognition*. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company.



Therefore the dual setting is a two-people field consisting of a sequence of communicative interactions balanced together ( $A \rightarrow P$ ,  $P \rightarrow A$ , etc...) metaphorically described as the swinging of a pendulum.

The pendulum is a dissipative dynamical system whose energy is exhausted under the influence of friction, unless the absence of it (suspension of memory and desire) or a reiterated supply of energy from outside (transference) lead to a perpetual continuous movement (whose balance point would be called the "Cyclic Attractor"). The life cycle of the pendulum system is described by a spiral in the first case, and by a circle in the second one.



In a simply structural perspective, no matter what complex dynamic do exist in it, the dual setting could be described by a fixed attractor. Insofar it is a finite system: since it has starting and ending points (session, week, treatment) based on the development of emotions (dissipation) fed by the transference (input of supply of energy).

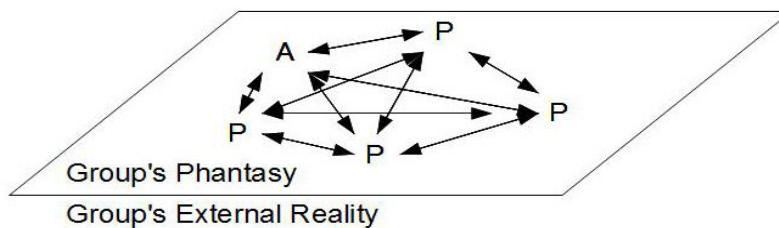
### Group setting

In the group setting a growing number of new occurrences make relationships more complex. For example the circular disposition (*vis à vis*) modifies the linear bus in a star network; the transference from and on the group; the group mentality. These configurations make the phenomena inside the setting more complex and with the irruption of a much larger amount of external reality.



The emotion involved in the relation is no longer just brought from elsewhere and re-actualized in the setting through the transfer, but enters the field of real inter-subjectivity and restructures itself in a group dimension. Here, we meet a Group-entity appearing as a whole.

With the group setting the co-existence of a third body comes into play and participates to the group along with patient and analyst: that's the group itself. This entity, located at a different level of abstraction, lies necessarily outside of the patient-analyst line and spreads beyond the geometric metaphor – the bi-dimensionality of the plan. A part of reality is now included in the setting-plan. The relationship, involving now three bodies, opens to dynamic relationships of complexity (see Poincaré<sup>6</sup>) and could/would therefore be described by the trajectories of a strange attractor.



### **Institutional setting**

The institutional setting, compared to the group one, has two additional conditions that expand its degree of complexity. The first one is that internally, the various transactions happen either between individuals or between categories (nurses, citizens, patients, priests, soldiers, users, etc.). The second one is that the institutional setting often needs to be open throughout the 24 hours (with no regard of any presence or absence, since every part seems replaceable) and in every place (real or mental) containing events that may concern it. The space-time boundaries expand to infinity. Mental and real events are now placed in this new enlarged area; the institutional setting, in our geometric metaphor, expands to three-dimensionality. The external space (n-dimensional) it plunges in, becomes the social one with its larger tasks and missions.

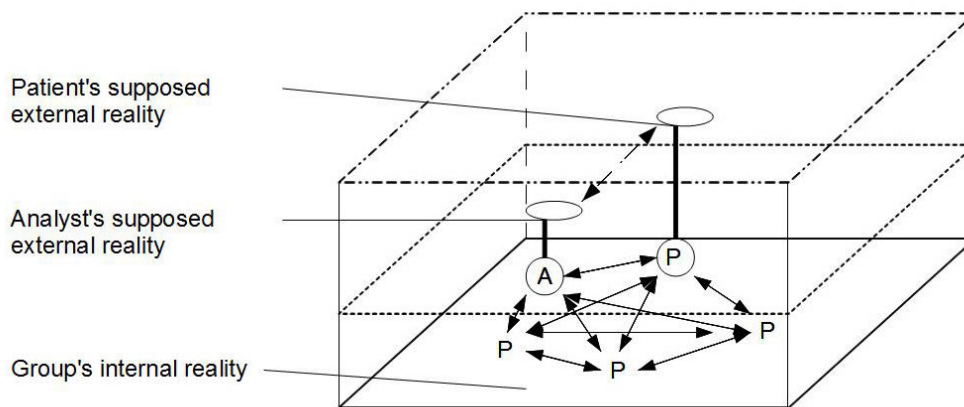
The three-dimensional capacity of the human sensorial experience has here lost the ability to swing, in a pulsing way (rhythmic, discontinuous), between external reality and internal fantasy: because they now overlap. The perceptive apparatus explodes because the observing entity has

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. Poincaré, H. (1891). "Sur le problème des trois corps," *Bulletin Astronomique, Serie I*, 8 12-24.



become trans-personal and the institution-observer coincides with the institution-observed and yet with the institution-context of observation. So this regressive confusion dis-identifies and homogenizes external reality and fantasy, and in the same way the role of patient and therapist, and the context as well.

In this globalized space-time a new multi-focal standpoint develops hovering outside the plan; Margherita (2011) called it “the Eye of the Fly”. The synchronic vision of all the plans and lines contained in this new three-dimensional geometric dimension, typical of the institution, takes place.



This oxymoron circumscribing the infinite can be described by a Möbius ribbon: form simultaneously displaying infinite inside and outside his circumference, and overlapping them.

### **Oscillation in the setting: external realities/internal fantasies.**

Even in the group end institutional setting, as in the individual, we might distinguish a real external space from an internal and mental fantastic one. The different topological structures of those three types of settings, as described by their geometric metaphors, distribute in distinctive ways their boundaries in space-time – either between internal and external world or between reality and fantasy. The device of setting can so appear to us like a semi-permeable membrane (for example as a bionian contact barrier) that filtrates the transference from reality of external objects, in order to put them in the fantasies of the internal ones.

The unthinkable part of external relations can be so experienced in a setting constituted of fantasy (virtuality). The unthinkable (even undigested quanta of beta elements) acquires the ability (alpha function) to shape an internal fantastic reality that becomes, in this way, dream-able





and thinkable. Meaning and identity of the couple attending the analytical work are so structured within the setting.

What happens in the group setting? The whole set of individual imaginations is transfer-red inside the setting and becomes the group fantasy. The collective elaboration of the common fantasy gives the group its sense and its identity: an analytical entity at work.

The particular configuration of its space-time makes it difficult to recognize internal components from external ones; all the internal reality takes simultaneously the status of fantasy and vice-versa. The real movement is identical to the probabilistic and imagined one. So the recognizable-acting acquires a communicative sense, in addition to its value of emotional discharge.

The peculiarity and the intricacy within the institution are the following: the setting is not artificially created inside it, as it generally happens in the classical or group analysis, by cutting out artificially and observing a portion of experimental reality to work on and over; it is all already there and presents itself as an all comprehensive universe coinciding with the same institution. It does not need to be established, but just to be recognized and used as such. Product of the analytic relationship constructed within the setting, could be the knowledge of its own identity and of the sense of its own activity, either evident or latent, acquired by the institution.

The setting as a device sends us again to the ectoderm as an embryological membrane. It develops the ability to separate from an outside – and to contain an inside (like the skin) – and the ability to induce the development, in its inside, of apparati apt to think meaning and identity (like the brain). The reality of this fantastic new space-time becomes more sensorial and knowledgeable, and fluidly easy to tell from the specific standpoint of couple, group, institution.

### **What makes the group/institutional setting more complex than the dual one?**

The group/institutional settings appear more complex than the classical one. As we have seen, they shape themselves in three-dimensionality, up to the possible n-dimensionality. Shifting from the linear setting to the complex one a bifurcation seems to occur: the phenomenon modifies itself like in a change of phase. Within those settings, the relations begin swinging in basins of attraction (wider and wider along with the number of dimensions involved). These happens when the point of view focused on the phenomena is no longer the binocular one of the organism-individual, but gets fragmented and extend itself even to the multi-focal one of the organism-group.

Let's now describe the changing parameters bound to modify the quality of the system:

1) Number of participants. Not anymore the two of them (patient and analyst): the number of patients can increase (eight for example) so



developing a multi-focal constellation with a large number of intertwining relationships.

2) Presence of vertices of different entities in relation with each other: they take place in this complex setting (at various topologically concentric levels) and are dynamically active at the same time (individuals, groups, institutions, etc.). For example, the group entity belongs to the same plan it lies on, along with every individual entity; and at the same time it represents the standpoint/vertex hovering over it, unifying the whole supra-system. This places it outside the plan, opening so to the typical three-dimensionality of solids. And the same thing happens in the institution, which opens to n-dimensionality.

3) Complexity of the interactions. The interactions here simplified as linear-interactions patient-analyst are by the way, in the reality, already complex enough: the introduction of a greater number of bodies (group and institutional setting) evokes the intricate and unpredictable system of relations and feedback that the intuition of Poincaré solved imagining it as a complex system. If Poincaré spoke of Sun, Earth, Moon (about the astronomic theory of the three bodies), our system is complicated from the consideration of their inclusion in a wider supra-systemic field (for example the Milky Way). Coming back to our case: which complex influence is exerted by the western dominant culture on institutions and individuals?

4) Discrete/Continuous. Transition from discrete space-time, punctuated by places and times contractually defined and limited, to a continuous space-time, where the setting is unlimited, open 24 hours and in any place displaying institutional events.

5) Confusion between the observing subject, the observed subject and the context of observation in which the events take place (who treats whom?). The institution is, at the same time: a) the healing structure b) the object to heal by improving the performance and c) the context in which the healing takes place.

These conditions cause the constant overlapping of the roles of observer, observed and contest of the observation.

In the group, the elements of the complication lead to gather the scattered dynamics of the individual fantasy to a complex unified basic fantasy such as an Anzieu "group illusion" or a Bion "basic assumptions". This group fantasy, more complex than the individual transference, remains separated, through the border of the group setting, from the external reality where it is plunged. In its real context, in fact, the group is treated as an inclusion defined by its shell: an entity/work group in relation with other groups and with the institution. For example the group of nurses will identify it as something else: "Oh yes, in that room there is prof. Margherita Tuesday group", without any indication about the emotional events occurring in the meantime in that room.

The inflation of the infinite enlargement of the institutional field, therefore, cancels the external space embracing it all and condensing it over the field of internal fantasy.





Only unconscious dreamlike languages, full of bi-logic and with highly symmetric contents, can express this confusion between outside and inside the setting, reality and fantasy <sup>7</sup>. (But languages needs to be discussed separately.)

In this progressive acquisition of larger complexity let's try to follow the transformations of "who transfers what on whom".

If the transference has to be considered a movement, how can it take place in such a complex condition?

The movement could, we figure, not occur in the displacement of the observed subject – but in the change of the point of view of the observer; it could involve a simultaneous focusing on different strata by multifocal vertices, placed on different levels of the complex setting. This change would be possible due to the different conditions of the strata focused by the different standpoints considered.

From this perspective, every point of the system synchronically contains, in virtual terms, like a hologram, every other point (since reality and fantasy coincide in every single dot). We are facing the paradox of the synchronic transference; hence the metaphor of the statistic coexistence in a photon of its state of particle and of its wave function.

### **The Complex Setting as a fractal hologram.**

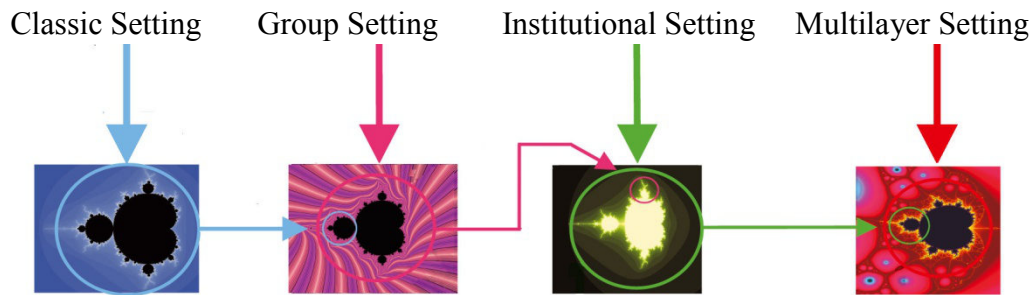
We can consider couple, group and institution as three different levels of the same fractal figure, showing concentrically different levels of the same reality. The realities of each level appear with a holographic configuration as a three-dimensional arrangement of a multidimensional fractal complex<sup>8</sup> (each level, actually, contains the virtual projection of all the other levels).

The Sub-systemic levels downstream of the couple (but to those we don't pay attention now) could be individuals, organs, cells, possibly macro-molecules and atoms. The Supra-system – upstream the institution – would be bureaucratic organizations, societies, nations, culture, value systems, (i.e. Western civilization).

---

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. Matte Blanco, I. (1975). *The Unconscious as Infinite Sets*. London: Karmac.

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. PRIBRAM, K. (1991). *Brain and Perception – Holonomy and Structure in Figural Processing*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.



*The exemplificative figure used is the Mandelbrot fractal*

The three different settings are – as a matter of fact – three models / points of view able to build similar realities (concentrically and hierarchically ordered, where each one includes the next) just like a Matrioska dolls set. Furthermore, we can add to these the Multilayer Setting, that contains them all and that we will consider later.

In their fractal unfolding, they all can be observed at the same time in their unique, global sense – as well as in the myriad of broken up senses characterizing each standpoint composing them. We can do both: observe it globally, as a continuous figure, and as the discrete sum of its independent components.

So we can see the global sense of all the trajectories of the phenomena in a flow of continuous dimension that gives them a sense of unity; or we can observe them fragmenting into single streams of discrete dimension whose sense belongs to each of them separately. This is valid diachronically and synchronously. We can consider as an whole the flow of the entire analysis compared to the discrete sequence of the single séances; or even we can perform the analysis of an institutional set either by analyzing it as a whole, or through its single constituents groups, made up of single constituent individuals.

In these examples the movement is continuous, but, if I shoot the whole sequence, it will be possible to break it down into pieces of discrete fractal photograms.

### **Setting as a basin of attraction.**

The reiterative quality of the setting (the repetition of appointments and roles) creates a complex dynamic space and structures it topologically as a basin of attraction. Within it, the emotional dynamic relationship (transference) re-presents itself overlapping the trajectories of ancient phenomena on new traces, thus graphically describing the complex shape (Gestalt) of a strange attractor. At this moment the setting is a definite space-time, acting as a basin for the trajectories of dynamic phenomena determined by it.



In the group setting, vectorial trajectories of every single story come together in the strange attractor that, as an undivided, builds the group fantasy. We witness now to an enlarged vision – including the new, more complex, basin of attraction. Such a jump of point of view: from the discrete level (fragmental visions of single events) to the continuous level (a global vision belonging to the whole set). This reorganization is an unexpected fluctuation of the phenomenon and sets up what can easily be called bifurcation in the math of chaos. The so-expanded new basin identifies a new field for new phenomena: although keeping the same repetitiveness of the transference (for example the one between patient and analyst), this will happen to a sovra-systemic level of abstraction, giving rise to a group transference or to a bionian basic assumption.

The step producing the transition from the plan to the tri-dimensional space creates conditions of synchronic transference (Margherita, 2011); the complex and repetitive structure of variables and invariants allows the transference to adapt complex feedbacks to the ones of the basin of attraction it takes place in – and consequently assuming, internally, the same shape of a strange attractor.

We are describing how a complex transference, as a result of its characteristics, can fade from the discrete dimension belonging to the entities into a continuous one. These figures (setting/transference units) evolve in more and more complex ways, along with the series of two, three, four, n-dimensionality forming the Complex Multilayer.

### **Setting as a point of view.**

Let's consider the setting as a frame (Cadre) holding a classic paint, such as Leonardo's Mona Lisa; the complex setting can now be seen as a outline that contains a conceptual picture, contemporaneously open to what is inside and outside the frame (i.e. Fontana's spatial concepts or Paolini's mirrors). The complex perspective is related to any point of view (individuals in the group) and various possible levels of location (institutions-society-culture) within the larger setting. Hence the setting can also be defined as a perspective field (look), being at the same time an observing entity and a container for transference contents.

The looks, and for consequence the level of setting, may be for instance: the individual look, the couple look (might be analytic), the group look, the institutional look, the look of the social toward the institution, the look of specific cultures, the look of wider and wider systemic entities (Margherita, 2011).

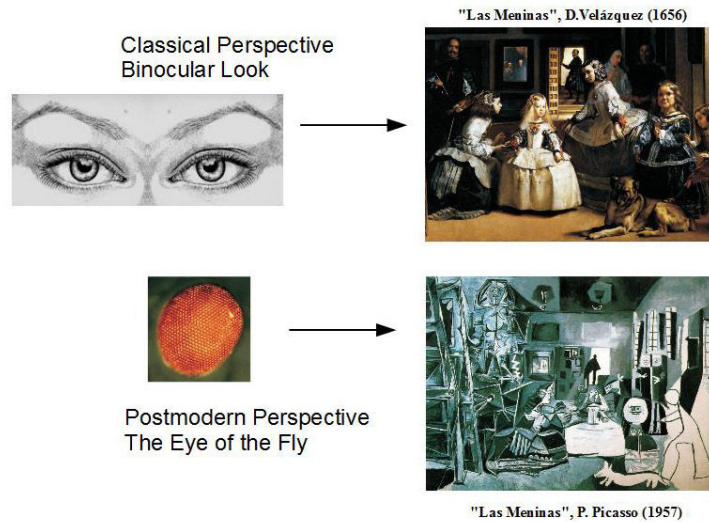
Each look is generated by a vertex: the complex ones collect the ensemble of all the partial and fragmented standpoints, such as the *ommanitida* of the eye of a fly, building a plural perspective.

The multi-ocular integration occurs within the psychism of the global entity; the one that owns temporarily the totality of points of view. Metaphorically as in a picture of Picasso, which notoriously overturns the perspective vertex of the Renaissance and overlaps the movement, eliminating space and time. Every standpoint of the canvass participates to

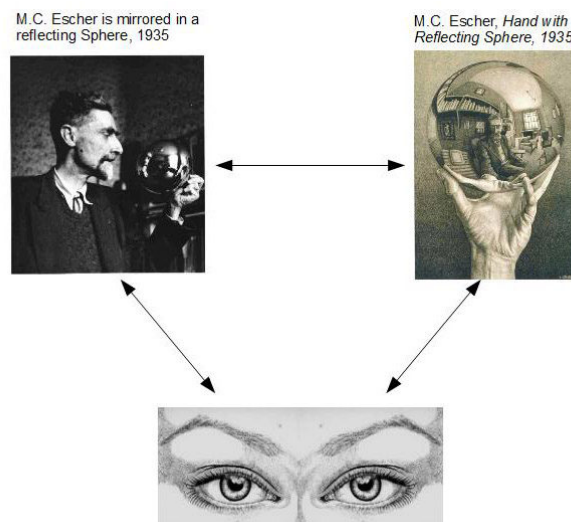


<http://www.thecomplexmultilayeredset.com>, leading articles, 2012

the new multi-focal perspective. The eyes of the fly may represent the possible fragmentation of the points of view generating in the institution real states of twilight consciousness.



For example we are subjects of a research group carrying on a research through self-observing the very group. We circularly observe the object of the research – to which we belong – like a subject that at the same time is watching us: as in an Escher portrait: he looks at the sphere which at its turn looks at him; or as a new standpoint making possible the observation of both multiplying the reciprocal relationships observer-observed while we are under our own observation. As if we were placed in a mirror room with infinite reflection.





Who observes?  
Who is observed?  
What is the instrument of observation?

The group observing and the group observed, can be represented on the two surfaces of a Moebius ribbon. Both look from their own surface the outside and the inside universes, from their different standpoint, and merge in each other. There is only one side and one edge. After a turn, you find yourself on the opposite side. Only by repeating the run we find ourselves on the start.

### **Setting as an apparatus to think.**

We have seen how the setting is a portion, experimentally cut, of external reality. Being so it is also a device allowing us to understand better the meaning of such a simplified reality; barrier of contact that turns chaotic beta elements (from outside) into dreamable and thinkable alpha sequences (inside). The setting appears then as a device meant to build sense, an entire apparatus for thinking<sup>9</sup>.

The sense assumed by any object and the emotional content within the different settings goes along with the level of external reality they interact with. The transference sense in a couple engaged in an analysis can produce a narrative pattern included in the narrative pattern of a group that builds and feels its own sense through a bionian basic assumption; the whole in a narration, acted by the institution, telling itself the sense of integrating its own different mechanisms while performing latent missions.

Different elements (energy, emotions, experiences, processes) can thus assemble concentrically at various levels: fear and anger in the individual, fight-flight basic assumption in the group, practice of the platoons in the institution, story of aggressions and wars in the culture.

Construction of both, meaning and identity, do run parallel within the analytic function given by any setting. This function generates a transformation of the beta elements (external chaos) in alpha elements (capacity of thinking inside the setting). The reverie function of the setting (as a maternal womb/mind) is furthermore used for the construction-transmission of an apparatus to think.

The setting appears suitable to disconnect, institutionally, the linear logic of individuals and of any external reality by using the free-associative techniques and the emotional high-temperature: this is what makes possible the analysis. In an oneiric state of consciousness the analytical function can test and create new combinatorial opportunities (interpretations), which could be thought because have been dreamt. The setting represents in fact the device through which the entity (individual, couple, group, institution) may have access to its own inner side, through

---

<sup>9</sup> For these conceptualizations, particularly the contact barrier, the alpha function and apparatus for thinking cfr. BION, W. R. (1962b). *Learning from Experience*. London: William Heinemann.





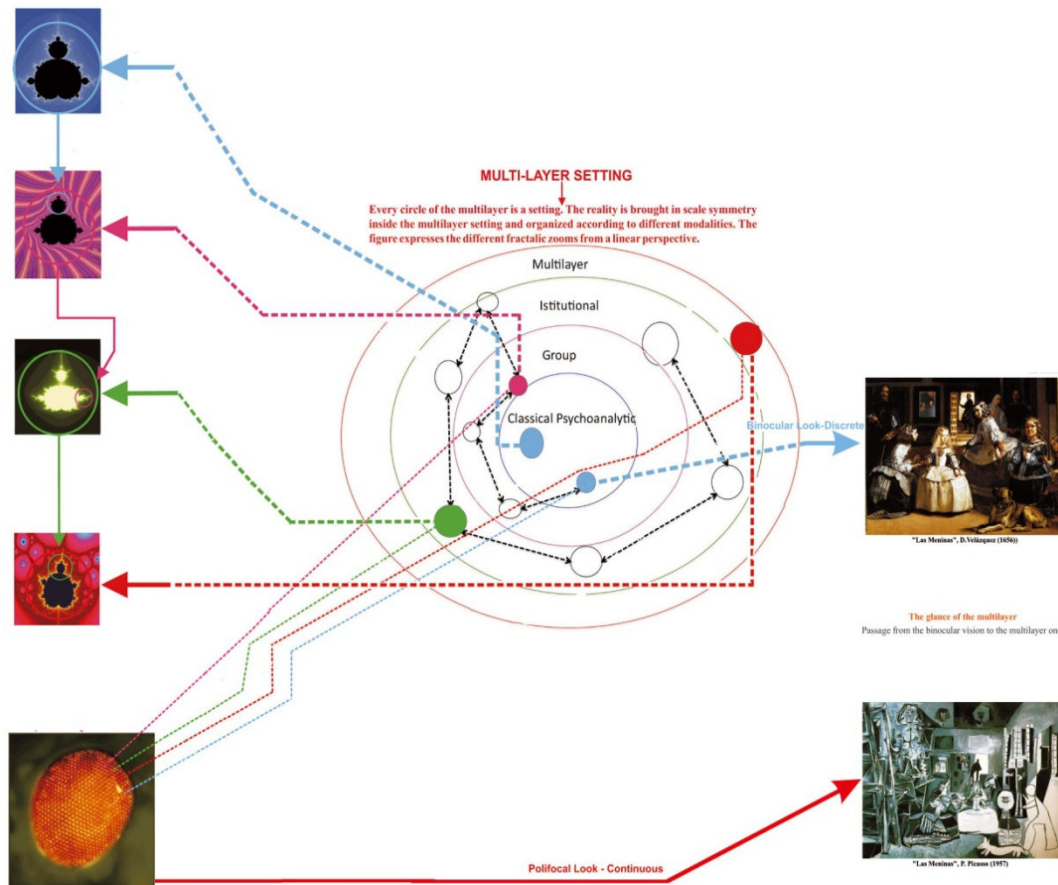
<http://www.thecomplexmultilayerset.com>, leading articles, 2012

an altered state of consciousness, and reach material that can be connected and told using the language of a multilevel dream.

The working -trough of this language – giving defined identity to single entities (individual, group, institution) – can be spent in the external relations with what Bion calls "the language of achievement"<sup>10</sup>.

## Multilayer Setting.

If we extend our geometric metaphor of the setting from the bi/tri-dimensionality to the n-dimensionality, we meet the Multilayer setting configuration. This setting, while open to the infinite seriality of n-dimensionality, concentrically contains all other systems connected as in a web. Basically, it is a relational network between settings, and within it, each setting has its own internal network of relationships.



<sup>10</sup> Cfr. Bion, W. R. (1970). *Attention and Interpretation. A Scientific Approach to Insight in Psycho-Analysis and Groups*. London: Tavistock Publications.





Taken as a whole in its fluid and dynamic continuity, the picture gives us the perspective of a complex multilayer meant as a dynamic process developing in a set of fractal basins of attraction.

The figure in detail emphasizes the different fractal zooms, which can be discontinued, thus hollowing out the different setting levels earlier considered. Each circle, large or small, can be considered as a setting and as an identified entity (knot of a network) from the outside; at the same time it is a field (set of nets) from the inside. Its circumference becomes the border separating a discrete outside world – in which each entity, in a quantum metaphor, behaves like a particle related to other particular entities (reality) – and a continuous inner world, where it behaves as a probabilistic wave, according with its infinite statistical probabilities (fantasy).

This set can be described from each vertex (the inner circles of the figure) and using the visual parameters of the classical Renaissance perspective, namely those of binocular vision. An example would be the painting *Las Meninas* by Velasquez. To understand scientifically this vision can be used Galileo's epistemology.

The same occurrence can also be observed from the fragmented perspective of the whole supra-systemic set containing entities. In this case the poli-ocular vision (the eye of the fly) will be the standpoints of all the entities placed in this space-time taken together. The example could be now associated to the picture of *Las Meninas* redesigned by Picasso 300 years later. This opens the way to any virtual parallel universe (in Everett's sense<sup>11</sup>) and to all other *Las Meninas* painted by Picasso (and also to those not painted yet). The scientific perspective here might remind again a quantum epistemology.

Within the multilayer setting the reality is organized in scale symmetry, and assumes different hologramatic modalities depending on the different discontinuous levels of each observing entity/standpoint. The vision of the Multilayer, to say the totality of its infinite standpoints, will give us back in a dynamic flow a very complex hologramatic kaleidoscopic composition.

From a dynamic point of view the classic setting, as a space-time device, allows the diachronic flow of transference energy from the outside to the inside, turning reality into fantasy through the transference; in the multi-layer setting the complex poli-centric device, incorporating any external reality within the setting, only allows, in a synchronic movement, the level of focusing of any single constituent transference.

So the complex path – made up by the sum of all the trajectories of any single transferees of any single levels – takes place inside the fractal basin of attraction. This is the strange attractor describing the dynamic path of the whole process within the multi-layer setting.

Therefore, the transference in the multilayer setting is not only expression of an oscillatory compulsion to repeat (historical transfer), as classically understood, but also happens either diachronically in the time or synchronously at all levels. In the multilayer topology, in fact, the different complexity levels of object-relation (individual, group and

---

<sup>11</sup> Cfr. EVERETT, H. (1957). *Relative State Formulation of Quantum Mechanics*. Review of Modern Physics vol 29.



institutional), are activated simultaneously, through their different energies and relations at their various levels. The unconscious virtual ways of the multilevel relations can be so synchronously highlighted to be analyzed at the selected level. Then, at each level, a specific story will configure the relationship of that entity with its object-analyst. All this enclosed in the relation of reality, supported by more mature levels, defined by the contract of the setting.

It appears clear that the multi-layer setting has the same qualities of the other setting described: a) a basin of attraction within which the synchronic transference oscillates b) a standpoint, eye-of-the-fly shaped, organizing a multifocal reality, and finally c) a device of sense to contain the oneiric flow of a fantastic thinking.

Looking now at the figure as an entire whole, like a device capable to create sense and identity, the multilayer setting can be described as a *Weltanschauung*, a worldview in which the observant subject exploded in its constituents along with the observed object; a set of space-times that contemporarily explores his own numerous levels hybridizing and compromising internal and external dimensions, emotions, relations. A visual metaphor would send to a picture of Picasso as an auditive one, instead, to a symphony of Schoenberg. In both cases, Canons of classical harmonies are broken and new colors, shapes and sounds take their place in the artistic sense of the new speech.

We are following a process in which a mass, a confusion can be transformed by a new Canon in a new order. To look at the institution as a huge multi-layer setting can, may be, help who works within it, to organize a better understanding of entities, fields and energies concerned. The entire multi-layer setting will do, this way, his job of a device trying to build sense.

In conclusion, couple, group and institution are three fractal levels overlooking reality, within the Multilayer, from different points of view. They appear to be three different figures because we look at them from three different points of view – those of their specific settings. These entities are both different figures and different standpoints. The real complexity is in the circularity. Each of the level is not only object (observed) but also subject (observer). The three different settings described, the entire global Multilayer as well, represent places/standpoints building different realities fractally ordered. The new unitary reality running through it will appear different, because the observing standpoint is placed in a different supra-systemic level of space-time.

The change of level is, therefore, a catastrophic change involving the explosion of all previous standpoints. Somehow as if the observer is scattered and the object as well, outside and inside merge permitting so an overlap of reality and fantasy. All that leads to something that appears like a new cosmogony: the coagulation of a new globalizing supra-systemic vertex – the basin of attraction, the point of view and the sense of the Complex Multilayer.



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ANZIEU, D. (1999). *Le groupe et l'inconscient. L'imaginaire groupal*. Paris: Dunod.

BION, W. R. (1961). *Experiences in Groups*. London: Tavistock.

BION, W. R. (1962). A theory of thinking. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vol.43. Reprinted in *Second Thoughts* (1967).

BION, W.R. (1966). Catastrophic change. *Bulletin of The British Psychoanalytical Society*, n 5.

BION, W. R. (1970). *Attention and Interpretation*. London: Tavistock.

MARGHERITA G. (2007), Il transfert sincronico nel "multistrato complesso": tuffo multilivello nello spazio istituzionale. *Koinos, Gruppo e funzione analitica*, 1-2, pp. 29-58.

MARGHERITA G. (2010), Istitution as a cahotic setting. *Mind Force. ConVersAction on the Embodied Mind*. Siena, 7-8 Oct. 2010.

MARGHERITA G. (2011), The Eye of the Fly: Psychoanalytic Gestalten and Chaotic Attractors in Large Groups and Institutions. *Chaos and Complexity Letters*, volume 4, issue 3.