How can we trust our (research and organizational) Praxes?
An Epistemology of Socioanalytic Methodologies

Rose Redding Mersky

(Presented at the annual symposium of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations, Santiago, Chile. June 15, 2014)

> Since certain working hypotheses are put forward and tested in the material which the patient produces, psychoanalysis is a scientific procedure and its technique embodies scientific principles. (Klein 1998:12)

This paper will set out a proposed theory of knowledge (epistemology) that underlies the various socioanalytic methodologies that have been developed for use in organizations, both as instruments of research and as consulting interventions. Using Hollway's thinking on subjectivity (2013) and Polanyi's (1966) concept of tacit knowledge, I attempt to frame the ongoing debate between objective reality and subjective experiences as sources of truth. In this paper I try to demonstrate that our roots are broader than psychoanalysis, while at the same time deeply indebted to psychoanalysis. I will end this paper by offering a schema connecting Peirce's theory of abductive logic, which can be seen as a "primary philosophy of science" (Long 2013b:xxii) underlying socioanalytic methodologies and my three key epistemological concepts.

What is an epistemology and why is it important?

When we talk about epistemology, we are talking about the basic ways that we know what we know. When we say such and such is the case, on what basis do we know this? One's epistemology or theory of knowledge is extremely important, because it is the basis on which one undertakes research or intervenes in organizations. If one believes, for example, that all knowledge is rational, then one would not utilize social dreaming as a research methodology. At the same time, if one believes that knowledge is collectively generated, then one would not undertake an organizational diagnosis purely on the basis of individual interviews.

In order to lay the groundwork for this analysis I will first define what I mean by socioanalysis and explain two sample methodologies, i.e. the Social Photo Matrix and Social Dream Drawing.

What is Socioanalysis?

Socioanalysis is an evolving social science that is based on the principles and concepts of psychoanalysis applied to organizations and society. Its approach to research and consultancy, as Alistair Bain (1999:14) notes, "combines and synthesises methodologies and theories derived from psycho-analysis, group relations, social systems thinking, and organisational behavior".

Susan Long (2001 in Long 2013d:307) describes it as follows:

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

Following on from Gordon Lawrence's discovery of Social Dreaming in the early 1980's (1991; 1998a; 1998b; 1999), various socioanalytic methodologies have been developed and continue to evolve. What they all have in common is "the intent to access a group's unconscious thinking, whether related to a pre-identified theme or a particular organisational or social issue" (Mersky 2012:20) and to generate data to be later developed into working hypotheses.

To date these methodologies are Organizational Role Analysis (Newton, Long and Sievers 2006; Sievers and Beumer 2006; Newton 2013) Social Dreaming (Lawrence 1991, 1998a/b, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005; Baglioni and Fubini 2013), Social Dream-Drawing (Mersky 2008, 2012, 2013), Social Photo-Matrix (Sievers 2007, 2008, 2009, 2013), Organizational Observation (Hinshelwood and Skogstad 2000; Hinshelwood 2013), Role Biography (Long 2006, 2013c) and Organizational Constellations (Hellinger 1998; Weber 2000). I will describe Social Dream Drawing and the Social Photo Matrix in this presentation.

Two Socioanalytic Methodologies Explained

The Social Photo-Matrix

The Social Photo-Matrix was developed by Burkard Sievers (2007), beginning in 2004. Participants are invited to take photos in advance that relate to a pre-identified theme. These photos are sent directly to a technical assistant, whose role it is to organize them into an archive and develop a system by which they are randomly shown during the workshop. Like the other participants, we hosts never see the photos in advance. We work with the photographs, and the photographers are not identified.

The workshop has two key components, i.e. the matrix, where participants (including the hosts) offer associations and amplifications to the photographs and a subsequent reflection session, whose task is to focus on the meaning of the photographs in relation to the chosen theme. The Matrix is one hour, during which approximately six to eight

photos are shown. The reflection group is usually a smaller group and takes an hour. It is facilitated by one of the hosts of the matrix.

This photo is from a Social Photo Matrix that Burkard and I recently held in Belgrade Serbia, using the theme "Who am I as leader and follower?" It depicts the feet of some students on a sign that says *From Vardar to Triglav*. As our technical assistant explained in an email (Ristovic 2014): "Those were the borders of [the] former Yugoslavia, the river Vardar in Macedonia at the south and Triglav, the highest mountain in Slovenia at the north. There was even a popular song in 1980s with those lyrics, often considered [the] unofficial Yugoslav anthem that celebrated [the] unity and diversity of many nations who lived in the country", which since then has experienced a long-missing sense of solidarity along ethnic lines.

After many years of co-hosting Social Photo Matrix workshops around the world, I have learned that one can never predict in advance how participants will associate to photos. Even though this methodology can be used in any culture or country, the photos themselves always have different connotations. For example, this photo of a trust exercise in a park, which, to me, as an American who has participated in this sort of exercise, would seem to say something positive about leadership, was instead associated to in a quite skeptical and somewhat cynical fashion in Serbia.

This experience reminds us that one cannot undertake a socioanalytic methodology with a theory already in one's head and set out to confirm it by what emerges. Instead, one forms one's theories or hypotheses based on the data that is generated in the matrix and later reflected upon in the smaller session. If we had gone to Serbia, a country we know very little about, with a theory in our heads related to the theme "Who am I as leader and follower" that we sought to prove, I as an American and Burkard as a German, would have been woefully inadequate. Our "theories" about Serbian leadership would have come from what we had read in the news or heard in discussions and been naturally influenced by our own cultural and national perspectives.

Interestingly, however, even the Serbians in the workshop were surprised at what emerged in the matrix in relation to the theme, which were feelings of

sadness and depression. In the small reflection groups, the participants gradually came to grips with the impact of so many years of betrayal by their leadership, whom many felt they cannot trust. Thus, it is difficult for them to identify with either the role of follower or a leader, as both roles have been so contaminated.

As we always do, the theme for this SPM was chosen in collaboration with our Serbian colleague, who sponsored this event. We worked with a group of 48 participants, but only half of them sent photos. What we subsequently learned was that many in the workshop had difficulty taking a picture relating to the theme. For example this photo was taken by the young man who took us back and forth to the airport. He told us that he really struggled to find an appropriate subject relating to the theme. In this photo matrix, there were many photos taken from people's personal archives, i.e. photos of an Egyptian statue, a famous architectural house in Barcelona, someone's daughter dressed in summer clothes (which could not have been taken for the matrix, as it took place in March). Other photos seemed to be pulled from the internet, such as this one of baby geese following their mother, which seems to portray an idealized version of leading and following.

It seems that many participants could only cope with this theme by looking outward, rather than inward to their own experience.

Social Dream Drawing

Social Dream-Drawing (Mersky 2008, 2013) is a methodology in which participants work with the drawings of dreams relating to a particular theme. They are asked to start drawing their dreams as soon as they learn the theme and to bring one of them to the workshop. After telling one's dream, the dreamer shows a drawing. We work on each dream drawing for approximately an hour, offering associations and amplifications, as with Social Dreaming and the Social Photo-Matrix. For the last 20 minutes of this hour, we switch seats and reflect on the theme, similarly to the reflection session in the Social Photo Matrix.

What differentiates these two methodologies is that in the SPM, we are associating to the photograph, and not the photographer. With Social Dream-Drawing (as with organizational role analysis and role biography), we know whose drawing we are working with. This results in both a deeper experience for the dreamer, who often recalls dream material during this process, as well as access to the collective group unconscious.

This photo is from a Social Dream-Drawing workshop that I co-hosted in Chile in 2009. The theme for this workshop was "What do I risk in my work?". In this case, each participant was from a different organizational context, so while each dream drawing expressed an issue relating to the individual dreamer, what eventually emerged from the collective unconscious were societal and cultural issues relating to working in Chile.

This first drawing contains images from two different dreams, which the dreamer had three days apart. The first dream, which is reflected on the left side, was about losing his hair. The second was related to erotic feelings towards students, who approach him after giving a lecture. The associations and reflections were about being exposed and naked, which led to the discussion of the role of "masks as a characteristic of the Chilean society, specifically of the Chilean oligarchy, where one has the feeling of wearing masks since it is important -- in order to survive -- to have a certain social and family origin, to study at specific universities, etc. You must have what they call 'social credentials'" (Social Dream-Drawing Transcript 2009:8).

SOÑÉ QUE SOÑABA

This drawing by a self-employed consultant reflected another kind of anxiety, that of getting sick and not being able to support the family. As the dreamer put it: "The obligation of producing, generating, reaching stability, having material assets and power beyond a healthy level" (ibid.:11). The cross drawn on the bed turned out to be an important element that probably would never have been revealed in just the telling of the dream. This led to associations to the role of the crusaders and also the Knights Templar Trust in Chile, a charity which was then working in the San Juan de Dias Children's hospital in Santiago. The question of how much one could or should risk, how far one should go, to help others was related also to the demands on a self-employed consultant. As was said in the reflection group: "You have to establish certain limits regarding risks. Templars, for example, gave their lives but you don't need to go that far" (ibid.:12).

Lastly this is a dream drawing by a female human relations executive working in a private enterprise. Her boss had just called her into his office to tell her she must take care of his children and that she would recognize them "because they had blue eyes just like him" (ibid.:15). The theme of elitism in Chile returned, since "the most important corporate groups belong to two of the main Catholic Church collectivities: the Opus Dei and The Legionnaires of Christ" (ibid.:15).

Connecting all three dreams was the theme of the invasion of the boundary of the role holder in very personally vulnerable ways, leading either to exposure, sickness or humiliation. All the risks had to do with how strong a boundary one can set around one's work identity in a culture where one does not hold the elite position.

The Epistemology Debate: Hollway: The Split between Objectivity and Subjectivity

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

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

This rejection of the subjective completely leaves out "something essential: the thinker/knower" (ibid.) and as Despret (2004:131) notes: "to 'depassion' knowledge does not give us a more objective world, it just gives us a world 'without us' and therefore without 'them'…a world 'we don't care for'". Instead, argues Keller (1985:116), we can say that our approach is "maximally authentic, and hence maximally reliable".

Our intellectual roots stem from psychoanalysis, which is foremost about the unconscious and has always been both a theory and a praxis. This dual identity encompasses both a theory of knowledge (an epistemology) and a way of working (Devereux 1967:294).

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

On the praxis side, this way of working has, in and of itself, a scientific basis. As Melanie Klein has noted (1998:12): "Since certain working hypotheses are put forward and tested in the material which the patient produces, psychoanalysis is a scientific procedure and its technique embodies scientific principles".

The Epistemology Debate: Polanyi & Tacit Knowledge

Michael Polanyi, the Hungarian philosopher, while not from the world of psychoanalysis, struggled with the same split in epistemology. From his perspective (1966:25), the difficulty was "to find a stable alternative to its [positivism] ideal of objectivity".

In stating that "we can know more than we can tell" (ibid.:4), he developed the concept of tacit knowing, which is embodied in experience and is developed in collaboration with others. This is a kind of knowing that is only made obvious in praxis and "can only be acquired through practical experience in the relevant context" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacit_knowledge (accessed 21.04.2014).

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

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

For Polanyi

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

Three underlying epistemological concepts

In this paper, I am offering three key concepts underlying an epistemology of socioanalytic methodologies such as Social Dreaming, the Social Photo-Matrix and Social Dream-Drawing. While they are distinct concepts, they exist integrally in relation to one another and re-enforce one another. These concepts are consistent with both Hollway's notion of the necessity for subjective experience and Polanyi's notion of indwelling and experience over time developed with others.

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

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

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

practice using psychoanalytic processes and concepts to understand and intervene in organizations has developed. This field takes as its basic tenet that not only do individuals have an unconscious but groups, organizations and cultures have what Susan Long (2010) describes as an "'associative unconscious'… a matrix of thought that links members of a community at an unconscious level".

Gordon Lawrence states that the purpose of Social Dreaming as a methodology is the "accessing unconscious thinking through dreams" (Lawrence 2011:327). The subsequent development of other socioanalytic methodologies using photos and drawings, for example, has broadened the possibilities by which, as Long & Harney (2013:8) the associative unconscious can be accessed and "the unconscious social field of thoughts can be articulated or utilized in thinking".

This group unconscious, if brought into awareness, is a valuable source of thinking for systems (Bion 1993; Lawrence 1999b; Alexandrov 2009), where very often conflicts and traumas in the system are perhaps sensed, and certainly felt, but not fully available – for whatever reason – to be explored and addressed.

This epistemology also takes for granted that thoughts – even those of the individual – do not "belong" just to him or her. As Long and Harney (2013:7) put it: "'thought' is a social rather than an individual process". Thoughts are always a reflection of the group and can be made available through work with the group or system. One can be said to be offering one's thoughts on behalf of the group or as an expression of the group. It is further grounded by Bion's (1993) meta-cognition theory that thoughts are not individually owned (similar to Lawrence's concept that dreams are not only individually owned) but belong to the collective from which they arise (Alexandrov 2009). Bion (1993) posits that thinking is "deeply rooted in unconscious processes" (Alexandrov 2009:40), that thoughts belong not to the individual, and that knowledge is collectively constructed from these thoughts.

Unlike positivism, which holds that all that is known must be seen (Seale 1999:466), socioanalytic theory and practice has evolved to access what is not directly knowable. This also places organizational consultation and research largely outside the scope of the purely empirical, as the unconscious must be accessed in different ways, other than just by the senses. As Hollway (2013:5) notes: "This theory of thinking not only transcends the cognition-emotion binary on which objectivity depends, but also, in the place it makes for unconscious intersubjectivity, undermines the idea of an autonomous rational thinker who is the conscious initiator of objective thought." Thus, the exact opposite of my

first epistemological concept would be: Thinking is a rational mental process undertaken by the individual and all that is known is empirical and conscious.

Epistemological Concept #2: Knowledge is generated collectively

The basic philosophical stance in such research and consultation is that the practitioner is constantly engaged in a mutual learning process with the research subject and the client. One does not proceed on one's own to discover truths without the participation and collaboration of others. Thus, one could say, findings and insights "are not individually owned" (Alexandrov 2009:41), but collectively owned and discovered. The researcher may be the driver of the search, for example, the one with the original question, but not ultimately alone in the discovery of new knowledge.

Likewise, processes of group learning must take place in groups, a seemingly obvious statement. However, this is quite different from the statement, for example, that a group could actually learn from a consultant, who uses his or her "specialized method and knowledge" (ibid.:32) to truly understand a system, without engaging with it. This stance, which is often taken by researchers and consultants "from a privileged and detached perspective" (ibid.:35), is based on the epistemological assumption that one can have knowledge of a system primarily using one's own tools. Thus the exact opposite of my second epistemological concept would be: Knowledge comes from the theorizing of the expert and consists of individual contributions building on the cumulative contributions of other individuals.

The concept that knowledge is generated collectively is connected to the school of relational knowledge, which holds that knowledge "grows from interaction" (ibid.:37) and is based on relations with others. It is further connected to Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge, which develops in communities over time and forms a kind of collective expertise to be integrated and furthered in the next generations.

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

This concept underlies all socioanalytic methodologies and research, in that the methodologies themselves are designed to generate knowledge through the subjective experience of participants and the subsequent processing in a contained environment. In this approach, the subjective counts as real (Olesen 2012), and knowledge can be generated from this perspective. The exact opposite of this epistemological concept would be: Only what is observed or reasoned by researchers is valid for knowledge production.

One can say that at the subjective level one experiences "the truth" of a particular insight or finding. This is opposite to the position normally associated with quantitative data analysis, which involves "defining, categorizing, theorizing, explaining, exploring and mapping" one's data, then grouping them into similar concepts and further formulating them into thoughts and theory (Ritchie 1999:176). This truth, as in psychoanalysis, emerges from a subjective process. It is the internal working through that naturally follows an emotional insight, where everything naturally falls together. It is often very demanding and results in a re-orientation to one's internal and external world. It is not, for example, problem solving, which is a rational process, where the problem is clear and the solution can be found. This work results in a dramatic reorientation to previous assumptions and defenses.

Hoping to address the common accusation that reliance on subjective experience is a form of 'wild analysis', I propose here a form of coherence theory, which holds that truth requires a proper fit of elements within a whole system. This theory, mostly applied to the field of logic and mathematics, is being increasingly utilized in the social sciences. According to coherence theory, to say that a statement (usually called a judgment) is true or false is to say that "it coheres or fails to cohere with a system of other statements" http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3446800385/coherence-theory-truth.html. Hanly (1991:5) explores its application to psychoanalysis, coining the term "coherent narration", and relates it to Freud's (1927c:23) 'Totem and taboo' hypothesis where "'a number of very remarkable, disconnected facts are brought together … into a consistent whole'". It is deeply subjective, but somehow right.

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

Similar to the data that emerges from the associative unconscious in the matrix that makes us aware of an organizational and collective unthought known, Polanyi (1996:25) argues that the evidence that is creatively discovered and previously hidden, is "a clue to a reality of which it is a manifestation" (ibid.:23-

24). Thus one might say, the dream drawings from Chile provide us with a clue that in that country societal class distinctions deeply influences organizational processes and norms and can be a factor in negotiating one's professional boundaries and tasks.

Integrative Schema

I have developed a schema that connects my three epistemological concepts, socioanalytic theory and methodologies, and the practice of consultation in organizations, which I will introduce step by step. First, however, I will introduce another key underpinning of this work, i.e. the philosophy of abductive logic, developed by Charles Sanders Peirce, a 19th century American philosopher.

Peirce's abductive logic

Abductive Logic (Peirce)

| Surprising fact | Sense making | Working hypotheses formed, to be tested |
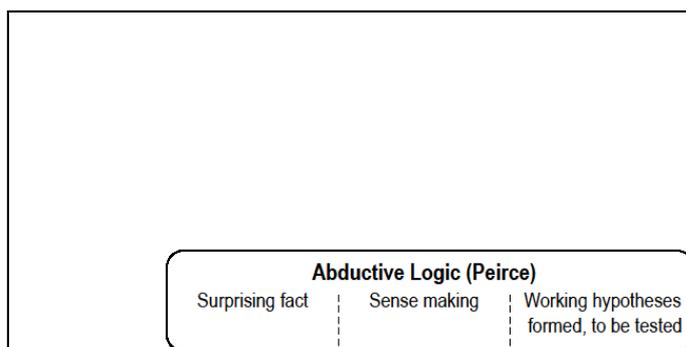
Susan Long and Maurita Harney, in the newly published book "Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems", edited by Susan Long (2013a), present an extensive case for this method of inquiry to serve as "a basic philosophical underpinning to the associative unconscious" and "an underlying concept for" socioanalytic methodologies (Long 2013b:xxiii-xxiv). From their perspective, it grounds and sustains the process of making sense of the often surprising, disturbing and puzzling emanations from the dreams, drawings, and photos and provides a logical process by which they can be worked upon to provide meaning and understanding. Like the dream drawer's bald head, the boss' blue eyes and the cross on the hospital bed sheet, this surprising thing can be termed "the Strange Intruder" (Peirce 1903, EP:154). Abductive logic provides a pathway for making something useful out of the

surprise that at first glance cannot be explained. Making sense of these so called intruders, of course, is exactly the task of psychoanalysis.

Once the surprising fact surfaces, using abductive logic, one seeks to understand from where it might emanate. Using the example of the blue-eyed boss, we look for something that could explain what might have produced this image. For example we could formulate the working hypothesis that the influence of the elite class in Chile deeply influences organizational norms and processes. With this temporary formulation, the blue eyes in the drawing now make sense, as an expression of a tension in the dreamer's experience of her status in her organization. This is the sense making phase of Peirce's logic.

At this point, the surprising fact, although not proved, at least makes preliminary sense. After a period of time, from these first efforts to make sense, one may formulate more developed working hypotheses to be refined and tested. This could form the basis of research into the impact of class distinctions in Chilean organizations.

 "Abduction presents us with *possibilities:* its conclusions give us something novel or different although not yet probabilities. These are established later through the work of normal science" (Kuhn, 1962 as cited in Long 2013b:xxiv). This scientific work can be inductive "which consist in accumulating data or instances that confirm the hypothesis" or deductive "which tests the hypothesis by applying it to further cases" (Long and Harney 2013:12). Using deductive logic, for example, one could survey the ethnic makeup of Chilean role holders, to see if this confirms one potential hypothesis based on the dreamer's experience.

Long and Harney term abductive logic "a conceptual framework for the associative processes that we believe are central to the unconscious, especially as it is evidenced in social groups…a clear philosophy of science" (ibid.:3). It is eminently appropriate for the first creative steps of discovery. They conclude their chapter with this summary:

> Abduction, as a logic of creativity, discovery, or insight, is well suited to enquiries governed by the aesthetic norms associated with narrative and imagination. Dreams, drawings, metaphors, and idiosyncratic musings can all serve as vehicles of the unsettling feeling, the 'surprising fact', which motivates the abductive process which 'break(s) into' and disrupts our habits of expectation. The abductive 'reasoning' then proceeds by way of a logic of association which sustains the process of 'making sense' or what had been puzzling, unsettling, disturbing (ibid.:20).

Abductive provides us with a pathway by which we can help ourselves and our clients begin to make sense of what emerges in these methodologies. Long (2013d, 307) points out that socioanalysis "works largely within the first, yet most creative stage of scientific discovery, when data is created through in inquisitive state of mind." It offers a way of channeling these vibrant first discoveries into learning and insight.

Social Dream-Drawing & the Social Photo-Matrix
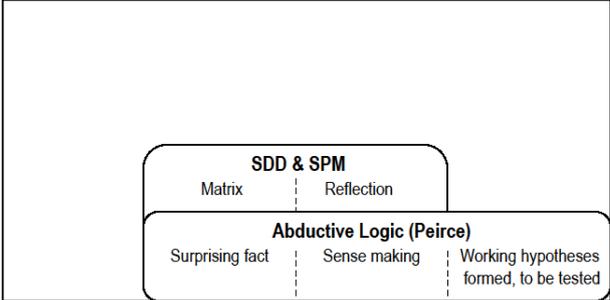
Next can one easily integrate the first two parts of abductive logic with the two socioanalytic methodologies I described, and also with others, such as social dreaming. The surprising element emerges in the matrix and preliminary sense making is the task of the reflection session.
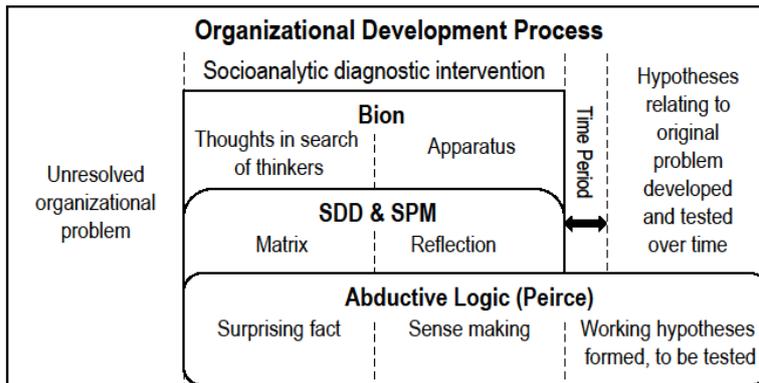
Bion and Thinking
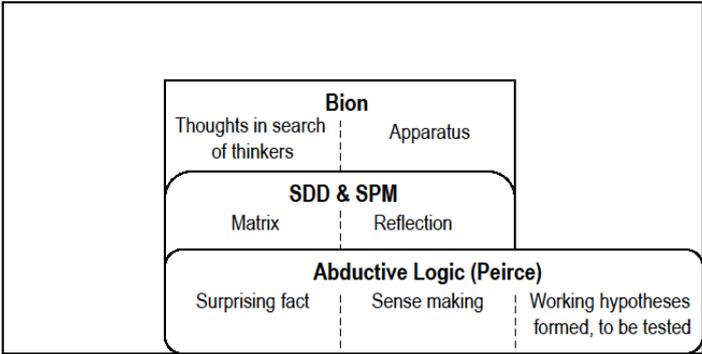
Bion's concept that thoughts precede thinking, as opposed to the idea that one begins to think and what follows are thoughts, is central to the matrix and to Peirce's first step in abductive logic. Bion's famous phrase 'thoughts in search of a thinker' (1967) serves as a metaphor for his concept that "thinking is a development forced on the psyche by the pressure of thoughts and not the other way around" (Bion 1988:179), meaning that we cannot call thoughts into being by the act of thinking. We can only think once thoughts arise. This notion is central to the matrix and is connected to Peirce's first step in abductive logic, the emergence of the surprising intruder.

In addition, Bion (ibid.) views thinking as the result of "two main mental developments. The first is the development of thoughts", which I see as arising in the Matrix and in the associative processes in other socioanalytic methodologies. The second main mental development is the "apparatus to cope with them" (ibid.). I see the reflection group as the metaphoric apparatus that enables participants to think, i.e. to transform the 'surprising' thoughts from the infinite (i.e. the boss' blue eyes) into potential hypothesis related to reality, i.e. the chosen theme or the organization itself. In Peirce's framework, this is sense making.

To further expand this line of argument, I want to note that Bion (1998) viewed these unconscious thoughts as not just random ones. He notes that they "contained or expressed a problem" (ibid:184) and "were themselves felt to be undesirable excrescences of the psyche and required attention, elimination by some means or other, for that reason" (ibid.). Thus these emerging thoughts are clues to the problems underlying any system, for example, role boundaries of subordinates being invaded by a superior with an elite group identity.

Organizational Development Process

```
Organizational Development Process
    Socioanalytic diagnostic intervention        Hypotheses
                                                  relating to
                 Bion                             original
    Thoughts in search      Apparatus             problem
      of thinkers                                 developed
Unresolved                              Time      and tested
organizational      SDD & SPM          Period     over time
  problem      Matrix        Reflection

           Abductive Logic (Peirce)
    Surprising fact    Sense making    Working hypotheses
                                        formed, to be tested
```

I now wish to broaden our perspective and also bring ourselves into the real world of organizational consultation. Here we can imagine that when an organization has a problem that simply won't go away, despite numerous interventions, it may be agreed upon with the client to use one of our methodologies to help surface the underlying chronic issue, of which the presenting problem is merely a symptom. Using a theme relating to this problem, such as "Leadership Transitions" or "Where will we be in 10 years?", which serve to ground and contain the process, the workshop is embedded in a broader consultation frame.

Surfacing the surprising fact and intruder and then reflecting on them in a Social Photo-Matrix or a Social Dream-Drawing workshop are, of course, just the first steps of a longer process of hypothesis formation and testing. Further steps are certainly required, in order for an organization to develop credible hypotheses to be tested and corroborated, using inductive or deductive processes. This "later and separate stage" (Long and Harney 2013:12) relates to Peirce's third and last phase, "Working hypotheses formed to be tested".

Participation in and facilitation of a socioanalytic methodology requires much resources and energy. This form of exploration, often unfamiliar to organizational role holders, does not follow the more familiar linear step by step consultation process of entry, contracting, diagnosis and feedback. Instead, by its very nature, it sets in motion the release of unexpected, as yet not articulated and often deeply felt underlying processes. It is, as Peirce notes, just the beginning of a creative discovery process. It goes without saying that any consultant or researcher who takes on the role of introducing such a

methodology to a system must be skilled in helping the organization to manage such an experience, to make sense of it, and to use it fruitfully.

While a period of time needs to elapse for integration and planning to occur, very often changes start to take place even before the formal intervention phase begins. As Susan Long has observed, "in much social systems based research the ever-changing dynamic nature of the system means that its very exploration creates change" (Long 2013d:313).

In any event, whatever is discovered needs to unfold gradually to be truly made of use for change in the system. We do not want to come too early to hypotheses and formulations.

Central to this work is its deeply subjective nature. As Long (ibid.:311) notes:

> [T]hese methods work by accessing, through the associative unconscious, the central emotional experiences to be found in a social system and its context and to open up the potential for their transformation, perhaps from a pathological to a more normal position, perhaps even to a position with creative potential. The reflective spaces created by these methods allow people to feel safe enough to reconnect with emotional experiences that lie at the heart of their work together and from there to think about how their work might be done more satisfactorily.

Underlying Epistemological Concepts
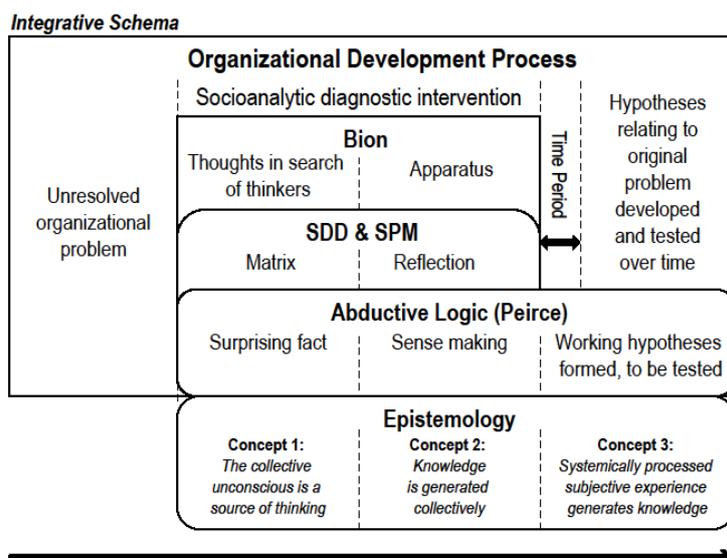
My last addition to this schema is to return to the three underlying epistemological concepts that I earlier offered:

1. The collective unconscious is a source of thinking.
2. Knowledge is generated collectively
3. Systematically processed subjective experience generates knowledge.

I have lined them up with the earlier categories.

Thus the first concept, that "the collective unconscious is a source of thinking", is the epistemological assumption underlying the idea of the matrix in the socioanalytic workshop, where Peirce's surprising fact always emerges and where those unconscious thoughts that are searching for thinkers, as Bion has formulated, become available for thinking.

The second concept, that "knowledge is generated collectively", is the epistemological assumption underlying Peirce's notion of sense making, which takes place in the reflection section of a socioanalytic workshop, which is the structure that functions as Bion's apparatus for thinking.

And, lastly, the third concept. that "systematically processed objective experience generates knowledge", is the epistemological assumption underlying Peirce's notion of testing working hypothesis previously formulated in the reflection session and coincides with the follow-up work in an organizational diagnostic process.

Conclusion

My goal with this paper is to establish a sound theoretical basis for the validity of what we do in our research and organizational practices, so that we can truly trust that our work helps organizations broaden and deepen their capacities and creativity. I am hoping to bring to light what we must often keep in the shadows, our perspective of the unconscious and its possibilities for positive and effective change in the wider world.

Bibliography
Alexandrov, H. (2009) Experiencing knowledge: the vicissitudes of a research journey. In: Clarke, S. and Hoggett, P., eds. *Researching Beneath the Surface: Psycho-Social Research Methods in Practice.* London: Karnac, pp. 29-49.

Baglioni, L. and Fubini (2013) Social dreaming. In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac, pp. 107-127.

Bain, A. (1999) On socio-analysis. *Socio-Analysis*. 1 (1), pp. 1–17.

Bion, W.R. (1946) The Leaderless Group Project. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic.* 10 (3), pp. 77-8l.

Bion, W. (1962) *Learning from Experience*. London: Karnac Books.

Bion, W.R. (1967) *Second thoughts.* London: W. Heinemann Medical Books [Reprinted, London: Karnac, 1987].

Bion, W. R. (1988) The psychoanalytical study of thinking. In: Spillius, E. B., ed. *Melanie Klein Today. Developments in Theory and Practice, Vol. I, Mainly Theory.* London: Routledge, pp. 178–186.

Bion, W. (1970/1993) *Attention and Interpretation.* London: Karnac.

Borck, C.R. (2011) The ontology of epistemological production: cases in ethnography and psychotherapy. *Qualitative Inquiry.* 17, pp. 404-411.

Bordo, S. (1987) *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays in Cartesianism and Culture.* Albany: SUNY Press.

Despret, V. (2004) 'The body we care for: Figures of anthropo-zoo-genesis'. *Body & Society.* 10, pp. 111-134.

Devereux, G. (1967) *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioural Sciences.* The Hague: Mouton.

Freud, S. (1927c). *The future of an illusion.* S.E. Vol. 21, pp. 5-56.

Hanly, C. (1991) The Concept of Truth in Psychoanalysis. Paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the Rapaport-Klein Study Group.* Austen Riggs Center, Stockbridge, MA.

Harrison, T. (2000) *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a Different Front.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Harrison, T. and Clarke, D. (1992) The Northfield experiments. *The British Journal of Psychiatry.* 160, pp. 698-708.

Hellinger, B., Weber, G., and Beaumont, H. (1998) *Love's Hidden Symmetry: What Makes Love Work in Relationships.* Phoenix, AZ: Zeig and Tucker.

Hinshelwood, R.D. (2013) Observing anxiety: a psychoanalytic training method for understanding organizations. In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods:*

Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems. London: Karnac, pp. 47-66.

Hinshelwood, R. D. & Skogstad, W., eds. (2000) *ObservingOrganisations: Anxiety, Defence and Culture in Health Care*. London: Routledge.

Hollway, W. (2013) Objectivity. In: Theo, T., ed. *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*. Heidelberg: SpringerReference, pp. 1-8.

Keller, E.F. (1985) *Reflections on Gender and Science*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Klein, M. (1998) *Narrative of a Child Analysis*. London: Hogarth Press.

Kuhn, T. S. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lawrence, W. G. (1991) Won from the void of the infinite: experiences of Social Dreaming. *Free Associations*. 2 (22), pp. 259–294.

Lawrence, W. G. (1998a). Social Dreaming as a tool of consultancy and action research. In: Lawrence, W. G., ed. *Social Dreaming @ Work*. London: Karnac, pp. 123–140.

Lawrence, W. G. ed., (1998b). *Social Dreaming @ Work*. London: Karnac.

Lawrence, W. G. (1999) The contribution of Social Dreaming to socio-analysis. *Socio-Analysis*. 1 (1), pp. 18–33.

Lawrence, W. G. (2000) *Tongued With Fire: Groups in Experience.* London: Karnac.

Lawrence, W. G. (2001) Social Dreaming illuminating social change. *Organisational and Social Dynamics*. 1 (1), pp. 78–93.

Lawrence, W. G. (2003) Social dreaming as sustained thinking. *Human Relations.* 56 (5), pp. 609–624.

Lawrence, W. G. (2005) *Introduction to Social Dreaming: Transforming Thinking.* London: Karnac.

Lawrence, W.G. (2011) Intuiting knowledge from the social unconscious with special reference to social dreaming. In: Hopper, E. and Weinberg, H. eds. *The*

Social Unconscious in Persons, Groups, and Societies. Volume I: Mainly Theory. London: Karnac, pp. 321-336.

Long, S. (2001) Working with organizations: the contribution of the psychoanalytic discourse. *Organisational and Social Dynamics*. 1 (2), pp. 174-198.

Long, S. (2006) Drawing from role biography in Organizational Role Analysis. In: Newton, J., Long, S. and Sievers, B., eds. *Coaching in Depth: The Organizational Role Analysis Approach.* London: Karnac, pp. 127–143.

Long, S. (2010) ISPSO List Serve comment.

Long, S., ed. (2013a) *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac.

Long, S. (2013b) Introduction: Socioanalytic methodology. In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac, pp. xix-xxx.

Long, S. (2013c) Role biography, role history, and the reflection group. In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac, pp. 227-236.

Long, S. (2013d) Using and creating socioanalytic methods. In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac, pp. 307-314.

Long, S. and Harney, M. (2013) The associative unconscious. In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac, pp. 3-22.

Mersky, R. (2008) Social dream-drawing: a methodology in the making. *Socio-Analysis.* 10, pp. 35-50.

Mersky, R. (2012) Contemporary methodologies to surface and act on unconscious dynamics in organizations: An Exploration of design, facilitation capacities, consultant paradigm and ultimate value. *Organisational and Social Dynamics*. 12 (1), pp. 19-43.

Mersky, R. (2013) Social dream-drawing: "Drawing brings the inside out". In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac, pp. 153-178.

Newton, J. (2013) Organisational role analysis. In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac, pp.205-226.

Newton, J., Long, S. and Sievers, B., eds. (2006) *Coaching in Depth: The Organizational Role Analysis Approach.* London: Karnac.

Olesen, H.S. (2012) The societal nature of subjectivity: an interdisciplinary methodological challenge. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: EPQualitative Social Research.* 13 (3), Art. 4.

Peirce, C. S. (1992-1998) *The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings (EP), vol. 2, 1893-1913.* The Peirce Edition Project, ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Polanyi, M. (1966) *The tacit dimension*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ritchie, J., and Spencer, L. (1994/1999) Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In: Bryman, A. and Burgess, R. G., eds. *Analyzing Qualitative Data.* London & New York: Routledge, pp. 173-194.

Ristovic, N. (2014) Personal email to Rose Mersky, 16 April.

Seale, C. (1999). Quality in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 5, pp. 465-478.

Sievers, B. and Beumer, U. (2006) Organisational role analysis and consultation – the organisation as inner object. In: Newton, J., Long, S. and Sievers, B., eds. *Coaching in Depth: The Organizational Role Analysis Approach.* London: Karnac, pp. 65–81.

Sievers, B. (2007) Pictures from below the surface of the university: The Social Photo-Matrix as a method for understanding organizations in depth. In: Reynolds, M. and Vince, R., eds. *Handbook of Experiential Learning and Management Education.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 241–257.

Sievers, B. (2008) "Perhaps it is the role of pictures to get in contact with the uncanny": The Social Photo-Matrix as a method to promote the understanding of the unconscious in organizations. *Organisational and Social Dynamics.* 8 (2), pp. 234–254.

Sievers, B (2013) Thinking organisations through photographs: the Social Photo-Matrix as a method for understanding organisations in depth. In: Long, S., ed. *Socioanalytic Methods: Discovering the Hidden in Organisations and Social Systems*. London: Karnac, pp. 129-151.

Social Dream-Drawing Transcript (2009) Santiago, Chile. November 2, 2009.

Stenner, P. (2008) A.N.Whitehead and subjectivity. *Subjectivity*. 22, pp. 90-109.

Weber, G. (2000). Organizational constellations: basics and special situations, J. Peterson & U. Luppertz (Trans.), Praxis der Organisationsaufstellungen. Heidelberg: Carl-Auer-Systeme Verlag. http://www.constellationsolutions.co.uk/weber1.htm (retrieved 30 November 2010).