Psychoanalysis at Hawkspur Camp and other therapeutic communities for antisocial children and young people

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ABSTRACT

Psychoanalytically informed therapeutic communities constitute an important, but often forgotten, chapter in the history of applied psychoanalysis. Apart from the original experiments by analysts and educators such as August Aichhorn or Homer Lane, little is known about the vibrant and socially progressive nature of residential communities established during and in the aftermath of the Second World War. This article explores the uses of psychoanalysis in four such communities that worked with antisocial children and young people: the Hawkspur Camp, established in 1936 by David Wills and Marjorie Franklin; the Barns Hostel, a hostel for 'unmanageable' child evacuees from Edinburgh and Glasgow, active during the Second World War; the Reynolds House, a residential home for boys leaving approved schools who had no home to return to, started in London in 1963; and the Cotswold Community, a residential school for 'maladjusted' children in Wiltshire, transformed into a therapeutic community in 1967. Apart from the modifications of psychoanalytic methods made necessary by this environment, a key question posed by these communities is what constitutes healing social relationships at large, and how psychoanalysis can be instrumental in building and maintaining them.

Keywords: psychoanalysis; therapeutic communities; antisocial; children; adolescents; healing society

PSYCHOANALYSIS AT HAWKSPUR CAMP AND OTHER THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES FOR ANTISOCIAL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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The inter-war and the Second World War period were marked by the medicalization of antisocial behaviour, particularly when it comes to children and adolescents.[1] In contrast with the focus on economic and moral factors in the nineteenth century, the inter-war period saw 'maladjustment' as a result of the conditions in the child's home: bad parenting, maternal deprivation, lack of appropriate role models or adverse childhood experiences. The popularization of psychoanalysis had a significant role to play in this shift of focus. It was fuelled by the establishment of psychoanalytic clinics offering free treatment to the public in major cities in Central Europe, the UK, the USA and Russia (Danto, 2005), the proliferation of child guidance clinics in both the UK and Central Europe (Danto, 2005; Stewart 2007) and the emergence of institutes specifically focused on treating offenders, such as the Juvenile Psychopathic Clinic, founded by William Healy in the United States as early as 1909, or the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency (which would later become the Portman Clinic) in London in 1932. Within this wider context, a special role needs to be accorded to the emergence of therapeutic communities. Most scholars locate this emergence in the psychiatric wards of military hospitals – such as the Northfield Hospital, where a therapeutic

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community was established by the psychoanalysts John Rickman and Wilfred Bion. Yet there is a much longer history of therapeutic camps and residential schools working with antisocial children and young people, beginning during and just after the First World War with the establishment of August Aichhorn's school for delinquent boys in Austria and Homer Lane's Little Commonwealth in Dorset. These 'functional antecedents' (Mills & Harrison, 2007, p. 25) of later therapeutic communities remain largely unknown in the history of psychoanalysis, in spite of their innovative uses of psychoanalytic methods and a much more progressive social agenda.

While the clearly stated purpose of treatment at Northfield was to enable ex-soldiers to rejoin the military service (Mills & Harrison, 2007, p. 30), the therapeutic communities discussed in this article aimed to foster a critical approach to social norms and to enable its members to change, and not merely adapt to, society. Their stress on equality and mutual responsibility lacked the 'strong authoritarian streak' (Mills & Harrison, 2007, p. 27) present in military hospitals. The approach also differed greatly from psychoanalytic theories that called for a disciplined approach as a key environmental factor in the treatment of young offenders. In his articles on the genesis of antisocial behaviour, for instance, Donald Winnicott claimed that a large part of the young offender's troubles stemmed from the lack of control imposed on them in early childhood. 'Children deprived of home life', he wrote, 'must force us later to provide stability in the shape of an approved school or, in the last resort, [. . .] the four walls of a prison cell' (2012, p. 102). While Winnicott was thus quite open about his support for strict discipline in approved schools, the residential communities discussed in this article cherished a non-punitive, egalitarian and supportive approach to their members. A close association between the methods used by Aichhorn in Austria, Melitta Schmideberg in Berlin (and later on in London) and David Wills in the UK attests to the circulation of ideas between clinics and communities in Central Europe and in the UK, especially since a lot of analysts who first worked in Vienna or Berlin later moved to the UK because of the threat of Nazism. An interesting inter-war example of this approach was Hawkspur Camp.

Hawkspur Camp was a joint initiative started by David Wills and Marjorie Franklin. Wills was a Quaker educator with an interest in psychoanalysis, whereas Franklin was an analyst and one of the founders of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency (ISTD), the first institution in the UK to work with offenders on psychoanalytic principles. In 1936 they founded a camp for young men who, mainly due to the lack of affection and approval in their early environment, showed signs of antisocial conduct. What started with

limited funds, a colony of tents and a piece of land soon became a supportive community with an elaborate social structure (Franklin, 1966, pp. 5–7; Wills 1967 pp. 7–15). The main principles of communal life at Hawkspur Camp were applied in a number of residential schools and homes for antisocial children and young people in the course of the 1940s and the 1960s. Out of these, three communities will be referred to in this article. These are the Barns Hostel, a hostel for Second World War children too disturbed to be lodged with 'ordinary' families in Edinburgh and Glasgow; Reynolds House (started in London in 1963), a hostel for boys leaving approved schools who had no home to return to and who needed help in transitioning to an independent life; and the Cotswold Community, a residential school for 'maladjusted' children in Wiltshire, transformed into a therapeutic community in 1967. In all of these ventures, psychoanalysis played a fundamental role not only as an individual therapeutic method, but also in structuring the daily life of the community. Beginning with a general outline of psychoanalytic theories of antisocial behaviour, the different roles of psychoanalysis, as well as the psychoanalytic approaches most frequently employed, will be explored in what follows. The final section will investigate the social implications of the principles devised in psychoanalytically informed therapeutic communities and their current relevance.

The Antisocial Personality: Causes and Promoting Change

Psychoanalytic discussions of how the offender is to be helped produced various theories concerning the constitution of their character. It was August Aichhorn – the Viennese pioneer in work with antisocial children – who claimed that the task of re-education would not be successful without 'altering the ego structure of the child' (1951[1925], p. 51). Having moved away from biological and hereditary theories of antisocial conduct, inter-war and post-war psychoanalysis sought explanations in terms of the child's environment and its relationships to its caregivers. One thing that all psychoanalysts concerned with this subject agreed on was that, in the young offender, the relationship between the id, the ego and the superego (or the ego-ideal) was somehow malfunctioning.

Aichhorn set the stage by arguing that, as a rule, the young offender had a weak or poorly developed ego-ideal. Following Freud, he claimed that the nucleus of the ego-ideal was formed through identification with the first love objects (the parents or guardians) (Freud, 2012 [1914], p. 96). If there was family violence in the home (directed towards the children, the other parent or both), the child might take over unacceptable traits from the parents (Aichhorn, 1951[1925], pp. 225–6). Aichhorn did not elaborate on the various

scenarios that might result from this identification with the aggressor, as Ferenczi would later call it (1988, p. 198). He merely stated that one cannot expect a child to develop socially desirable traits if they did not grow up in an environment where these were present. He also pointed to the fact that the process of identification takes time and that, if the child frequently changed caregivers or was moved from one family or institution to another, this was unlikely to happen (p. 198). Aichhorn did, however, elaborate on one particular outcome of faulty family relationships that did not result in a weak ego-ideal, quite the contrary. This was the case of the neurotic child with delinquent traits whose actions stemmed from 'unconscious feelings of guilt' (1951[1925], p. 230). If the ego-ideal was too severe (formed through the identification with an overly strict, punishing or critical parent), the ego would have great trouble meeting the ideal's demands. This would result in a hyperproduction of guilt feelings and a general sense of not being good enough. One possible result was for the ego to attempt to defend itself by repressing these guilt feelings into the unconscious, where they continued to operate as 'an unconscious need for punishment' (p. 230). Such a person would commit crimes where the likelihood of their being discovered was high and the punishment itself would serve as a temporary atonement for the unconscious guilt that tormented them.

Nearly all psychoanalysts who were interested in crime and delinquency wrote about such cases and it is difficult to fathom their particular attraction when compared to other antisocial behaviour patterns (Freud, 2012 [1914]; Alexander & Healy, 1935, p. 287; Schmideberg, 1947, p. 458; Wills, 1967, p. 120). One explanation is that the neurotic offender with a punishing superego was seen to possess a higher degree of morality. They committed crimes only to be discovered, and thus represented both the offence and the punitive power of the law, which they deliberately provoked or brought upon themselves. Both their personality and their actions were thus more in line with social norms than those of an offender who did not wish to be discovered and was in open conflict with society. Furthermore, neurosis was at the time already a familiar terrain for psychoanalysis and consequently seemed more accessible to psychoanalytic treatment than the personality of an offender whose behaviour was motivated by psychotic traits.

On the other hand, as Sarah Hayes points out, antisocial behaviour was often linked to pre-psychotic states in psychoanalytic accounts of the time (Hayes, 2007, p. 134). This link between psychosis and crime pushed the psychotic patient, and especially the psychotic offender, further into the remit of the non-normative and socially unacceptable. To a certain extent, the attitude of analysts involved in the treatment of young offenders reflected the general psychoanalytic discomfort with psychosis. Thus, in the brochure of Hawkspur Camp,

published in 1966, the camp's analyst Marjorie Franklin expressed doubts as to whether persons with deep-seated psychotic traits could be helped by the camp's methods (p. 15). This, according to Franklin, was due to the fact that the psychic structure of a psychotic person could not be sufficiently influenced by changes in their environment (pp. 15, 43). However, it must be said that, both at Hawkspur and at free and low-cost psychoanalytic clinics, the treatment of such cases was tried and often led to new theoretical insights, which countered the accepted views on both psychosis and antisocial behaviour.

In Kurt Eissler's preface to Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth* (1925), we find Aichhorn 'arguing with a schizophrenic adolescent about the interpretation of some obscure passage in the Bible' (Eissler, 1951, p. xiv). More importantly, we are called to witness 'from week to week the patient's gradual recovery at a time when official psychiatry still maintained the dogma of the incurability of schizophrenia' (p. xiv). In 1932, Melanie Klein's daughter Melitta Schmideberg, who devoted her life to work with offenders, published an article about the psychoanalysis of antisocial children and adolescents, based on her work at the Berlin Policlinic and in London. The paper contains an outline of Schmideberg's work with a boy referred to as Willy, who was actually one of the first cases treated by Schmideberg at the Berlin Policlinic. At the time of admission, the boy was eight and a half years old and destructive to an extreme degree. He would neither play nor talk, but destroyed the consulting room to such an extent that it had to be renovated. He stole anything he could get his hands on and attacked both other patients and Schmideberg herself. Very soon, it became clear that he lived in a state of terrible fear and saw almost every object as a dangerous weapon that would soon be directed against him. Schmideberg was able to interpret the boy's destructive and antisocial behaviour as a defence against psychosis (1932, pp. 470–9).[2] Importantly, Willy's case was one of the analytic encounters that motivated Schmideberg to critique the prevalent theory of the young offender's weak superego. According to Schmideberg, this opinion was a reflection of popular prejudice, and merely a scientific way of saying that the criminal has no conscience (1954, p. 272). The truth, however, was more complex.

Unlike Aichhorn's, Schmideberg's theory encompassed the possibility of a different genesis for the ego-ideal and the superego, and thus drew a clear dividing line between the two psychic functions. While the ego-ideal could only be formed through the internalization of good objects (loving parents or guardians), the superego could also be created by

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[2] While it is true that Schmideberg makes a link between delinquency and psychotic traits here, it needs to be pointed out that she did not consider this link ubiquitous and that she related it more to the lack of affection or familial violence than to the lack of parental control.

internalizing objects that were violent or fear-inducing, such as abusive caregivers. It was therefore true that delinquents often had an underdeveloped ego-ideal, but, according to Schmideberg, there was no human being who actually lacked a superego (1932, p. 502). The lack of guilt feelings that psychoanalysts believed they could recognize in offenders was based on the lack of good objects that the offenders could identify with in childhood. For it was only the relationship with good objects that enabled the existence of guilt feelings (in the sense of a willingness to repair and do good), while the identification with bad objects led to the hyperproduction of anxiety and fear. This anxiety could be repressed, but it could also be projected into the outside world that then became full of dangerous and persecutory objects (1932, pp. 497–502). These objects needed to be destroyed, which could be done either by aggressive behaviour or by stealing (punitive objects are removed and thus made powerless). However, the destruction of punitive objects led to the fear of retaliation, which increased the original fear and locked the person into a vicious cycle of aggression and apprehension. According to Schmideberg, this was what happened in Willy's case.

While the theoretical foundations of Schmideberg's explanations are certainly reminiscent of Klein's, it must be stressed that Schmideberg paid more attention to the external circumstances of the child's life and the influence these had on their psychic development (see Shapira, 2017, pp. 330–1). Like most other analysts quoted here, Schmideberg argued that it was the lack of parental affection (or an overly suffocating type of affection) that ultimately laid the basis for delinquent behaviour: 'Many children are delinquent simply because they have never received loving attention and have never really been attached to anyone. They have to learn how to love and trust before they can become social human beings' (1948, p. 54). In Willy's case, she stressed the absence of parental care in early childhood (the boy was placed into an orphanage at the age of two), the distanced attitude of his foster parents, who tended only to his physical needs and openly showed a preference for their biological children, as well as the role of actual sexual abuse (by a group of older boys) in the formulation of the boy's sadistic sexual phantasies (1932, pp. 510, 516). In addition, Schmideberg advocated a patient, gentle and compassionate approach when working with her young patients. She stressed the role of reassurance in therapy, and how important it was that the patient had the impression of speaking to a real person (Shapira, 2017, p. 335; Schmideberg, 1935; Cassullo, 2016). According to her, offender therapy needed to focus more on interpreting movements, actions and symbols rather than words. The main goal was to make the patient comfortable and to decrease their anxiety and fear (1932, pp. 503–4). This could mean treating them in a comfortable room with household objects, taking

them for a walk, or any other intervention that would enable the transference. At no point should the analyst try to reprimand or to discipline the child or young person, as this would only confirm the punitive and fear-based worldview they already had. A persistently kind attitude would, on the other hand, eventually lead to the mollification of the superego and thus to the reduction of fear and fear-based behaviours (1932, p. 503).

It is likely that David Wills was as familiar with Schmideberg's work as he was with Aichhorn's or Homer Lane's. Schmideberg worked with Marjorie Franklin at the ISTD (in fact, she was one of its founding members) and edited Wills's work published in the *Psychological and Social Series* (see Wills, 1946).[3] What is certain is that Hawkspur staff were also skilled at interpreting from actions, behaviours and, quite often, from the physical presentation of their camp members to reach conclusions about their psychic life, their needs and their symptoms. Thus, when a member who was verbally hostile to Wills was seen to imitate his way of dressing, it was concluded that the hostile attitude was merely a means of masking affection and, consequently, an affectionate response was what was required (Wills, 1967, p. 117). Punishment was never used; aggressive and destructive behaviours were responded to with kindness and the goals of reducing fear and establishing a positive transference were as important (and as difficult to achieve) as they were for Aichhorn and Schmideberg.

Furthermore, the staff at Hawkspur Camp also believed that improvement was impossible without a fundamental change of personality. There were several methods through which this was achieved. The first, and probably most important one, was the attempt to meet those needs that had remained unmet in a person's childhood. In his personal account of camp life, Wills explicitly stated: 'Needs vary a good deal, but my attitude to them is all the same – so far as I can, I try to supply them' (1967, p. 127). Before the young person's needs could be met, the camp staff first needed to establish what they were. This was done by collecting all the available information on the boy's history (from the family, school, social workers, probation officers, institutions where they previously resided and so on), by observing his behaviour at the camp (his habits, emotional states, his interactions with his peers and the camp staff) and also by means of a psychological assessment conducted for free by members of the ISTD (Franklin, 1966, p. 11). At times, weekly psychoanalytic psychotherapy was arranged for members, and Wills was regularly informed on the child's progress and the

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[3] The *Psychological and Social Series* was a series of pamphlets on psychological, social, psychiatric and educational subjects aimed at both a popular and expert audience, edited by Schmideberg and Franklin in the 1940s.

issues uncovered in this manner (Franklin, 1966, p. 28; Wills, 1967, p. 130). Once an estimation of the boy's personality and history was thus established, the staff tried to offer relationships and activities that would strengthen the well-developed parts of his personality and facilitate the development of others.

At times, the consequence was a high level of dependence and preference for a particular staff member, but this was tolerated, and even encouraged, as it was understood as a phase that would, given the right attitude, eventually lead to maturity. As an example, Wills mentioned a boy named Bryn (a pseudonym) – an illegitimate child unloved by his mother and merely tolerated by his stepfather – who was at first 'completely emotionally dependant on Bods [T.C. Bodsworth, staff member at Hawkspur]' (1967, p. 129). However, Bryn 'grew out of this dependency, [. . .] completely reliving his emotional childhood and achieving something very much like maturity in a couple of years' (p. 129). The need to relive a part of one's emotional childhood was already mentioned by Aichhorn, and was stressed by Wills both in his account of Hawkspur Camp and in his later work at residential schools (Wills, 1967, 1970, 1973). Historical accounts of young offender therapy frequently stress the particular combination of childishness and maturity so often found in survivors of childhood trauma and neglect, as most members at Hawkspur Camp were. Through their relationships with the camp staff, the boys were afforded an opportunity to rebuild and reintegrate the lost parts of their childhood and adolescence.

It is crucial to stress, however, that the rehabilitation of young men at Hawkspur did not merely proceed through them identifying with the staff, but also through their relationships with the group, in 'the building of a free and happy community to which past members can look back with pride and affection' (Franklin, 1966, p. 19). In an analysis of therapeutic communities today, Chris Nicholson, like Wills, speaks of 'providing a space in which things that got stuck in primary emotional development can be re-experienced and re-worked' (Campling & Haigh, quoted in Nicholson, 2014, p. 11). According to Nicholson, this is achieved by creating an atmosphere in which 'the healthy part of the ego of both clients and therapists can be mobilised in a group setting and come to mobilise not a superego, but an around-ego through identification with peers' (2014, p. 9). Of course, this can only happen in a setting with frequent role reversal, in which the hierarchies that normally exist between staff and members are erased. Hawkspur staff were aware of the fact that it was not only their 'healthy' personalities, but also those of the other camp members, that could offer valuable points of identification, and that this had to take place in a space specifically designed to offer equality, respect, shared responsibility and long-term communal support.

A final point worth stressing is the manner of dealing with conflict in therapeutic work with young offenders. In all residential settings mentioned here, a key method was the tolerance for destructive and violent outbursts (provided that no one was in immediate physical danger), which were met with patience, and consistent attempts to repair and replace what had been stolen or broken. Aichhorn's revolutionary success with a group of 12 aggressive boys at his residential school in Oberhollabrunn (see Aichhorn, 1951[1925], pp. 167–85) was imitated by later analysts and educators, with similar results. In Wills's book on the Barns Hostel, the period of 'chaos' preceding a gradual subsiding of aggressive behaviour was estimated at four to six months (Wills, 1945, p. 48). The explanation given for this was that, apart from the vast amount of anger and fear that the boys had to live with, aggressive behaviour was their way of testing the affection and security in their new environment (1967, p. 25): if, even after the expression of the most grossly hostile behaviour, the staff still did not give up on them, they must indeed be loved. It was only once this security had been established that improvement in their physical and mental well-being could take place. Conflict was thus dealt with in the group setting, instead of projecting anger and aggression outwards. This was accompanied by multiple identifications within the camp, rather than a collective identification with a community leader (or leaders).[4]

In their article 'On Infrastructural Thinking and Living with Psychoanalysis in a Glitch' (2024), Raluca Soreanu and Ana Minozzo define this manner of dealing with conflict as one of the main characteristics of the work in free psychoanalytic clinics, and contrast it with group dynamics in which positive transference and identification between group members is enabled through the projection of negative transference onto people outside of the group (or to members of other groups). This 'interest in and acceptance of ambivalence' enables a way of working with (and working through) individuals' violent impulses without attempting to repress or displace them. In social terms, such a way of life prevents both psychic harm to the individual and the periodic resurgence of inter-group conflict.

Whether the resolution of aggression would require psychotherapy was a question that was addressed on an individual basis at Hawkspur. In some cases, weekly psychotherapy was considered a necessity, whereas in others the affection and emotional support of the group, accompanied by the development of personal interests and useful occupations, proved sufficient. Whether what was needed was a building-up, an alteration or a mollification of the

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[4] For an account of how identification takes place through communal identification with a leading figure, see Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921).

superego, this was ultimately achieved through similar means: an affectionate attitude of the staff and other members, a tolerant, patient and consistent approach to conflict, shared responsibility and the development of personal interests. This should not imply, however, that members at Hawkspur Camp were treated in a uniform fashion. While the conditions enumerated above comprised the general framework of life at the camp, it was understood that everyone's emotional struggles needed to be approached in an individual way, even when the symptoms presented to the outside world appeared to be the same.

The Uses of Psychoanalysis

When considering the role of psychoanalysis at Hawkspur Camp, one needs to differentiate between the uses of psychoanalysis within the everyday life of the camp and outside of it. The majority of staff members working at Hawkspur were familiar with psychoanalytic theories, although they were not psychoanalysts themselves. David Wills was a psychiatric social worker who trained in the USA. However, all aspects of Wills's work were psychoanalytically informed. In *The Hawkspur Experiment*, Wills jokingly called himself 'that most noxious of creatures, a layman dabbling in psychology' (1967, p. 10). Arthur Barron, who worked alongside Wills at Hawkspur and later led another camp for younger boys (aged 11–15) between 1944 and 1946 (Franklin, 1966, p. 16), was not a psychoanalyst at the time. Later on, however, he went on to become an analyst and a research worker in delinquency at the Hampstead Child Therapy Clinic. The official psychoanalyst who worked with the young men at the camp was Marjorie Franklin, a much-neglected figure in psychoanalytic history. Franklin was a Member of the British Psychoanalytical Society and a consultant at the Portman Clinic (until 1948, the clinic was still part of the ISTD). She not only offered individual therapy to selected members, but also met with Wills on a weekly basis to discuss the work and life at the camp and even spent weekends at Hawkspur every four to six weeks (Franklin, 1966, pp. 28–9).

Within descriptions of daily life with antisocial youth, whether this was at an outdoor camp like Hawkspur or a residential school, both the biggest problem and the most cherished goal can be described in one word: transference. For young people who were gravely disappointed and frustrated in their relationships with their parents, attempting to establish a positive and trusting relationship was hard work. However, Aichhorn had already stated that this was a necessary condition of treatment: 'A dissocial youth cannot be re-educated without a strong positive feeling for the people in his environment' (1951[1925], p. 154). Wills's book on Hawkspur Camp echoes this statement by insisting that it is 'impossible to over-

emphasize the value of the transference' (1967, p. 123). Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth* and virtually all of Wills's writing contain descriptions of different tricks that were employed by the camp staff to secure a positive transference. At Aichhorn's school, where each group of boys was assigned a counsellor, the counsellor would initially keep a low profile, while occasionally offering friendly attention or a word of advice to the boys. If the boy reacted with suspicion or hostility, this meant that the counsellor needed to wait. If the child reacted positively, the work could begin (1951[1925], pp. 137–8). Wills described scenarios in which he deliberately showed favouritism, or chased after runaways in his car in order to convince them that he wanted them to stay (1967, pp. 131, 144). This, of course, was accompanied by the tolerance of aggressive outbursts mentioned earlier. Finally, Wills and Aichhorn both emphasized the value of the milieu in facilitating a positive transference, both the milieu of the group and of the institution as a whole (Aichhorn, 1951[1925], p. 146; Wills, 1973, pp. 134–44). In this context, it was vital that there were no disagreements between individual staff members. For, more often than not, the establishment of a positive transference in the young offender required team work.[5] This led to the formation of a kind of group supervision, in which staff members could talk about their worries regarding members, their personal problems and countertransference issues.

Group meetings took various shapes at Hawkspur. This led Wills to claim that 'group therapy may be said to have had its early beginnings at Hawkspur Camp' (1967, p. 12). However, if we take this statement to be true, we must conceive of the term 'group therapy' in the broadest sense. Today, we are more likely to refer to these meetings as a form of group supervision. There was an informal relationship between Wills and the rest of the staff, and they often met to pool observations regarding each particular member. While at Hawkspur the staff meetings appear to have been rather spontaneous and unstructured, later communities evolved more specific methods. At the Cotswold Community, a technique of group supervision was devised by Barbara Dockar-Drysdale, the founder of the Mulberry Bush School (Wills, 1973; Rodway, 1999), who was employed at the Cotswold as a therapeutic consultant. At these meetings, staff were able to bring forward for discussion any events or

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[5] That team work is essential in rehabilitating an antisocial person was already claimed by Schmideberg (1958, p. 120). In today's offender therapy, this is equally recognized. Estela Welldon claims, for example, that 'offender therapy is not the heroic work of a loner, but is very much teamwork' (2018, p. 102). According to her, all forensic patients are in need of three structures: fellow patients, the therapist and the institution (or 'milieu' as Aichhorn would call it) (2018, p. 156). Although the cases discussed here were children or young people whose criminal record was not nearly as serious as that of Welldon's patients, the same rule seems to apply.

behaviours which they found perplexing. Rather than providing them with ready-made theories, Dockar-Drysdale saw it as her role to enable the staff to find their own answers and ways of working, which were in line with their own personalities, as well as those of the children. Consequently, the questions raised called for an interpretation (in the psychoanalytic sense) of the child's behaviour, but 'they may equally call for examination and interpretation of the behaviour of an adult' (Wills, 1973, p. 55). This led to a frequent discussion of countertransferential phenomena and advanced the staff's understanding of their own behaviour. Wills repeatedly stressed the importance of self-understanding for adults who work with vulnerable children and young people, and psychoanalysis was, of course, a pivotal tool in achieving this. 'An awareness of our own unconscious motivations' afforded by psychoanalysis was, according to Wills, 'an essential qualification' (1973, p. 14) for this type of work. While the staff did not necessarily have to be psychoanalysts, some form of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and/or supervision for the staff was considered necessary to the successful running of the community.[6]

However, one could also argue that a type of group therapy (in the broader sense) was facilitated through regular Camp Council meetings, as they were called at Hawkspur – that is, community meetings in which both the staff and the members participated and where current issues and disputes were discussed. In his account of the life at Reynolds House, Wills explicitly stated that, while the boys were only made familiar with the practical role of community meetings, these also served a latent therapeutic function:

> The discussions [. . .] about people's behaviour provided opportunities to learn that we are all influenced in some measure by impulses and motives other than those of which we are immediately aware and while [. . .] psychiatric terminology was rigorously eschewed, generalised interpretations of certain kinds of behaviour could from time to time be given and there may be opportunities for the enlightened adult to prod a youth, by oblique remarks, by gentle insinuation or by downright challenge, to examine his own motives. [. . .] This was an important function of the housemeeting and by no means all contributions of this kind came from adults. Boys sometimes helped each other and it was not uncommon for an adult to have *his* motives brought into question. (Wills, 1970, p. 62)

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[6] At Reynolds House the meetings of the staff and a non-resident psychoanalyst took place on a biweekly basis and adopted a similar form as the one discussed at Cotswold (Wills, 1970, p. 30).

<T>In the quoted passage, it becomes very clear that the community meetings often became a form of collective therapy, in which unconscious motives and wishes were made conscious. Importantly, the role of the therapist was not performed by the staff members alone. Residents developed the capacity to understand and discuss their own unconscious motives, as well as those of others, and to point out patterns and impulses that the staff themselves were not aware of. We can therefore conclude that this diffusion of roles and hierarchies facilitated not only the establishment of a positive transference and identification among community members, but also the dispersion of therapeutic and interpretative capacities.

So far, we have looked at the function of psychoanalysis within the daily life at Hawkspur Camp and other therapeutic communities for antisocial children and young adults. However, psychoanalytic psychotherapy was also used individually with members who were thought less likely to recover without it. In *The Hawkspur Experiment*, Wills explains the decision to conduct psychotherapy outside of the camp's premises and to limit the frequency to once a week for an individual member (1967, p. 130). The latter stipulation was made so as not to decrease the power of transferential relationships within the community. In a more intensive psychotherapeutic relationship, the bond with the therapist becomes the main focus of the transference, which would make the member emotionally inaccessible to the camp's treatment methods (Franklin, 1966, p. 16). The decision to organize psychotherapy outside of the camp's premises (as opposed to within it by a resident psychoanalyst) was also justified by the intensity of the transferential relationships within the community and the need to keep the relationships within the camp and the therapeutic relationship separate:

> These feelings [positive and negative transference] are much more pronounced in an environment where the transference is being deliberately exploited for therapeutic ends. [. . .] If psychotherapy is necessary, [. . .] it should [. . .] be carried out by someone quite outside of the vortex. (Wills, 1967, pp. 123–30)

Wills was convinced that it was Homer Lane's decision to analyse the children within his Little Commonwealth that eventually caused his downfall (1967, p. 130).[7] Whether or not one agrees with Wills regarding the impossibility of conducting individual psychotherapy within the therapeutic community, it is certain that the arrangement had some practical value

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[7] Lane was accused of sexual abuse by two 16-year-old girls under his care.

in that it created 'a more contained and sustainable way of working', as David Kennard notes (2004, p. 298).

In sum, psychoanalysis at Hawkspur Camp and at subsequent therapeutic communities for antisocial children and young people was employed in several ways. Positive and negative transference were deliberately used within the camp to enable its members to form meaningful relationships with the camp's staff and other members. Group therapy was organized for staff and, in a less conspicuous way, was made use of at community meetings. Finally, individual psychoanalytic psychotherapy was organized outside of the camp for members who were in need of it. When all of this is taken into account, it becomes obvious that psychoanalysis was not merely the therapeutic method of choice in the camp setting, but informed all aspects of the therapeutic community, from its daily life to its ideational conception.

Which Psychoanalysis?

At Hawkspur Camp, as well as at later-established communities, psychoanalysis thus found numerous applications. What is striking, however, was that the usual divisions between psychoanalytic schools of thought simply did not apply in this milieu. From Hawkspur Camp onwards, the predominant attitude was to combine various psychoanalytic approaches in any way that seemed to work. Marjorie Franklin, the camp's principal analyst, was a student of Sándor Ferenczi. Apart from classical Freudian texts, David Wills quoted from, and favourably commented on, the work of Donald Winnicott (Wills even knew Winnicott personally). In later communities, the camp staff also made use of theories that had a decidedly Kleinian bent and promoted the creation of an environment that would successfully support the need for regression in emotionally deprived children (1973, p. 32; 1970, p. 116). Arthur Barron joined Hawkspur Camp when practically still a teenager himself, but attended psychological seminars at the ISTD (Franklin, 1966, p. 20), where he would have encountered the work of analysts such as Edward Glover, Melitta Schmideberg and Marjorie Franklin.[8] He later on went to train under Anna Freud and published a paper with Dorothy Burlingham in 1963.[9] When describing the methods employed at the Cotswold Community, Wills mentioned the influence of 'the group-dynamics people at the Tavistock Centre, [. . .]

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[8] For more on psychoanalysis at the ISTD, see chapters 5 and 6 in Michal Shapira's book *The War Inside: Psychoanalysis, Total War and the Making of the Democratic Self in Postwar Britain* (2013, pp. 138–97).
[9] See Burlingham & Barron (1963, pp. 367–423).

psychopathology and psychiatry (two parts of Jung and three of Freud), academic psychology and the growing field of child-care training' (1973, p. 61). Thus, the approaches made use of at the Community were a combination of current psychological studies of group dynamics, Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis and various theories of child development, to a large extent psychoanalytic.[10]

In addition, psychoanalytic accounts of antisocial behaviour, especially those produced by members of the ISTD, stressed the necessity of researching the individual roots of criminality together with sociological studies that examined the environment of the child and the social factors (poverty, unemployment, overcrowding and socially induced helplessness) impacting the family. According to Käte Friedländer, another member of the ISTD who trained at the Berlin Policlinic, 'in common with psychoanalysis [these sociological studies] emphasize that society influences the individual from birth onwards' (1949, p. 9). Within the behaviour and needs expressed by antisocial youth, the influence of society could be felt in two ways. On the one hand, feelings towards the parents were often transferred to the individual's attitude towards society (Wills talks about this in detail in *The Hawkspur Experiment* [1967, p. 147]). On the other, it was emphasized that society facilitated this by effectively making the provision of primary care impossible and later applying punitive methods to 'treat' misbehaviour, thus further depriving the emotionally deprived individual of the care and safety they needed, in much the same way as the family had done. When parents' needs were chronically uncatered for by their social environment (often in addition to their own experiences of childhood deprivation), this could result in self-neglect or a lack of confidence that would be transferred onto the children. In the words of Melitta Schmideberg, '[w]here there is no hope, there can, as a rule, be no self-respect, and in the absence of self-respect, there will be little protective love for the children' (1947, p. 32). A society that robbed some of its members and groups of self-respect was therefore producing the very behaviour that it later sought to punish and eliminate.

In terms of treatment, an important point to note is that, as well as a multifaceted theoretical approach, therapy with antisocial youth called for a significant stretching and reinscription of personal, social and institutional boundaries. The tendency was to steer clear of rigid professional and gender roles, time frames and academic and behavioural expectations, and instead to adapt to the individual needs expressed by a child or young

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[10] A similarly eclectic approach characterized the ISTD (Shapira, 2013, pp. 138–69) and the Tavistock Clinic just after its establishment in 1920 (Mills & Harrison, 2007, p. 27).

person. In his book on the transformation of the Cotswold Community, Wills referenced Barbara Dockar-Drysdale's method of helping unintegrated children, that is, children whose experience of primary care was so unsatisfactory that they were unable to establish the beginnings of an independent ego. These children needed to experience 'so far as possible – the primary experience that they have been denied' (Wills, 1973, p. 65). Dockar-Drysdale called this 'the provision of primary experience' (Dockar-Drysdale, 1991), which was an idea she developed from Winnicott (she was significantly influenced by both Winnicott and Klein). In order to cater for these children's needs, a separate space called the Cottage was established on site that imitated the conditions and relationships of a satisfactory family home. It is important to stress, however, that the children's regression (in the sense of the surfacing of an infantile behaviour) happened spontaneously. The boys would themselves ask for a cuddle or a hot drink before bedtime, or another form of attention otherwise appropriate for a boy of a much younger age. The worker needed to adopt 'a different attitude, a different approach to every boy, according to his need and his personality' (Wills, 1973, p. 68). Something like a uniform attempt to regress the children, or a uniform response to the regression that did happen, needed to be guarded against. In fact, it was the commitment to adapt to the individual needs of the child that demanded a limited regulation of the daily activities at the Community.

In an insightful analysis of the effects of regulation at Mulberry Bush School, Dockar-Drysdale explained why too strict a delineation of professional roles and spheres of work in a residential school was not advisable:

> A person working in a place for a few hours every day, or all the time in a very specific context, may become involved with a child who is in need of 'gap filling'; but he or she may be unable to find any way of making continuous emotional provision which will 'keep the child going' and be sufficiently reliable to prevent further gaps in the child's life. A teacher [. . .] in a boarding school for deeply disturbed children who never gives a child a meal or puts him to bed [. . .] has a much narrower field of provision and continuity [. . .]. In our particular school, there had been in the past extreme flexibility of function by grown-ups accepting provider roles. (1963, n.p.)

At a camp or residential home, the grown-ups had to simultaneously take on the roles of teachers, counsellors, group leaders and care providers (i.e. a parental role). This required as much flexibility in attempting to satisfy the child's needs as encountered by a new parent and

posed many questions given the number of children that needed to be cared for. For instance, if an adult was temporarily absent, did they still need to remain in contact with the child? If a child or young person is having an important conversation with an adult, does that experience have to be interrupted for them to attend a lesson or a communal meal? At the psychoanalytically informed communities mentioned here, the first question would likely have been answered in the positive and the second in the negative. While it was understood that a disturbed child needs predictable routines and clear boundaries, these boundaries were created to meet the needs of the children, not to cater for smooth institutional functioning.

Such an approach required flexibility not only with respect to one's professional roles and timetabled activities, but also in terms of gender roles. When one reads books by Wills and the accounts of staff duties in the 1960s, one can easily become critical of the traditional gender roles found there. For instance, one will often find the 'housemother' in her room sewing and sorting out linen and otherwise employed in 'motherly tasks' (Wills, 1971, p. 66). However, in Docker-Drysdale's article, we are reminded that a male employee is often chosen (by a child or young person) to take on a maternal role and, if this is so, then the mothering is his to provide (1963, n.p.). In a predominantly male camp like Hawkspur, this occurred with an unsurprising frequency and sometimes put the staff into awkward situations. T.C. Bodsworth ('Bods' in Wills's book), who became the primary attachment figure for a boy needing to re-live a part of his emotional childhood, was faced with a situation in which the boy wanted to sleep in his tent, which of course gave rise to some unwelcome rumours both inside and outside of the camp (Wills, 1967, p. 129). What workers at Hawkspur Camp, at Reynolds House, at the Cotswold Community and elsewhere had to contend with is that transferential phenomena, fuelled as they are by unconscious needs, rarely care about socially imposed gender roles, and this may be seen as part of their subversive potential.

Psychoanalytically oriented therapeutic communities for antisocial children and young people therefore combined all the psychoanalytic approaches available: Freud, Jung, Klein, Anna Freud, attachment theory and group therapy. These were read together with sociological studies that focused on the growing child's socio-economic environment and its influence on the parental home. In attempting to meet the member's needs, the staff had to pay attention to the surfacing of their individual symptoms and requirements. Placing these individual needs at the centre of community life (rather than the smooth running of an organization) required great flexibility in terms of time, educational expectations as well as professional and gender roles.

The Healing Society

How different is contemporary society from the healing society on which the curative potential of all of these communities was based? And can the principles adopted within the communities also be applied within society at large? Both of these questions are addressed in Hawkspur Camp's 1966 brochure by the sociologist Norman Glaister (himself the founder of several communities, most famously Braziers Park). In his short entry on the social implications of Hawkspur Camp, Glaister wrote:

> Hawkspur Camp was a therapeutic institution, not a model community. Nevertheless, it was in one respect [. . .] in advance of society at large, in that it offered to each member full mutual partnership with the group as such. The individual member was invited to plan and work for the welfare of the whole community, but on occasion the whole community might address itself to the welfare of that individual. [. . .] Nothing less than a similarly benevolent attitude on the part of the State towards each individual can be expected to influence antisocial self-seekers favourably. (1966, p. 56)

According to Glaister, a healing community is one in which there is a two-way relationship between the individual and the social group they belong to: the individual does what they can for the common good, but, equally, the group as a whole is there to provide for the individual's needs, to offer containment and ease suffering. Only this can ultimately restore the young offender's trust not only in interpersonal relationships, but also in a benevolent society. At Hawkspur, this society was built on several pillars, some of which deserve further elaboration. These were: shared responsibility, the absence of hierarchies, discipline and punishment and the attitude to work.

The principle of 'shared responsibility' (a term introduced by Marjorie Franklin) is probably the most fundamental component of therapeutic communities contemporary and historical. It was already used in Homer Lane's Little Commonwealth (founded in 1913) and was taken over by Wills (Kennard, 2004, p. 297). The principle means that all decisions affecting life at the Camp were made at a collective meeting by way of direct democracy – that is, the problems were discussed and the decisions confirmed by a vote. Of course, the discussions could often turn into arguments and the meetings were in practice quite chaotic, especially during the first few months. However, in connection with the group-therapy aspect mentioned earlier, Wills claimed that the heated discussions had the double benefit of

working off some of the pent-up aggression that would otherwise likely have resulted in fights, and teaching the boys to verbalize their emotions (1970, p. 52). The Camp Council (or the 'house meeting' or 'group meeting' as it was called elsewhere) also had the function of distributing funds, arranging for items that were broken or stolen to be fixed or returned and sustaining those members who could not or did not wish to work. Although, in theory, the Council had the capacity to punish its members, it barely ever did so, except for a minimal fine that was introduced for bullying. Even in this case, the fine was symbolic. It was meant to show the disapproval of the community rather than inflict restraint or physical discomfort (see Wills, 1967, pp. 57–86). The staff participated in the meetings on an equal footing with the members and were called by their first names, which leads to the second principle of community life: the absence of hierarchies.

The deconstruction of social hierarchies is best described in Wills's book on the Cotswold Community, which was transformed from a hierarchical community into a non-hierarchical one by Richard Balbernie[11] and his colleagues. Wills clearly outlines the resistances of both the staff members and the children to the changes made necessary by the abolition of power structures (1967, pp. 39–56; 1973, pp. 11–17). Apart from the organization of group meetings outlined above, this meant giving the staff more autonomy within their designated sphere of work, both with respect to the group of children they were working with and the tasks they were meant to organize. For the children, it implied a greater level of personal responsibility, since they were no longer able to say they were following orders or to be punished for not following them. Within the Cotswold Community and Hawkspur Camp, the absence of hierarchies was also reflected architecturally by abolishing the spatial separation into 'staff quarters' and the living quarters of the boys (1973, pp. 87–8). Perhaps the most interesting point made by Wills, however, is the way in which the gang culture that developed among the boys in the 'old system' was a reflection (if an exaggerated and parodic one) of the top-down power structures that were in place within the institution, and how the breaking down of institutional hierarchies discouraged the formation of 'underground' hierarchical structures:

> The existing inmate culture was to all intents and purposes destroyed, partly by
> breaking up the institution into small and more autonomous groups, and partly by the

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[11] Balbernie, the new head of the Community, had worked as a teacher and trained as a psychotherapist and an educational psychologist. He had also worked with 'maladjusted' children and adults in another psychoanalytically oriented community (Wills, 1973, p. 21).

abandonment of the hierarchical structure. The power and violence basis of the inmate culture reflected the formal power-and-punishment structure of the staff: that structure being no longer there it cannot be reflected. (1973, p. 136)

For Wills, deconstructing power structures was a fundamental part of the treatment, in restoring the boys' belief in relationships and enabling the experience of the healing nature of community life. In order to do this, the 'crude, individualistic, blind self-seeking that motivates the power-violence subculture' (1973, p. 137) needed to be replaced by a concern and consideration for others.

However, abolishing hierarchies required tackling unconscious motives, including the unconscious attraction to discipline and punishment within the staff and the young people in the community. Wills openly talked about the fear and sadistic impulses that motivated the disciplinarian (1967, p. 36; 1973, p. 15), and he was not alone. In explaining why the public finds it so hard to renounce the belief that the criminal needs to be punished, analysts of the ISTD, including Schmideberg, claimed that the attraction to crime and punishment was based, on the one hand, on the public's identification with the criminal and, on the other, on finding a licensed outlet for their aggressive urges. The punishment, therefore, was not primarily a way of 'correcting' the criminal, or even of protecting the community, but of providing a controlled way of satisfying the population's sadistic wishes: 'The significance of punishment lies in its psychological value to non-criminals, who derive sadistic satisfaction first from the crime itself and then from the punishment inflicted for it' (1947, p. 475). When looking at the effect of punishment on the young offender or the antisocial child, Wills enumerated three principal reasons why punishment will only make a bad situation worse. For an individual who suffers from unconscious guilt feelings, it will lead to temporary atonement, but will motivate them to repeat the cycle. For others, punishment will be a way of 'squaring the account' (I've paid for my crimes, so now I can repeat them), and will enable them to avoid personal responsibility and contemplating the consequences of their actions. Finally, 'difficult' behaviour can be a means of testing the child's new environment, trying to make sure that there isn't a point at which the adults there will start behaving like the punitive, abusive or controlling caregivers in the child's past. To this we might add that punishment can function as a confirmation of paranoid ideas, such as those of Schmideberg's patient Willy, who recognized potential attackers in all people and objects (Schmideberg, 1947, pp. 464–76; Wills, 1967, pp. 92–3). According to Wills, the removal of punishment and discipline would not only make a positive transference easier, but would motivate the young

person to attempt to give up their old defences as these would no longer be as effective. The staff, on the other hand, needed to be sure their behaviour was not motivated by unconscious aggressive or controlling urges, which again made some form of psychotherapy or supervision necessary.

The final crucial point in the social makeup of psychoanalytically informed therapeutic communities consisted in their relationship to work. At Hawkspur Camp and at other residential homes, work was not an obligation. No member was required to work and, of course, no type of labour was ever used as a punishment, the goal being to weaken the socially imposed connotation between work and suffering. Work was paid in the mornings, whereas in the afternoon it was optional, the only motivation being the avoidance of boredom, the love of the job and the welfare of the community. The latter aspect was particularly prominent at an outdoor camp like Hawkspur, which started as a colony of tents with only one functional building, while all the other facilities (the bunkhouses, a bathroom with running water, etc.) were built by the members themselves (Franklin, 1966, p. 17). What this meant was that any work, no matter how poorly executed, indeed made a great difference to the community, which had a significant effect on the members' self-confidence. 'By seeing the fruits of his labour' the member discovered 'that he is a person, and that when he pulls his weight, it really does make a difference' (Wills, 1967, p. 106). But work did not merely entail activities, like construction, tending to the animals or gardening, whose use was immediately apparent. In the Camp's brochure, work is defined as any 'effort directed to some end', whether this is 'to score a goal in a football match' or 'the pursuit of an ideal' (Barron, 1966, p. 36). In line with this, the role of art, poetry, reading, writing, theatre and sports, as well as their therapeutic value, was recognized in all therapeutic communities discussed here, as they still are in similar organizations today.

If we translate these basic principles into socio-economic terms, we come up with equal wages, stable benefits or even basic income, direct democracy, communal property with some individual spaces, shared responsibility and decision making as well as constant, predictable and unconditional communal emotional support. This was the basis of the healing society at Hawkspur Camp, the Barns Hostel, Reynolds House and the Cotswold Community. Thus, institutions whose role was publicly perceived as making social misfits conform to British society actually did something much more valuable. As Wills repeatedly expressed it, the communities were not intent on creating 'good little citizens', but 'were out to make rebels' (1967, p. 60; 1945, p. 45). By this he meant not necessarily turning the camp members into non-conformists or persuading them to support any particular political option, but

enabling them to think and act critically, and not just to accept the set of power structures currently imposed on them. This, however, required the abolishment of discipline, the exploration of one's unconscious motives and the acceptance of freedom and responsibility. Precisely these two things, freedom and responsibility, were the foundation of social and emotional rehabilitation at Hawkspur. Does psychoanalysis also encourage us to accept freedom and responsibility? At its best, it can do so. And at Hawkspur Camp and its later counterparts, positioned between the prison system and respectable society and implicitly rejecting both, this is how psychoanalysis was used.

A lot of the methods employed in these communities could readily be applied in similar settings today. A non-hierarchical structure, group supervision for staff, closer links between the staff and the psychotherapist and increasing the responsibility (and consequently the potential for creativity) of individual staff members could positively impact relationships within any residential setting working with traumatized children and adolescents. Psychoanalytically speaking, the provision of primary experience in children where this was not satisfactory seems to have been a crucial aspect of recovery. The space for the expression of aggressive impulses, accompanied by the containing, non-judgemental, non-punitive approach of the staff, as well as the encouragement of verbalization facilitated by the group meetings, were equally important. However, it must be understood that the staff would not have been able to provide this without individual analysis and group supervision, which explored their motivations for doing this type of work, their attitudes to punishment as well as the transferential and countertransferential phenomena that arose on a daily basis. This also fostered closer links between staff members and enabled quicker conflict resolution, which in turn contributed to a positive atmosphere within the communities. Another aspect that deserves consideration is the flexible approach to boundaries, and in particular to institutional boundaries. It was understood that children and young people need boundaries and routines in order to feel safe, but it was equally acknowledged that situations will often arise which make the maintenance of fixed roles or a fixed schedule impossible. In these situations, the members' emotional needs were considered more important than the institutional framework. This final aspect was closely related to the experimental, eclectic methodology that characterized all the communities in question. Unable and unwilling to pledge allegiance to any particular psychoanalytic approach, or even to psychoanalysis itself, each community developed its own slightly different set of methods, depending on their members' needs and the expertise of the staff. The key question was not 'Is what we are doing still psychoanalysis?', but rather 'Does it work?'. Yet it was precisely this aspect that proved the

value of psychoanalytic methods in residential settings for antisocial children for, as we have seen, the majority of the methods that did prove useful relied on psychoanalytic principles. Certainly, a similarly flexible, eclectic, experimental psychoanalysis would prove beneficial to children and young people living in residential communities in our time.

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