



THE ACTIVE USE OF THE ANALYST'S BODYMIND

AS IT IS INFORMED BY PSYCHIC DISTURBANCES

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Reflecting critically on and interpreting my subjective experience in and of an analytic relationship (me, you, us) or, in other words, carefully thinking through raw subjective psychic experience and thus hopefully rendering it a useful and usable counter-transferential source of information about the other person – this is the seminal activity of my position and work as an analyst. It is a matter of my mind being made by its ideas of other minds – or other bodyminds. My reasoning, thinking, linking and thence interpreting of this psychically, mentally and somatically received information is often a process of ordering beta disorder, of co-ordination and re-formation.

The subjectivities and processes I am thinking of are:

- 1) received clinical theories which have been built out of clinical experience;
- 2) psychodynamic models of the emotional mind which I have created by both adapting previously existing psychodynamic and philosophical (even metaphysical) systems and also by putting a coherent language to my own clinical experience;

- 3) the subjectivities of my imagination and ideation, my interpretive thinking and my counter-transferentially (including psychosomatically) informed reverie.

For today I would select four subjective philosophical and analytic theories that inform my interpretive practice:

- 1) The use of 'selected facts' which arise out of unconscious, semi-conscious and conscious learning and information, based on my fantasy, reverie, and connected thinking: *intuitive knowledge*.
- 2) An animal faith in the necessary illusion of free choice; the psychic reality of a sense of agency and free will in the face of a determined actuality (unconscious mind, body, brain, family, history, and contingencies): *free necessity*.
- 3) Psychoid and psychosomatic forces of information and communication, including projective identifications and extractive introjections, which I understand as useful and usable demonstrations of *the Mind as the Idea of the Body and Bodies*.
- 4) Based on neo-Spinozan and Bionesque concepts, I use an internalised idea of a dynamic grid of intra- and inter-psychic (and somatic) 'jouissance' affects, a dynamic of *natural passions and actions*.¹

These four positions contribute to a personal 'Anschauungsweise', a particular attitude and approach, an internal psychic organisation that responds well enough to new arrivals and demands. These four elements are also my means of ordering my thoughts and thinking through emotional storms, my interpretive lenses, my self-containers, and part of my defenses.

This paper is a consideration of what it is to be an analyst who *chooses to be made* to have to think through, to find words and language for, to link, re-order and re-cycle intra- and inter-psychic split and disordered (often pre-symbolic and somatised) states of psychic beta-fragments and difficult

relations. By this I mean thinking, forming and expressing ideas out of my transferentially informed and necessarily affected, sympathetically and parasymphatically disturbed or irritated (analytic) 'bodymind'. By working in, through and out of this psychoid realm, structural change may sometimes emerge, or be mutually and consubstantially found or made ... or not.

Today I am specifically referring to those clinical thoughts, theories and actions that I use to make sense of more than just neurotic states and relations - namely, the psychotic core and defences of deeply disturbed personalities; or perhaps I mean those parts of all of us.

In the case of borderline disorders this is about working within zones of overwhelming affect and of unformed, confused thought, which is itself an aspect of a distorted symbolising function, due, for example, to primary or early experience of lack of parental relational clarity and maturity, and so where no language was found to make sense of overwhelming and incomprehensible psychic pain and distress.

However it is only out of this beta-disorder, now being re-lived and experienced transferentially, that really deep structural difficulties and problems may be analytically moved into more normally neurotic splits, and through interpretation into more honest observation and recognition.

Thus troubled emotions and behaviours arising out of the inability to manage primary lacks, melancholic losses and frustrating limits may be put to better use; a 'sublation' where mad psychotic relations and transferences may be recycled into more normally mad neuroses, where a new structure may be formed, and within which psychic confusions, frustrations and splitting manoeuvres may be reordered and redirected.

This process occurs either slowly, or sometimes apparently suddenly out of an intuitive recognition and realisation, a 'selected fact' - a new psychic realisation

formed out of a protracted period of safely gathered, contained, and processed emotional knowledge. Either way, the process is incremental: “What wound did ever heal but by degrees?”.

Psychoanalysis is a particularly proscribed and framed, contained and containing, interactive relationship, where reflection, speech and words are the overt vehicles of understanding and interpretation. As an analyst I am open to emotional, imaginal, ideational and infectious communication and information, but which I then further filter and temper through reverie and thought - especially about expressions of a mis-developed symbolising function and other unordered and disordered aspects of the analysand's personality.

Paradoxically such psychic and psychosomatic re-creation is often deepest and most 'real' where the analytic field is a destructive-seductive battlefield of projective identifications and rapacious extractive introjections, of force and adhesion. This is because it is re-lived in the grievous places where there are no structural foundations, the terrible core of original and perennial lacks and losses. These are the most vitally affective engines for communication: extremely difficult psychological states where goods are hated, envied, attacked and destroyed are yet those whereby a dangerous vitality may come into being. In fact there is often a perverse but vitally libidinal erotic desire tensely incorporated within the needs of borderline destructive force.

However, where these violent conditions exist only split off and hidden under a defensive cloak of false harmlessness and near-invisibility, motivating strategic manipulations and manoeuvres, then here we have the un-changing or un-recyclable narcissistic realms of relational lifelessness.

My work with difficult borderline and narcissistic relations best exemplify my use of the subjectivity of my internal analytic position, of some of my meta-psychological constructs, and of clinical practices built around a certain understanding of personality disorders and my experience of them.

I shall now go on to construct a hypothesis about the relations between borderline and narcissistic defences, derived from my subjectively diagnosed, complementary counter-transferential reactions and impulses.

Primitive envy and rage constitute the defensively repressed and split off 'shadow' underlying narcissistic defences (such as a desperately needy invisibility or a dangerously false harmlessness); however, the 'shadow' of the frustrations, angry hurts and destructiveness of borderline states lies in its shrouded and deviously dangerous superstructure of narcissistic strategies - which are sometimes resorted to (by borderline persons) in order to manage a primitive terror of the world of others. In other words, narcissism is as much a shadow of borderline rage as vice versa. I say this because narcissistic behaviour can evoke as much or more hateful and sickening feelings in others and in the countertransference as do borderline attacks. A less retaliatory hate but a certain distaste or disgust that can be perhaps more rejecting - and so needing careful countertransferential reflection.

This is an incorrectly subjective and precariously hypothetical countertransferential diagnostic definition of borderline and narcissistic disorders and of their defensive inter-relatedness.

Betty Joseph said somewhere that all psychoanalytic (transference/ counter-transference) relations are based in projective identifications, even in relations that are ostensibly normally neurotic because there are always partially psychotic pockets under normal primitive anxieties. I would say that because of this analytic ubiquity of projective identification, it is useful to realise the latent psychotic transference behind narcissistic defences.

For severely over-sensitive narcissists, real intimacy is generally and transferentially so fearful and/or shameful that it is turned into an apparently gentle adhesive-seductive-extractive pull into a false intimacy. Other defensive manoeuvres to disguise the narcissistic wound (of abject loneliness) include

a subtle stealing of identity and a sentimental spirituality covering a private delusion of special powers.

It is because, and in spite of their fragile thin-skinnedness; because of their self-righteous expression of the apparent unfairness of their personal and social unpopularity, their secret but selfish expectations about special entitlements, that such narcissists gets themselves repeatedly and increasingly bullied, ignored or rejected.

Thus I most strongly agree with Otto Kernberg's idea that any expression of the feared underlying (borderline) rage is a healthy intra- and inter-psychic development beyond malignant narcissistic self-love. This is also why the thick-skinned narcissist is, in some ways, easier to work with: the outer layer of arrogance and aggression is like a carapace of borderline defensive traits and so can be more directly challenged.

Brittle narcissism cannot be met head on; rather the analytic task is to address the primitive anxiety, inter-personal terrors and shames and this may lead to a shock of recognition: that the object of their fear is the recognition of their being a starved and emotionally wounded little self in a big world with very necessary and understandable, very intricate, strategic and secretive defenses.

However, the therapeutic problem remains that all narcissistic defences are so adamant and determined that they are quickly, forcefully and often cleverly rebuilt.

Borderline relations are about resisting and defying change because a change for a better or the good belongs to the envied other, the analyst; because change is resented and despised; and because destruction as a bizarre force goes on even after it has exhausted itself and obliterated the world.

Narcissists defend against change because it entails facing up to a shamefully naked non-self, an intolerable self-consciousness under the gaze of the judgemental eyes of the peopled world; and because rapid retreat to familiar strategic manoeuvres, manipulations and contortions are a powerfully easy defence.

Therefore, with both disordered states the analyst is made to work in a relational field that attacks or resists change: envy and destruction of all good in the case of borderline relations; dread of the exposure of naked loneliness in the case of the loss of narcissistic defences.

JIM, A CASE OF DESTRUCTIVE BORDERLINE RELATIONS AND VITALITIES

Jim repeatedly called me a 'feeble cunt'; this expressed a hate-filled attack on mother, all women, himself, and me as a gender-confused object, an object of simultaneously impossible need and resentment. His tone and pitch of voice was a mix of growl and loud hiss, of throat, tooth and spit. Tattoos and a skinhead menacingly enhanced Jim's very aggressive body language. He was a serial vandal, driven by impotent global rage, frustration and confusion: a fateful family inheritance.

Jim dreamt:

"I am screwing a Gothic cathedral through its west doors, holding on to its outstretched arms, transepts I think they are called. It is a very spiky, sharp and painful body to have to fuck. I know that if I screw it really violently and hard it will soften up. So I do this, but as it becomes softer it feels wet and disgusting - like a girl. I lose my erection and can't come. Then suddenly this foul wet cunt-cathedral disappears from beneath me. It becomes nothing. I am now nowhere, so I know I'll just have to explode -which will have no effect in empty space?"

He then added the autistic comment, "*Space is actually harder than hard*".

The morning after this dream Jim went and, as he put it, "*pissed and yelled my guts out in a church. I mean what else could I do?*".

When he told me of this, I said, "*You do that here*". He replied furiously and with contempt, "*No! I did it there, dickhead; Get it!*". This was spat at or into me with such venom that I was physically shocked and shaken. I felt sick - an unmanageable invasion of, or possession by, both hot and cold fear.

Acting out and somatisation are the only possible realisation and expression of overwhelming and incomprehensible matters when there is no other symbolic 'as if'.

Jim's sexual destruction of the Gothic cathedral is the destruction of both me (mind and body) and of the transcendent function between us and/or of any depressive possibilities. This confused prickly penis/soft vagina cathedral was a needed bodymind to be aggressively and sexually possessed and controlled - and destroyed - and recoiled from - and then ultimately found not to be controlled at all. This meant also possessing, affecting and changing my mind and my body. However the emasculated or feminised mind-body-part is then felt to be repulsive and so is hated.

Furthermore, under these sadistically sexualised objects there is a perverted fantasy of erotic contact and of disgust. And behind and within the attacked object is the autistic no-object: a hard emptiness in space. The objectless core underlying the destructive personality disorder is an autistic objectless space: such is the degree and (un)reality of the basic parental unconnectedness.

The intimate connections of affective attack eventually became our well-known familiar battlefield, and so a mutual attitude of ironic recognition became an aspect of our shared field. Thus I came to know a 'beloved enemy'

– until we realised that we could hold metaphoric ‘memorial services’ for our oh-so-lovely war.

Several years later I heard that Jim had gone on to become an affective worker in a centre for socially delinquent adolescent boys. His destructive impulses were more self-contained, but his social and relational life apparently continued to be difficult and ‘overly angry’.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF BORDERLINE RELATIONS

Work with borderline personality disorders demonstrates a primitive, fused psychoid unity through states of identification and confusion, both personally and inter-personally, and even between mind and the world. Borderline states and relations unconsciously demonstrate that ‘the mind is the idea of the body’ in a confused, confusing and primitive way.

A psychotic, borderline person who feels that they are ‘basically damaged goods’ may think, feel and angrily express their transference urgency something like this:

“For me mind and body, fantasy and reality, inner and outer, my mind and your mind, my body and your body, you and me, are and must always be fused and undifferentiated, all one (but of course you must simultaneously sort out my confusion).

So realise that your mind is my mind, your body is my body.

Because I am starved of enough of anything good and have never had the necessary power to get the primary love I should have had and still need, make it be that you loved me back then - even though you did not - love me now - even though you do not - love me forever - even though you never shall.

Because I love you it is outrageous and intolerable that you do not love me back, and for this I hate you, and because of this I will forcibly affect you. I shall get into and possess your separate bodymind by infecting you psychosomatically. I shall confuse your thinking, attack your linking, somatise your symbolising function. Realise and understand (as I do not) that making war is my way of making love. My anger knows no bounds.”

From the other side, my analytic mind might be based on internal positions like these:

“My affected bodymind is identified by and with this force. So, yes, me too ... I feel the same about you, or at the very least I hate you for so attacking, affecting and infecting me. The necessary and ethical law of this human world is - no, you cannot have it all (me, others, parents) as you will; you cannot make me disclose my separate private self to your devouring knowledge, for that would preclude necessarily frustrating fantasies; you cannot make me, by force or seduction, love you in the way you wish. There is a limiting frame that others (me, now) do and shall embody: a law of the Fathers, of the frustrating but necessarily carefully containing parents. Your fantastic desires and hates are now for us to understand. So, unlike you, I shall use my separate thinking mind and reflect before I act. Indeed, your anger recognises no boundaries. But my boundaries and the world’s necessities are actually your truest gain: an apprehension of free necessity.”

Finally, I remember that I know that it is ‘me as their fantasy’ that is envied; that my body and mind need not be made to identify with and suffer as the target of their psychosomatic missiles. I have a separate and healthier mind and know that I am a separate person.

The sometimes possible borderline achievement of mourning the limits of analysis can indeed become a movement to a truly muscular position beyond the grief for lacked and lost goods, and beyond the recurrent destruction of all subsequent good objects. It may become a fiercely honest acceptance of the limits of their life to such an extent that they can gaze, with a strong and realistic acquiescence, into the face of their mortality with a recognition and knowledge of their angry loneliness and of the limits of their life's goods, which is also vitalizing.

However the actively destructive forces still do go on - to the very end and beyond: a perverse 'conatus'.

CHRISTINE, A CASE OF BRITTLE NARCISSISTIC DEFENSES, SELF-DELUSIONS AND ILLUSIONS

Christine was a very brilliant artist and art teacher – she said. She came to complain (in an annoying mix of whimper and irritation) of the hurtful unfairness of her relational, social and career failures, at being misunderstood and unappreciated by everybody. *“It is probably because they are jealous of my rather daunting talents - though I’m careful not to flaunt them: I’m too modest to do that of course.”* She freely offered colleagues her ever-so helpful suggestions, often telling them that she was speaking from the wisdom of experience. And ‘wisdom’ was the right word, because it was an altruistic, educative, loving and spiritually-based giving of her most profound psychological self. *“So I just can’t understand why people drop me and let me down. Sometimes I think I’m just too kind and straight-forward for this competitive and greedy modern world.”* It is unsurprising that she was also starting to train as a counsellor.

I was soon to join those who found Christine’s blind grandiosity to be irritating, disgustingly arrogant, even loathsome. But I also started to grow increasingly tired of her and would nearly fall asleep over her (false) dramas. It was

difficult to remember that behind her fragile hollow superiority and disdain there lay a terrible abject loneliness and sadness, a sense of utter insignificance and dread of the peopled world, and that behind that was a dangerous but real live anger – which would render her even more alone.

Christine's dream:

“My stomach and vagina are full of seething, writhing balls of little worms or maggots. These worms all have human faces – but somehow without any features, except definitely nasty little mouths.”

Later we were able to make much of this dream, above all that it meant not being able to let anybody in (vagina), and not daring to let anything out (shitting out a too terrifying revelation of her disgusting insides); also self-effacing facelessness; the fear of biting etc. This dream certainly signified a big shock of recognition and a shift.

But long before that, something much more shocking happened. Two sessions after she had presented the dream and still talking and associating around it, Christine rather suddenly and nervously asked me, *“Are you shocked and disgusted - by me?”*. Surely a very real and loaded transference moment. However I was, by this time, sunk deep into a narcotised sleepy state, as often happened when with Christine. Quite against my usual practice and without reflecting and thinking, I carelessly answered her question or rather heard myself say, *“No, but at last I am really interested”*.

Her shock (and my shock) was palpable. She took up this *“at last I'm really interested”* with justifiable hurt and fury: I had obviously been bored by her all along; nothing could have been calculated to wound her more than the way I let this slip, it was totally unprofessional; I was a heartless, insensitive and

cruel so-called analyst etc. For weeks she reminded me of my *“careless cruelty that has undermined her universe”*.

She said that she now thought that her insect-filled body had been made thus by me: I had infected her with my dislike/disgust of her repulsive self. This was perhaps a painfully true interpretation, but, if so, it was also an aspect of what she induced in many others and was a product of a malign and masochistic reinforcement of her hated self. My bad complementary counter-transferential reaction was, to an extent, a reconstellation of parental hate; and her offended, hurt and angry spitting out of her inside feelings was also a real expression of healthy aggression - ‘at last’.

When she had the courage to be aggressive and attack the much needed, good loved object (me), Christine was more truly alive, but when she lost her courage and faked a false goodness by hiding her desire and greed under various forms of denial, she became a life-draining bore. Her sickeningly sweet smile was tense with controlled desperation: narcissists hate real mirrors so they set up rose-tinted ones all around.

Christine continued to oscillate between the potentiality of her ‘aggressive liveliness’ and defensive retreat into her ‘fearful invisibility’. At the end of our time together she declared that, at the outset, she had privately wanted to *“stop being a frightened gazelle and become a leopard”*. I said, *“And so now - what have you become?”*. *“I now actually sometimes enjoy being a gazelle.”*

Under the conditions of such narcissism, I think that’s about good enough: a ‘satisfactory disappointment’.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF NARCISSISTIC RELATIONS

A secretive, quiet, narcissistically adhesive and parasitic personality may fantastically work their inter-personal world something like this:

“I’ll get into your separate life and your separate mind, your values, your emotional privacies and I shall take possession and co-ownership of them by making you not notice my intrusion, for my crafty strategies are invisible and secret. I will move you; influence you and your life almost without you noticing by making my extractive spider-bite painless - even pleasurable. Look, but don’t look; see, but don’t see that I’m so loving, that you can’t help but love me, this best-of-all, most beautiful and interesting me.

You are noticing me aren’t you? You do realise how lucky you are to know me, don’t you?

I have laid my eggs under your skin. You are my unwitting host. You are my unknowing lover and partner. You can never leave me. I will never leave you.

But I keep my powers private and secret and really known only to myself.

I’m not empty, am I? I’m not dull and boring, am I? I’m not invisible am I? I shall make myself visible and effective through my most subtle manoeuvres, my most secret strategic calculations.

I’ll get you in the end. In fact I think I’ve got you already - although you may not realise it yet.”

Under such conditions it is difficult, but vital, to remember and know that this person is basically crippled with abject anxiety and a terrible abject loneliness. It is by pointing this out at the right moment and in a way that does not cause shame and defensive retreats, that I become an acceptable and trustable ‘emotional reality principle’; one who thereby disturbs her narcissistic universe in a such a way that it may lead to a stronger emotional and relational

realism. Although a change for the better, this is a very precarious change and is easily retreated from.

The analytic task is to address the primitive anxiety, interpersonal terrors and shames, and this may lead to a recognition, even a shock of recognition that their object of fear is a maternal-parental world in which the self is unrecognised, unloved and its healthy exhibitionistic energies crippled. Thus, necessary, understandable, clever, strategic and secretive, but very counter-productive, self-defeating and unattractive defenses are desperately wrought.

ANALYTIC RELATIONS, CHANGES AND LIMITS

To an extent both these personality disorders stem from being oedipally orphaned. However, a borderline person reacts to this fate with outrage; a narcissist manages it more passively. Jim was at least able to recycle his sick symbolising function and his destructive madness, vitally through fury: he resisted the super-ego defiantly. Christine was able to recycle her brittle self less well because her symbolising function was so petrified by primitive fear and the untouchable defence of strategic inaction: she identified with the super-ego submissively.

Both states are basically driven by venomous envy and resentment: overtly expressed in impulsive acts of borderline murderousness; denied and hidden behind polite invisibility and the art of feigning in the case of narcissism.

These projective poisons can and do get into my emotionally receptive but analytic bodymind, that is, into my auto-immune self-system. I need to think non-reactively and clearly through and out of this infection or contagion, to focus my reverie (intuitive knowledge of other, me, us) and eventually (with applied understanding) to speak and interpret mutatively.

Through these case stories the issue I really want to catch is my subjective/objective reverie and interpretive action in the face of transferential psychoid/psychosomatic storms and deathly calms. In other words, being a thinking mind in the midst of an interpersonal experience of being caught up in an emotionally and psychosomatically disturbing cosmic explosion but which may also be a moment of creation. This furious storm is exactly what the narcissist spends his or her strategic false-life trying to avoid. And it is this violence through which the borderline person spends his or her psychotically destructive life trying to reach a real love and meaningful order; but a love and order that is always simultaneously envied, murderously resented and lethally attacked. But at least there is here the intimacy of fight, whereas with the narcissist there is a more sinister, revolting and strategically hidden 'sucking hollow of denied anger'.

The issue for the analyst is the mental sorting and ordering of objective, subjective and mutually consubstantial identificatory projections and introjections, amidst the scatter-shot and the shards of beta fragments which make up and inform this difficult analytic field. In this 'interactive analytic field', this animated body, we are, as Jung said, both changed, or, I would add, nearly destroyed. However, it is in this field of projections, extractions, infections, dreams, intuitions, frustrations and limitations, that the analytic mind is effective: dreaming, thinking and intuitively joining, using real internal goods and strengths - in so far as possible.

CONCLUSION

I think that the analysis of pre-symbolic personality disorders is an inherently Jungian and post-Jungian arena of clinical interaction. Jung theorised out of his experience with his own and other's near-psychotic and psychotic matters. This means he developed his thinking out of close infectious work with structural disorders and with the confusions and frustrations of early trauma

and blindness which harms the development of the symbolising function, where fantasy and reality, or image, idea and impulse are unprocessed and undifferentiated, and so are confused. These become the very stuff of the destructive and constructive analytic bath: a blood bath, erotic bath, and/or a transformative bath.

My point is that analytic immersion is often experienced through somatic impact. An analysand expresses the confusion of the analytic relationship through embodied enactments and a body-based primitive pre-symbolic state – which may also be an anti-symbolic state.

In relations with 'borderline beta matters', the analyst is often made to have or 'be' the mind, brain, body and the neurological energy for and of the other, and thence to have to actively feel, think, link, imagine and interpret our way through psychic blocks and pains.

The wounded healer actually heals through his/her particular wounds, or rather his/her survival, management and recycling of his/her wounds and madneses. As Santayana said of what he called 'normal madness', 'sanity is madness put to good use', which I think is also a good enough definition of a proper training and indeed of analytic transformation. Borderline persons can indeed recycle their madness through their affecting of me and then having their passions met by my passionately thinking bodymind within an ordered external and internal frame: contained by necessary laws.

By definition total structural change is impossible and/or would be literally mad. We are to a great degree internally and externally predetermined: free choice and agency is limited and partial; the body, the brain, family, history and culture as fate; unconscious desires and fears; internal and external relations all limit psychic transformation.

Sometimes the only possible change is not structural but an achievement of irony: a knowledge which is simultaneously sad and joyous, depressing and elating, an ironic view of realities and relations in which we both know that there is a limit to how (and how much) we can know ourselves and each other. Irony implies a true sense of scepticism. Thereby I suggest it also incorporates a healthy sense of psychic freedom in the face of the fact that we are actually somatically, environmentally and contingently over-determined.

The philosopher David Wood has recently argued that 'negative capability is the antidote to violence'. I would add: also to borderline impotent rage and to hidden narcissistic fear and hate. However, even to talk of irony, ambivalence, scepticism, 'free necessity' and negative capability, means to have moved beyond grief into mourning, remembrance and recreation. This includes mourning the gains and failures of the analysis.

These difficult internal and external relations have to do with our management of passionate and lost loves, hurts and hates, of realities and laws, powers and frustrations, of psychosomatic pleasures and pains, of a 'jouissance' that is a relational force but which also accommodates separateness and separation, the pleasures of reasoning and its limits, the power of our best, worst and utterly fantastic memories, and the capacity for imagination in the face of the unknowable. Thus we may create a temporary, maybe illusory, but psychically necessary (and sometimes beautiful) sense of meaning.

NOTE

1. See *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, Vol. 51, No. 1

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