

## *Panel Contribution*

# Shadows of Mutual Change

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### **TOPIC**

Jung's comment: *'For two personalities to meet is like two different chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed. In any effective psychological treatment the doctor is bound to influence the patient; but this influence can only take place if the patient has a reciprocal influence on the doctor. You can exert no influence if you are not susceptible to influence.'* (C.G. Jung, *CW*, Vol. 16, para. 163)

### **EDITORS' NOTE**

This is Giles Clark's introductory contribution to the first conference panel, held on Saturday 20th October 2007. Other panel members included analyst Peter Fullerton and academics Dr David Haynes, Dr Terrie Waddell and Dr Peter Bishop. Unfortunately there were no other written contributions from this panel available for publication.

### **GILES CLARK**

Let us remember that the theme of this conference has to do with our various or different uses of subjective experience, though all of us presumably reflecting, thinking and speaking from Jungian or post-Jungian positions; the two main tribes addressing this field ...

as well as everyone else here, who are hopefully a vital part of the shared thinking and debate ... are academics and clinicians. I am speaking as one of the latter. I want to both stick to the overall theme of subjective experience (and that includes subjective values, I think), and also to respond critically to that which is given to me to consider. This morning I responded subjectively to David Tacey; now I'm going to react subjectively to Jung; tomorrow I shall reveal some of my subjectivities (and their uses) as a practising analyst.

So, to this quotation from Jung ...

'Both are transformed' is a 'sine qua non'. The only two alternatives are (1) to think that only one of us (the patient) changes – which is hierarchical, an abusive power position, defensive, schizoid and/or narcissistic; or (2) to think that neither of us changes – which is autistic.

Jung, with certain prescience, recognised a mutually shared, inter-subjective psychic field as a third agent of the analytic relationship ... in and through which both persons are changed. We can study this in particular in 'The Psychology of the Transference' and even more specifically in the introduction to that essay. This clinical idea has been considerably elaborated upon by several Jungians, in for example hypotheses of an embodied counter-transference, an infectious or contagious and consubstantiating animating-psychoid body ... affective through transferential and counter-transferential projective identifications and other forceful psychosomatic communications etc.

Such hypotheses are not dissimilar to Balint's 'harmonious, interpenetrating mix-up', Ogden's idea of the 'coercive pressure of "the subjugating third" in which both of us are changed', and to Britton's 'triangular space'.

The danger here is the possibility of a lazy conceptual thinking that falls into reification and hypostatizing. Other than actual neurological synaptic change, ‘the third’ is an ‘as if’, a useful metaphor, a nominal phrase to describe a psychic or psychosomatic experience or fantasy, or a psychic rather than concrete reality. A perceived or apperceived subjective experience of a libidinous entity outside me or you is better described as an adjective or adverbially, and always symbolically (not literally): it is ‘as if’ there is a commonly or transferentially experienced autonomous other or third agent in the room, affecting me or us bizarrely, an unconscious force of strange desire or fear or unease, something unconsciously moving us. Such psychosomatic experience can be interpreted: it is a re-constellation and re-iteration of other, internalised but unconscious relations.

The same point can be made over treating ‘the relationship’ as a separate essence or as ‘the third’, thus sometimes essentialising or transcendentalising a subjective process ... or two inter-subjective processes. As the philosopher Harry Frankfurt puts it, we need to think ‘distributively’ rather than essentially.

Accepting the rider that all metaphors - especially of place or position – are psychically never quite right ... we may say that analysis is a particular relational or anti-relational state that is active between us and is a field of activity around us: a psychically alive or deathly (or indeed near-deathly) world of emotional experience, of being oneself with and for an other in an environment that is often alert with the slings and arrows of projective identifications ... as well as the arrows of Eros.

I would summarise my view of the tense, conflicted analytic field thus: we have a field of conscious desires for the good, the pleasurable and the safe (good objects), and also of conscious fears of the bad, the painful and the dangerous (bad and persecutory objects). It is also a field of *unconscious appetites for love and life* but also of primitive anxieties about loss of love and life, and so is simultaneously or alternating between desire/need and dread/defence.

There are shadows (good and bad) of this mutual transformation. We need to be aware of identificatory/seductive mutuality ... especially on the part of the analyst who needs the analysand, their problems and their impetus for his/her health, for his/her healing, for his/her narcissism. We also need to remain aware of the vitality of difference, of non-mutuality. We are different, separate and we are changed differently ... we need to be careful of assumptions and identifications, because we also do not and cannot ever know the other. After all the mournful analytic aim and the inevitability is separation.

As well as both gaining through curiosity and the affective epistemophilia which wants and sometimes thinks that it gets into an understanding of the insides of the other, we also mourn the limits, the failures and the end of analysis ...and all relations. Mutual change or transformation can be ... or even always partially is ... a psychic (even psychosomatic) infection and contagion. The next mutual task is therefore a process of separation out of such fusion.

What Jung doesn't say about the analytic alchemical bath, the black rain, the psychic or psychosomatic union, about participation mystique is: what changes happen to the person he calls 'the Doctor', and what s/he can do with these changes, how to interpret them (as distinct from amplify them), when and how to feed them back or not, in what sort of or degree of transformed form, and if not then why not, and how does this profound relational transformation work.

Never mind staying with 'the mystery' or amplificatory images or fairy stories or the magic of couples in mutual transformation ... I am a sceptic and a realist: I want to know what's happening between us, what we are doing to each other and how; and a vital aspect of experience which contributes to my true (healthy) identity is the realisation of otherness, of what and who is beyond my control, will and knowledge.

## REFERENCE

Frankfurt, H. (2006) *On Truth*, New York, Knopf

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