



# THE USES OF SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

## *Proceedings of the Conference*

*'The Uses of Subjective Experience: A Weekend of Conversations  
between ANZSJA Analysts and Academics who Work with Jung's Ideas'*

October 20–21, 2007, Melbourne, Australia

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Acknowledgements

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*Preface*

## The Intimate Edge of Experience

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In Christopher Bollas' latest book *The Freudian Moment* (2007), he describes a relational coupling, 'the Freudian pair', as comprising the 'free associating analysand and the evenly suspended analyst' (p. 13). He goes on to quote Freud:

'...the attitude that the analytic physician could most advantageously adopt was to *surrender* himself to his own unconscious mental activity in a state of evenly suspended attention, to avoid so far as possible reflection and the construction of conscious expectations, not to try to fix anything he heard particularly in his memory, and by these means to catch the drift of the patient's *unconscious with his own unconscious*'. (Freud, 1923, p. 238 in Bollas, 2007, p. 13)[italics added]

Bollas reclaims, for his Freudian colleagues at any rate, the central ground of the unconscious-to-unconscious link in both the formation and therapeutic value of any depth 'psychoanalytic pair' as this distinguished historical relational constellation might now be more aptly named. Those trained within a Jungian and post-Jungian psychoanalytic tradition might wish to claim the revelation of what that unconscious-to-unconscious link might actually mean and feel like relationally by citing Jung's *Psychology of the Transference*, first published in 1946, as a seminal text.



The image chosen by Conference organisers for the Conference and hence used as a 'cover' image for these published *Proceedings* is taken from *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, *Psychology and Alchemy* (p. 147). This drawing, entitled 'the union of irreconcilables: marriage of water and fire' is described as being 'after an Indian painting' and is taken from a nineteenth century text.<sup>1</sup> Jung utilised this drawing to illustrate a point about method:

'If reason is not to be outraged on the one hand and the creative play of images not violently suppressed on the other, a circumspect and far-sighted synthetic procedure is required in order to accomplish the paradoxical union of irreconcilables.' (para. 186)

Here Jung makes the point that if reason and imagination are to coexist, a way must be found/created which 'brings together' seemingly oppositional forces, energies or elements. In this image, the 'irreconcilables' are depicted as fire and water; intellect and emotion; masculine and feminine; in passionate embrace.

Jung's re-discovery of such arcane images speaks to his significant contribution to the understanding and practice of the psychoanalytic 'healing' relationship: that beneath and alongside the necessary state of 'surrender' with its attitude of 'evenly suspended attention' there is indeed a hidden 'passion' enjoined: both intrapsychically and inter-relationally.

Jung's opus is predicated on a language of dualistic, seemingly oppositional patterns of 'pairing'; contained, yet circumambulated and with an eye to telos. But this image is an adaptation from an Indian image out of a non-dualistic, plural cosmic fantasy. Perhaps, when considering this collection of papers, we might also focus on the *circulation* or flux, in, through and around 'difference'; an interpenetration, an elemental coniunctio, a passionate encounter. The many hands pointing to the many ways of approaching and 'coming to grips' with the elements of being; the heart of the matter.

An image such as this can be read as a representation of both intra-psychic and inter-relational patterns of engagement. We can think of that unconscious-to-unconscious link mentioned earlier as an elemental coniunctio or circulation as depicted in the alchemical image by the circulating fire and water; we can think of intuition arising out of such intra-psychic and inter-relational patterns of engagement.

All of the papers presented in this collection are evidence of that ‘passionate encounter’ between a relational pair: analyst/patient; anthropologist/subject; teacher/student; person and culture; one culture and another; and the recognition of and circulation around and through difference.

And each, in their own way, also demonstrates the fruits of additional ‘passionate encounters’, married with the intra-psychic capacity for surrender and ‘catching the drift’, with the realms of idea, image and feeling to arrive at an emotionally coherent and satisfying distillation of what it is like to encounter an Other at the intimate edge of experience.

And what of the ‘hidden’ passions? Judith Pickering, in her Panel Contribution, *Ancestral and Mythic Themes in the Consulting Room*, reminds us that:

‘...the patient who comes to us has a story that is not told, and which as a rule no one knows of... It is the patient’s secret, the rock against which he is shattered’. (C.G. Jung, 1963, p. 117)

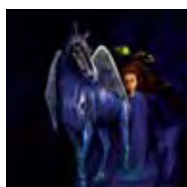
The contributions from those teachers of Jungian and depth psychoanalytic ideas in this collection presented their own experiences of engaging with the ‘story not [yet] told’. Judith goes on to highlight the potential for the academy to function as a facilitating environment; an ‘amplificatory temenos’ or location which can, ideally, function in a manner complementary to - rather than antagonistic to - the therapeutic work of bringing ‘unthought knowns’ (Bollas, 1987) to consciousness.

It also made me reflect on the ‘untold stories’, the ‘hidden passions’, the quiet voices also gathered at this Conference.

Different facilitating environments, different frames, focus attention, care and energy on the ‘matter’ under investigation in subtly different ways, for example the clinician may be more (but not wholly, of course) engaged with the process of *the way in which* thought/mind/subjectivity comes into being and is experienced; the academic/teacher may be more engaged with the thoughts themselves and their application to specific task or argument.

Each paper can be downloaded, usefully, separately, but we urge readers to consider the whole as a demonstration of what it takes to encounter and hold in mind radical Otherness where ‘taken for granted’ arenas of human experience are challenged. Both papers and Conference played around the themes of what separates and connects, as clinicians, teachers, students, cultures – people - how different/similar we are to one another; how much we dare to reveal in one another’s company, how we drive one another mad. But, perhaps more importantly than this, how we can help each other to think, make sense, bear the unbearable and locate hope.

As the reader moves through from consulting room to seminar room to ‘country’ the changes in the patterns of the transference/countertransference relationship and how it might be engaged with can be, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, discerned. Similarities and difference. Food for thought. Psychoanalytic practice privileges experience over knowing and yet, as these papers ably demonstrate, there are different kinds of experience and different ways of knowing and coming to know. The qualitative differences and similarities can be discerned. Perhaps it is what we do with that experience and knowing that separates and connects us as practitioners – in whatever field - and people.



The ‘geometry’ of the *Proceedings* presents the contributions of analysts and academics, in conversation, and follows the internal logic of experience and idea presented during the two-day conference rather than the actual programme. The Editorial Committee wishes to thank David Tacey for graciously relinquishing his keynote speaker status to facilitate this.

Hopefully, this allows for a circulation through experience, idea, feeling and image in context.

If we consider the images<sup>2</sup> that each of the authors of the nine main papers have chosen to accompany their text as selected facts (from W. Bion, after Poincare, 1963) – i.e. designators of an organising pattern that gives a sense of coherence to the elements of their work - then we might have a story line that goes something like this:

- Falling through the gap
- Isolation/alienation
- Support/binding
- Encounter
- Spiral
- Dark horse
- Plurality
- Prayer/devotion
- Water crossing

Each illuminates an area of specific ‘passionate engagement’ and yet, taken as a whole, following the line through, what reveals itself is a process .....a pattern of engagement.....

John Morton, who introduced the second panel discussion (and from whom we unfortunately do not have a written contribution), reminded us of Jung’s dream of the house with many levels – perhaps, now, an iconic metaphor

for a depth psychology of subjectivity. It is an archaeological image, of slow revealing, of 'going down', of finding bedrock; a place to stand. Many of us 'find' in this dream (and I am here taking the meaning of the word 'dream' to refer broadly to a foundational pattern or template) – and by extension Jung's opus – a pattern that makes sense, something that we can recognise ourselves in, or want or long to recognise ourselves in.

Hopefully, for academics, analysts and other practitioners, and students, the Conference papers in this collection will address some of the anxiety that surrounds the 'mystery' of what is happening in the local community – both consulting room and seminar room. That is, perhaps it begins to address the question for one another: what are we each doing – and just as importantly, not doing - with the Jungian dream? Papers by Fullerton, Clark and Devereaux, Tacey, Russell, Stewart and Bishop speak particularly to this question.

This dreaming pattern, however, is indigenous to the North and the West. In our region, Oceania, this deep pattern cohabitates with radically Other dreaming structures and patterns. Jadran Mimica's paper on the Yagwoia of East Papua New Guinea helps re-locate us in this region and Craig San Roque's review of Alexis Wright's novel *Carpentaria* helps re-orient our thinking towards the different dreaming pattern or way of being resident here.

There is a need to meet and be met by something recognisable and that recognises us in return; to 'find' ourselves in the familiar. There is also a need to recognise the Other as Other; to 'come to terms' with the unfamiliar, with difference. And to come to terms with ourselves as being 'the unfamiliar' to the Other.

Hopefully, these different patterns are *not* irreconcilable; hopefully we can resist any desire to set them in opposition. Hopefully we can return to our Indian drawing and imagine different elements circulating in erotic play.

Leslie Devereaux, in her paper *Between You and Me*, describes the suspension of the normalising belief in the world as we already expect it to be as the ‘phenomenological epoche’. This is the sine qua non of the capacity to be open to the other as Other in a non-narcissistic way; one practises being in a state of ‘arriving’ at seeing and understanding through experience; paying due attention to both the richness and complexities of the present moment and the process. Leslie reminds us that ‘the self and the other are ideas inseparable from each other... And so the encounter with the other is also the encounter with the self and to know, amid this projection and difference, what is what, is perhaps the heart of human difficulty’.

Leah Carter, a Conference attendee and PhD student from Western Australia, had this to say about Leslie Devereaux’ paper:

‘I was moved by the poignancy of Leslie Devereaux’ account of her experience in Mexico, where she set herself the task of embodying the lived experience “walking with short steps” of the women in the culture that was the subject of her research. The significance of her story was for me twofold; as an expression of a cultural process that embodies lived meaning and as a metaphor for the slow and painful learning of wisdom. There was profound meaning held in the belt that each woman made and wore for life after painstakingly acquiring each skill needed to create it. It seemed to form a wholeness in its role of adornment and beauty, of modesty and of constancy whereby it was worn always, leaving its mark on the body. The story touched my sense of the attenuation of a meaningful aesthetic at these levels in current Western culture; evoked a deep longing.’ (pers. comm.)

Isn’t it precisely because of the attenuation of which Leah speaks that we desire to meet, write and are curious about what others are thinking and doing.

The metaphor of this woven, dyed belt, signifying an embodied experience of the interconnectedness of life in all of its forms, is beautifully illustrated by this passage of Leslie's:

‘Without the frost under my foot, the grassy patches between forest and cornfield would not be good pasturage for sheep. Without the baaing of the lambs, the wool in the belt would be gone. Without the truck horns the colourfast red dye from German companies in Guatemala would have to come by mule train, and be more costly. Without the wood smoke from the disappearing oak forests, how would the weaver cook her corn into tortillas? So it is clear that my belt is made of an infinitude of non-belt elements. It has no separate existence from this web of non-belt elements.’

This is a feminine statement, out of a feminine and profoundly ecological sensibility; if not a hidden passion at the Conference, perhaps an under-represented one.

This collection expresses some of the diversity found in the minds and hearts of some of those at work in this country who deal with the matter of psychic pain and making sense. Each is a revelation from ‘the inside out’. A small contribution to beginning to think about the question: What are we doing here?

The Editorial Committee wishes to thank all contributors for their thoughtfulness, generosity and goodwill in working with us. Thanks also to Tim Hartridge our graphics designer for his generosity, creativity and willingness to accommodate our particular needs. Thanks to all for your patience as we find our way around the web publishing domain!

March 2008



## NOTES

1. The Union of Irreconcilables: marriage of water and fire. After an Indian painting: from Mueller N., *Glauben, Wissen und Kunst der alten Hindus*, Plate II, fig.17, 1822.
2. The images reproduced here are those found on the first page of each of the main papers in this collection. Permissions and acknowledgements, where necessary, can be found at the end of each paper.

## REFERENCE

Bollas, C. (2007) *The Freudian Moment*, Karnac, London

## *Introduction*

LEON PETCHKOVSKY

ANZSJA PRESIDENT AND CONFERENCE CONVENOR

*Gold Coast and Alice Springs, Australia*

### **‘THE USES OF SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE: A WEEKEND OF CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN CLINICIANS AND ACADEMICS WORKING WITH JUNG’S IDEAS’**

‘The Uses of Subjective Experience’ Conference, from which these *Proceedings* are taken, was an ANZSJA<sup>1</sup> initiative, celebrating the companionship between those two domains, clinic and university, which share, in their very different ways, a preoccupation with depth psychoanalytic ideas and praxis.

As President of ANZSJA, it was my intention to help ANZSJA provide a milieu in which both domains had an opportunity to present themselves more fully to each other; hopefully to encourage a deeper and more refined level of appreciation of each other’s contributions into the depth psychoanalytic arena, to foster engagement and, perhaps, to create a base for further collaboration.

However, as President of one of the few professional clinical bodies in Australia charged with the responsibility of both the psychoanalytic training of clinicians and of promoting a depth psychoanalytic approach to healing psychic pain, I must admit to a broader purpose: to present to a larger world - including overseas Jungian colleagues, fellow clinicians in related fields

(psychoanalysts, psychologists, psychiatrists), licensing/accrediting bodies (both for training institutions and for professional guilds), and even health care funding bodies – something of the richness and depth of a psychoanalytic and Jungian and post-Jungian clinical praxis and scholarship.

This purpose is given away in our title ‘The *Uses* of Subjective Experience’.... with its implied dialectic counter-pole; those discourses which would see subjectivity as useless.

It is clear that the present is a time when the depth psychologies are seen as increasingly irrelevant to mainstream psychology and psychiatry. Our Freudian psychoanalytic colleagues also find themselves embroiled in this. Patricia Cohen, in a recent article in the *New York Times* (Cohen, 2007) has noted that the American psychoanalytic institutes have recently commissioned a survey of 150 public and private universities in the U.S. and found that, of the 1,175 courses that referenced psychoanalysis, more than 86 per cent were offered outside psychology departments. She writes:

‘Psychoanalysis and its ideas about the unconscious mind have spread to every nook and cranny of the culture from Salinger to “South Park”, from Fellini to foreign policy. Yet if you want to learn about psychoanalysis at the nation’s top universities, one of the last places to look may be the psychology department. A new report by the American Psychoanalytic Association has found that while psychoanalysis — or what purports to be psychoanalysis — is alive and well in literature, film, history and just about every other subject in the humanities, psychology departments and textbooks treat it as “desiccated and dead,” a historical artefact instead of “an ongoing movement and a living, evolving process”. The study, which is to appear in the June 2008 issue of psychiatry’s flagship journal, *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, is the latest evidence of the field’s existential crisis.’

This is not necessarily all bad. At least it tells us that the arts and the humanities are passionately interested in psychoanalysis. They have no problem with 'the uses of subjective experience'.

But in the mainstream mental health domain, this attitude is apparent in the 'evidence base' debate that smoulders in the field of psychotherapy, and which threatens to disenfranchise those models and approaches that, precisely because they are intersubjective, are insufficiently mechanical to lend themselves to facile 'evidence base' analyses. This accounts, to some extent, for the ascendancy of simplistic (some would say disingenuously over-simplistic) CBT and psychopharmacology approaches which can be more readily measured.

This is not the place to review the debate; however I would recommend a paper by Jungian analyst Roger Brooke (Brooke, 2006) for any reader wishing to inform themselves of some of the key issues.

I can point out, in passing, that the American Psychological Association Report (APA 2005) on 'competence in evidence-based practice in psychology' stresses that 'psychological practice is, at root, an interpersonal relationship between psychologist and patient' (p.12). More pointedly, there is an emerging body of work to support the proposition that 'adherence to treatment manuals is negatively correlated with treatment outcomes', even with CBT! (Castonguay et al., 1996; Ablon and Jones, 1998.) Furthermore, the work of Jungian analyst W. Keller and his associates in Germany (Keller et al., 2006) reminds us that permanent positive structural changes in the organisation of the 'self' can usually only be achieved in longer term (two-plus years) psychoanalytic (including Jungian) therapy, and that shorter therapies, while temporarily producing measurable improvements, show high relapse rates. The work of Keller and his colleagues was powerful enough to persuade the German health insurance authorities to support Jungian analysis (or Analytical Psychology as it is also known)!

Finally, as Brooke (ibid.) points out, the APA has again recognised ‘expertise’ (as opposed to mechanical manual-based training) as ‘essential to professional competence’.

We in the depth psychologies will be bearing the brunt of this debate in the coming decade. Currently, ANZSJA analysts Sue Austin, John Merchant and colleagues are negotiating with IAAP<sup>2</sup> (the International Association of Analytical Psychology) to develop an ‘Evidence-Based/Efficacy of Jungian Analysis’ project which will include the use of J. Okishi and Michael Lambert’s innovative methodologies (Okishi, Lambert et al., 2006).

## CONFERENCE FORMAT

The two-day Conference was organised around the notion of a conversation between clinic and academy: papers delivered by clinicians were responded to by academics and visa versa.

On each day a panel comprising both clinicians and academics addressed themselves to one of two pivotal statements by C.G. Jung. The first:

*‘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.’*

However extroverted the person or the culture, subjective experience is ontological bedrock. But psychoanalysis involves two subjectivities, that of analyst and analysand. And the interaction generates a mutually transformative third field, the intersubjective. Jung was deeply struck with this, hence his engagement with alchemical metaphors of transformation. The above quotation,

from the *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, para. 163, posits intersubjectivity as a principal theme for our discussion.

The second panel focussed on another quote from Jung to a further central theme that we might call the passing of ‘the subjectivity of nature’. The provocative Jungian analyst David Holt mourns this ‘alienation of man from nature, where nature is to be thought of both as man’s own nature and also the natural world’ (Holt, 1992).

This quote is taken from Jung’s autobiography, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (1963, p.144):

*‘[Indigenous people] live[d] in a period and in a milieu in which man was still linked by myth with the world of the ancestors, and thus with nature truly experienced and not merely seen from the outside.’*

This seemingly inoffensive statement spreads across a huge terrain, which might include ecology, anthropology, spirituality and geopolitics and economics (the desacralisation of the earth, nature and lived experience, the alienation of capital and the mass market, the intercultural struggle of indigenous people, but also the alienated nature of urban life for the individual). We were particularly keen to draw our anthropologist colleagues’ views.

## **JUNG AND THE UNIVERSITY: AN ACADEMIC QUESTION?**

That there is a broad and rich tradition of Jungian, post-Jungian and depth psychoanalytic scholarship, while known within analytical psychology domains, may not be widely appreciated elsewhere. In Australia we are especially fortunate to have internationally recognised scholars Peter Bishop, Francis Gray, Bernie Neville, David Russell, Brendon Stewart, David Tacey

and Terrie Waddell contributing to debate and all, except Francis, were able to accept invitations to our conference. At the conference we were also fortunate to be able to welcome several anthropologists who bring a psychoanalytic approach to their work. These included Jadran Mimica and John Morton.

However, engagement between clinicians and scholars, or perhaps it might be more true to say, the academy, is sometimes, though thankfully not always, a fraught affair. In the Jungian arena there has been an attempt to form a bridge between the two domains with the establishment, in 2003, of the International Association for Jungian Studies (IAJS)<sup>3</sup> to facilitate (rather than authorise) Jungian scholarship and exchange between academy and clinic. ‘Jung in the academy’ is often unpopular (see David Tacey, this volume) and Jungian researchers suffer isolation. While our Melbourne conference had no formal affiliation with, or sponsorship from, IAJS, readers might find it useful to know that it places, as central to its debate, the question: what do we mean by the term ‘Jungian Studies’? And what is the relation between clinical practitioners and non-clinical academics and students?

As Andrew Samuels (Jungian analyst and Professor of Analytical Psychology at Essex University, U.K.) puts it in his position statement on the IAJS website (Samuels, 2005):

‘...in the end it is a choice between Analytical Psychology/Jungian Studies as a defined area centring on clinical (particularly analysts), practice, and a different conception of an academic field; one of liminal borders, flexible and oriented towards a creative approach to knowledge-making. A second related perspective on academia ... is to seek out the largely scientific body of research that might underpin or validate the essential premises of analytic practice for a sceptical modern age. Such research is likely to be focused upon neurology and psychology, perhaps seeking additional resources from philosophy.’

## WHO – IF ANYBODY – OWNS JUNG?

There is a well-known paper by the Jungian scholar Jean Knox (Knox, 2007) which examines this question in detail. Jean proposes a list of Jung's 'signature concepts':

- The self as an organising psychic structure.
- Archetypes and the collective unconscious.
- The dissociative nature of the psyche and the formation of complexes.
- The unconscious as an active and purposive agent in individuation.
- The psyche as self-regulating - the transcendent function.
- Libido as neutral psychic energy, available for a number of purposes.
- Psychic imagery as symbols not signs, reflecting something as yet unknown.

(To which we might add Jung's clinical principle that one cannot exert influence unless one is available to be influenced.)

A Jungian analytical training ensures that these ontological insights both inform and are actualised within the candidate's training experience, through the process of personal analysis. But Jean also makes it clear that no organisation has a copyright or patent on any of these concepts. They belong to the world. And the *Proceedings* of this Conference give ample evidence of this.

## WHICH JUNG?

Giles Clark, in his response to David Tacey (this volume) when considering the question 'can the academy teach Jung?' asks the further pertinent question 'which Jung?'

While there is some historical substance in the classification that Andrew Samuels (Samuels, 1985) proposed two decades ago of a distinction between



three major schools or approaches to the training and practice of analytical psychology: the Classical tradition of Jung and the Zurich school; the Developmental approach of Michael Fordham in London; and the Archetypal perspective so eloquently articulated by James Hillman, my colleagues and I have argued elsewhere (Petchkovsky, San Roque and Bescow, 2003) that the post-post-Jungian world is now so diverse that it can no longer be said that any 'one Jungian "method", "school" or metapsychology ...can claim centrality'. The best we could claim, at that time, was a 'Jungian sensibility' with its love of art and the transpersonal, its telic thrust, and its distaste for reductionist explanations of the person.

This 'Jungian sensibility' has obvious appeal to the arts and humanities; both David Tacey and David Russell in their contributions spoke to the influence of James Hillman and the archetypal approach, for example, in their orientation to university teaching. And at the centre of the Jungian sensibility, that very quality of intersubjective engagement, whether in the clinic, teaching or field-research of anthropology, was present in each conference contribution, and made for a vibrantly engaging event.

## THE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

From the clinical perspective, the highlights of the Conference were the challenging and confrontational papers by two senior ANZSJA analysts, Peter Fullerton and Giles Clark. Both Peter and Giles, it should be said, work out of a post-Jungian developmental sensibility, informed by psychoanalytic embodiment paradigms, and bring their uniqueness to this task. Both papers focused on the analyst's painful, often somatic, and sometimes almost unendurable countertransference as masterful demonstrations of the 'uses of subjective experience' in the therapeutic consulting room. Peter, focussing on the festering but potentially fertile impact of the wound of a couple's relational dysfunction; Giles, on the sickening shock of interrelationships between

the borderline and narcissistic agony of his more damaged analysands. Both opened the question of what it may mean to ‘choose to be made to have to think through’ (Clark this volume) these abysmal states of being.

## JUNGIAN THOUGHT AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Here we must take issue with Patricia Cohen’s (Cohen, 2007) claim that psychoanalytic clinicians would be hard put to see the point of psychoanalytic investigations of colonialism. Not in Australia! Our conference was marked by a significant contribution from the anthropological domain. Anthropologist Jadran Mimica both presented a major paper and responded to two clinical papers; ANZSJA clinician and anthropologist Leslie Devereaux presented a paper; John Morton, a Freudian/psychoanalytic anthropologist opened the second panel discussion and ANZSJA member Craig San Roque contributed a paper to these *Proceedings* after speaking to it during the second panel. All engaged in various ways with issues of post-colonialist critique and repair, as prompted by Jung’s quoted concern about the loss of immersion in a nature imbued with subjectivity.

Jadran Mimica’s passionate, ur-eloquent, and very deeply confronting presentations (and images) of his immersion field-work in Papua New Guinea with funerary practices were probably the most powerful.

Leslie Devereaux brought a soft and deeply sensitive influence to the group both in her paper and her panel interactions. Again, the theme of personal impact on the practitioner was re-explored, both in a transcultural setting, as she described her challenging experience of immersion field-work in a Mayan village as a young anthropologist, and as contemporary clinician.

Craig San Roque’s poetic essay on Miles Franklin Award-winning author Alexis Wright’s novel *Carpentaria* is also informed by his many years of immersion in the indigenous field in Central Australia, including the impact

of ‘country’, and walytja the ‘psychosocial ecosystem’ so central to indigenous ontology, but also arguably to our own, however much we might disown it. Craig has enlarged the countertransferential intersubjective theme to consider phenomena of collective, inter-cultural countertransference, and this is developed in his paper and other publications (San Roque, 2005).

## THE TRANSCENDENT

Spirituality in its broadest sense of personal encounter or the subjectivity of engagement with transcendent processes was a recurring theme. Readers will see this especially well developed in papers by David Tacey, David Russell and Brendon Stewart (the leading figures in the unique University of Western Sydney Masters of Analytical Psychology programme and its attempts, including drawing on Jungian experiential paradigms, to address this domain in a university setting).

David Haynes, in his contribution to the first panel, also gave a very warm, engaging and impressive oral presentation to the theme of the transcendent in a university setting but was unable to submit a written version of this contribution to the *Proceedings*.

## JUNG AND PEDAGOGY

In this Conference, we found that the ‘new corporatism’ of university culture was also a recurring theme, from both presenters and the floor. Given increasing interest in Jungian thought among students from various backgrounds, there was obviously a constituency out there in the broader student community, or a ‘market’, to lapse into ‘new corporate-speak’. By the same token, the strategic and structural changes brought about by the ‘new corporatism’ had been inimical to anything not clearly connected with economic impera-

tives, and humanities departments had suffered. ‘Market’ is anathema to the Jungian opus of individuation (and its opposition to mass consumerism) and to Jungian engagements with the transcendent (as opposed to materialist reductionism). Peter Bishop’s elegiac exploration of alternative visions to that of global corporate capitalist hegemony in his paper ‘The Death of Shangri-la’ exemplified how a mythopoeic imagination may be brought to global socio-cultural reflections in gently provocative ways.

The university exists to teach. Presentations by David Tacey, David Russell and Brendon Stewart gave detailed and subtle consideration to how Jung might be taught in a university setting. There are obvious and inherent tensions between the necessities of an academic milieu and the experientially-based learning that characterises clinical analytic training. See, especially, David Tacey’s tersely titled ‘Teaching Jung in the University’.

It is often forgotten that engaged teaching has a deeply subjective experiential side, as does engaged learning. Teaching cannot be confined or reduced to narrow cognitive models. Nor can the realm of Jungian thought be confined to the clinic, even if Marie Louise Von Franz thought Jung had no place in the university (Tacey, this volume). Conversely, our university-based presenters reminded us that the drive to personal growth takes place in the classroom without benefit of formal Jungian analysis – or indeed any therapy – the university, as nurturer of scholarship, is also a ‘facilitating environment’. See Judith Pickering’s panel contribution as she addresses this theme. Yet the clinic, striving to improve the lot of its patients, is more concerned with practical outcomes; another area of intrinsic and necessary tension between the clinic and the classroom.

An area of exploration that time did not allow for in this Conference was a public articulation from ANZSJA practitioners about how they envisaged (and effected) various teaching (and scholarship) tasks relevant to clinical training and practice and the ways in which our various members have con-

tributed to university courses. It is my personal hope that a further conference might take the opportunity to explore this important area. I rather suspect that such opportunities for depth reflection and public articulation might make for even deeper and more appreciative interactions between clinic and campus.

## THE FUTURE

This Conference gave us the opportunity to celebrate both past achievements and current strengths - working relationships, clinical approaches, localised Australia/Oceania cultural and social issues etc. At the conclusion of the Conference I took the opportunity to make a brief position statement with respect to what I see as a potential future direction for depth psychology research. The future, as I have already said, will include hard considerations of efficacy ('evidence base') and validity. The latter, especially, is closely tied to advances in physiological psychology and brain imaging which promise to unveil the bio-substrate of subjective experience in ever greater detail. This, in turn, will open the way for tracking the efficacy (or otherwise) of depth psychological treatments neurophysiologically, a much more credible outcomes measure than the questionnaires of the psychological outcomes industry. Our understanding of the dance between brain function and the inner world is, in the view of colleagues like psychoanalyst/neuropsychologist Mark Solms (Solms, 2002), the current major growth area in the field.

Jungian psychology might be advantageously placed here, largely because Jung's theory of complexes is paradoxically the most biologically embedded of all the psychoanalytic models. This bold assertion is unpacked in a brief working paper by the author in these *Proceedings* ('A Work in Progress: Some preliminary reflections on the biological substrate of meaning-making') where the relationship of Jungian thought to the biosciences and Jungian contributions to the 'neuropsychanalysis' project promoted by Solms are noted. Here

in Australia ANZSJA member Robert Bosnak, not present with us at the Conference, has written about his ‘neuropsychanalytic project’: the psychophysical correlates of dream experience and dream recall (Bosnak, 2004).

And as we begin to understand ever more closely the biophysical substrate of this process of meaning-making in dream and complexed association, the conclusion that the Jungian opus could be an important part of this 21st Century thrust is inescapable, in my view at any rate.

## IN CONCLUSION

Many participants reflected back to me that they found this Conference “the most alive they had attended in decades”. The neurophysiologist in me reflected: those subliminal cues, the enigmatic signifiers of Frosh and Pontalis (Frosh, 2002), were clearly active and humming, enlivening the debate. And this in turn generated connections at many levels, connections of meaning, connections of beings. And with each connection, a dopamine surge, which further facilitated meaning-making, resulted in a veritable cascade. Just when we had thought it could not possibly get any better, the next presentation would disabuse us. By the end of the weekend, we felt pleasantly buffeted, as if we had survived a spectacular fireworks display.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Seriously grateful acknowledgment goes to our tireless Conference organisers: ANZSJA members Joy Norton, Margaret Caulfield and Sue Austin, and to our Conference co-ordinator Lenore Kulakauskas.

Deep gratitude must also go to our co-editors and ANZSJA members Amanda Dowd and Craig San Roque, who have brought that rare combination of high poetic sensibility and attention to detail and praxis to this work.

This is also an opportunity to extend our especial appreciation of the passionate engagement in the Jungian domain over the years of David Tacey and colleagues at La Trobe University and David Russell and Brendon Stewart at the University of Western Sydney. The UWS project of which David Russell speaks in his paper ‘Analytical Psychology as a Spiritual Practice: an Australian Perspective’, as many may be aware, is in the process of closing. It was, to quote my colleague Craig San Roque who contributed to this project along with others (see his Response to David Russell’s and Brendon Stewart’s papers, this volume) “a bold experiment in exploring, developing and applying depth psychological experience vigorously in an educational milieu”. We mourn its passing.

On behalf of ANZSJA I would also like to extend our warmest wishes to David Russell on his retirement, and look forward to further contributions from him as opportunity opens.

Apart from re-stating my enormous appreciation and gratitude for the contributors to the Conference and these *Proceedings*, I will avoid further gratuitous commentary on this collection of quite extraordinary papers, and leave the reader to judge for themselves. Enjoy, critique, contribute.

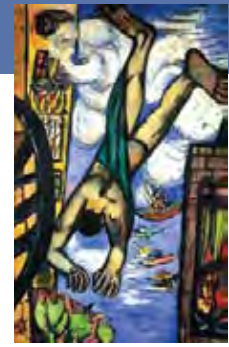
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## NOTES

1. ANZSJA – the Australian New Zealand Society of Jungian Analysts – is best understood as a professional guild. It was established in 1977 and is the clinical and professional organisation responsible for the training and professional development and support of psychoanalytic practitioners of Jungian Analysis in the Australasian region. ANZSJA is a member of the IAAP (see Note 2) and a member of the psychoanalytic psychotherapy section of PACFA (the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia; see [www.pacfa.org.au](http://www.pacfa.org.au) ). For further information on our organisation and training, please see our website: [www.anzsja.org.au](http://www.anzsja.org.au).
2. IAAP – The International Association of Analytical Psychology – was established in 1953 and is the umbrella body for Jungian analytical professional and training organisations worldwide. See [www.iaap.org](http://www.iaap.org).
3. IAJS – The International Association of Jungian Studies – was established in 2003. It holds conferences every three years, the most recent in Zurich in July 2008. For further information please see [www.jungianstudies.org](http://www.jungianstudies.org).



# THE ACTIVE USE OF THE ANALYST'S BODYMIND

AS IT IS INFORMED BY PSYCHIC DISTURBANCES

**GILES CLARK**  
*ANZSJA, Sydney, Australia*

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*.<sup>1</sup>

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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Giles Clark © 2008

*Response*

to Giles Clark

*The Active Use of the Analyst's Bodymind  
as it is Informed by Psychic Disturbances**Dealing with the Negative*

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I hold a view that it is primarily the conditions that range from broadly schizoid (Guntrip, 1968; Rey, 1994), borderline (Schwartz-Salant, 1989) and pathological narcissistic (Kernberg, 1975) to deeply psychotic (Frosch, 1983; Grotstein, 1981; Eigen, 1986; Volkan, 1976, 1995), which reveal the radical reality of the human psyche. They acutely make manifest the bi-polar, instinctual life<sup>^</sup>death energy which generates both destructive and constructive processes. The dynamic dis/equilibria of these processes in turn sustain the inner architecture of human personality, the inner and outer horizons of its intersubjective (object-relational) constitution, and, most profoundly, the pleromatic vortex (the unconscious) of the human embodied mind (Jung, 1963). Absurd as it may appear, it is important to stress that the analytic experience of, and engagement with, these precarious conditions, specifically when the therapeutic situation is dominated by deadening stases and the inexhaustible capacity of human psyche and spirit to feed off their own immanent negativities, that affirm the *efficacy* of analytical practice.

Such analytical-therapeutic situations also facilitate greatly the theoretical-conceptual elucidations of the human condition at large. Whether or not

they may effect a gradient of curative change, the interactive lock-ups show that the therapist's ability to endure extreme impasses yet continuing to work vigilantly in the flows of transference/countertransference is in itself a fundamental achievement of the therapeutic relationship. The analysts who deal with these situations on a regular basis, and some exemplary ones are listed above, may rightly be characterised as the master analysts. Giles Clark can be taken as one such analyst whose therapeutic practice involves him with persons ensnared in the vagaries of those human predicaments that bear the diagnostic terms of 'borderline' and 'narcissistic personality disorders'. I suspect that his practice also engages him with the more radical human predicaments which remind one of how hard it is to be a human being – for some persons more so than for others.

In his paper, Giles details with poignant terseness two vignettes that illustrate those clinical situations wherein a severely wounded egoity can maximally actualise its own unviable condition and, through the therapist's mediation, may endeavour to face up to it and – hopefully – change it. This project, in so far as one will make it so, is nothing less than a toil of making the patient transformed as a whole in relation to a plurality of motley parts: some toxic, obstinate, obnoxious, some healthy and mature, some infantile. And, usually there is one, neither male nor female but may appear to be both, that has not been and does not want to be born, or more appropriately, incarnated. This, I hasten to say, is only one way of characterising the same inner sanctum of internal object-relatedness which Giles describes as 'the autistic no-object: a hard emptiness in space'. Its concrete specifications are indefinitely variable, precisely because of its immanent negativity. Schwartz-Salant's (1989:15) mythopoeic amplification captures aptly yet another manifest figuration of this implacable negative:

'In a strange way, the patient carries truth for the therapist. But it is a truth that lives in a destructive form. There is an Egyptian myth about the Eye Goddess – a symbol of the Great Mother

archetype in the initial stage of creation – who roamed the world and destroyed everything it saw. We can say that the Eye represents imaginal sight in its destructive form and is analogous to the borderline patient’s “truth”. This sight is split off and unconscious in the borderline patient. It is primarily encountered in therapy as an unstated demand, an emanation that puts the therapist on guard; it induces guilt, uncomfortable bodily tensions and breathing constrictions, and furthers mind-body splitting. The sense of being scanned by the patient’s unconscious sight is a common experience.’

The ‘truth’ that Schwartz-Salant is talking about is, I think, fundamentally the self-projection of that part=whole that refuses to be born, for to be so, it would cease to be that impossible omni-seity, which, to be sure, is a concentration of the non-differentiated psychoid energy.<sup>1</sup> This is why ‘in the initial stage of creation’, when one’s egoity has to, so to speak, self-contract from the irradiations of the mother’s eye and commit itself to a finite, far from perfect and mortal human semblance, that same primordial gaze may well experience this severance as the irreparable loss of its omni-seity. The ensuing ‘truth’ of the ego and of everyone else is that no-one is the actualised ‘superlative’ omni-seity s/he may harbour within him/herself. The ‘unconscious scanning’ of the borderline, as of a festering (rather than haemorrhaging) narcissist, makes sure that one comes to feel increasingly the disjunction between the repertoire of one’s self-idealizations and one’s incarnated self-actuality. One is progressively made to feel like a sham.

The descriptions Giles gives are fragments of what must have been protracted analytical engagements whose cumulative outcomes for two persons seem to have been reasonably viable. Jim’s ‘destructive impulses were more self-contained, but his social and relational life apparently continued to be difficult and “overly angry”’. Christine’s predicament is said to be ‘about good enough: a “satisfactory disappointment”’. However, in an earlier version of this paper, Giles did not say whether either of the two persons did manage,

even for a bit, to extricate him/herself from the predicament that their psyche and its un/conscious vortex was. For me, the absence of this information in the original communication amplifies the perfidiously coagulating quality of these situations: despite even the most destructive outpours of a ‘borderline’ or a ‘thick-skinned narcissist’ (Rosenfeld, 1987), the ego is nevertheless subject to its defences against his/her foundational vulnerabilities. Therefore, the ego is also plagued by the shaky armature of its internal objects and qua them, the sham semblances of his/her self. Precisely because of this determination and despite the therapist’s lucidity and technical know-how,<sup>2</sup> the intersubjective vortex of these clinical relationships may easily settle into abysmal equilibria. Here, even if the most lethal potentialities of the psyche achieve a modicum of actualisation through either enactments (e.g., Bateman, 1998) or outright acting outs (which may well be followed by hospitalisation), these may still do nothing more than preserve the clinical status quo: a well-tuned condition of the self-replicating drudgery *a deux*. The interactive ebbs and flows make no fundamental difference and engender no more radical alteration in the analysand’s self.

Giles’ profoundly insightful interpretations of these situations and of the two types of personality disorders are formulated within a ‘personally developed’ conceptual framework which overtly draws on Kleinian and Bionian theories and, more opaquely, on a neo-Spinozan philosophical position. What I admire about this conceptual synthesis is that it is actualised as ‘an active attitude and approach, a substantial psychic organ or a well lived-in internal structure that can accommodate and respond to new arrivals and demands’. Once again, Giles attests to the primacy of therapeutic engagement in his work and therefore the mastery of his analytic craft. This clinical basis strengthens the clarity of his conceptual elaborations upon the borderline and narcissistic conditions in terms of a structural twinship between them.<sup>3</sup>

Reflecting on Giles’ analytical situations I felt that in both he is like a sort of stoic Job, adept in withstanding his tormentors since, unlike them, he has a



mastery of Yahwian silent brooding and violent usurpations. And this enables him to sustain a syzygy-like interactive circuitry wherein no rupture occurs regardless of how many quanta of beta-elements have been transmuted into alpha elements. It is true that, as he says, ‘the process of relative or structural change occurs either slowly and incrementally, or sometimes suddenly out of an intuitive realisation or “selected fact” ... which is yet still a product of a period of safely gathered, contained and trusted emotional knowledge’. I also have no doubt that in many instances ‘the only possible change is not structural but an achievement of irony’. One is stuck with one’s self until the bitter end and therefore, if one can, s/he should try to come to terms with one’s ‘personal and impersonal “necessities”’, or as Freud said – ‘accept our common unhappiness’.

However, the reader doesn’t know at what point, if at all, Giles’ patients did move ‘beyond grief into mourning, remembrance and recreation’. For either of them the reader can also assume that the inner ‘destruction still has to go on and this precludes any such possibilities’. What are the options for the analyst who senses that such eventuality may well be, or is bound to become, the patient’s permanent predicament – beyond the salvation through self-irony and mourning. S/he is a subjectivity generated and sustained by his/her permanent, unforgiving and unyielding negativities. If the analyst knows that for certain kinds of acid wounds only acid medicine may effect their short- or long-term cure, should s/he not use such a *modus operandi* within exactly the parameters which structure Giles’ situation – a self-perpetuating and containing equilibrium – and opt to induce a fissure, or a series of them, which may effect a therapeutic overturn? It may or may not work, but the truth is that a wholly negative outcome with some persons – their perpetual self-torment – is a perfectly real possibility. Taken matter-of-factly or ironically, fundamentally, there are no guarantees.

Eigen (1986:192-93) gives an instance of a particularly difficult impasse with a radically ‘difficult’ patient for ‘Dee was a twelve-year-old girl diagnosed

as epileptic and schizophrenic. Her epilepsy became manifest after her first attempts at kindergarten, in which separation was intolerable'. Eigen took her on when he was still 'fresh and undaunted and would try anything'.

'For some time', he goes on to explain, 'I shadowed Dee silently and after a while she began to notice my presence. I noticed her noticing me and felt she noticed that, too. Her eyes flickered with life, then went blank. Was she tuning me out, or was she simply unable to sustain a moment's semi-aliveness? At times, I imagined flickers of disdain.'

After a while, Eigen:

'felt she was looking even when she was supposed to be unconscious during her seizures. She was mentally alive in the midst of earthquake and paralysis. I saw a devil looking through her eyes, a malevolent core of consciousness at the heart of apparent oblivion. It was a searing look, pure hate, a mocking laser. As I stared more closely, I believed I saw malicious glee and ghastly suffering, but also something regal and haughty, even prankish, as though the devil were sticking out its tongue and saying, "OK – Let's see what you can do"... One day, as Dee started a seizure and flashed her devil look I heard myself scream, "You bitch!" The seizure stopped instantly, and she glowered. From that time on she noticed me more often, and differently. She had to put more effort into blanking me out. Our silences thickened, but her face had more color'.<sup>4</sup>

Once committed to dealing with psyche's extreme negativities of indefinite intensities, the analyst may as well try those other modes of negative capability whereby, without the guarantee as to the outcomes, a negation of negation may provoke a self-negation. This, in turn, may well induce that sort of negativity that punctures or cuts deeply into its root-negativity. And with

it, the process of self-constructive depression and mourning may well inaugurate an individuating spillage of self-recognition and a new potential for self-renewal.

## NOTES

1. In this 'nuclear' determination - the psyche in its un-punctured narcissistic shell - has no sense of itself as being either the foetal flesh or the bones, fluid or compact, or any other mode of quiddity. Concomitantly it can be said to be on the hither and thither side of incarnation; the subject of neither living nor dying because rejecting of both, it is impervious to all facticity. Some more acute conditions of autistic children bring this core-aspect of the psychic being with a heart-rending dramaturgy (e.g., Bettleheim, 1967, the case of Joey, the machine-boy). For the ontological problematics of the concept of the 'psychoid' see Driesch, 1929:221-22; for Jung's take on it, see Jung, 1960:176-77.
2. To quote Giles: 'Both, however, 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... and eventually (with applied understanding) speak and interpret mutatively'.
3. See also Symington, N. (2002), pp.150-58 for related observations.
4. The reader is encouraged to read the rest of this case, Eigen, op. cit. pp. 193-95.

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# THE MAKING OF A REPRESENTATIVE

IDENTIFYING WHAT INFORMS AN AUTHORITY TO SPEAK  
WHEN WORKING WITH COUPLES IN MARITAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

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Those of you who are familiar with Doris Lessing's speculative fiction *Canopus in Argos* series of novels will recognise the source of my working title. I am referring to her book: *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*. It is a striking and insightful piece of writing which I will use in this paper to try and amplify my central theme. Mine will be an argument against the fantasy of 'objective observation'. I will be saying that, as clinicians, whether we are working with individuals, couples, families, or even institutions, our primary therapeutic contributions arise from the practice of allowing ourselves to be conscious of, and use, the way in which we are affected by our clients. Further, that if these contributions are shaped into the form of an interpretation, that interpretation needs to represent what we have seen, felt, experienced and thought with our clients. It is by this means that I will track the way a representative is made.

Jung had this sort of process in mind when he argued that:

'The doctor, by voluntarily taking over the psychic sufferings of the patient, exposes himself to the overpowering contents of the

unconscious and hence also to their inductive action. *An unconscious tie is established.* The patient, by bringing an activated unconscious content to bear upon the doctor, constellates the corresponding unconscious material in him, owing to the inductive effect which always emanates from projections in greater or lesser degree. Doctor and patient thus find themselves in a relationship founded on mutual unconsciousness.’ (Collected Works, Vol. 16, para. 364)  
[Italics added.]

I have included this rather long quote because it is central to my theme. It is from the volume in the Collected Works entitled *The Practice of Psychotherapy*. This ‘practice’ relies on an engagement with the potent unconscious processes that are brought to life in the consulting room. The effects of this unconscious engagement become more apparent, I believe, if we think about what is happening in terms of the therapist being made into, or becoming a representative of the client’s unconscious world. I intend to use Lessing, Jung, and an illustration from some work with a couple, to explore this idea and the questions that arise from it.

In *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*, Lessing, like Jung, is inviting us to think about the unconscious ties between people and things. She sets her story in another world, Planet 8, which, I think, easily translates into the intersubjective unconscious world that Jung describes. Planet 8 was a developing colony, initiated, supported and watched over by people with an almost archetypal ‘higher being’ quality. These beings were from another, other world - Canopus. We don’t hear much of Canopus, except via the visits to Planet 8 made by the Canopean Agents, whose job was to advise, teach, guide and show those on Planet 8 how to get the best from their world.

First, a little about their history. To begin with, Planet 8 was a sort of Eden. It was warm and abundant, allowing its people to live a healthy vegetarian existence. Killing, with all of its social implications, was unthinkable. Rather, the

social order was characterised by a co-operative interdependence, structured around the functions that people fulfilled for one another. Relationships were not based on power and dominance. This did not mean that there was no relationship to authority; rather authority was functionally vested in certain individuals. Primarily, the Canopean Agents carried the most profound investment of authority, but by modelling themselves on how these Agents managed themselves, the peoples of Planet 8 learned to share the various responsibilities required to maintain their communities and way of life.

As readers, we come in at a point in its history when Planet 8 was in deep trouble and undergoing a process of profound environmental change. A cosmic shift had disrupted the planet's orbit such that it was beginning to freeze and, of course, this was having a catastrophic effect on the people. Survival depended increasingly on the functioning of the Representatives.

To flesh this out a bit I will say a little about these Representatives. In Lessing's book they were individuals who took up different roles. Each role had a name and the individual was known by this name. So individual and role were one, and both role and name were transferable between individuals. For example there were the roles of: teacher of children; guardian of the waters; maker and creator of grains and fruit and plants; storyteller; healer, who was also the discoverer of medicines and remedies; and so on. The people who carried these roles emerged seemingly naturally, out of their communities, although Canopus did offer some training and instruction to those who were self-selected. Because the practices informed by this system of Representatives were being sorely tested, we get a thought-provoking glimpse into what it is that really makes a Representative. Hence my interest in Lessing's thinking.

As Planet 8's environment changes, so the roles of the Representatives must also change. Most notably, they were required (by the circumstances) to become much more conscious of what made them, their task, and exactly what it was that they were representing. That is, the freezing was either going

to send them into unconsciousness, or to challenge them to think. At first the people were told by Canopus that they must find ways to adapt for a time, and that another world was being prepared for them; a world to which they would be transported. Consequently, the Representatives initially understood that they were working to facilitate the survival of the people until the next world was ready for re-location. However, it becomes apparent after a time that Canopus was not omnipotent, and that the catastrophic change which had so affected Planet 8 had, in fact, scuttled the 'rescue' plan. The new world was also beginning to wither. Consequently, Planet 8 and its people were destined to freeze to death.

Rather than just give in to this fate and die, Canopus, through their Agents who went to join the people on Planet 8, entreated the Representatives to actively explore the essence of themselves, their pasts and their trying future. This challenge seemed to rest on the view that there was something to know - an essence in themselves and their life which was intangible, but which was available to perception if they could train themselves to pay minute attention to both themselves and their surrounds, so as to detect what it was that 'makes' a person, a relationship, a people, a planet, a world.

The suggestion was that, in this way, Planet 8's people were not necessarily destined to be completely extinguished. The Representatives were called to make the adjustment from being guardians and commentators, to becoming genuine representatives of that *something vital which was intangible*, but which made them unique. It is made clear that this activity was, by its nature, a collective/collaborative task. It required engagement, rather than objective scrutiny. This fact is established through an interesting but vital element in the story.

In the warmer, easier days, Canopus had brought 'an instrument' to Planet 8. We would call it a microscope. Through this instrument, the people were able to see that their seemingly solid, tangible world (including themselves)



was made up of spaces. ‘Immense spaces’, describes Doeg, the first person narrator of the novel, ‘that lie between electron and electron, proton and its attendants, spaces that cannot be filled with nothing, since nothing is nothing’ (p.115).

So what is happening in the space between elements, between objects? Plainly it could not be ‘nothing’. The Representatives found themselves challenged to come to understand that they were striving to become conscious of a complex system of perpetually moving relationship, whether between very small molecular elements or more complex elements, people. Each element intimately connected with the other.

Through a conversation between Johor, the Canopean Agent, and another of the Representatives, I will illustrate Lessing’s portrayal of the impact of this instrument on the people. She, the Representative, was by now constantly cold, hungry, and bitter. (Bitter because of her inability, due to the cold and the inexorably encasing ice, to do her Representative job of caring for the health and wellbeing of the animals.) She had been asked by the Canopean Agent to recall her life and her memories, including the experience of seeing the world from the perspective of the ‘instrument’. She says in response:

“We saw the substance of our bodies, and found that it vanished as we looked, and knew that we were a dance and a dazzle and a continual vibrating movement, a flowing. Knew that we were mostly space, and that when we touched our hands to our faces and felt flesh there, it was an illusion, and that while our hands felt a warm solidity, in reality an illusion was touching another illusion.”  
(p. 124)

She was being taken to the conclusion that nothing is fixed; movement and negotiation describe the norm. With this realisation a new and irresistible consciousness came: that the essence of life is in the interaction between

tangible and intangible elements. Life was constituted with ‘...more space than substance’ (p. 158). The value of this image of ‘space’, which links each element to another, each person to another, each self to another self, is that it provides us with a key to the essence of the making of a Representative. The Representative’s job is to resonate to, to identify with and thereby amplify, what constitutes something that Doeg had confirmed, i.e., that immense spaces cannot be filled with nothing. The obvious and suggested question is: what are they filled with?

Now, you might be wondering how all this relates to a therapist’s clinical practice? I would suggest that these ‘immense spaces’ look, as it were, for representatives to amplify them. As therapists, we are constantly resonating to and negotiating this role. To my mind, this is what Jung was pointing to when he spoke of the mutual unconsciousness that characterises any (effective) therapeutic engagement.

### **THE ‘SPACE’ OF A THERAPEUTIC ENCOUNTER**

I would now like to employ the images that Lessing has given us to argue the value in being mindful of this representative process in order to track the unconscious elements encountered in a clinical practice. I will fill this out with an example from some work with a couple in marital psychotherapy.

My intention is to focus on one element in our work together, so it is really a clinical fragment that I hope will amplify my theme. What I offer here will neither do justice to the complexity of this couple nor the work of many months, and I acknowledge them for giving me permission to use this material. Obviously, I have changed their names and endeavoured to protect their anonymity.

I will call this couple Max and Cheryl. They were in their early 40s when they first came and a cold and frosty emotional tone was certainly palpable between them. At the outset they described their difficulties in terms of three preoccupations: Max's depression, Cheryl's frustration with the infrequency of any meaningful dialogue between them, and the persistence of ongoing, meaningless arguments, which could flare up over the most trivial of matters. In the early consultations, it was plain fairly quickly that over the 17 or so years that they had been together they had both moved into a defensive position with respect to each other. Whilst it was possible for them to engage thoughtfully with me, they tended to keep away from the more tender areas between them, both in the sessions and at home.

### A little history

Max was a middle child from a family of four. He was born and raised outside Australia with most of the family migrating to Australia when he was a young man. Whilst Max conveyed a sense of lots of activities within and around the family, including cousins, aunts and uncles, he also made it clear that scant attention was paid to feelings in his family. The world of his childhood seemed to be very much an outside reality place. The internal world of any individual was experienced as irrelevant and to be avoided. I got the impression Max was open to attachments as a child but, as he grew up, he learned that he had to fend for himself in every way.

This was illustrated by a poignant story from Max's childhood which became a bit of a touchstone in the marital work. His family had sent him and a sibling to his cousin's house during the summer months. This cousin's family lived near the beach so, on the face of it, it was a good arrangement for Max. On one occasion he was at the beach with a group of his cousins, some of whom were younger than Max. Whilst they were in the water playing, one of the younger ones got into difficulties and drowned. This was plainly a shocking event for everyone, but in the turmoil around the accident and the distressed and distressing reaction of the boy's mother, Max was completely forgotten

by his relatives. They all took off to the hospital, leaving him at the beach on his own. Max described wandering around for several hours, afraid he might have been responsible, and not sure how to get home. He finally found his way there, but to add to the impact of all that had happened, it was only when he turned up, that the adults remembered him. He really had fallen out of their minds. This event had the quality of a defining psychological touchstone for Max and thinking about the experience and its consequences has helped us think about the dynamics in their marital relationship. That is, how difficult it is for Cheryl to convince Max that she does hold him in mind, and how difficult it is for Max to allow himself to expect he will be remembered. Consequently, over time, both had difficulties making themselves available to the other.

Cheryl was born and raised in Australia, being a middle child of three. Her relationship with her mother was the most significant within her family, and it was one that became more central later in her life. Cheryl described her early life as one where she was not heard, or was misunderstood fairly regularly, even by her mother. Her father was a loud and dominating figure in the family and he developed the reputation for being bombastic and at times intimidating. Her relationship with her father was, consequently, distant and cautious, although she was aware of some real/hopeful connection between them. Taking a leaf from her father's book, for example, Cheryl had developed her capacity to shout in order to make herself heard. This was only partially effective because she conveyed the sense that she had come to expect she would not be taken seriously. However, when her father lost his temper with her siblings, Cheryl would often try and intervene on their behalf, mostly because she seemed to be more effective than her mother at getting him to back off and calm down. This sense of agency was certainly apparent in our work, but so was the implied disheartening experience of being misunderstood and misrepresented.

When she was a young woman, Cheryl's mother developed cancer. Cheryl conveyed the sense of a deepening attachment which developed between them at that time as she helped her mother battled her illness, and finally engage with her death. Not surprisingly, Cheryl has remained distressed by the painful loss of her mother and this has been very apparent when she speaks of her mother in the sessions. However, she was also mindful of the fact that this experience of a significant connection followed by loss was not just something she encountered with her mother during that illness.

She spoke of this as a repeating experience in her life, both before this painful event and after. She felt familiar with this pattern, and was conscious that it was being reiterated in their marriage. Both of them found it difficult in their day-to-day lives to find ways to consciously modulate the reiterations between them which echoed these earlier life experiences.

### Beginning of their relationship

Max and Cheryl had met whilst Cheryl was planning to go off and see the world. She had been in a relationship that had not worked and had left her feeling very bruised. She was keen to be independent and make her own way in the world. Max, too, had been in a complicated and unworkable relationship before they met but, interestingly, he seemed to feel that the relationship with Cheryl had real promise and he wanted to make a serious connection with her. She openly warned Max she was just interested in having a good time, and that she was about to go overseas. Max sort of went along with this, but whilst Cheryl was away, he wrote her long and frequent letters, confirming his sense that they had a future together and telling her he wanted her to come home. Finally, she did come home and they set up house together. However, in the work that we did, the question of what sort of a 'home' they had set up became significant particularly given the similar patterns, expectations and defences that their different but resonant experiences had informed.

### Unconscious marital fit

Whilst there is much that is different between Max and Cheryl, there was evidence of a strong unconscious marital fit, suggested by the significant stories they told. He expected no one would come to his aid; on the contrary, he had both a fear and an expectation that he would fall out of the mind of anybody to whom he felt attached. It is not difficult to see how the experience around his cousin's drowning established this fear/expectation in his mind. Consequently, Max has lived his life through the assumption that he must rely on himself exclusively (we have an insight here into his depression) and despite feeling his need to depend on Cheryl, this assumption was being played out in the marriage. As I have observed above, it was very difficult for Cheryl to convince Max that she did and wanted to hold him in mind. However, his conscious investment in his relationship with Cheryl was apparent to me, as was his longing for her to confirm that she did really have him in mind.

Cheryl also conveyed her resolute conviction that she must rely exclusively on herself. For her, it was because she felt that she would be left (i.e., the death of her mother) if she let herself become attached. Getting close was more dangerous because of the tenderness and vulnerability that closeness to another would confirm. Both, therefore, had similar guiding assumptions about their relationships; assumptions powerfully confirmed by painful experiences of death in their earlier lives. It is not difficult to imagine the grip that the resultant unconscious expectations had which made both Max and Cheryl conclude that they had to defend themselves against allowing a dependant intimacy between them. This, despite an obvious and still consciously recognisable need for intimacy.

I found myself taking this apparent need for intimacy as evidence of their intense sensitivity to each other, rather than their incompatibility. Whilst I commented on this regularly within the work, and they were usually both welcoming of and thoughtful about this perspective, they treated it very much

as my perspective. This latter element was the first outward indication that we had of my gradually becoming a representative of one element in their relationship, i.e., the intense sensitivity evident in their marital choice of each other.

This gets us to the point we have been heading towards: that is that a therapeutic process amplifies the unconscious use that clients can make of their therapist. For example, the work with Max and Cheryl can be seen as a process whereby they have been gradually making me into a 'representative'. Specifically, a representative of the aspects of their marriage which they kept circling around, but were not able to hold in mind securely and long enough to allay their anxieties about being left or forgotten. I felt that although their shared anxieties plainly provoked many difficulties for them, it did confirm the developmental aspect of their marital choice. They had each married their problem in effect. Thereby, they gave each other an opportunity to work on, not just defend against, the reiteration of their guiding assumptions. These were assumptions that 'insisted' (so to speak) that they should only rely on themselves, because any significant dependence would leave them vulnerable to 'another' painful loss. They kept, figuratively and literally, returning to the conclusion that they should not and had not invested in each other. At least that was the familiar and defensive, shared state of mind in which they lived.

To further illustrate the process whereby Max and Cheryl shaped me into a representative, I will focus on a particular moment in the work. We had over the preceding months, become quite familiar with a reiterating pattern in our interactions. We would engage with the tensions and arguments that they had encountered in the intervening week, with each of them coming to the conclusion that this indicated that their relationship was irretrievable and that it was only the children who kept them living together. Although I could, and did, pay attention to these strong feelings and conflicts, my attention was repeatedly drawn to the specificity of their marital fit (as I have just

described it). I suggested often that they were confirming this fit and that it was an indication of the developmental heart in their choice. They were, as I have mentioned, inclined to welcome this perspective, but again from their subjective vantage point, they were clear that this represented my perspective. My perspective as the developing representative of their relationship. And, for them, it seemed to be a peculiar perspective at that; they often said, warmly, that I was mad. Prominent, from their point of view, was the return to their disappointment with each other and a reliance on a warring that had, as its purpose, the protection of them as individuals. However, from the perspective that I am pursuing, I took the genuine warmth they conveyed, as they called me mad, as an active (if unconscious) effort to ensure the warmth in their marriage found a representative in our work.

On one particular occasion near the end of one session, I was again going to remind them of the evidence which I said confirmed their marital choice, and which I thought was being made apparent in their interaction. Before I said this, I prefaced it with a “I know you think I am mad saying this”, sort of statement. Max interrupted me saying stridently: “Even you have been contaminated by the stuff between us; now you are qualifying what you are about to say, before it even gets out of your mouth!”. He was right! I had been vaguely aware of doing this as the work progressed, but he was bringing it very much into focus. I agreed with him, saying that I thought that through the work we were doing, I had become ‘contaminated’, although I said I preferred to think of it as my being made into a representative of that aspect of their marriage which they had the most difficulty recognising. Namely, that theirs was, and continues to be, a meaningful marital choice, specifically because of the shared ‘stuff’ - this primarily being problems with consciously allowing their dependence on each other. It was certainly not that they were NOT dependent. They just couldn’t bring themselves to acknowledge it because the stakes were too high. Deep down (as it were), both feared but expected abandonment and loss.



This is the sort of experience which helped to make me into a representative of their relationship, and thereby gave what I tried to represent or interpret a different ‘authority’. It was possible then to say that the tensions in the spaces between them were not shit (as they often said), nor, in Lessing’s language ‘nothing’, rather these tensions were intangible evidence of the attachment they had to each other and the ‘contaminating’ fear of loss they faced.

They could now begin to acknowledge and think about the developmental nature of their relationship precisely because of the unconsciously shared quality of this tension. Both began to respond in a palpably different way, in this session and in subsequent interactions. Cheryl reflected on her sense of their need to protect themselves and to prevent any experience of being ‘touched’ (emotionally) by each other. Max experimented (to their shared mirth) with being more direct with his affection. The emotional tone of these discussions was different: more experimental; more playful; more risky and sometimes openly so. Of course, their self-protective defensiveness also continued to be apparent, and their oscillation between a palpable warmth and an often desperate survival-oriented ‘qualifying’ continued.

Working off Lessing’s imagery, this marital work seems to confirm the value of thinking in terms of making oneself, as therapist, available to be ‘contaminated’, as Max called it. To be made, that is, into a representative of what was unconscious in the couple. For Max and Cheryl this meant that they could use the therapy to become conscious of the fact that their belief that there was ‘nothing’ in the ‘immense spaces’ between them was actually not nothing. Rather it was anxiety and powerful, very difficult anxiety at that, to do with loss, annihilation, and death. As Lessing’s character, ‘Doeg’, reminded us, there can not be ‘nothing’.

In summary, what might it be that Max and Cheryl needed to see, via the representations we made in the marital work? I would suggest it was that the essence of their marital choice rested on a shared fantasy about having to be

self-reliant; that in choosing a partner with a known fantasy, they created in their relationship the possibility of being understood by the other, rather than inexorably being forgotten, misrepresented, and thereby reconfirming their conviction that defending their separate individuality was the only way to live. So much was lost in their living in this way, and that had literally been depressing for them.

I'll end, by saying how Lessing ends her story. All the surviving Representatives, with the remaining Canopean Agent, end up huddling together as they and the Planet finally freeze to death. They look into each other's eyes, engage as they die and, as they do so, they see their collective essence released from what we might call their shared 'spaces'. One vital point, from the perspective of this paper, is that it is finally made clear that the Canopean Agent is also a Representative himself. He was the Representative called the 'traveller'. So, in the final analysis, the individual most closely associated with objective observation is revealed to be a participant. In this we have a moral for any therapeutic practice: eventually it will be revealed that therapists are participants, not observers.

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## *Response*

to Peter Fullerton

### *The Making of a Representative*

*Identifying what informs an authority to speak when  
working with couples in marital psychotherapy*

**DAVID RUSSELL**

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In that very particular vehicle of the ‘analytical hour’ we travel with Peter Fullerton to the metaphorical space where unconscious material is constellated; a space that brings forth a *relationship* of mutual unconsciousness.

Peter helps us to get a handle on this double un-knowing by reference to Doris Lessing’s fantastical images of Paradise and Paradise Lost: that eternal human drama of pre-consciousness depicted as an Eden-like geography and demography, contrasted with the arrival of consciousness and the accompanying dramatic pains and subtle joys of shouldering the responsibility for our knowing and acting.

The move is a good one! How else could we gain images of *not knowing* except through building a bridge, a metaphor, between a description of a known world (even one that is fictional) and the unknown and unknowable world of the unconscious?

My own interest was aroused by the role of she-who-is-handmaiden or, he-who-is-skilled-at-human husbandry, the one who encourages the entry into

this space of the double unknowing and the mutual unknowable - as we slouch towards our Bethlehem.

It is this skilful role, as I understand it, which gives 'an authority to speak' as in the title of Peter's paper.

Analyst and analysands tie an unconscious knot and, in my looking into this space, I imagine it to be a knot of *not* knowing: an actual negation of thing-ness!

I am drawn to how real this knot of unconscious material is for Peter. How the experiential rupture is held as a fertile wound, a meeting of wounds (Max's, Cheryl's and Peter's): a mutuality of experience for which Peter, as therapist, becomes a representative.

It is a reality shaped of desire, loss, and longing. No wonder it is 'the aspect of their marriage which they had most difficulty recognising'.

And, as Peter says, in this work the therapist invites 'contamination' - physician, take your own medicine!

The rupture to understanding is shared by all and on all fronts - the absence of objective thing-ness, of objective understanding, remains to the bitter end. The driving emotion that seems to shape the analytical hour is experienced, to the end, as *bittersweet*: the analyst is always a full participant!

Lessing's display of an archetypal drama, a drama that skilfully questions the taken-for-granted nature of a fixed reality, suggests that survival, or 'transcendence' if you prefer, is more in evidence as an ambivalent display of the dialectic of desire, more a story of conflict between desire and reality, than the surface dynamics that immediately meet the therapeutic eye.



# BETWEEN YOU AND ME

## REACHING FOR UNDERSTANDING IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

**LESLIE DEVEREAUX**

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Nearly forty years ago I trained in a department then called Social Relations, which combined psychology, sociology and anthropology. I still feel blessed to have been able to study across disciplinary boundaries and to have had years to read among their common philosophical sources – Marx, Weber, Durkheim, William James. Even while still an undergraduate I was able to begin fieldwork in a Mayan village, the start of eight years there, all up so far. So, when in graduate school, I also had time to study the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz and the psychological phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, I finally found thoughts that resonated with my personal experience of encountering radically different others - in their terms, in their world which for them was the taken for granted arena of human existence.

The phenomenological attitude also gave me a way of thinking about the intense, detailed, wholly experiential practice of fieldwork. Fieldwork research, itself definitely an initiation, confronts our own sense of secure belonging in a knowable and meaningful life world. And most ethnographic accounts up to those times were written in language that bleached personal experience from the text. This discursive form reaches for the voice of objectivity, in line with the heroic attitude requisite in the English language sciences of discovery, whether in laboratory or in jungle.

And it was/is also in line with the universalising discourse of the non-personal knower: there is no experiencing 'me', no 'I' except the conventionally depersonalised (and, I might say, superior), objective knower. Subjective personal experience has no voice here.

So what a relief it was to find a philosophical attitude to knowing that grounded itself in experience, and investigated its conditions! - that took advantage of Kant's realisation that however wondrous human conscious is, and it is, it is nonetheless housed in bodies and sense organs and an embodied mind that gives it access to the world. No body: no mind. No embodied mind: no knowing. How humiliating is that to the project of limitless rationality hoping to become God?

If we begin with a sense that our knowing is grounded in experience, the experience of a particular subjective awareness, shaped by language, filtered by cultural selection of what matters, situated in a complex vantage point, always engaged in inter-subjective moments which flow into our Jamesian stream of inner consciousness then we can relax into the fact that human experience is the centre of all our knowing, though not by any means the sum of it.

We are continually subjects of our experience, imbedded in our lifeworld, and, like most human beings, we take the meanings in that lifeworld as given, as self-evident, and, often even universal. The practice of anthropology takes careful note of this at a collective level, and to do this, though not many anthropologists would express it this way, we must deliberately suspend our belief in the world as we naively take it to be. *Fundamentally, if we apprehend the world through the lens of what we already know, we cannot see what is there in its own terms.* To suspend this normalising belief in the world as we already expect it to be is called the 'phenomenological epoche', and it is quite different from cultural relativism. The phenomenological attitude regards the elemental apprehension of what it means to exist in a pre-existent world as the basic project of human consciousness. Anthropology helps us realise just how

radically the many human lifeworlds can differ, even while many essentials of humanness do not.

Analysis, when it is well done, carries out this same project in a similar way, attending in detail to what is, moment by moment, through conversation at all levels - suspending belief in the world by forbearing to already know what the analysand means, or takes us to mean or to be. Using the experiencing self of the analyst to perceive afresh, and thus possibly learn something about this complete and radically different lifeworld sitting in the chair opposite.

The subjective, the experiential, in academic discourse is often suspect because it lies in the realm of the small, the daily, the personal, the 'just me', while our intellectual attention is directed toward the conceptual, which we imagine is the collective. Anthropology, as well as analysis, knows that people do not actually live in the conceptual, but in the daily, the totally contingent. But we think, we assess and we evaluate ourselves against the conceptual. This is in every human being an ongoing preoccupation.

The conceptual forms the realm of rules, of what can be said; the subjective often sits quietly, unsaid, often unsayable. But as we know in analysis, the subjective, as it slowly moves toward formulation, through dream, through association, gradually becomes articulable in some way.

So subjectivity raises, inevitably its companion 'objectivity', a hierarchical pair, as Levi-Strauss would tell us. Subject and object, companion standpoints of consciousness, are not, in intellectual discourse, on level ground: objectivity belongs to a knowing mind with claims to authority which subjectivity cannot match: the subjective is the personal, the private, the unauthorised, the subversive.

So I speak today as just myself, someone with continuing deep interest in our topic but with no special rigour or expertise. What I can offer are just



some of the thoughts and experiences that have stuck to this question in the meanderings of my life.

Let's start with some words from a legendary meanderer, the Haiku master Basho who wrote the wonderful book *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* about the journey he undertook when he felt he was soon to die.

*Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine, or, to the bamboo if you want to learn about the bamboo. And in doing so you must leave your subjective preoccupation with yourself. Otherwise you impose yourself on the object, and do not learn.<sup>1</sup>*

Basho directly speaks here not only to the gardener or botanist, but to the modern student of psychology, social work and, indeed, anthropology. Go to the other. Leave your preoccupation with yourself. Do not impose your subjectivity on the object - thus you may learn. Of course, in Basho's meditative tradition these significant injunctions can only be understood as coming after an earlier, more primary injunction, akin to Socrates': know thyself. Without a rigorous self-knowledge how can we possibly know what to leave behind as our preoccupation with ourselves? How do we discover the obstacles in ourselves to the possibility of learning about what is other, or not-self. How do we 'Go to the pine, or to the bamboo'? How do we encounter the other?

This is all the more poignant when the other is another self, like, and unlike, me. I might add to Basho's suggestions: leave, but do not forget, your subjective preoccupation. Both social research and analysis require a double consciousness – our own meaning, the other's meaning, held together. In both anthropology and analysis our self, our subjectivity is our instrument. The task, then, of knowing in order to understand something in both domains is triple. The three elements could perhaps be posed this way: (1) to be aware of our experiencing self; (2) to bracket this experience – hold it for the moment to one side, as it were; (3) to open the experiencing self to the other in order

to receive what emanations – thoughts, feelings, unconscious happenings, bodily signals – come to the self.

Of course, there is a fourth element, the digesting, differentiating, re-combining, thinking and feeling that may, ultimately, make useful sense of the encounter of self with other.

Dogen Kigen, another wonderful old phenomenologist, and bringer of Zen to Japan in the thirteenth century, puts it this way:

*To study the way is to study the self;*

*To study the self is to forget the self;*

*To forget the self is to become altogether intimate with the ten thousand things.<sup>2</sup>*

What I've just laid out for some kinds of anthropology and for analysis is quite different from the radical objectivism necessary to certain forms of science. That objectivism requires, prescribes, a radical separation of the knower from the known, of mind from its object.

One of our great sociological thinkers of the nineteenth century, Max Weber, presaged the epistemological complexities of this issue when he contrasted the sciences of matter with the human sciences. The great positivist virtue of material science, he pointed out, lay in the investigator's capacity to suspend identification with the object of study – to know, as it were, nothing of the object while observing it. This is, indeed, the heart of objectivity: withdrawing all human desire for the world to be as one imagines or wishes it to be. Thus, we observe, record data, and make inferences from data hopefully uncontaminated by desire. All scientists know how difficult and dodgy this is to maintain: but procedures of replicability and peer review have been put in place to help to hold desire in check and to back up experiment and observation with the intending rigour of other minds.

Max Weber chose to propose an exception to this canon of scientific objectivism. He asked: Why, when the object of our study is a human being like ourselves, would we forego the insight which our common nature affords us? Thus he proposed a social science that might make use of the investigator's special likeness to, and therefore potential psychological access to, something of the mind of the object of investigation. This thought profoundly implied, therefore, that the *object* of investigation was/is also a *subject* – a subject of his/her own consciousness.

The potential pitfalls in this as a research paradigm are immediately obvious – identification, assumptions unnoticed, logical fallacies. And, at the same time, the possibilities are also clear – the entry into meaning-making as primary human activity; awareness of contingent factors which impinge in similar ways upon human subjects; shared language, even via translation.

Empirical psychology has chosen the positivist route, taking the 'subject' of experiment or investigation as an 'object' – a 'not-me'. Analysis has chosen Weber's route, which he termed "verstehen sociologie" – understanding; making use in certain ways of the fact of our likeness, which is denied the investigator of the molecular structure of say, copper alloys.

Verstehen sociologie, since Weber's time mid-nineteenth century, has been a fertile source of theory. Weber's own analysis of bureaucracy remains unsurpassed; current papers on governmental and managerial dynamics in modern schools of business may ignore their ancient forbear, but cannot gainsay him: his thought is the ground they stand upon. This is because, as Weber demonstrated, we know something of what it is to be human, and to draw on this, especially in light of a rigorous self-knowledge, can hold great value in our effort to make sense of other humans, and human practices and institutions of society.

However, as both Marx and Emile Durkheim, Weber's contemporaries and the other two luminaries of nineteenth century thought, were also making clear, positioning within any given human meaning system strongly shapes what it is easy to think, and what will be given to us to feel - by class, by culture, by language and by the way human groupings make specific meanings of things, despite our common human potential for both thought and feeling. So our nineteenth century thinkers about the nature of society delineated for us both the potential for empathy and common understanding, as well as the limits to these, routinely imposed by the way our position, our experiences, our vistas and blinkers shape our view of the world and of ourselves.

These socio-philosophical matters weighed upon me as a young woman, one foot in the upper class, one in bohemia, living with an itinerant mother on the smell of an oily rag and bravado, in love with life and scared to death. It was, perhaps, living between worlds, my fate to take up anthropology, to try myself in other peoples' worlds, frightened, self-conscious, struggling for a semblance of competence when often my rudimentary language of Tzotzil, or Guugu Yimidhirr made me fit company only for four-year-old children.

It was fascinating, and desperate. I disclose these uncomfortable personal matters in order to delineate the grounds for the kind of anthropology I undertook, something I can see was the same ground that carried me forward into the analytic profession. Objectively, or intellectually, I can make a case for the continuity and common wellspring of these two undertakings: anthropology and analysis. And I'm bolstered in this by my colleagues here today with similar overlaps. Still, I take it as my task today to say something philosophically coherent about these things. If they make some sense in a life - my life - this could be entirely idiosyncratic. But more likely, the sense they have and do make in my life could suggest something about a sense they make together, a sense that links the clinical to the anthropological, even though these practices are held institutionally in quite differing discourses, and are accountable in quite different ways.

This has been a rather long preamble, trying to say something about the philosophical orientation that informed my research and my way of understanding clinical work, just to give us all a common referential ground.

Now I want to describe or convey something from my life in anthropology that carries for me the clarity and conundrum about subjectivity (and objectivity) and might mark the place where I have found myself in the academic context over the last decades. After that I'd like to say something about a clinical encounter that resonates with my thoughts about subjectivity, in clinical, anthropological and philosophical inquiry, even while they occur in quite different registers.

### **WORK IN THE FIELD: NABENCHAUK**

First, a vignette from my many years in Nabenchauk, a village in the municipality of Zinacantan, in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. I first went there aged nineteen, in the early years of a twenty-five year ethnographic undertaking called the Harvard Chiapas project. From the recently prior presence of linguists and archaeologists the role of inquirer was sort of known; a masculine role. Before me two women had taken up this role with some success, but also at personal cost, as they were honorary males, but not women, and it gave them no comfortable place in the Zinacantec world – no hostility, simply no recognition.

I chose another way, for lack of courage, I think, and for lack of loyalty to objectivist science. I chose to apprentice myself as a Zinacantec woman: drawer of water, hewer of wood, baker of tortillas, grinder of corn dough, spinner of wool, tender of sheep, weaver of clothes, bags and bedding, washer of clothes, bags and bedding, raiser of chooks and turkeys, and over the years carrier of my babies in snug slings on my back. I worked hard to shorten my steps to be more sure-footed on the steep pathways, and learned how to make

my long folded skirt snap deliciously as young women could do; to sit with my legs tucked and my feet cradling my bum; to stand in a single graceful rising from this posture. I learned to express shock at local transgressions, how to exclaim in feminine tones, how to keep quiet, when to cover my head, or my mouth.

All these tasks, skills, ordinary movements and activities have a style and a manner of accomplishment that carries grace. I took months to learn to carry my water jar on a tumpline without sloshing telltale splotches down the back of my skirt, even though I made eight trips every day. How to bake an acceptable – even excellent - tortilla and with grace (not burning my fingers, draping the thin crumbly dough with an easeful sweep over the fire, turning them so that in the end they puffed satisfyingly and didn't have to be put aside for the dogs) became my particular obsession. When, after maybe five years my compadre Petul asked me to help make tortillas for his senior ritual obligations at the fiesta of San Sebastian I was in bliss, and puffed with pride throughout the five days. I could happily have it as my epitaph.

Why does this matter? Because sensuous meaningful experience is an embodied life, and the embodiment carries an infinitude of meanings that constitute personhood, and intersubjective encounters of social recognition.

My first really useful skill, of spinning wool, I learned from Me7 Mal, then in her eighties and nearly blind. She and I sat together over a thousand hours in our courtyard, spinning wool, telling stories, snoozing, remembering. Slowly I learned to spin it strong and fine enough to be warp thread, and though I had earlier woven a few small hapless cotton bags, dying and weaving my wool into a proper belt was another stage in becoming a Zinacantec woman.

Her belt is the piece of a Zinacantec woman's clothing that is most emblematic of femininity. She wears it throughout her life cinched very tightly around her middle. The belt holds her skirt smoothed closely across her body, delin-

eating her hips. Because of the way her tubular skirt folds over the top of it, the belt itself is virtually invisible when she is wearing it. Its breadth supports her back and stomach when she carries heavy loads.

She hangs it over the rafters to support her weight when she kneels in the labour of childbirth. She loosens her belt at night for sleep, but only unties it fully when she changes her skirt. Women in Zinacantan are almost never fully unclothed.

As soon as an infant girl is born she is wrapped in a skirt-like cloth for a nappy, which is cinched in place with a miniature belt identical to her mother's and sisters. She will wear a woollen belt tight around her waist for the rest of her life. I struggled to cinch my belt as tightly as both custom and utility required. More than once one or another of my babies, stretching their legs in their sling on my back, pushed the back of my skirt out from under my belt, occasioning extraordinary measures from my family to cluster around me, hiding my chagrin, until I got home!

But I spun the wool of my belt in our family courtyard; my sisters helped me dye the green from local plants, and accompanied me to town to buy the imported chemical red dye from Guatemala. They helped me judge the length, helped me warp up the pattern, and soothed my frustrations when my inept sawing motion on my backstrap loom made the fibres pill up and clog the weaving.

So when I remember, or look at my first belt it is replete with the sense experiences of all that is part of it, and all that surrounds it: the smell of wood smoke from the household fires, the ruckus of turkeys and baaing lambs, voices carrying up the mountain slope from neighbours' courtyards, truck horns and scratchy cantina music. The feel of dawn frost under my bare foot.

Without the frost under my foot, the grassy patches between forest and cornfield would not be good pasturage for sheep. Without the baaing of the lambs, the wool in the belt would be gone. Without the truck horns the colourfast red dye from German companies in Guatemala would have to come by mule train, and be more costly. Without the wood smoke from the disappearing oak forests, how would the weaver cook her corn into tortillas? So it is clear that my belt is made of an infinitude of non-belt elements. It has no separate existence from this web of non-belt elements.

Similarly, it expands into a web of non-belt meanings as it takes its place wrapped tightly around a woman's waist, where belts have always held her fast throughout her life, loosened only in her most private moments. In fact this belt is even present in its absence.

In 1974, Me7 Mal, my oldest daughter's godmother, who taught me to spin, needed to have the cataracts that were blinding her removed at a clinic in the state capital. I accompanied her both as attendant and as translator. There, as I helped her bathe before putting on her skimpy surgical gown, I learned that the flesh of Mal's waist was permanently indented half an inch deep, the width of her belt, all the way around. For me, as I washed her and felt that indentation, the presence of that belt in its absence was profound. But for Mal, the absence of that belt at her waist was deeply felt throughout her stay in the clinic, a part of her estrangement, her weakness, her aloneness among strangers, a lack of support, her body unwrapped, loose and vulnerable.

We live at all times in embedded, contingent ways in our minds and in our physicality. The interactions of our life worlds continuously tweak strands in the web that resonate through nodes and intersections through conditions of geopolitical capital that lie beyond the horizon of direct experience and impinge in constitutive ways on the lifeworld. So we have both the specificity and the embeddedness, the node and the web, the thing and the relatedness.



And we have somehow, in order to live and to understand living, to keep both these aspects in view.

How do we help, as anthropologists and as analysts, in the project of validating the plurality of human experience without imposing false separation? How do we keep human understanding open to the possibility of radical difference while tracing out the connections which hold us all in a single woven world?

The self and the other are ideas inseparable from each other. When we encounter the other we are inclined to project onto it those aspects of ourselves that we cannot own or even acknowledge – we make our most elementally frightening desires into the desires of the other. And so the encounter with the other is also the encounter with the self, and to know amid this projection and difference, what is what is perhaps the heart of human difficulty.

Objectivism – the act of the radical separation of the knower from the known, of mind from its object – expunges the self from the scene of encounter and impedes the possibility of distinguishing the self-ness of the ‘other’ from our projection. Only the self-knowing self can withdraw its projections and leave the other free. Self-knowing, which is the condition for truly meeting the other, is not an achievable state, but a process within the acts of knowing, perceiving, receiving - a process that accomplishes itself through encounter with the other. Analysis and anthropology begin with that attitude of openness to self within the conditions of encounter.

We all suffer, in the academy and in training institutes, from the consequences of literacy. Conversation in the academy is mostly contention, and descends institutionally from practices of male ceremonial combat, which does not go on in the courtyard while spinning wool, but in special arenas and lecture halls. And just as today we have the awkwardness of moving into conversation from read monologues like mine, so does our Western thought tradition have

to recover something of the flow and mutuality of conversation from the fixed and impersonal language of written discourse. Literacy allowed a speaker to speak, as it were, to someone distant in both space and time. It was and is a wondrous thing, but not without its consequences for relationship.<sup>3</sup>

Literacy is a process whereby the thinker becomes aware of his own thought as an entity, as an abstraction. Writing fixes the idea, transforming the evanescent world of sound to the quiescent, semi-permanent world of space. It allows analysis to free itself from context and to develop generalising and universalising tendencies. And print, far more than mere writing, completes the separation of the knower from the known. Printed text creates finality and closure, and presents thought as a commodity in the manufacture and discursive shaping of the text, and in conventions of form. Thus the lifeworld has lost its place in the academy to analytical abstraction. Outside the academy, and in the analytic encounter, we can stick closer to experience.

As all young returning fieldworkers know, in the academy we tend to view human culture as something thought, rather than felt, embodied and experienced. Trying to render their own highly felt experiences into a thesis confronts them with this, painfully and maddeningly. Anthropology has found it difficult to acknowledge that culture is as inscribed in ordinary glance and gesture as it is in spectacle and performance. Cultural meaning is theorised as if suspended between minds, referred to and enacted, rather than renewed and modified with each encounter as it reciprocally modifies each consciousness. This is the work of resorting too quickly to abstraction in search of generalisation rather than sticking close to experience. This is not the same as empiricism; it requires looking closely at one's own experience, even while having it, looking at the process of engaging with social reality, with the uncomfortable and unknowability of the other.

So social science tends to stay with the realm of public behaviour and events. The 'private' is the realm of the idiosyncratic, the disordered, the unaccount-

able and the inexplicable. This brings us to the practice of analysis, where we have the possibility of sticking very minutely to experience and contemplating the very private together, and together, coming to make something of it, find its order, as it were.

### WORK IN THE CONSULTING ROOM: PAUL

Now I want to offer some clinical material from some very long and detailed work with a young man suffering a terrifying narcissistic uncertainty about being-in-the-world and the radical impossibility of a two-person relationship. I will track aspects of our clinical work through some of the images that arose in my patient, in me and between us that carried us into the beginnings of a real relationship. What became possible for my patient was to begin to experience himself as a subject and me as a subject at the same time.

This work resonates profoundly with my anthropological experience on many levels. The most obvious, but no less profound for all that, is the work that it takes to open to an encounter with a radically different meaning world, whether that encounter takes place in an exotic geographic location and radically unknown language, or whether it occurs in one's own rooms with a recognisable young person apparently speaking the same language as I do.

It also resonates in the way that both he and I, differently motivated and in different ways both conscious and unconscious, grope toward the other in search of understanding and of being understood. The clinical encounter replicates all the power-laden aspects of the ethnographic encounter, as the jostle between private or sub-cultural meaning worlds and conventionally empowered meaning worlds continually upends itself, with now one, now the other driving the moment. And it turns, like good ethnographic collaboration, on achieving some meta-sense of the relational dynamics that we – both

as singular, groping minds, and as a couple-like unity of ‘we-ness’ – must go through, as humans making something of our meeting.

As I speak of this work I will juxtapose some of its vignettes with the poetry and letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, whose psychic dilemmas were similar to both my patient’s and, in the narcissistic insecurity of my young ethnographic life, my own. Rilke, I feel, worked through some of his dilemmas by means of his artistic relationships both to the artists he sought out as persons and to their art as their personal explorations of being. Both he and his biographers clearly saw these periods of Rilke’s life as conscious apprenticeships in how to live. This is not unlike my own efforts to understand and to discover something of how to embody myself as a Zinacantec woman. Nor is it unlike the questing and partly mimetic journey my patient Paul took with me to find some way to be himself in the company of another self.

Rilke the child was pathologically accommodated to a narcissistic mother; as a young man he spent years of alienation at a military academy, and as a young precocious poet at age 26 wrote a famous series of mentoring letters to a young man at that same academy, advising him on the path to total devotion to the sensibilities of his art.

My patient Paul came to me as a young man of 24 feeling painfully inadequate and unsure. He also had experienced an acid trip in which he felt a profound, seamless unity with the world. He was confused, now experiencing a self-conscious, agonised state of feeling damaged and worm-like, and also experiencing a state of mind in which all other beings were beneath contempt, and he was, possibly King of the World. What, or whose world did he live in, and how could he know?

He wanted help, and to get it from me he pulled his chair up knee-to-knee with me, spoke in a monologue, and in each session asked me, ‘What do you think of that?’, and immediately held up his hand to hush me, and said,

‘Don’t answer that’. Any of me in the room except the receptive me was potentially annihilating.

This young man Paul lived by rules of extreme eco-purity and self-denial, seeking a perfection of being that might hold him above contempt and keep the world turning on its precarious axis. Each time he felt understood by me, he warded off this contact by questioning my competence and value.

Rilke, too, pursued his art with ascetic purity, abstaining from wine, removing himself from the contaminating influences of ordinary embodied life, eventually living apart from his sculptor wife Clara Westhof and their small daughter. But, like my patient Paul, his sensibilities were acute, his intelligence extremely fine. Work, for Rilke, was the work of art. The slog of providing a roof and a meal for himself assaulted his sense of entitlement and threw him into despair.

Likewise, Paul abjured physical effort that he feared would damage his body. For a time his preferred posture was lying with his head on the compliant lap of his girlfriend. And yet, somewhere within himself he knew that this was deathly, and far from manifesting the seamless sense of being at home in the world which his acid trip had shown him. He needed his girlfriend and her selfless compliance, and therefore he held her in contempt. As he came to need me, contempt jostled with hope that he could make use of me in a way that would open a pathway out of this unfree state.

Attunement is not compliance. For years, what was needed was my quiet effort to get what he was experiencing, to notice the subtle beginnings of despair or contempt, and yet to inject nothing of me that would, in its difference from him, threaten this porous self with shame. At the same time he needed to know that my mind was robust, independent and not compliant.

Like Rilke, Paul's sensibilities missed nothing, felt everything and managed the world by a moralism designed to make as little impact on the universe as possible, and to hold himself safe from its influence on him as well.

At the same time Paul, like Rilke, took as his entitlement being supported by his girlfriend's parents. He felt diminished when he had to have truck with the muck of the world; he tried by his un-related and ghost-like perfections to show God his worthiness of being housed and fed, which for a long time he could not really acknowledge to the people who actually saw to it.

So for Paul to reach a place where he could take from the world what he needs, and to take it knowingly, and even to savour and enjoy what he takes, has been quite an achievement – to find and to own his own necessary aggression, his appetite, his gusto.

Gusto has to do with our capacity to bite into life and to savour it. It is an ordinary word that helps to evoke the sense of ordinary, human animal exuberance which I want to place at the centre, in order to reflect upon the constraints on appetite and gusto that were made by Paul's depressive narcissism and obsession.

Animal gusto is carefully shaped in all human cultures and it is what we customarily regard as civilization's hallmark to constrain. And yet, as Freud demonstrated so disconcertingly for the twentieth century, an excess of constraint extinguishes the value of a personal existence. Life lacking in gusto is a chore.

Gusto, with its sense of appetite and bite, points to the way in which life makes use of the world for its own temporary purposes: plants thrive as their roots suck up nutrient elements from the soil, molluscs drill holes in the shells of other molluscs and suck out their contents, baby mammals suck milk from the teats of their mothers, humans pluck and hunt and husband other life

forms, and we burrow, build and borrow bits of the world to do things with. Gusto is a quality of our being in the world, of our encounters with external reality, with the other. It has to do with the use we make of the not-me and with our ability to survive being made use of, and contemplating it will take us into elements of ordinary creativity.

Here is a description of gusto all but extinguished by depression. It comes from a letter from Rilke to Lou Andreas Salome, while he was in Paris in 1902, living alone, walking the streets, trying to find his art:

*...and what people I met almost every day! ...At most one took them in as an impression and looked at them with calm detached curiosity like a new kind of animal in whom want had developed special organs, organs of hunger and death. ... They were holding out under the foot of each day that trod on them, like tough beetles, were enduring as if they still had to wait for something, twitching like bits of a big, chopped up fish that is already rotting but still alive.<sup>4</sup>*

That feeling inside of the enormous purposelessness of existence, that finds outside in the world nothing but decay, senseless poverty, pain, want, a kind of useless un-animation. This is the sort of experience of the world Paul also felt much of the time. 'It's shit; they're all shit. They live in shit and don't even know it!' he would cry, of the dullards who drive their cars and attend their jobs, of the druggy and contaminating gothics who rode the bus with him. These times for Paul were full of contempt for the world, a hotter feeling perhaps than Rilke's, but they led him into rigid, hollow despair in which no one had anything to offer, and death was the only inviting condition in which he could preserve his valued parts.

In 1902 Rilke sought out Auguste Rodin, asking him poignantly, desperately, 'How do we live?'. And Rodin had replied, 'By work', and sent him to the

Botanic Gardens every day to put himself in touch with the natural world. Here is one telling poem that emerged from this period:

*THE PANTHER*

*In the Jardin des Plantes, Paris*

*His vision, from the constantly passing bars,  
Has grown so weary that it cannot hold  
Anything else. It seems to him there are  
A thousand bars, and behind the bars, no world.*

*As he paces in cramped circles, over and over,  
The movement of his soft powerful strides  
Is like a ritual dance around a centre  
In which a mighty will stands paralysed.*

*Only at times, the curtain of the pupils  
Lifts, quietly – an image enters in,  
Rushes down through the tense, arrested muscles,  
Plunges into the heart, and is gone.*

Here, surely, is an image of the power of being, constrained, pacing, a caged being whose strides must repeat cramped circles. And Rilke goes further, imagining the impact on the creature's will which is paralysed. Not imprisoned, but paralysed by its imprisonment. The outer bars have become inner bars, rendering the mind's eye too weary to hold an image. Imagination foreclosed.

Here we have a picture of what is alive in us unable, or almost unable, to tolerate hope. There is no possibility of anyone offering anything; the world is sadistic. And, though Rilke may not intend it, we can look at the panther – that beautiful black beast full of its power and its bodily urges to stalk, to



lunge, to sink its snout in the hot blood of the deer – as also an image of libidinal urge turned sadistic, hate-filled. The *wild* panther, in its forest and free, is not an image of the sadistic, but of the creative, which includes the capacity for aggression, biting into life. It hunts only when hungry, and freely, with work, makes use of its environment to feed its energies when feeding is necessary. When it is not hungry the panther looks down on its prey species with benign disinterest. But *caged* these potential energies have another quality altogether, both ethologically and in our imaginative thoughts about it. Caged panthers hate, through the bars of their captivity, and they give up. Their disinterest is not benign but malign, extinguishing, deadening the world.

Let us juxtapose this with Paul's state of mind, when he had fallen fully into a state of rigid, obsessional thinking, fending off the possibility of I – Thou relatedness by an intricacy of thought that bound him in such painful anxiety that he had not been able to leave his flat for months.

Paul had rung for our session in a very distressed state. His bowl of organic fruit had begun to attract fruit flies. Paul worried intensely that these fruit flies might distract the driver of a vehicle passing by, dazzle someone and cause an accident. Paul felt his fault was in letting the fruit ripen to this point. A plastic bag would be un-ecological. He hoped, wanly, that having made a compost area he might be relieved of the responsibility which having the fruit in his flat had made for him.

He is exhausted from living with such minute attention. He obeyed the letter of every law to avoid dangerous catastrophes that a moment's unrighteous carelessness or an ungoverned urge might rain down upon the world, denying Paul access to heaven. The panther in him, hungry, constrained, paced in his flat behind his bars – hateful, lonely, contemptuous, almost without imagination, in despair.

What he thought was the panther in himself at that time was held in the grandiose image of his only experience of feeling at home in the world, and his only mediating image of a masculine differentiated self. It is a two-fold image we called King of The World.

In our first session he described his conversations with his mother by holding one arm wide out, holding an imaginary telephone, his head bent away from it trying not to hear.

Some time later he told me of his acid trip experience two years previously, when he had felt for the first time that he absolutely understood that everything was OK. He often wondered if this experience was unique, that he might be 'king of the world'. As he said this he made a gesture with both arms outstretched at his sides, his head flopped to one side. I intuited that this was Christ on the cross. He nodded.

I said that it reminded me of his telephone conversation with his mother, and he nodded again, arms still outstretched, and said, 'Yeah...suffering'.

Paul was not enlivened by this exchange, but cast into a pensive silence. When I wondered what had just happened he did not want to say. The next session he told me that he had felt bad when I said that, as if he were a damaged person needing therapy. Later he turned this into a sadistic joke, by saying in broad mimicry of a cartoon therapist, 'That reminds me, Dr Devereaux....' and laughed caustically.

Nonetheless these two images became elements of our vocabulary that Paul used over the years to refer us to the complex quality of a moment of righteous suffering endured. It gave me a potent sense of the dangers of intimacy for Paul, and of the rather desolate hopes he held for communication, let alone dependency. It was his experience of being nailed to the tree of life, and of being crucified on the mental body of mother, which needed to be held in

mind as I sat, Madonna-like, providing an undemanding mental lap. As we went on together, as Paul began to hope for something from our connection, the more potentially impinging and disappointing I became. 'Don't speak!', he implored me, lest I destroy his idealisation; the particular, the actual was too incarnate to yet be borne.

Now let us pair this with another image from Rilke, which articulates a similar unbearableness of the other in an exalted form. Here is the beautiful beginning of Rilke's *First Duino Elegy*<sup>6</sup>, inspired while he wrestled with the banal exigencies of finance as he walked the cliffs of his royal patron's estate:

*Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels'  
hierarchies? And even if one of them pressed me  
suddenly against his heart: I would be consumed  
in that overwhelming existence. For beauty is nothing  
but the beginning of terror, which we are just able to endure,  
And we are so awed because it serenely disdains  
to annihilate us. Every angel is terrifying.  
and do I hold myself back and swallow the call-note  
of my dark sobbing? Ah whom can we ever turn to  
in our need? Not angels, not humans,  
and already the knowing animals are aware  
that we are not really at home in  
our interpreted world.*

How do we live?! rings through Rilke's letters even as he opens up most intuitively to the matter of what his art is about and how it works. Truly giving voice to the collective unconscious through his own narcissism and angst he asks: how can I be myself under the pressure of the minds of others? How will I ever know or give voice to what is truly me, if there is anybody else?

Rilke's turbulent apprenticeship to Rodin opened his mind not only to the sculptor's particular robustness, but also to the aim of his art, which mediated between classical ideal perfection and the possibility of appreciating the ordinary, unique human. While Rodin made idealising images of creative heroes – Balzac, Dante, the Burghers of Calais – he was doing it in a form unrecognisable at the time as idealising. Rodin was after the spirit of the man *as a man*, and so he worked from the inside out, often sculpting the figure first unclothed in order to know fully the sense of his being in the body itself. He rejected the classical sense of giving ideal form to the hero: his was the celebration of 'This Man'.

In 1907 Rilke began to catch the sense of something in himself and in the culture that had to do with *living* from the inside out. His wife's friend Paula Modersohn Becker, later known as the first female modernist painter, sold during her short life only a single painting, to Rilke. After her death Rilke's requiem poem for her expressed something of what he had begun to learn from her. Titled *Requiem for a Friend*, it reads in part:

*For that is what you understood: ripe fruits.  
 You set them before the canvas, in white bowls,  
 And weighed out each one's heaviness with your colours.  
 Women, too, you saw were ripe fruits; and children, molded  
 From inside, into the shapes of their existence.  
 And at last you saw yourself as a fruit. You stepped  
 Out of your clothes and brought your naked body  
 Before the mirror. You let yourself inside  
 Down to your gaze, which stayed in front, immense  
 And didn't say: I am that. No: this is.  
 So free of curiosity your gaze  
 Had become, so unpossessive, of such true  
 Poverty, it had no desire even for you yourself; it wanted nothing. Holy.*

Wilfred Bion calls what arises in this state of mind *unsaturated* and distinguishes it from the saturated elements of dream and myth. It is unsaturated with already existent meanings that are laden with personal or cultural intention.

This began Rilke's resolution of his narcissistic dilemma, and it continued through his deep inquiry into the painting of Paul Cezanne, posthumously displayed in a Paris retrospective. Rilke sat in front of Cezanne's works for many days, later writing his famous critical essay. Rilke saw how Cezanne, too, stood before the object and tried to paint it in its suchness, refusing to cloak it in 'saturated' meanings.

He came to see how Cezanne painted the object from the middle outward, and did not start with the skin, but with the core. Rilke wrote to Clara:

*Starting with the darkest colouring, he covered its depth with a layer of colour which he carried a little beyond that and so on and on, extending colour upon colour, he gradually came to another contrasting pictorial element, with which he then proceeded similarly from a new centre.<sup>8</sup>*

Four days later on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October he is back at the gallery again:

*...One also notices better each time how necessary it was to go even beyond love; it is of course natural for one to love each of these things when one makes it. But if one shows that, one makes it less well; one judges it instead of saying it.... One painted: 'I love this' instead of painting 'Here it is'.<sup>9</sup>*

Let me now put this next to an image that held, over time, the beginnings of a similar resolution for my patient Paul. At one session Paul was talking about watching someone serve a customer while carrying on a conversation with both the customer and a workmate. Paul was envious of this ability to attend to several things in a relaxed way, while he was also horrified and contemp-

tuous of the ‘carelessness’ he attributed to this man about perhaps making a mistake in all this multiplicity and possibility of mix-up.

Just at this point a crimson rosella arrived at the feeder hanging close outside the consulting room window. The rosella called loudly in its crystalline CHNK! .... Chnk! Chnk!. CHNK! ... Chnk! Chnk!. Over and over it called. Paul was interrupted in his thoughts, and turned to look at the rosella; he then turned back to me, laughing and irritated all at once. He huffed, ‘Did you hear that? Look at it now!’. We watched as the rosella, having cast a glance around it, plunged its head into the feeder and seized a sunflower seed, husked it, swallowed it and plunged its head back into the feeder for another. Paul laughed, in a form of amazement and admiration. ‘Stupid bird. Not a care in the world! Me! Me!’.

Paul was speaking both as the bird in this moment and for himself, since his irritation was at once envious of the bird’s capacity for self-announcement and a call for us to turn our attention back to him.

This call, ‘Me! Me!’ became iconic for us for a long time, standing for several things. Most often Paul used it in storytelling to indicate a wish for a moment to have included him when he was feeling that it had not: moments when Paul felt like an object, and had wished to feel like a subject – with his mother, with his girlfriend’s family, with his sense of the universe, animate and inanimate at any given moment.

During Paul’s months locked obsessively in his flat we conducted our sessions by phone. In our final phone session before Paul was able to resume getting himself to my rooms we talked over all his fears about making the journey: the roadways, the sun, the cars, electricity, doors. We also discussed his feeling that if I really wanted to see him in person “to be nice, I should try to get there. It’s a lot of pressure, really”. For Paul to see me had, as he said,

“the positive aspect that you would feel more real, and the negative aspect that you might not find me so appealing”.

At our first session back in my rooms, the following exchange took place:

L: I wonder what it's like for you to be here?

P: Good. It's good.

L: Before we were just phone voices, now we're whole bodies....

P: Hhmmm. I didn't think of that. More it's being here in your place.

Your cave. I read the Odyssey last year...there's a character, Circe?

Or is it Calypso? Who had the cave? ... So it's your whole place, not just your physical body. ... Here, coming to your cave I don't have so much of my own authority. ... But, that's OK.

So being clasped to the breast of an angel was still daunting, but manageable. And the me-ness of me which raised intimations of being engulfed, taken over, rendered helpless, could be borne, ultimately. There was a two-ness that was beginning to have the quality of 'we', as well as of Paul and Leslie, which is the separateness that is a form of intimacy.

## **WORKING FROM THE CENTRE OF EXPERIENCE**

If we think back to Rilke's description of Cezanne painting outward from the centre of each pictorial object, we get a sense of how he replicated in this the meeting of two things phenomenally, and the way that meeting creates what we think we see as the line, or the contour that we think delineates them. This delineation is a reification of an aspect of seeing. This is clearer if imaginally we locate ourselves in the centre of each object, and feel our way outward toward that point of meeting with another object.

Marion Milner, the Middle School analyst, diarist and painter, explored this in her book entitled *On Not Being Able to Paint*:

*I found that to draw the line of one object with fully felt awareness of the line of the neighbouring one and of the patterns of space they mutually created between them, seemed as potent an act as laying the wires across the terminals of a battery; and the resulting flash seemed to light a new world of possibilities.<sup>10</sup>*

There is something important about the achievement in infancy that allows an interplay between separating subject and object, and not separating them, which allows a zone of possibility we call play. It is ruminative, open-ended, not definitively anchored in time or space, and in a non-climactic way it constantly creates the energy Milner speaks of as the flash between two battery terminals.

Milner goes on toward the end of this study to speak about two kinds of thinking: the kind that makes a separation of subject from object, me from not-me, and the kind that does not. Referring to the kind that does not, in its mature form, and its relation to art, she makes the point that we must think about creativity in its capacity for ‘fusing, of con-fusing subject and object, seer and seen and then making a new division of these. By suffusing, through giving it form, the not-me objective material with the me – subjective psychic content, it makes the not-me “real”, realizable’.<sup>11</sup>

What is important about this psychic achievement is that it is mutable; one can move between anchoring in the concreteness of what absolutely is (or seems to be) and the open possibilities of what *may* be. This achievement is made in the intersubjective field of human relationships, which is where our infant selves begin to develop a sense of self, and then becomes transferable to the self in the world of infinite objects – things, beings, the elements – where it is elaborated into a personal world of experience and meaning.



For this to be bearable and rich, a part of our infant omnipotent fantasies must remain available to us. The child's interest, its in-loveness with the world, is full of omnipotence; disillusionment is carefully calibrated in bearable doses by ordinary parents. But when the world is impervious to, or overbearing to a child's omnipotence, it becomes a dead world, because it cannot be made use of in imagination.

Rilke, wandering in Paris without personal meaning was able only to see human life as enduring being trod upon. He found a resonance with the caged panther, occasionally receiving a live image from a world deadened by his inner paralysis. Paul's caged life within his flat was barred by obsessional obedience forged of a fear of his own interest; his appetites, his active subjectivity had been trapped in an environment of things he could not make his own, things not subject to inner transformation and personal meaning-making that could be shared.

When things demand we do not transform them by investing them with meanings arising from our own inner lifeworld, however nascent, but require us merely to *abide* by them<sup>12</sup> – to obey the fixed meanings of the lifeworld in which they reside, the world is deadened for us, and like the panther, our vision grows weary. When, however, we can encounter the other – radically different though they may be – with a sensibility in which meaning is not fixed, but endlessly ramified by embedded practices, histories, mythologies and embodied practicalities, as we know our own lifeworld to be, then the encounter, dangerous, potentially maddening, can re-enliven the world and the self, and the concreteness of certainty begins to verge on possibility, as two centres of being and meaning meet from the inside out.

## NOTES

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- 3 Ong, Walter (1982) *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word*, London, p.92
- 4 *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke: 1892-1910* (1945) trans. Jane Bannard Greene and M.D. Herter Norton, New York, W.W. Norton and Co., p.109
- 5 *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke* (1989) ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell, Vintage International, New York, p. 25
- 6 *ibid.*, 'The First Elegy'
- 7 *ibid.*, 'Requiem for a Friend'
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- 9 *ibid.*, p.311
- 10 Milner, Marion (1969) *On Not Being Able To Paint*, London, Heinemann, p.12
- 11 *ibid.*, p.161
- 12 Phillips, Adam (1996) *The Beast in the Nursery*, London, Basic Books, passim

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The image on the title page is the author's own: Zinacantec belt.

*Response*

to Leslie Devereaux

*Between You and Me: Reaching for Understanding  
in Anthropology and Analysis**Some Phenomenological Psychoanalytic Reflections  
on Ethnographic Field-Research*

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Leslie's paper has an organic personal, ethnographic, clinical and poetic integrity which should remain intact. Therefore, the best way to comment on it is by choosing to reflect on the vicissitudes of ethnographic understanding as a fellow-anthropologist with a related, yet somewhat different, life-trajectory and epistemic commitments, notwithstanding the passion for phenomenology and psychoanalysis that I share with Leslie. However, as a consummate ethnographer, and without ethnography there would be no anthropology deserving of that name (i.e., the critical knowledge of human existence), I will just make one remark which enhances the ethnographic substance of Leslie's paper. In her discussion of the woollen belt, emblematic of Zinacantec femininity, Leslie says that these women 'are almost never fully unclothed'. I clearly remember that when she originally told me about this feminine habitus of Zinacantec existence, I asked if this also applied to sexual intercourse. She said that it did and then went on to describe how, in intercourse, a Zinacantec woman loosens her belt while the man crawls underneath her skirt, re-emerges through the waist-open-

ing and, in that, I can say, all female envelopment, they proceed to make love. It seems to me that implicit here there is an entire libidinal dramaturgy of Zinacantec (male and female) selfhood, its gender difference and micro-dialectics of power and intimacy.

After this concrete ethnographic preamble I will reflect on a few key aspects of the core anthropological experience – ethnographic research – but, as psychoanalytically grounded practice which has a long tradition in anthropology (e.g., Roheim, 1932, 1945; Layard, 1945; Devereaux, 1967; Mimica, 2007a).<sup>1</sup> To conduct a systematic psychoanalysis as an ethnographer in relation to individual (local) co-workers facilitates a better management and understanding of the personally very demanding and self-alienating experiences which commonly characterise ethnographic research and are constitutive of its results (see Devereux, 1967). Furthermore, I hold that, in so far as it purports to be a productive science of human existence, anthropology has to be founded upon phenomenology and psychoanalysis. Castoriadis' (1987) theoretical work provides one particular lead which may be used to implement, through concrete work, the unsurpassed horizons of psychoanalytic anthropology developed by Freud, Jung, Rank, and Roheim.<sup>2</sup> What I advocate is a self-critical ethnographic psychoanalysis which is shaped by self-transformative transference-countertransference relations between the ethnographer and the specific individuals (informants) who mediate for the ethnographer their life-world and its constitutive imaginary (e.g., Mimica, 2006, 2007; Weiss and Stanek, 2007). In trying to reach the depths of the culture that he/she is exploring, the very foundations of the ethnographer's egoity are in question. What is challenged is the most cherished and deeply ingrained sense of humanness as the function of one's own egoity. In this regard, Devereux's (1967) insights are as vital as ever.

In doing ethnography, one's character and personality structure are both the limiting and facilitating conditions of the ethnographic project itself. Here, a self-reflective exercise has to be carried out in a Malinowskian mode

(1967). The ethnographer has to work through his/her own egoic self-erosion, defences and projections, and, equally so, through the defences and projections of the informants (Mimica, 2003a, 2007). Through this process the ethnographer is genuinely creating a critical understanding grounded in the depths of his/her and other people's psychic being. Unless one is willing to work self-critically at this level, ethnographic understanding will not break out of the limitations of the ethnographer's self-idealizations grounded in his/her inner archaic-narcissistic<sup>3</sup> position. Only through the modification of this self-deceiving yet vital threshold of the ethnographer's subjectivity will a self-reflective and critical method produce a more acute and objective mode of ethnographic understanding. In this sense, the theoretical basis of an empirically validated *verstehen* (Weber) method must necessarily be developed through phenomenology and psychoanalysis. No formula application or supervision is a viable solution; every practitioner has to discover the objective possibilities of subjective understanding in the first person, and through empirical practice.

If one aspires to perfectibility in the field of indefinite knowledge shaped by omnipresent ignorance, that is, if the ethnographer aspires to an ever more accurate ethnographic knowledge and its synthesis into theoretical understanding, the only way is through intensive and, in principle, endless concrete work; a permanent self-modification which can be characterised as an intrapsychic surgery by one's own hand - and without anaesthetic. One can learn it all from Freud, Jung, Klein, Fairbairn, Winnicott and Guntrip, or Husserl and Sartre. And, of course, in the process one is making errors. The only remedy is that one must be willing to endeavour to detect and duly correct them. This, in turn, requires more fieldwork, more self-exercise of authentic relations with one's own fieldwork experience and labour, more thinking, more suffering. All in all this is a worthy endeavour but not because, as one ethnographer recently put it 'anthropology may be an impossible dream (which may die, if not nurtured)' (Herdt, 2001:28). This is an idealisation, hence the rhetorical incantation 'anthropology as an impossible dream' - as if

the twenty-five years of his own professional life in leading American institutions and numerous grants weren't enough to convince him that (at least as an academic profession) anthropology is a wholly socio-economically and politically realised practice which allows him and numerous other anthropologists to pursue it as a self-project which they actualise every which way. And, when it is practised as a self-critical and self-responsible activity, at its best, it may be humanising, in the sense that one may choose to make the best possibilities out of one's own, far from perfect and perfected, being.

An ethnographer neither lives the life nor dies the death of the people s/he is working with. And yet, it is the interrelations between the two, and the dynamics of human passions and radical imagination, that constitute the ontological nexus of any given life-world. To be sure, human facticity does not exist outside of its own human self-constitution. Intrinsic to every society, being the field generated as the dynamic structure of egoic bodily intersubjectivity, is the internal self-defence against itself, its own weaknesses, vulnerability, and sham, and amplification of its own ideality and omnipotence. Every human society is constructed as a synthesis of its own ambivalence and the primordial autogenerative schizoity that generates its own self-totalisation. Power, exploitation, violence, and distortions; vulnerability and sham, are not to be approached as primarily the symptoms of failure at the synthesis, but the very reality of every human social synthesis. Therefore, for every anthropologist the preparatory task is to open him/herself up to a mood which discloses this very situation of the total humanness, and it demands a creative effort, the effort to create a new horizon of intelligibility correlative with a particular ethnographic encounter. To descend into the pleroma of total humanness, and to behold with understanding its expression in each particular human situation, one has also to recognise it in oneself and, as such, to acknowledge this transpersonal ontological horizon of the psychic being over and against one's own social-cultural-historical, moral and intellectual finality. Herein is the permanent relevance of psychoanalysis and anthropology in the conquest of human ignorance and the creation of knowledge, truth and human freedom.

The acuteness of ethnographic understanding depends on a will to enter into this pleromatic matrix of existence, which psychoanalysis and phenomenology can clarify and deepen like no other framework of critical reflection, providing that it is practised with a total commitment to the project of ethnography for which 'one's character in relation to one's life' (Levi-Strauss, 1973:58-59) is in need of self-critical transformation rather than self-reconciliation. One can reconcile oneself with oneself, but he or she can still misunderstand both oneself and other humans. Ignorance, self-deception and false consciousness are not taken care of by any techniques of reconciliation. Rather, the latter requires the former. In this view, anthropology is far from being an impossible dream. And its self-transcending actualisation is effected through each individual practitioner's *will to true* self-recognition and the *will* to choose to act accordingly as an epistemic subject.

Critical to ethnographic-psychoanalytic practice is the recognition of the vicissitudes of the narcissistic depths of the human egoic self (its archaic core), the ethnographer's no less than that of the individuals s/he is working with. There is no possibility of escaping the archaic narcissistic dynamism of the egoic un/consciousness but one can learn how to recognise it without feeling defeated, thereby being able to choose self-knowledge and use it constructively; indeed, use it in the service of the creation of a more realistically viable, self-grounded and self-accountable knowledge of oneself and others.

Many anthropologists with - I shall call it - reflexionist - sensibilities do not seem to appreciate sufficiently that a critical self-reflection is not the same as a narcissistic theatre of selective self-disclosure, a pseudo-drama of the idealised balance of the 'truth' of one's own limitations and actualisations, but rather it is a means of creating more accurate knowledge. There is no epistemological and concrete empirical gain to be derived from it. To be lucid about one's own limitations and to do something constructively about them is the basic step. A person with a healthy narcissistic equilibrium will know what to do:

swallow your self-idealisation, suspend your delusory desire for omnipotence and omniscience, and proceed to do work on your deficiencies and see how far you'll get in that regard. Concrete work is more likely to transform one's narcissistic desires and, in fact, it does yield far more gratifying objects since the project of ethnography is about concrete knowledge. And, since narcissistic desire is inexhaustible, one will be able to draw on it to propel oneself into more action whose aim is to conquer the problematic, resisting and titillating object. It is better to make the limitations real than to turn them into the narcissistic object of one's own idealised self-representations, which is what, more often than not, is managed in so many would-be self-reflexive ethnographies.

This is but a glossy metaphoric prop for the stage of self-representation. The 'critical' hyper-reflexivity evidenced in such writings is nothing else but the investigators' defensive self-consolidation within the shield of narcissistic self-mirroring which systematically occludes the real flaws, deficiencies, and the limitations in the dimension of concrete knowledge and understanding. The former purports to be the icing for the latter. An authentic, psychoanalytically-guided reflective turn is an altogether different operation. In taking up psychoanalysis and phenomenology one stands and falls by it, although not primarily through its application to others, but, firstly and recurrently, to oneself. What abounds in the purportedly self-reflective anthropological liturgy is an egoic circuitry which I call 'reflexivity', with the *x* inflection, to emphasise the fixed, blind, or routinized character of egoic self-regard which, precisely because of its automatism and routinized 'strategic' (i.e., opportunistic) modes of being oneself, brings into the scope of consciousness only those aspects which cancel and/or inhibit further need for self-understanding or critical self-modification.

Reflexivity is a closed-off circuit of the egoic self-regard determined by its own unpunctured narcissistic auto-scotoma. Two of its main qualities are cowardice and defensiveness, but projected as a higher (grandiose) morality.



Reflection, on the other hand, is a penetrating and critical self-regard which, with each current of the inward turning, spreads deeper and deeper into the realms of the egoic self, and attempts to comprehend its internal constitution. Relative to the intensity and depth of self-reflection, such circuitry is bound to destabilise, at some stage, the egoic dimension of the self, and among other effects, will cause depression, for it becomes evident that one is not exactly the kind of being that one aspired and assumed oneself to be. The narcissistic dynamics of these and other modes of the circuitry of the egoic self-regard, which now amounts to a struggle with the death instinct and a transformation of K link (Bion) through the transformation of the capacity to love self and object in relation to the truth-driven will to knowledge, cannot be dealt with here. My point, however, is that as an epistemophilic (Klein, Bion) pursuit, the practice of self-reflectivity has to engender and systematically sustain a genuine depressive position which alone will transform the practitioner into a mature epistemic, or more accurately, gnostic subject.

Coda: this practice of anthropological understanding through love and knowledge of humanity, borne out of authentic ethnographic encounters, has nothing to do with the degradation of anthropology, and critical knowledge at large, characteristic of current academic enterprise. Here, thinking has irreversibly succumbed to a greedy narcissistic pulverisation; what one presently witnesses in academe is a performative on-line packaging of a marketable knowledge-death.

## NOTES

1. In what follows I reproduce a section from my unpublished work *On phenomenological psychoanalysis and the epistemology of ethnographic field-research*.
2. Castoriadis' views have to be clarified both in respect of his specific philosophical and psychoanalytic synthesis of understanding (i.e., his ideas and their conceptual articulation). He is a thinker who indeed thinks for himself within the Western philosophical tradition which he knows very well. But precisely as such he has to be critically elucidated in relation to that tradition and, especially, in relation to the field of psychoanalytic and ethnographic evidence.
3. In my formulations, narcissistic dynamics is not separable from the dynamics of instinctual drives. The archaic nucleus of the latter is what I call 'oral-ocular', indicating the immanent synthesis of narcissistic dynamics and the primordial sucking-digestive-groping instinctual self-circuitry. This is the core of the primal ideal-ego and the super-ego (well illustrated by Malinowski's (1967) self-account).

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# WOMB=TOMB=HOUSE=BODY

## YAGWOIA EXPERIENCE OF BLISSFUL SELF-DISSOLUTION

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### THE COSMO-ONTOLOGICAL BACKGROUND: A BRIEF SKETCH<sup>1</sup>

The people I write about are the four central Yagwoia-Angan territorial groups ('tribes') in the borderlands of the Eastern Highlands, Morobe and Gulf Provinces, east Papua New Guinea (Mimica, 1981, 1988, 1991). The empirical domains alluded to in the title are the Yagwoia cultural imaginary (Castoriadis, 1987) and the archetypal dynamics which generate their kinship sociality which is a totalising process of life<sup>^</sup>death.<sup>2</sup>

Given this immanence of life<sup>^</sup>death in the core of Yagwoia relatedness I will state that as a realm of human material investments, interests and activities, the Yagwoia societal field is a libidinal totality. But libido subsumes here its negative modality of mortido. Nowadays, this term is rarely used (e.g. McDougall, 1995: ix) and here it designates the destructive mode of psychic energy which, in view of the Yagwoia facts, is the mirror-inverse of libido (cf. Spielrein, 1994). My conception of libido is rooted in the classical tradition and *embraces exactly those salient antinomies* which figure in Freud's, Jung's, Abraham's, Klein's and Fairbairn's formulations. This is so because the Yagwoia mode of existence, which I call ouroboric, articulates these antinomies with exuberant transparency and totalising systematicity.

Ouroboros is the archetypal image of the self-eating serpent (Neumann, 1954) which among the Yagwoia has a unique mythopoeic manifestation as their self-created androgynous *Imacoqwa* (The Great-one-he). He is the cosmic monad whose eyes are the sun and moon; he embodies, continuously generates and sustains the world (Mimica, 1981, 1988, 1991). Accordingly, he can be characterised as the Cosmic Self and the container of everything that there is. Under the name of *Imacoqwa*<sup>3</sup> he can be aptly glossed as the Father-of-All and as such he is the immanent presence in all the denizens of his world-body, specifically in his human progeny. This is why a psychoanalytic exploration of the concrete Yagwoia simultaneously entails the exploration of this archetypal realm of their cosmic Self.

It will be noted that in this text (and elsewhere, e.g. Mimica, 2003a, b, 2006) I write about the Yagwoia un/conscious. I put it so precisely because the relation between consciousness and the unconscious is subject to diverse articulations in different life-worlds. Experientially, their mutual articulation does not conform to a universal dimensional topography, principally in terms of a distinction between psychic interiority and exteriority.<sup>4</sup> Hence my use of the slashed un/conscious which indicates that there is no *a priori* assumption made as to how and in what mode, if at all, is something unconscious in a given field of experience. This calibration varies between individuals and life-worlds, and between different periods within one and the same life-world. In terms of the Yagwoia life-world-specific ontological underpinnings of their experiences and existence, the basic dimensionality of their 'I-ness', such as interiority/exteriority and all its derivatives, is a radically different inner/outer field. Spirits no less than the soul, or any other presences experienced, for instance in dreams, are not for the Yagwoia 'internal objects' composed of life-memories or archetypal images. They are the entities either entirely autonomous (e.g., spirits) and external to a given 'I' (ego) or in a semi-detachable incorporative/excorporative relation with the body and 'I-ness', as for instance one's dream-soul component.

The ego and the derivations egoic, egoity, stress the irreducible boundness of the primary, bodily sphere of the human experiential field and its constitution qua the dialectics of the body ego (Fleiss, 1956, 1961; Schilder, 1950) and its maternal envelopment (Klein, 1932; Lacan, 1977; Neumann, 1954, 1988; Mahler, Pine, and Bergman, 1975; Stern, 1985). By a somewhat cumbersome phrase 'egoic self' I specify the figure/ground dynamics within the embodied sphere of experience. Selfhood is the total dynamic ground of the psycho-soma vis-à-vis the ego/I-ness which is the figure subject to a myriad of fluctuating modalities of auto<sup>^</sup>allo-morphic dynamics (including auto<sup>^</sup>allo-centricity, auto<sup>^</sup>allo-recognition) and always in reciprocal formative relation to its total ground. When I write Self with the capital S, I am referring to the realm of the radical, archetypal schemata of experience (Jung, 1959, 1968, 1971) which, in the Yagwoia life-world, is objectified as the ouroboric Cosmic Self. This transpersonal Self is immanent in the egoic selfhood of every living and dead Yagwoia. This cosmic ground is self-centred through all its parts, and the ego derives its own centrality from the omni-self-centredness of its ground, regardless of whether s/he knows and/or likes it or not. It is this total matrix that generates all its parts, starting with the ego who is always the individuating figure and dimension of its total ground and its parts. For a concrete example of experiential manifestation of this dialectical individuating relationship, see Mimica, 2007b. This, in short, is the sphere of Yagwoia 'agency'. Accordingly, my psycho-analysis is phenomenologically grounded in the Yagwoia life-world. Their psychic being is accounted for with a maximal fidelity to its life-world constitution. So, although my use of the notions such as un/conscious, egoic self and internal objects is within the framework of psychoanalytic meta-psychological conceptualisations, this is done as an interpretive exercise which both maintains and amplifies the ontological originality and existential integrity of the Yagwoia selfhood and life-world.

Among the Yagwoia, every human is indeed a microcosmic manifestation of their macrocosmos. In this perspective, the psychodynamics of a concrete ego and his/her intersubjective matrix is conterminous with the archetypal

dynamics of their life-world and its constitutive imaginary. As an archetypal structure of libidinal dynamics, ouroboros crystallises the oral-grasping-ocular unity and nucleus of all drives. Here copulation is the mirror-inverse of sucking, biting, eating, looking, grabbing and evacuation (vomiting, urinating, defecating, ocular emissions); libido is *mortido*. The antinomies referred to above are intrinsic to the ouroboric libido, i.e., the life^death flow, which, needless to say, in a life-world like the Yagwoia, is the cosmic energy that *generates-drives* existence in *toto*.<sup>5</sup>

This intertwining of life^death underscores a specific ouroboric determination of Yagwoia existence (Mimica, 1991, 1996, 2003, 2003a, 2006a,b,c; in preparation a, b) whereby there is no life of the human self without the simultaneous coefficient of self-destruction. In the field of their kinship relatedness, father>son incorporative dynamics (Mimica, 2007b), for which the indigenous image is 'Planting', is taking place correlatively with the mother>child incorporative self-circuitry characterised as 'Eating' (Mimica, 1991). Its libidinal substance is meat. Accordingly, these two modes of incorporation feed differentially into the kinship matrix and both are articulated in the total flow of substances and societal exchange.

## QANG IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS OUROBORIC LIFE-WORLD

I first met him in 1977, within a week of my arrival in the Yagwoia abode. Our friendship began to develop a few months after I settled in a village only three hours walk from his home area. Writing now about QANG, with the hindsight of three decades, what has to be reflected upon in connection to his existential milieu is his self-contentment amidst the ceaseless, devouring life^death flow incarnated in him and all those with whom he lives. I have already outlined the narcissistic core of his egoity (Mimica, 2006a) which generates his genuine ouroboric contentment. It can be characterised as a

sense of optimal fluctuation of the fundamentally pleasurable excorporation-incorporation of his libidinal (self-) substance sustained by his matrixial mother^father generative self-unity. Within the ouroboric determination of egoity, in a life-world such as the Yagwoia where there is neither salvation nor damnation but only relentless existence,<sup>6</sup> the fundamental self-contentment must be lived as a function of that endless life^death process. That is, not just as the self-experience through accomplished sexuality and procreation, or as the satiation produced by a good feed, especially of meat, but as a self-experience of the desire for a good, all-devouring death and bodily self-dissolution. These are the concrete and authentic parameters within which the ouroboric self-contentment is actualised.

How does QANG's self reveal that sphere of Yagwoia existential flow and sensibilities? The Yagwoia mortuary practices make the bodily self-dissolution an ubiquitous aspect of their everyday life (Mimica, 1991, 1996, 2003, 2006c). Apart from the post-partum bodily context of breast-feeding and nurture, it is in this ubiquitous context of socialised corpse-handling that the concrete excorporative-incorporative sensibilities and the ouroboric sense of human mortality are forged. In this transient mode of the imperishable life^death flow also indwells a fundamental feeling of ouroboric bodily intimacy, maternal containment and, through it, the desire for a wholesome self-contentment. In QANG's self-experience several images shape his projections of his own self-dissolution, all of them articulating the dialectical unity of the container and the contained whose irreducible prototype is the foetus inside the mother's womb. Simultaneously, this is the image of the self-unity of the ouroboric phallus as the foetus which reciprocally and indissolubly is the fulfilment of the womb's desire for its own self-completion or self-fulfilment.

House is the root image of the maternal womb-container which, following his/her delivery from the actual womb, contains every human being throughout life. Identified with the human body, the Yagwoia house is the generative womb=stomach container. The door-passage is the mouth=face, while the

interior side diametrically opposite to it is male. The two lateral sections, the 'rib-cage sides', are female. A married man effectively doesn't own a house but the wife for whom he builds it. A polygamist has to build each wife her own house. Man's main preparation for getting a woman is to build a house into which she can be placed. The idea is that in order to have a womb for making children man should first get the womb to house both himself (the penis) and his womb-container (woman). This image is entirely predicated upon a container-contained circuitry between the two part=wholes (penis-womb) contained within the container (house) but which as such is *erected* by man (see Mimica, 2007a:96-97).

House is an archetypal image-condensation that every Yagwoia knows and lives in various degrees of discursive lucidity, especially in its equation as house=womb=tomb. What is readily thematised is the gestation = copulation = generation equation.<sup>7</sup> As a mirror-image of eating and gestation, bodily dissolution is cogently articulated in the mortuary practices and is amplified through the use of a net-bag (=placenta) in which the corpse is placed and handled. A particularly powerful instance of this image is QANG's mother's prolonged handling of her brother's (i.e. QANG's maternal uncle's) skull (Mimica, 2006a). Many years later, her exemplary behaviour had shaped QANG's own response to his favourite wife's death and the way he handled her corpse (Mimica, 2006c).

Concerning the practice of consumption of the putrid fluids which emanate from the corpse while it is being smoked (Mimica, 1991; cf. Dupeyrat, 1954:220-224), QANG had a memorable childhood experience. Once, when he was a little boy, his mother went to the garden leaving him in the care of a very big and strong woman.<sup>8</sup> Recalling her strength, QANG said that she could lift him up with just one arm, as if he were feather-light, and place him on the top of several net-bags that hanged from her forehead and rested on her back. They were inside her house and he was crying because his mother was gone while this woman was placating him by pointing to the roof-rafters



and telling him to look up there - there were two marsupials for them to eat. In actual fact these were the corpses of two men, father and son, killed by the Iqwaye.<sup>9</sup> They now were hanging and smoking over the fire-hearth in two net-bags. She told him not to cry but to go and get the *kunyile* vegetables used for scooping the fluids that were dripping from the corpses. When we talked about these, now abandoned components of the mortuary practices,<sup>10</sup> QANG would often recall this particular childhood experience. He said that he was somewhat perplexed when she told him that those two were 'our meat'.<sup>11</sup>

This is a beautiful example of a tacit yet discursive articulation of the goodness of bodily dissolution pitched in the alimentary-gustatory register. The big woman told him not to cry (because of his mother's absence) for there was tasty game-meat for him and her to eat that would fill-in her absence. The promise of a filled stomach is intended to transmute the absence of the primal, maternal self-object into a palatable and pleasurable substitute which atones the momentary anxiety. This substitutive and atoning use of food is a universal human predilection. Food commonly compensates for this sort of separation experience and for other modes of self-privative anxiety, frustration and self-dissatisfaction. Through eating, a distressed child makes up for the absence or various deficiencies of the maternal container and the contentment that it provides aiming thus to regain the primal dual-unity<sup>12</sup> of the container and the contained. In the ouroboric life-world of the Yagwoia, however, the maternal-domestic contexture of the food and womb as well as of the tomb, i.e., real dissolving human cadaver destined for the actual alimentary incorporation,<sup>13</sup> has had an acute concrete form of actualisation.

Now, this memory from QANG's childhood is illuminating but still it does not reveal the deeper meanings of this necrophagic nexus. For the prospect of self-dissolution and absorption into the maternal container may induce the feeling of a deep self-contentment and blissful self-extinction into primal generative liquidity. This modality of Yagwoia sensuousness had surfaced

as one of QANG's responses to the most common mode of containment – dwelling inside a house.

It happened on the night before I flew out of the Iwolaqa-Malycaane in February 2003. QANG came to the house where I was staying while at the air-strip where three New Tribes Mission (NTM) families settled. The house used to belong to one of them but he quit his calling some three years ago and returned to America where he was now training to become a parish pastor. This particular house is truly beautiful: spacious, comfortable, and extremely solidly built. It is presently used by the local followers of the NTM and R, the sole remaining NT missionary in this area, who keeps a radio in it. There is a separate study room, very cosy and a real pleasure to be in it. QANG came into this house for the first time in January 2000 when my wife came for a visit and we spent a few days there before going to my village field-base, some four hours walk from the air-strip. On that occasion his response to the house was one of unreserved admiration and uninhibited bodily absorption of its being. Once inside, he looked all around this beautiful spacious interior. He sat on the smooth floor made from the firm sheets of industrially manufactured ply-wood. He touched and felt the smooth texture and solidity of this wood, saying with a mixture of excitement and desire - "Aiiy, white man's house! This is how they make it" (i.e., "I wish it was mine"). It was overwhelming to see him seated on the floor, feeling it with his hands, looking upward into the exposed interior of the roof. He was *all* inside and enclosed by this big spacious house-container yet, simultaneously, he was filling and absorbing its entire volume.

Three years later, on the night before my departure I wanted to finish translating the last remaining section of a shaman's self-account so QANG was there to assist me. We sat in the study room and both of us enjoyed being there. I remarked on the quality and beauty of the house. QANG immediately released his unrestrained admiration for it. He first said that this was a house which "*Amerika* built" meaning specifically that it was exclusively

the white NTM builders who worked on it. This was true - they all were Americans. Therefore it was a superior work whereas, said QANG, the other two NTM houses *Europe* built with the help of the locals: “we local men worked on them”. These are R’s and N’s houses. They are Europeans from the Netherlands and Belgium respectively. Then QANG said that if I bought this house, he would look after it exclusively. Only he (and his family) would live in it; no other man would be allowed inside, no matter what! While talking, QANG was looking up and down, at the roof (sky) and the floor (earth). I felt as if his eyes were touching them; as if he was putting his hands on the wooden surfaces in the way he did the first time he came in. He was now completely *inside* the house, identified with it, or better, he felt completely enclosed and contained by it as if he were in the maternal womb. Then he made the following pronouncement:

*“If this were my house I would be staying inside it all the time. No way that I would care to go out. And when I die I would tell my children that they mustn’t take me out quickly. First my whole body has to completely decompose inside it (the house) and only then they can take my bones and bury them in the ground. But not before the body (flesh) is gone. Only then they can bury me.”*

I was taken by this stunning self-articulation. Although for years I knew the saliency of the identity of the house = body = womb = tomb, I have never experienced this kind of explicit and verbalised identification. I could see that while he was looking all around the house that he was looking into it as the image of himself, his maternal bodily flesh. What is formidable is this acute image of *his* bodily decomposition inside the house. Only with death does the body truly become inalienably absorbed by its primal cosmic-maternal container, the earth=womb. This is why QANG said that he would want to make sure that he not just dies in this house but that his body would have to decompose in it. The body has to go into, be absorbed by the house and thereby it would truly become his flesh-container just as much as he would

truly come to possess it.<sup>14</sup> He saw this house as the best of the best possible receptacles for his flesh-bound egoic self.

Here, then, is a magnificent example of the ouroboric inside=outside interfusion, the container=contained incorporative self-reciprocity and, through it, of the total self-identification with one's flesh-bound egoity envisaged in the mode of complete self-liquefaction. This is also an image of a blissful self-contentment for the inside and the outside and, conterminously, the egoity and its intra-uterine matrix are dissolved into their primal self-identity which also contains within itself its own self-difference.<sup>15</sup> As for the hard bones, their solar-generative spirit will continue in the progeny's bodies. And if these were the bones of violent contention, all the same, those who have incorporated them will therefore be even more possessed of the father's phallic legacy.<sup>16</sup>

QANG's self-projection and verbal elaboration is a sublime modulation of what is otherwise a fully culturally objectified dynamic scheme of the cannibalistic matrifilial self-circuitry ('Eating'). Its core is the desire for eating the mother and being eaten by her and, reciprocally, the parental desire to eat the child (Devereux, 1980). What QANG expressed, however, can be characterised as his intra-uterine un/consciousness. Manifest in it is an image of the maternal oral womb, for in the ouroboric un/consciousness womb is a sector of the oral libidinal zone. The bliss of self-liquefaction is a positive expression of the desire for being eaten (incorporated) and thereby also preserved. But, in liquefaction, the overt aspect of oral destruction is cancelled. There is a passive quality in the sensuousness of corpse decomposition; it *dissolves* out of itself and the fluids, *pars pro-toto*, make it edible without it having to be chewed upon and thus assimilated (this was only applied to the killed enemies, i.e. exo-cannibalism).

Although the liquefying aspect of corpse incorporation is akin to breast-feeding and fellatio<sup>17</sup> the desire for self-liquefaction is fundamentally an expression of an intense symbiotic passivity which can be given the following alimentary

characterisation. It is a self-consummation of the breast that contains the milk and the mouth that sucks and tastes it, the flesh that feeds of it, and all of them become exhausted in a mode of self-consummated liquidity. If divested of the buccal-mammary delineation, then one can imagine it as a liquidity that eats and sustains itself through ceaseless self-absorption. In the sphere of Yagwoia sensuousness, this is the quality of lunar quiddity, a direct expression of its non-spectral (colourless) light and nocturnal fertilising liquidity. In the human body this lunar quiddity is borne by the maternal flesh and its animatedness. Here one can sense the inner vortex of the ouroboric metabolism, its anabolic phase in which all the solid melts into its mirror-opposite, the self-conserving self-liquefaction.

Yet this sublime intrauterine moment of phallic self-dissolution, or its anabolic moment, is at the same time a mirror-image of its seeming polar opposite, the disincarnated dry and hard bones which are to be interred separately while their solar spirit continues in the bodies of the progeny. The bare bones also mark the anabolic point when all activity has exhausted itself into the phase transition of life-into-death in order to carry on living itself ad infinitum. In their mutual self-mirroring, the bare bones and the bliss of liquefaction echo that foetal self-unity of the ouroboric phallus which originates in conception and gestation. This same process inaugurates the dialectics of the container and the contained and with it the archetypal dynamics of the libidinal circuitry of the Self. As an amplification of QANG's intra-uterine self-projection these reflections may also serve as an incipient sketch of an authentic Yagwoia *aesthetics* of bodily existence and ouroboric eudemonics.

## NOTES

1. In the ANZSJA 'Uses of Subjective Experience' Conference, this brief outline of the basic lineaments of the Yagwoia life-world was delivered orally using visual material (power-point and overheads). In particular, I outlined their ouroboric cosmology with the focus on mortuary practices. I also introduced the main protagonist of the paper (named QANG) and the problematic of 'blissful self-dissolution' as an authentic expression of Yagwoia experience and of the desire for such a state expressive of self-contentment. I would especially like to thank Dr Peter Fullerton for his superb comments on this paper following my presentation.
2. For my usage of  $\wedge$ , see Mimica, 2006a:31. Briefly, the designation  $\wedge$  means that any two terms/components thus conjoined are in mutually inseparable yet tensive (conjunctive $\wedge$ disjunctive) unity. This immanent *auto-polarity* is a dynamism which makes the ouroboric dynamics self-generative. Whenever I use it in the text,  $\wedge$  specifies auto-polarising dynamics that simultaneously binds and generates both the mutual unity and the components/terms which comprise it. Neither component/term exists without the other, and each is constitutive of the other. This auto-polarisation is articulated as the function of the dimensional differentiation (in terms of inside $\wedge$ outside and container $\wedge$ contained) of the primordial ouroboric phallomorph. It can be best explicated as a dynamic topological scheme represented by the image of the Kleinian bottle or the Moebius strip (see further Mimica, op. cit. above). For general formulations of ouroboric archetypal dynamics, see Neumann, 1954, 1963, 1966, 1973, and Jung, 1956. For the specificities of this dynamics in the Yagwoia life-world, see Mimica, 1991.
3. His female mirror-double is *Imacipu* (The Great-she). The two are identified with the sun and moon as well as with the sky and earth. For the discussion of the primal twinning of *Imacoqwa* $\wedge$ *Imacipu* and the symptomatic fluctuation of their luno-solar identity, see Mimica, 1981. For the luno-solar quiddity of the human (Yagwoia) soul, see Mimica, 2003:262-265.
4. In anthropology, this fundamental caution was stressed a long time ago by Leach 1958. Similarly, Lienhardt observed for the Dinka 'who have no conception which at all closely corresponds to our popular modern conception of the "mind", as mediating and, as it were, storing up the experiences of the self (ft.1. *And still less of conscious and unconscious elements, of course*)' (1961:149; emphasis JM).
5. For some, the antinomial modes immanent in psychic energy (libido) and reflected in the formulations of instinctual drives (e.g., the principal Life $\wedge$ Death, Eros $\wedge$ Thanatos, also more recently echoed in the problematics of Narcissism, especially in relation to instinctual drives; Kohut, 1977; Grunberger, 1979), are primarily seen as contradictions that invalidate the formulations themselves. Still worse, those who appeal to 'state-of-the art' developmental neurobiology and neurosciences, or to infant research, think that they, therefore, are really within the truth, and that the notion of libido and its classical formulations (indicated by the great five referred to above) are an outdated psycho-analytic 'mythology'. In this context, it will suffice for me to say that 'they wouldn't know any better', without suggesting that the current knowledge in these fields, including neuropsychology (Winson, 1985, Schore, 1994, Solms and Turnbull, 2002) is irrelevant. On the other hand, in characterising the Yagwoia libidinal dynamics as ouroboric which entails a micro-macrocosmic ego-Self dialectical circuitry, I am demarcating its original actualisations in and as their cultural life-world. Accordingly, it cannot be uncritically assimilated into the exist-

ing psychoanalytic formulations, including such reworkings as in Lacan's opus. For some recent examinations of the problematics of the death instinct, see Grotstein, 1985; Eigen, 1995; Segal, 1993; Green, 1999, 2001.

6. See Mimica, 1996, 2003.
7. A good example is well illustrated in QP's usage (Mimica, 2007b:96-7). To the extent that he is still virile and procreative, he went on to say, he can get a younger and fertile woman. It is not good that he replaces his recently deceased wife Y with a woman as old as himself so that they two would be just sitting inside the *aane acipiye* (food-cook-house) and look at each other. This image plays on the view of sexual intercourse and child-making as 'food cooking'. An active young couple is, through sexual conjunction, inside the 'house' (i.e., penis in the womb) making a baby. The image of an old couple, sexually unproductive, sitting inside a cook-house and just looking at each other conjures an entropic atrophy of the progenitive desire and conjunction. The old couple can only eat cooked food, i.e., the substitute for the sexual-copulative mode of 'cooking', and look at each other while digesting it. But their looks are not the burning, i.e., cooking looks, of the sexual conjunction and are not fuelled by, so to speak, the digestion *a deux* that makes a real baby inside the womb=cook-house. By digesting and looking at each other, the old couple effects no child-generating conjunction. Although themselves contained inside the cook-house ('womb'), they are apart, digesting yet empty of their procreative self-unity in the body of the one who is their third and as such their two-in-one, the foetal being through and in which they will have been replaced. This simple image, then, condenses an entire dialectics of container^contained, being the core of the human ouroboric self-circuitry, destiny, and the quest for self-creation and self-perpetuation ad infinitum. My ontological amplification of it in terms of the self-generative one^two^oneness is entirely grounded in the immanent archetypal mathematicity of the Yagwoia noesis and life-world constitution (see Mimica 1988; 1991).
8. Her big size was indicated by her birth-order suffix inflected with a male gender marker which in this instance signalled her bigness. For QANG's relation with his mother and his parental matrix determined by her, see Mimica, 2006a.
9. Iqwaye are one of the four Central Yagwoia territorial groups with whom QANG's home-group was in war at the time (approximately 1949-1955).
10. Corpse smoking stopped in the mid-sixties but the practice of bodily contact and smearing with the corpse fluids, especially of young nubile women and children, continued well into the present (Mimica, 1991).
11. The dominant game in the Yagwoia life-world are marsupials. The generic term *hiye* labels all marsupial taxa and a species of aquatic rodent. This game also has a generic significance of 'meat' (*namce*) and the term *hiye* immediately equates with that categorical determination. 'Pig' is also 'meat' although it would not be intended as the 'meat' in the sense of the marsupial game (*hiye*). Yagwoia usage of the Tok Pisin *abus* applies to both meat and marsupial game.
12. It is informative to cite here Roheim (1945:1-2): "The expression "dual-unity" was invented by a patient of Hoffman's. "He and his mother", he declares, "formed one being originally. If they had been cut into halves they would both have ceased to exist. Love flowed from mother to him in the

shape of milk and from him to mother – as urine. If he could have the same sensations today he would be immortal because this dual-unity is more than two put together, it amounts to omnipotence. Hoffman describes this stage of dual-unity as follows: “There is no dividing line between the object and the primitive ego. There is both a primary identification with the object and a reversal of this process, an identification of the object with the Ego”. “The same narcissistic libido is reflected from the object which plays the role of the primary ego or of a mirror”. Roheim’s citations are from Hoffman’s ‘Projektion und Ich-Entwicklung’, *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 21, 1936:36ff.

13. A professional mortician and embalmer who once attended a lecture I gave on Yagwoia mortuary practices told me afterwards that he could relate to this. According to him it is a common experience among his professional colleagues to develop an enormous appetite while working on a corpse.
14. When his favourite (third) wife died he wanted to bury her next to his house-door but decided against it because he thought (correctly) that this would alarm his two other wives who would surely abandon him because they would conclude that he didn’t care about them and, furthermore, the deceased’s spirit (*wopa ilymane*) would be there all the time (see Mimica, 2006c).
15. After so many years that I spent among the Yagwoia plumbing their psyche and life-world QANG’s image truly infused me with a revitalised sense of respect for their irreducible reality: the ouroboric Self-hood which lives in every single one of them. It was QANG, my friend of some twenty-five years, who then and there made me experience anew his and their ouroboric authenticity.
16. Here, I am invoking the dynamics of the paternal bone-power and its internalisation, a subject of a long study from which the present paper is an extract. The Yagwoia notion of the paternal bone and its power pertains to the relationship between the father and his children, specifically his sons (see Mimica, 2007a: 5-6, 2007b:77-105). ‘Bone’ condenses the paternal phallic – i.e., seminal-spiritual - power contained not just in the father’s genitals but in the entire skeleton which in the Yagwoia understanding of bodily edifice is an arboreal structure and, as such, a phallic-ouroboric totality that generates its own animation. Reciprocally, this bodily microcosmos is animated by the macrocosmic metabolism generated by the movement, light and differential temperature of the sun and moon. This means that, like any tree, the bone (metonymically meaning the entire body as a phallic gestalt) is a generative organism whose trunk is rooted in the earth while the branches and leaves extend skyward. In the most expanded terms, the bone, then, is the human embodiment as the microcosmic equivalent of the macrocosmic edifice of the world delimited by the sky and earth (Mimica, 2006a:33). In terms of this global image (body=tree) the notion of the ‘father’s bone’ means that he is primarily a bigger branch (arm) closer to the trunk (spine = central axis of the body), while his sons at first are the smaller branches (hand-fingers) issuing from it. Later, when they replace him, they – in Yagwoia understanding - extract his bone and, in turn, the sons themselves become incorporated into the branch closer to the trunk from which, qua themselves, issue their own branches (children).

Daughters too are the branch-issues, but their destiny is to be like the leaves (finger-nails) that detach from the trunk because they marry outside of their own paternal ‘trunk’ (*latice* group) and enable other trunks and their branches to internally reproduce themselves, i.e., that the fathers



become replaced by their progeny of which the sons continue the process of (endo-) generation of the trunk via the incorporation into its branches which, in turn, are being incorporated into the trunk. The process is one of self-reciprocal incorporation, i.e., ouroboric (Mimica, 1991, 2006). Moreover, every part of this self-totalising totality is identical to the whole (i.e., is hologramic) concretely imagined as a tree closed in on itself, i.e., its branches and roots intertwining. This is the archetypal, cosmic tree of life<sup>^</sup>death whose structural determination is ouroboric because, like the serpent that eats its own tail, this tree grows in-through-and-out-of-itself, ad infinitum. Thus, the trunk = branches = leaves = whole tree = trunk = roots = branches =and-so-on. Apart from their cosmology and its diverse forms of actualisation, this scheme is fully objectified in the Yagwoia naming system (Mimica, 1988, 1991). Finally, the reality of the soul and spirit that this notion encapsulates is best conveyed through a notion of generative energy whose macrocosmic sources are the sun and moon replicated in the human body by the differential flow and interchange of blood and seminal (bone-marrow) flow in the blood-ropes (veins, arteries) and skeletal passages which in Yagwoia understanding comprise a system of intra-bodily ropes. Accordingly, the notion of the 'extraction-incorporation of the father's bone' entails also the incorporation of the paternal spirit-power (energy).

17. All of these (and many others) bodily activities are constellated into the libidinal nexus which pivots on the oral-phallic (hence ouroboric) determination of all instinctual drives and libidinal zones. I am describing here a particular figuration of its sublimated cannibalistic spectrum. A negative mode of cannibalistic desire is the *womba* complex where a person's soul craves raw human and animal flesh and gorges on it, though not in an overt form but by means of invisible devouring. This is commonly reported in literature as 'cannibalistic witchcraft'.
18. For the Yagwoia notion of the soul and its luno-solar generation from which derives their notion of spirit indicated here, see Mimica, 2003a, 2006.

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The image on the title page is the author's own: With a friend in the field.

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Jadran Mimica © 2008

*Response*

to Dr Jadran Mimica

*Womb = Tomb = House = Body**Yagwoia Experience of Blissful Self-dissolution***PETER FULLERTON***ANZSJA, Melbourne, Australia*

When thinking about how I might respond to Dr Mimica's evocative offering to us, I found myself comparing his descriptions to those of an infant observation. Both, I think, could be seen as aiming to represent detailed, respectful observations of actual people in their lives and experiences. And, certainly, Dr Mimica's descriptions, as we have just heard, are exquisite and thought provoking.

Like a report of an infant observation, this account of the Yagwoia takes us beyond the particular experience of 'the other' and invites us to use these observations to help us to think about ourselves and the intricate states of mind we encounter in our own inner worlds. This requires, I think, that we relate this direct and concrete engagement with life and death to a symbolic perspective; one which arises out of, as well as incubates, ego consciousness.

I think it is fair to suggest that Dr Mimica's observations of the Yagwoia experience of blissful self-dissolution could be seen as observations of ouroboric imagery enacted. He did, however, present this account of what we might call a concrete state of mind, complete with a challenge: that is, for us to look for the 'deeper meaning' which is suggested by the Yagwoia preoccupation with a 'blissful Self-extinction into primal generative liquidity'. That is it really, for me at least. We have here an amplification of a 'primal', i.e. foundational,

element in every person's psychological development. There are links here to psychologically primitive or, in other words, psychotic levels of functioning. Mostly, in our Western context, we meet this territory through profound defences which aim to maintain the states of undifferentiated identity, absorption, or fusion, which we have been hearing about.

So, as a contribution to our collective response to this challenge to look for the deeper meaning, I would say we could view this material as a representation of an ordinary state of mind. A state of mind which, in fact, is not so far away from, at the very least, aspects of our own experience of ourselves. I would also say that Dr Mimica has given us a wonderful amplification of at least one of the antecedents (as Rosemary Gordon refers to them in *Dying and Creating*, p. 113) of a symbolic function. This is a function vital for the development of ego consciousness; for the living of a creative life, and we all inexorably strive to develop, engage and employ it. It may at first appear paradoxical, but this paper, which seems so much an explication of a passionate but concrete and undifferentiated engagement with one's Self and the world, leads us to think about the development of a meaning-engendering, symbolic attitude: what Jung referred to as the transcendent function.

Just briefly, I want to note two ideas which I hope will contribute to your engagement with this material. The first, which is sequentially related to the image of the ouroboros, is the notion of symbolic equation. The second is a belief really, i.e., that we all need to foster a direct and conscious relationship between life and death if we are to develop a symbolic capacity and a life-engendering, life-engaging creativity. It is through this creativity I believe, that we are able to find meaning in the world and our experience within it. I will end this response with a question for Dr Mimica about the role of aggression in the development of a symbolic capacity.

I was not at first conscious of it, but Dr Mimica actually primed the association to symbolic equation with his title, which begins, literally: Womb =

Tomb = House = Body etc. As we've heard, he uses the notion of ouroboric self-containment to account for and describe the archetypal driving forces functioning in the evolution of the Yagwoia self-conception, their relationships and mode of existence in their world. The ouroboros is an image, I would say, which describes an ideal; an ideal, which for the Yagwoia, is rendered into, and lived as a concrete state of being. It is actualised in an 'all-devouring death and bodily self-dissolution' which blissfully transcends death when the liquefied individual is incorporated into the Yagwoia societal field. By being taken into the bodies of its peoples, the individual member is being (blissfully) preserved. With this state of being, there is little drive towards what Neumann (1988, p. 181) calls the separation of the world parents, a process which is a prelude to the development of ego consciousness and a symbolic capacity which is necessary to make use of this consciousness.

As Samuels (1986, p. 158) reminds us, ouroboric self-contentment is a pre-separation, primal state, where love and aggression or life instinct and death instinct are not differentiated; there is no distinction between the feeder and the fed, between self and other, between inside and out, between conscious and unconscious. It is a primary world dominated by sensations and sensory experiences. It is, as Dr Mimica clearly articulates through his engagement with QANG's experience, a world of dialectical unity. A 'unity of the container and the contained whose irreducible prototype for the Yagwoia is the foetus inside the mother's womb'. Psychologically speaking, once born, the objective in this system is to be re-absorbed back into unconsciousness, experienced as the womb or house.

The ouroboric state of mind is often associated with early infancy, partly because it predominates at that stage of life, and partly because early infancy is such an accessible image to represent beginnings. If the development of ego consciousness is to become an objective that is engaged, the primary unity represented by the ouroboros needs to be broken down and rendered into flesh and blood experience.

This necessity leads us to the realm of symbolic equation, the next 'phase' in the development of a symbolic function. Fordham's notion of de-integration, and Neumann's (1973) 'polarisation and separation of the world parents', both describe the psychological necessities which foster a differentiation out of a primary, ouroboric unconsciousness. Symbolic equation is characterised by a powerful denial of difference, but this very denial indicates that differentiations have already begun to occur. The 'Mother' and 'Father' (and all they represent because they are images, of course) have been separated to some extent. The consequence of a denial of this separation is a state which appears to resemble the dialectical unity which Dr Mimica describes. In the situation of symbolic equation, however, it is the result of two separate objects being thought of as one. There is, however, the beginning of an 'as if' implied. The existence and characteristics of one object are *felt* to be subsumed into the other and are *treated* as such.

To illustrate, there is the famous example, noted by Hannah Segal, of a man who had symbolically equated his penis with the neck of his violin to the extent that, when asked why he refused to perform in a concert, he exclaimed he would not masturbate in public. We can extrapolate and say that, although conscious and unconscious, self and other, life and death are defensively equated, it is courtesy of an anxiety about the consequences of an individuation process (i.e. consciousness) that has already been initiated.

The problem becomes, how one relates to these consequences of a developing Self-consciousness. Sensations and experience can no longer be seen as autonomous, and the development of meaning becomes more prominent. So when Dr Mimica uses the equals sign in his title and text, I found myself wondering whether this could be evidence that he was observing an early point in the evolution out of a state of being dominated by ouroboric contentment. I was similarly curious when he described (in endnote 10) that, although the practice of bodily contact (with a corpse) and smearing with the corpse fluids - particularly of young nubile women and children - continues

into the present, smoking corpses and scooping up the dripping fluids has now been abandoned. I would be very interested to hear if he thought that this might be read as indicating that elements of their practices might be being held more symbolically.

Very briefly, the emergence of the symbolic or transcendent function is the next 'phase' of the development I found myself thinking about in response to Dr Mimica's paper. This is an experience characterised by a tolerance of differences but also by an active curiosity about that difference. It is this conscious interest in the divide between oneself and others (or differing aspects of one's world), that fosters an engagement with both what is personal, separate and unique and what is needed for union with others. It would be interesting to think whether the bliss which is available via this symbolic function, can be compared in any way with the bliss Dr Mimica describes QANG feeling when he was imagining his death and absorption into the ideal 'Amerikan-built' house; his 'absorption into a primal cosmic-maternal container'.

Very briefly again, I wanted to relate the living centrality, which the Yagwoia invest in their relationship between life and death, to our own experience. In her evocatively entitled book *Dying and Creating: A Search for Meaning*, Rosemary Gordon takes this up directly. She says:

'...psychological growth, development and the general self-fulfilment of a person seems inconceivable without conscious acknowledgement of the fact of death. In particular the capacity to symbolise – without which all experience is doomed to be without meaning and significance – is likely to remain fallow and undeveloped unless a man lives his life consciously aware of death.'

(p. 4)

Dr Mimica's work challenges us to think about the significance of a consciously held relationship between life and death, and Rosemary Gordon

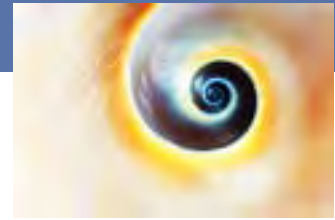


(formally an anthropologist herself), ensures we recognise that this task is as relevant in the centre of Melbourne, as it is in the highlands of PNG.

I would like to finish with my question to Dr Mimica. At the end of your paper you seem to be saying that the Yagwoia made a very active distinction between the fate of a dead enemy, and that of a dead loved one. Particularly, that liquefaction is essential with a loved one, because it creates the feeling possibility of an ouroboric return to the breast and a life-perpetuating ingestion. Chewing, which is a more aggressive activity, seemed to apply to the bodies of the Yagwoia enemies. From my perspective, this aggression could give rise to the splitting processes which are essential for a movement from an ouroboric state of being to a state of symbolic equation. (It separates the ouroboros into a known and an unknown; a living and a dead; or physical experience and spiritual experience.) I wondered if you thought that the Yagwoia (in their intimate relationships) were in this way ‘neutralising’ their aggression?

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# TEACHING JUNG IN THE UNIVERSITY

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*'Perhaps it would not be too much to say that the most crucial problems of the individual and society turn upon the way the psyche functions in regard to spirit and matter.'*

(C.G. Jung, 1947/54: 251)

## JUNG IN THE ACADEMY

Intellectual knowledge and intuitive experience

As a student at Flinders University in South Australia in the early 1970s, I was exposed to Jung's thought as it were 'off-campus', in books and journals that were not on the curriculum, and in conversations with non-academic individuals. I found his work fascinating and wondered why it was not on any of my university courses, and certainly not included in psychology, philosophy or literature, my three selected disciplines. When I tried to explore this problem from the academic side, I was often met with blank stares of disbelief from lecturers and tutors. My psychology professor informed me that Jung 'had been discredited long ago', and my literature tutor said he was of marginal interest only, and not worthy of a place on an already crammed curriculum. The philosophy lecturer pointed out that Jung condemned philosophy, and spent

considerable effort denying that he was a philosopher, and so the discipline did not owe him any favours.

Exploring this same problem from the other side, I was told by a couple of Jungian analysts who lived in Perth and Sydney that Jung did not belong in the university and is best not taught there. One of the strongest advocates of this view was Marie-Louise von Franz, who wrote to me from Zurich that Jung in the university might degenerate into a ‘head trip’ (von Franz, 1976). That is, he might become an object of purely intellectual study, and the emotional and psychological process that makes Jung’s work meaningful – namely, one’s personal encounter with unconscious contents – would be missing. Effectively, this view maintained that analytical psychology in its clinical practice *owned* Jung, and universities could not participate in this ownership, since they could only view Jung externally and superficially, and not from the inside.

Searching through the literature to find explicit statements about the clinical ownership of Jung is a difficult process, and yields few results. Mostly, this problem is expressed in personal remarks and letters and not in the public domain. Andrew Samuels, however, can always be relied on to be outspoken about what others do not divulge. In his Preface to *Post-Jungian Criticism*, Samuels writes:

*‘Certain analysts say that academics cannot really feel or suffer complex emotions because of their precocious intellectual development, which vitiates empathy and sensitivity. As this character assassination of the typical academic continues, she or he cannot really understand most of the concepts derived from Jungian psychology, because their provenance, and certainly their utility, are matters on which only practising clinicians can rule.’*  
(Samuels, 2004: xi-xii)

Samuels is a psychoanalyst and a clinical professor who is sticking up for academics, whereas I am an academic who wishes to support the analysts. I agree with Samuels that we cannot bracket out Jungian studies from the university curriculum on the grounds that clinicians have exclusive ownership of this knowledge. However, I tend to agree with analysts who object to the purely intellectual and therefore incomplete deployment of Jungian psychology in a university setting.

In his writings and interviews Jung made many disparaging remarks about universities. In his famous tribute to Richard Wilhelm, Jung scolded the universities and said that due to their 'sterile rationalism' they have forfeited the right to appear as 'disseminators of light' (Jung, 1930: 86). Time and again Jung accuses the universities of lacking the breadth of vision to grasp the meaning of his analytical psychology. Although I appreciate Andrew Samuels sticking up for my colleagues and me, I think that, in this case, his defence of academic culture is misplaced. The so-called 'character assassination' of the 'typical academic', or rather, the *stereotypical* academic, is probably a good thing, and something that needs to occur. We, in academia, would learn more by listening to Jung's attack than by attempting to protect ourselves from it. Many of us are aware of the one-sided nature of academic life, and see the need for change. We are aware that we are not educating the whole person, that the intuitive side of human experience is bracketed out, and much is not being engaged with in our students' lives as well as in the cultures that we attempt to interpret.

Some education theorists are trying to address this problem, including Bernie Neville in Australia and Jack Miller in Canada, but I am not sure that the system is changing. The students want change, but often their complaints fall on deaf ears. Sometimes they use their favourite word, 'spirituality', to describe what is missing in the university system. By *spirituality* they don't mean anything otherworldly or spooky; they are referring to intuition, creativity, spontaneity, pattern-thinking, feeling, emotion, affect – in short the

‘right hemisphere’ of the brain, which seems to be missing in our system. It is not correct to say that ‘subjective experience’ is missing, because there is a great deal of subjective content, especially in the way universities encourage students to introduce their opinions, ideologies and beliefs into the classroom. Since the impact of feminism, universities have been open to the idea that the ‘personal is political’, that is, the personal is valued, necessary and should be included.

### Intuitive students as outsiders

However, a certain kind of personal experience is still not included – the right-brain dimension of the subjective is not welcomed into essays or discussions. Academics will ask for proof, for reasons for believing an idea or concept, and if the sources of the idea are merely intuitive, it will be dismissed as arbitrary and without foundation. This is perhaps changing among younger academics who have been exposed not only to the feminist revolution but also to the postmodern revolution. Subjectivity and its intuitive depths is more acceptable to a rising generation of thinkers who have been brought up in a fluid, uncertain and complex world, in which simple answers are distrusted and exploration is welcomed. But the reception of intuitive knowledge into the academy is very much dependent on the personality type of the academic concerned, and whether or not a certain level of ‘negative capability’ has been acquired in his or her development.

Intuitive students have several responses to the rationalism of the academy. One is to shut down their intuition, and play the academic game at a purely cognitive level. This means a large part of them is suppressed and does not come out to play. They sense academic rigidities and this narrows their horizons and range of enquiry. Some become cynical and vow to recommence their more intuitive lives once they have completed their studies and have been awarded their ‘piece of paper’. I have particularly found this to be the case among students who are majoring in the Department of Psychology. They become detached from their studies, speak about psychology as ‘rats and

stats', and just manage to do enough to pass the subjects and graduate, but often with low grades.

Others dig in their heels and become dogmatic, asserting their right to believe in this or that religion or esoteric system, such as astrology for instance, and they go into battle against academic culture, often to their detriment. If their intuitive system is defensively bolstered, it can become inflexible and immune to the educational process. Hidden behind a barrier of resistance, their belief is beyond the range of criticism and remains in a primitive condition, not benefiting from the dialectic of critical exchange.

Still other students withdraw from their studies and drop out from university, deciding that it is not for them. If this happens, the university does not benefit from the challenge of intuitive thinking. If the university is to grow and develop, it has to enter into dialogue with the non-rational. If it believes it already has the answers, it is failing as an educational system being no longer open to the new elements that could transform it. It is true that postmodernism has taught academics to be receptive to the Other and to whatever it has to bring. But as we saw with the field of subjectivity, the Other that is capable of being admitted to the academy is heavily determined by the ethos of the time. The Other, for instance, as foreign students, foreign cultures, foreign languages is accepted, but the Other as the non-rational, the intuitive or spiritual side is kept out, unable to be assimilated by the dominant consciousness. To paraphrase Donald Rumsfeld, there are the known unknowns that the system can handle. Then there are the unknown unknowns that remain at the edge, and are governed by taboo. Even an ideology that pretends to embrace the unknown and to accept what has been marginalised is unable to bring everything into its orbit.

### Unseen forces and the intuitive vision

Jungian psychology is still far too scary and unknown to be able to be drawn into the centre of knowledge. What Jung does is disturbing to any system of

secular knowledge. He deconstructs and relativises the human subject that seeks enlightenment. Our seeking for knowledge is experienced as primary and secure, but for Jung it is secondary and uncertain. Prior to our seeking, there are forces at work in the psyche that seek us and invite us into a conversation. For Jung, our search for knowledge is impoverished and truncated if we fail to appreciate that there are forces that seek us. We are not only active subjects in a quest for knowledge, but passive objects of forces that hold sway over us, conditioning our minds and limiting what we can know. Jung's is a neo-Platonic challenge to the Aristotelian academy, and his challenge shakes the foundations of the academy to the core. Much like Derrida or Levinas, Jung doubts the solidity of our knowing, and he even doubts the value of our knowing if we fail to discern the forces that shape us.

The real problem Jung poses to the academy is suggested in this passage of his late writings:

*'In the realm of consciousness we are our own masters; we seem to be the "factors" themselves. But if we step through the door of the shadow we discover with terror that we are the objects of unseen factors. To know this is decidedly unpleasant, for nothing is more disillusioning than the discovery of our own inadequacy. It can even give rise to primitive panic, because, instead of being believed in, the anxiously-guarded supremacy of consciousness, which is in truth one of the secrets of human success, is questioned in the most dangerous way.'* (Jung, 1934/54: 49)

The academy operates mainly in the heroic mode, developing the boundaries of knowledge and science, inspiring the knowing subject with confidence, and presenting the world as a puzzle to be solved. It uses heroic metaphors such as 'conquering' the unknown, 'exploding' myths of the past, and 'extending' its borders. A successful PhD is a work which goes to the frontiers and pushes forward the perimeter of the known world. This, to paraphrase Jung, is one of the secrets of human success. But Jungian thought 'questions' this enterprise

in 'the most dangerous way'. Jung says that to take unseen forces into account induces not only resistance and defensiveness, but primitive panic. He is claiming that forces which cannot be seen or proved are observing us, and to the heroic ego this looks like a paranoid viewpoint that has to be overcome, or a medieval superstition that has to be exposed as unscientific.

What makes the situation of Jungian thought more difficult is that we only gain 'evidence' for the existence of these unseen factors indirectly, via the subjective experience of dreams, fantasies, intuitions, hunches, visions – and these forms of mental activity are viewed as suspect or invalid by an heroic consciousness. Jung's sense of conviction comes from the night side of the psyche, from its lunar or starry aspect, whereas the university is driven by solar knowing that arises from the clear light of day: empirical world, laboratory testing, evidence-based research. The world of solar knowing has the opportunity to open its borders to the wisdom of the night, the knowledge of the unconscious, or it can shut down its borders and declare such wisdom to be mere superstition.

Postmodernism presents the best historical opportunity that has ever occurred to Jungian thought. If the prevailing paradigm can see that its embrace of the Other has to include the subterranean, the intuitive and the non-rational, then Jung is automatically in favour. The poetics of being, and the shadowy forces of psyche and cosmos, are best revealed under the partial, fragmentary and liminal glow of the starry night.

### Who trains the teachers?

It is undoubtedly the case that the royal road to gaining knowledge of the unconscious remains psychoanalytic psychotherapy. When, in 1982, I was fortunate enough to win a post-doctoral fellowship to the United States, I elected to work with James Hillman in Dallas. I was not sure at the time just what our relationship would be – I suppose I envisaged some supervisory sessions, and that Hillman would read my current writings and comment



on them. Hopefully, there would be seminars on depth psychology, dream workshops and others writers and analysts to talk to. Neither of us really knew what a 'post-doctoral' relationship meant, or what it might entail. After a month of these arrangements, Hillman admitted that I would probably find going into analysis with him to be more fruitful and rewarding than merely 'talking about' the unconscious in our intellectual meetings. Besides, he said he was getting bored with our exchanges, since we were not working directly with what he called the 'soul' – thus seeming to reinforce von Franz's notion that purely intellectual involvement degenerates into a 'head trip'. I wrote to my sponsors in New York and asked if they would agree to the new arrangement. But I was careful not to use the terms *patient* or *client* in describing my new relationship with Hillman. This would not have met the criteria of the postdoctoral award and did not sound academic enough!

It is true that I gained much insight into the workings of the unconscious through my experience of psychotherapy. The subjective experience remains a primary window onto the so-called 'objective' psyche. Although I can hardly insist that my colleagues who want to teach Freud or Jung should go into analysis, I do not know how I would have gained the necessary insights for my academic career without the experience of being – let's face it – a *patient* in psychotherapy. I know some of my colleagues do go into analysis, but it is mentioned in hushed and quiet tones, as if a dark secret that should not be made public. Certainly, the whole idea about how academics can qualify themselves to teach Jung in the university has not been discussed at any level, either in the universities or in the training institutes. Many of us are self-proclaimed authorities and this raises ethical and intellectual problems which will have to be dealt with. Even my brush with analysis did not necessarily 'qualify' me to teach Jung, and no one was asked to judge my analysis or determine whether or not it was successful.

### An experiment in teaching

After returning to Australia from the United States, I took up an academic post at La Trobe University in Melbourne, and met a colleague in the Philosophy Department, Robert Farrell, who suggested we should join forces and establish a semester course in Jungian psychology. I was based in the English Department, but we conducted our teaching experiment in a program called Interdisciplinary Studies. This seemed like an ideal place to teach Jung, whose work and vision encompass at least eight disciplines, including psychology, classical studies, mythological studies, comparative religion, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and the history of ideas.

Indeed, one of the reasons why Jung is not taught in the university is because his work does not fit any specific academic discipline. Staff in the Psychology Department are likely to refer to it as Religious Studies, and lecturers in Religious Studies are likely to say it is definitely science and not religion. Philosophers regard the work of Jung as not squarely in the philosophical tradition, and Jung himself often said his work was not philosophy but empirical science. However, the empirical scientists are likely to point out that Jung's work is highly speculative, intuitive, and philosophical. As a doctoral candidate in Jungian studies, I was shuffled back and forth between the English, Anthropology and Psychology Departments and eventually back to English Literature. The psychology professor referred to Jung as a 'literary critic', and thus I incorporated the work into literary studies.

Jung's confinement to the Arts and Humanities is, let us hope, temporary. It is an interesting place for him to be, but he cannot be confined to these disciplines. He is more than myth and literature; he is, or represents, an amalgam of *mythos* and *logos*, story and science. In truth, he does not belong to the Arts faculty or to the Science faculty – he belongs to *both*. He belongs to a university system that does not yet exist, one in which the whole of life is studied and taken seriously. Jung is the scientist *and* artist of life integration. His thinking is organic, holistic, literary and scientific. As such, there is no

ready category for him. He is a scholar in the grand style, and his extraordinary breadth makes most academics feel humbled. Academics are often said to know more and more about less and less, but Jung works in reverse: his momentum is centrifugal, encompassing more fields in a desire to understand complex reality. At one stage Jung wanted to call his discipline ‘complex psychology’, and one can see why.

There is always the grave danger, however, that an intellect such as Jung’s, which seemingly fits everywhere, will be said to belong nowhere. Like God in creation, Jung in the academy can almost be said to be *felt everywhere* and *seen nowhere*. But when integrative sciences finally emerge in our universities, which they must eventually with the rise of ecological and organic thinking, we will find that Jung will discover his place in a new paradigm that will appreciate his synthetic style and encompassing worldview.

Robert Farrell and I called our subject ‘Jungian psychology’, but there was a protest from the Psychology Department that we were encroaching on their territory. I responded to this protest with a brief lecture on the etymology of the word *psychology*, pointing out its true meaning as the *logos of the psyche* or *soul*, and suggesting to the Psychology Department that they had left *psyche* out of the study of human behaviour. The protest was eventually dropped, and we were free to develop our own subject, although it was noted that our growing student numbers was the result of frequent defections from Psychology to Interdisciplinary Studies. In due course, Psychology dropped its antagonism, and decided to include us in its range of subject choices, so that students majoring in Psychology could study Jung as part of their Behavioural Science degree. The popularity of our subject meant we could not be defeated in a university system in which *numbers* mean so much, and so we were incorporated.

As Robert and I designed our subject, we spoke about many things including the objection of Marie-Louise von Franz: How could we do this so that it did

not lose the value and intensity of Jung's vision? Obviously, we could not play the role of *de facto* therapists in the academic setting, and yet we agreed that this subject would need to be *different*. Neither of us had the time, energy, or expertise to engage the students' interior processes, and yet we agreed that we might be able to teach the subject in such a way that the non-rational dimension of life could be incorporated and assumed into the subject.

### Educating with psyche

Robert Farrell and I have taught the Jungian course for nearly twenty years, and we feel that we have done so with reasonably good results. I am not talking about results in the narrow sense of high grades, but in the sense of having encouraged our students to engage with the unconscious and to take the non-rational side of their experience into account. We have concluded that the success or otherwise of this teaching depends on the way in which Jung is taught and the attitude of the teacher. A Jungian subject has to be taught with *psychological* intelligence, and this may not be the same as intellectual intelligence, since it involves an emotional component. If the teacher can be open to the depths of the psyche and receptive to its autonomous and living reality, then a certain reverence toward the psyche can be found which prevents the academic experience from falling into a head-trip.

The teacher of Jungian psychology, if he or she is to be effective, has to possess a certain feature, which we would call *vulnerability*. The teacher needs to demonstrate that he or she is open to the unconscious and takes it seriously. This attitude has a pedagogical significance in the same way that a priest or minister, for instance, cannot deliver an effective sermon unless he or she has a firmly developed faith. The teacher of Freudian or Jungian psychology needs to be in a relationship with the unconscious, and in that relationship the grounded, human meaning of the work is to be found. As Jung wrote of the impact of the analyst on the patient: 'You can exert no influence if you are not susceptible to influence' (Jung, 1929: 163). If one is susceptible to the

unconscious, the academic subject does not degenerate into empty intellectualism, no matter how intensely intellectual the teaching style becomes.

Being a good Jungian teacher does not involve being anti-intellectual, but rather involves a commitment to the psyche which, if missing, renders the intellectual material hollow. As soon as the teacher conveys a convincing sense that he or she is open to the depths of the psyche, something therapeutic happens in the classroom which is quite uncanny and difficult to describe. There is a shift in climate and focus, a deepening of engagement and, in this context, the learning experience becomes therapeutic. What this attitude allows is a different kind of thinking, one which is not purely external and ideological, but which enables thoughts to appear in a holding, reflective space. Such an attitude enables intuitions to appear, and barely-formed or half-formed thoughts are allowed into the classroom, so that a 'climate of validity' develops which encourages students to be intuitive and thoughtful contributors. This allows hunches, non-rational associations and unusual thoughts to be expressed, and encourages a 'hermeneutics of affirmation' that is frequently missing in purely rational exchanges.

Naturally, the critical faculty must be close at hand, but it does not have to pounce immediately, killing thoughts before they have been born. It is this Winnicottian 'holding' capacity that marks the Jungian subjects that I have taught from other, more typically academic, subjects. Perhaps the truly radical feature of this kind of teaching is that it challenges the clinical notion that such exchanges can only take place privately between analyst and analysand. The Jungian model of analysis is basically a form of *initiation*: in a one-to-one dialogue – hermetic, sealed off from others – an encounter with the unconscious takes place. But the initiatory experience can work, almost as well, in a more public and collective setting, given the right conditions. I do not imagine that the public or group experience can replace the clinical one, but it can supplement or complement it and, perhaps, even prepare the way for it. I have noted, for instance, that a number of my former students have gone

on to become clinical analysts. The point is that public and shared forms need to be found, so that a broader range of people can be allowed to make contact with the subtle and hidden side of our experience.

### The religious factor

If, as Jung claims, the individuation process and contact with numinous archetypes is *natural* and does not always have to be artificially induced in analysis (Jung, 1917/1926/1943: 187), there must be numerous ways to engage this process. In the past, there were religious methods to transcend the conscious realm and engage the unconscious, including ritual, ceremonies, liturgy, conversion experiences and worship. In addition, the arts and creativity have always offered doorways into the non-rational side of experience, especially music, poetry and theatre. Romance and relationships are also key avenues into the depths of human nature. In other words, any form of activity that is creative, intuitive or open to the non-rational is a potential location for an encounter with the unconscious.

The increasingly rational nature of modern life has had a destructive impact on traditional forms of transcendence. Typically, the modern person has little or no access to religion, ritual, worship or poetry, and even romance and relationships have become attenuated, commercialised and clichéd. Many of our non-rational outlets have been blocked, devalued or destroyed. This is one reason why, I believe, young adults are looking more to education to provide what was once provided by other means, namely, an engagement with the ‘spiritual’ dimension of experience. The demise of organised religion, especially in highly educated nations, has put increasing pressure on education to offer some entrée into the transcendent. This is an ironic situation, because education, under the influence of scientific rationalism, is largely responsible for the demise of religion in the first place. The repressed returns, and it returns to secular places that are not prepared to deal with what turns up.

Like it or not, teaching Jungian psychology activates the religious dimension of our lives. When we acknowledge that we are in the presence of something greater than ourselves, something unseen yet which 'sees us' (Jung, 1934/54: 49) we are in the religious domain. We shift from being active subjects who pursue knowledge, to objects of an invisible, autonomous reality. This has to be handled carefully by teachers and students alike. To call into being, or into academic consideration, a numinous and powerful *other*, a life which lives us, is to move directly into the primordial experience of religion. Along with this *invocation* come all the typical problems of religious experience.

The main problem for the teacher is not to identify with the wisdom that is generated by this process. The teacher has to watch his or her reactions, and make sure that inflation does not occur, that he or she does not become the classroom guru, the fount of all wisdom. Obviously there is an inescapable sense of reward and elevation in introducing a sense of spirit into students' lives, but the teacher has to contain this feeling and not allow it to gain the upper hand. As soon as this feeling wins, we lose the educational plot, and our integrity is in jeopardy. It is fine to be an instrument of knowledge, but not to identify oneself with this knowledge and become grandiose.

### Contradictory responses to the numinous

For their part, students frequently use Jung's psychology as a way into the numinous, partly because so few avenues are available to them. However, not all students of Jung are desirous in this way. The very rational and the very religious seem to share a certain antipathy toward Jungian approaches to the numinous. The first, the rationalists, may sense something irrational and crazy in any talk of the 'numinous', and strongly defend themselves against it. They will reject the invitation to journey into the numinous, finding it repellent, regressive or even anti-human. The second, the very religious, will often sense a 'rival religion' in the Jungian approach, and remove themselves from it. They tend to say, 'No thanks, I already have my religion and certainly don't need another one'. Not that Jungian psychology is a religion (Gundry, 2006);

rather, it is an approach to religious experience, but fans and foes alike do not always respect this distinction.

But the vast majority of students enrolled in my courses are eager to discover a sense of the numinous in life, world and self. This creates a typical range of problems, including a tendency to *believe* Jung's psychology too readily. Some students want to turn Jung into the religion they never had. This can severely limit the capacity of the student to think critically. Instead, some adopt Jung as a religious system, and use the technical terms such as anima, archetype, Self, collective unconscious, as articles of faith, speaking about them as if they were real objects in time and space, rather than metaphors for processes of the psyche. My role here is difficult, since I see myself performing a double function. First, I introduce students to the range of Jungian terms, and try to speak up for those terms. Second, I have to cut across the literal belief in those terms, and remind students that these are concepts in a theory of mind and, as such, are merely provisional and fluid.

This can create emotional and pedagogical difficulties in the classroom, as some students sense that I 'don't really believe' what I am teaching. The *converts* to Jungian psychology do not like my intellectual insistence that the terms are metaphors and not necessarily realities. They definitely want them to be *real* and sometimes accuse me of not being Jungian enough! References to the philosophy of knowledge, and to the problem of the reification of concepts, are often not enough to dissuade them from a certain kind of rigid belief. I have accepted that such belief may be a necessary phase that some have to go through, because the awakening of spirit seems to demand that they believe literally in the system that provides them with a glimpse into transcendent reality.

Contact with the numinous, with what is infinite and *Other*, is fraught with reactions, resistances, defences and enthusiasms. The stability of the ego is relativised and threatened by the realisation that it is not master of its house.



Some students give away their ego authority too readily, while others defend against the *Other* as if from hostile attack. The numinous calls for a response and the educated ego of the West often responds through resistance and denial. It is dismissed as an *illusion* by the rational mind, or viewed as a reified *object* by those who have come under its spell. Either way, presenting a balanced apologetic to students can be difficult. What emotions will the numinous arouse? How will it impact upon their present beliefs and attitudes? By the time most academics have reflected on these questions, they have realised that the task is daunting, and it is best not to bother. As one academic said to me, 'To teach Jung is to look for trouble'.

Jung writes of the capacity of the unconscious to paralyse our critical faculty and hold us in its power (Jung, 1928: 262). As mentioned, it is not uncommon for students to fall under Jung's spell, before they reach a more mature relationship to his ideas (Tacey, 1997). But reaching this mature level can be difficult and time-consuming. It is hard to be objective about Jung, if one is responding through a *complex* and not through the mind. It may take some time for the mind to catch up, because the complex works automatically and conditions our responses before the mind has a chance to think it through.

Rudolf Otto argues that the numinous inspires dual responses such as fascination and repulsion:

*'These two qualities, the daunting and the fascinating, now combine in a strange harmony of contrasts, and the resultant dual character of the numinous consciousness, to which the entire religious development bears witness, is at once the strangest and most noteworthy phenomenon in the whole history of religion.'* (Otto, 1923: 31)

Otto describes the numinous as a paradoxical *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. Some are drawn to it with overwhelming desire, and others are repelled by it with an equal and opposite force. Fear and fascination of the numinous

are both found in student responses to Jung and become difficult pedagogical issues. Do we have the capacity to deal with these responses in the university? Generally not, but if we are able to identify an emotional response as soon as possible, the teacher may have a chance to dialogue with it. In my experience, uncritical adulation is more common than hostile rejection. This can be contained by the teacher, but other staff members are likely to point to this problem and announce that the Jungian subject produces disciples rather than critical students. This may increase the prejudice that Jungians are part of a 'worldwide cult' (Noll, 1994: 3).

Jung seems to act as a trigger for what I have called the *spirituality complex* of the secular West (Tacey, 2004). Once this complex is activated, it asks for objects of belief, and Jung is a likely target for such projections. But, after the student has become adjusted to the life of the spirit, he or she often finds their way to religious, mythological, or cosmological symbols, and Jung is let off the hook. Then Jung can be returned to reality, and seen as an inspired but limited investigator of the psyche, rather than a god or idol. In technical terms, Jung acts as a transference object while we are sorting out our relationship with spirit. Studying and reading Jung activates our need to believe, which we previously did not know we had because this knowledge was withheld by the secular ego and rendered unconscious.

## TEACHING STYLES

### Towards a taxonomy of Jungian studies

What follows is a serious but semi-humorous account of various teaching styles in university programs on Jungian studies. Over the past twenty-five years, I have travelled extensively to witness first-hand how other academics are dealing with the challenge of teaching Jung. In every case, the success or otherwise of our efforts seems to be determined by our approach to the numinous. If we ignore *spirit* and the numinous, as is sometimes found in

academic study, we are not teaching Jung properly. Rather, we are excluding the essence of his approach, which relates to the numinous (Tacey, 2006b).

But how do we, in the post-Christian West, in a university system governed by secular values, make the numinous convincing and present? How do we point to its existence without indulging in the reification of its 'reality'? How do we handle our personal cynicism toward the unseen dimension? Just as importantly, how do we educate ourselves to become critical of the numinous, rather than fall for it with unthinking devotion? How can we avoid dualisms and complexes when we step into this realm? How can we teach Jung's work when we do not yet have the cultural and religious forms to understand it?

I have discerned four main approaches to the teaching of Jung. Each could be seen to be governed by a particular 'god' or archetype. I am sure that there are more than four, and I have left others out, but this, at least, will set the ball rolling toward a taxonomy of Jungian Studies:

1. Fitting in or Conforming      ruled by the Father, Senex, or Old Man
2. Updating or Reconstructing      ruled by Hermes, the Trickster
3. Transforming or Overturning      ruled by Dionysus, the Reveller
4. Keeping Pure or Standing Still      ruled by Disciple and Acolyte

As with all taxonomic categories, these styles are almost never found in pure form. As one sketches out these archetypal styles, they invariably become somewhat clichéd and stereotypical, but we have to take that into account.

### Fitting in or conforming

Here, the desire is to fit Jung into the university system, rather than to challenge the system by advocating new knowledge. Analytical psychology under this influence sets itself the task of conforming to prevailing standards, expectations and assumptions. The keyword for this approach is 'respectability'.

The aim is to show how *respectable* Jungian psychology is, ‘if only’ academic scholars took the time to understand the nature of Jungian thought. If scholars sat and reflected, they would see that the exclusion of Jung from the academy has been based on a misunderstanding. This approach is rational, cool, and collected; it is non-combative and diplomatic. It seeks to demonstrate the validity of Jungian psychology by fitting it alongside other theories and knowledges.

Its aim is also to demonstrate that the exclusion of Jung has been based on misconceptions: Jung is not a mystic, but a sound and worthy scientist of the more difficult reaches of mind. These depths are not ‘mystical’ but are accessible to scientific analysis that is properly attuned to the mind’s deep structures. This approach emphasises his scientific credentials, his career as a leading-edge psychiatrist, his philosophical education, and his empirical approach to mental illness and social problems.

Archetypally, this approach is ruled by the senex or old man, in its creative aspect (accommodating and including) and negative aspect (manipulating and controlling). This approach teaches the ‘nuts and bolts’ of Jung, without indicating that the work is ultimately about self-transformation. Students are given academic information, but not the tools to engage in self-transformation. The brighter students complain about the dryness and aridity of this approach, once they find out more about the field. The drying-out effect of this approach is part of the long-standing opposition that many analysts have to bringing Jung into the academy. Divorced from the mystery dimension of the unconscious, is ‘knowledge about’ Jung useful? Can Jung be understood without the kind of experience we gain from the encounter with the numinous? As a slogan reads on the walls of the Jung Institute in Zurich, ‘A little Jung is worse than none at all’.

Ironically, in our desire to include Jung in the academy, we have to be careful that we are not ‘excluding’ him – or his essential message – all over again.

If our pedagogical style is too narrow, we are not including enough of his work. If I can use a metaphor from physics, it is as if we are trying to pull a single particle into the university, only Jung is not a particle, but a wave of vast extension.

This is an emotional and pedagogical problem of the *senex* archetype. The *senex* (in men and women) thinks of itself as being important and in control. It won't risk the self-disclosure that transformation demands, since it involves contact with the *anima* or *animus*, the revealer of the inner life. The more identified the teacher is with the *persona*, the more unconscious and distant the *anima/animus* will be. To teach the art of transformation demands that the teacher shows that he or she is vulnerable to the numinous and receptive to the soul. We stand before the sacred not as someone in control, but as someone who receives. If the teacher is not prepared to risk the controlling stance, to let the guard slip, to show vulnerability, there can be no teaching with soul. As Jung once said of Freud, he was not prepared to 'risk his authority', and as a result he 'lost it altogether' (Jung, 1961: 182).

The other problem with *senex* pedagogy is that in its conservative interest in scientific standards, empirical evidence, rational proof, it fails to see that the academy has been radically transformed by postmodern knowledge. Many of the old academic ideals, such as objectivity, precision and exactness in scientific method, have been overturned by postmodern thought and feminist theory, at least in the social and human sciences, if not in the exact sciences. To some extent, the image of the academy that the *senex* holds no longer exists. This is because the trickster Hermes, the central archetype of the postmodern era, has got into the academy and turned things around (Neville, 1992).

### Updating or reconstructing

Hermes governs the second teaching style I have discerned, although Hermes can outwit himself. The emphasis in this approach is on 'reconstructing' Jung in light of progressive discourses that have taken place in the social sciences,

arts and humanities. If *respectability* is the keyword for the senex, here the overriding concern is *updating*. Unlike the senex, Hermes is neither respectable nor dignified, but he is certainly wily, proficient and fast-moving.

Hermes is the fleet-footed messenger who moves between worlds, and he brings to the Jungian world messages from other knowledges, and introduces Jungian concerns to worlds that have never before been interested in Jung! His concern is with potential connections and creative dialogues. Hermes, the trickster, adopts the view that an unreconstructed Jung cannot be admitted to the academy. Whatever 'Jung' may signify to Jungians, he has to be reconstructed before he can be authentically brought before the university. This style may be paradoxical: it may even side with the established views of the academy, and argue against 'Jung' in his unreconstructed form. This approach may be embarrassed by unreconstructed Jung, and seek to differentiate a 'post-Jungian' from an earlier, classically 'Jungian' position.

Whether this approach is post-Jungian or not is a matter which has never been discussed. Most people accept this appellation at face value, but I think it needs to be questioned – and doubted. An argument could be made that the so-called post-Jungians are either non-Jungians or pre-Jungians. The 'post-Jungian' approach seeks to re-read Jung with current views in mind, often critical of the ways in which *classical* Jungian thought falls short of contemporary values. It critiques the Jungian work, especially in terms of the 'big three' preoccupations of the academy: class, gender, race. It seeks to revise Jung's metapsychology and his philosophical underpinnings in an effort to bring these into line with contemporary thought and social/political theory. This approach might employ as its credo: 'reparation works best in the open', and it enjoins scholars and critics alike to enter into dialogue with 'post-Jungians' in a mutually enriching work of cultural reconstruction.

But with all this fancy footwork and adaptation to contemporary concerns, essential elements of the Jungian opus are not addressed. What happens to

the numinous? Where is the divine in the psyche, in gender, in race? With the emphasis mainly on the socially constructed nature of gender, race and class, it has not been easy to affirm the presence of the divine in what is read as a relativistic and ever-shifting social landscape. The gods are viewed as one of the more embarrassing features of Jungian thought. Sometimes, a post-Jungian scholar will gesture to a feminist-pleasing ‘Goddess’ (but never a patriarchal God), in the hope that this addresses the need for numinosity. This approach often says: we will redeem Jung’s psychology, but not bother about his (largely Christian) theology, which is stale and unfashionable.

But this won’t do. The trickster outwits himself at this point. Jung’s religious attitude is *not* an added extra, an *optional* element that we can do without. We cannot just say his religion is a residue of his conservative Swiss-German-Christian nature and leave it at that. Radical ‘post-Jungians’ have never known what to do with Jung’s religiousness, except to make excuses for it, or to deflect attention to other issues, such as his alleged anti-Semitism. Moreover, in the contemporary university such left-wing Jungians find no intellectual support for Jung’s religiousness, since religion is usually relegated to the *right-wing* of politics (Schmidt, 2005). Leftist intellectuals, whether Jungian or not, still do not know what to do with religion, other than hope it will go away.

Jung’s work seems to call for a religious *left* that does not yet exist on campus. The religious scholars in the university, few as they are, are often very conservative. The major exception to this rule is Western-style Buddhism, which seems to be politically progressive. Most progressive thinkers like to typecast Jung as irredeemably conservative and stuffy, but the implications of his psychology are radical (Tacey, 2006a). Certainly, as mentioned, the spiritual dimension of Jung cannot be trifled with; it is integral to his thought, and any discourse that does not place it centre-stage is not Jungian, not even post-Jungian.

### Transforming or overturning

The third approach focuses on the numinous dimension, but often has little to say about social and political themes, and little concern for academic traditions. Its interest is in the inner life and the cultivation of soul. An exception to this rule is where Jungian visionaries suddenly decide that the outer world has ‘soul’, and behave almost as religious converts to political and social realities (Hillman and Ventura, 1993).

Transforming or overturning is iconoclastic and rebellious. Its tutelary deity appears to be Dionysus, the god who loosens and transforms, who gleefully overturns prevailing morality in order to bring a larger world to birth. Dionysus accepts that the work of bringing Jung into the university is a subversive act, i.e. a counter-cultural enterprise. He is not interested in conforming Jung to existing cultural or academic paradigms, but in challenging the models of knowledge that have kept Jung out of the academy. His concern is not with *respectability* or *updating*, but with *revolutionising* the system.

The third approach likes to employ language that flies in the face of the academy, using terms like ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’ that the academy considers obsolete. I know a Jungian teacher who gave a staff seminar on the gods and goddesses of the psyche, and some of his colleagues left the room. The revolutionary approach often decides that the academy ‘lacks soul’, that it privileges knowledge but not wisdom, that it is repressive toward what counts, that it avoids an encounter with ultimate questions. This approach is inspired but is also what Jung would call ‘inflated’. But whether arrogant or inspired, it fails to see that the academy has been secular for many years, and if it wants to bring the numinous into the system, it has to be tactful and present an appropriate apologetic for the gods.

Scholars of the third approach frequently scorn what is current and contemporary and often devalue these concerns as merely fashionable. They dislike the contemporary and are in love with antiquity. Their models of how to live



are often pre-modern, ancient or primordial. Favoured sources of inspiration are the Florentine Renaissance, the Perennial Philosophy or Medieval Alchemy – which tend to look like hocus-pocus to the modern university. The third approach believes that a primordial truth can be found, and this is an inspiration for championing such traditions as alchemy, shamanism, Neoplatonism, metaphysics and wisdom literature.

Scholars who follow this way have difficult and often lonely careers. They are generally not liked by their colleagues (apart from a few close associates), and develop ill feeling and rivalry in the workplace. They may exacerbate the problem by their repeated criticisms of mainstream knowledges. Because they celebrate soul and spirit they are often given a high profile by the media, and this rubs salt into the wounds of their colleagues, who can be beset by envy. However, such teachers are often highly successful with students, who view them as inspired prophets on campus. They form the ‘Dead Poets Society’ of the Jungian academic world, but they often get too entangled in the emotional currents and sexual complications of students’ lives. The senex persona is dropped in the name of ‘soul’, but sometimes propriety and professional boundaries are dropped as well.

### Keeping pure or standing still

There is also a purist approach, and this group tries to have as little to do with the intellectual life of the academy as possible. They do not stir the pot like the Dionysian soul-makers. They hope that if they confine themselves to a Jungian bubble, the rest of the intellectual world will evaporate. They are suspicious of postmodernity, do not like Derrida or Foucault, ignore the post-Freudians, never quote Freud, and try as hard as possible to keep themselves pure for Jung. Their job is to inform people about Jung – a kind of information bureau on campus. They might gently scan the history of ideas to find parallels to Jung, emphasising such figures as William James and Spinoza, but never engaging in quarrels, fights or vigorous intellectual debates.

I can't think of an archetype that governs this approach, because it is not passionate enough to warrant an archetype or instinct. But I can think of a stereotype: the disciple or acolyte. This style, as Jung observes (Jung, 1928: 260) is secretly identified with the master, and hides this identification under a mask of subservience to his teachings. Such teachers do not talk about Jung's scientific research, but about his 'findings', as if they are commandments written in stone or brought down from on high. The problem with this approach is that it is not doing Jung any favours. It is keeping him hermetically sealed off from the world, away from the critical debates, making him almost gloriously irrelevant to intellectual life.

Teachers in this mode often behave as converts and their students are sometimes expected to become Jungians, rather than critical readers of Jung. Students rightly complain that this approach is claustrophobic, although it may suit the kind of student who is looking for something to believe in. Teachers in this mode are not always liked by their colleagues, who see them as priests or nuns of an esoteric sect. Often this style is short-lived, because it is sometimes a phase that people go through, a moment in which they fall in love with the numinous as revealed by Jung. This tendency of the work is savagely, and at times unfairly, attacked by Richard Noll (1994). However, Noll at least does the Jungian field the service of making this propensity a public and political/intellectual issue.

Once again, this problem is largely a religious issue. How to incorporate the numinous in the secular academy? Jung evokes and stirs a spirituality complex; some reject him out of hand, others revere him as a prophet. Converts do not know how to gain the necessary critical distance, since criticism is viewed as a transgression or heresy, further signs that our spirituality complex has been activated. If Jungian purists are incapable of genuine criticism, their colleagues will argue that they are indoctrinating students, making them incapable of living politically aware and astute lives. This sets up the conditions for fundamentalism and intolerance, and arguably education should work in

the opposite direction. The Jungian cult on campus never lasts more than about three or four years, because the Dean moves to close it down and lack of connection to the academic mainstream proves fatal.

### Diversity and experimentation

These four approaches cannot be pinned down to particular personalities in the world today, but rather represent leanings or biases in the teaching of Jung. The first approach seeks to *conform*, the second to *reform*, the third strives to *transform*, and the fourth seeks merely to *inform*. It is sometimes the case that the one academic will experience elements of all four styles and approaches. Basically, they can be reduced to two larger categories: one and four are static styles, while two and three are dynamic. Number one is the static and number two is the dynamic form of adjusting to the academic world. Number three is the dynamic form and number four the static form of adjusting to the numinous.

Hostility between various camps and teachers could be attributed largely to these differing styles. The fast-moving trickster finds the disciple or acolyte to be static and uninteresting. The trickster finds the senex boring, but may be too diplomatic to say so. The senex finds the trickster to be slippery and deceitful, and the transformer is seen as exhibitionistic and narcissistic. The Dionysian transformers find all other types to be superficial and defensive, and speak of the 'spirit of Jung' in proclaiming their authority to revolutionise. The purists argue that all the other styles are in danger of losing the plot, and they ask that the focus be returned to the *Collected Works*.

Sometimes transformers push the system too far and are in danger of losing their jobs. The university might decide that soul-makers are actually trouble-makers and that it can get on better without them. Transformers can reinvent themselves more modestly as updaters or reformers, where they can hold down their jobs, and where passions are cooled by the need to enter into dialogue with contemporary concerns. The acolytes are also nudged onward

to new styles, partly due to criticism from others, since the university will not tolerate an exclusive bubble world for very long. A Jungian information booth is best dealt with by the various Jung clubs and not by universities.

But the field is new and still being born. There will be other styles to discover and more problems to elaborate. We must expect this diversity in Jungian studies and, if possible, hold the tension between conflicting positions. The recent establishment of an International Association for Jungian Studies, which focuses on the teaching of Jung in university and college contexts, will do much to provide a forum for discussion and critical reflection on teaching styles, pedagogical issues, and the meaning and purpose of Jung in the university. Readers are invited to consult the website, which can be found in my list of references.

In conclusion, we serve Jung best not by turning his work into a fixed ideology, but by playfully deconstructing it for the new era. We have to deconstruct his ideas about society, politics, gender, race, class, but in so doing we cannot afford to *eradicate* the numinous to suit the needs of a secular academy. The task is to engage in a resacralising project, even as deconstruction is underway. To use one of Jung's key phrases, we have to 'dream the myth onward' (Jung, 1940: 76). As we move the work into the academy, we have to avoid the various pitfalls, including getting stuck in the senex and leaving out the soul, becoming intoxicated by updating and leaving out the numinous, becoming identified with the soul and condemning the world, or being stuck in a ghetto and ignoring the intellectual tradition. These problems are not unique to Jungians. They are found wherever the numinous raises its head in a secular context.

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*Response*

to David Tacey

*Teaching Jung in the University***GILES CLARK***ANZSJA, Sydney, Australia*

I was initially surprised to hear that such culturally capacious classical Jungians as Marie-Louise von Franz (and others) thought that ‘analytical psychology in its clinical practice owned Jung’. I thought that there was a family culture shared by von Franz, her school and Hillmanian archetypal psychologists; and I knew that the latter most certainly do not think that Jung ought to be kept to the consulting room, but that his psychology and therapy is a far wider endeavour. So it was good to hear Andrew Samuels, David and others argue that ‘we cannot bracket out Jungian studies from the university curriculum on the grounds that the clinicians have exclusive ownership of this knowledge’. I have myself much valued and enjoyed teaching the History of Ideas to the Jungian MA course at the University of Western Sydney: an analyst teaching a non-clinical, academic subject outside my professional field.

I have always felt, and argued, that a subject or field can draw upon another discipline as a secondary source to try to help itself, but that the borrowing subject had better not claim to usefully teach the drawn-upon discipline anything. They do not need me or us, unless they ask for such support. For example, I use certain philosophies and philosophers to enhance my analytic thinking, but I certainly do not think philosophers need Jung, Freud or

any form of psychoanalysis. Similarly, some Jungian analysts and academics utilise neuroscience, but neuroscience/neuroscientists certainly do not need Jung! This is, or would be, an embarrassingly arrogant imperialism and ‘deformation professional’.

Until reading and hearing David’s seminal paper I often wondered and worried about, not ‘can’, but ‘how does’ the academy teach Jung? And, what or which Jung? And how to do this without the process becoming a wild therapy of group and individual? Since Jungian studies are bound to touch and evoke deep psychic disturbances, confusions and desires, how are these to be managed and how do they fit into academic processes, requirements and goals? The study of Jungian and post-Jungian psychology with those who initially know little or nothing, let alone those who are already epistemophilically curious and interested (for some reason or another), is bound to become an emotionally-loaded, demanding and difficult therapeutic endeavour at some level; the problem is that it cannot be dealt with analytically by academic teachers within an academic setting.

Well, David has gone a good way to addressing and answering these tricky matters. There is much I can take up and support enthusiastically. I like his typology of rationalists, intuitives and withdrawers; I like the idea of Jung as a neo-Platonic disturber of the Aristotelian academic mind; I am, as always, roused by the issue of the numinous, the religious or spiritual dimension, and ‘soul-making’; I am intrigued by his taxonomy of Jungian studies and its archetypal ‘rulers’ - especially since this aims to demonstrate how rational and respectable Jungian psychology is! And, as for David’s comparative and critical approach to the ‘revolutionary wisdom’ of the not-only-antiquarian vitality of neo-Platonism, soul-speak, alchemy and so on - this is a carefully thought-through and creatively explained perspective on such controversial matters.

At the beginning of his book, *The Analytic Experience*, Neville Symington writes:

‘Psychoanalysis cannot be taught. ... Psychoanalysis is a phenomenon which occurs at the centre of the individual. So when I say you cannot be taught psychoanalysis it is because it can occur only through a personal act of understanding.... Psychoanalysis is not a thing; it is a complex reality which is both intrapsychic and interpersonal, both individual and social. I can try to describe it, I can lead you to it, but you have to experience the reality of it.’  
(p.15)

Yet, in distinction to the practice and experience of analysis, ‘Jung’s psychology’, by which I mean his creative construction of relatively coherent theories out of (1) personal-subjective or temperamental-emotional; (2) intellectual-cultural; (3) interpersonal psychological and psychiatric experience - this vast psychology - is hugely open to critical and comparative study, to amendment and to further fruitful elaboration.

What is most vital about Jung is his extraordinary historical, cultural, philosophical and psychological breadth and depth. This attitude can blow open narrow and exclusive fundamentalism and dogmatism, in all these intellectual and value-laden fields, including clinical theories - and perhaps practices? It is in this capacious sense, and only in this sense, that I am a Jungian, and it underlies everything I shall go on to say.

I would suggest that Jung might nowadays be of most interest to serious critical studies within a historical and cultural context: for example as a seminal part of the development of early twentieth century psychotherapy, theories of the mind, history of ideas, historical and current philosophical and religious debates, critical and comparative cultural studies etc. So I reckon that David and other academics are actually ‘better and bigger’ Jungians than most analytic clinicians.



Under the aegis of 'Studies in Jungian Psychology' the main subjects might include: the Self/self and the structure of the dynamic psyche; psychic reality, complexes and images; psychic disturbances; psychic experience; psychic relations; finding or making meaning; the development and nature of the symbolising function and its problems; and the critical study of these subjective-objects, including their relation to body and matter - and to relations.

For me, Jung's most important *clinical and cultural* contributions are his study of, and hypotheses about, the personal symbolising function, its disturbances and healing, and the depths and breadth of comparative cultural symbolisations. This is an area that clinicians meet in their daily encounter with emotional stress and struggles for order and meaning; and it must be what academic Jungians deal with in their creative and critical thinking about Jung's psychology, in questioning their own objects of curiosity, and in the nature and management of their students' motivations, processes, problems and goals.

Why I reckon that Jung is well suited to the academy is that I think he created more of a 'school of psychological wisdom', rather than a 'school of suspicion' and hence of subtle clinical technique. The classical Jungian method of amplifying and archetypalising psychic content, especially images, dreams and fantasies, rather than interpreting and linking them to current relations and so to the forces of unconscious personal history, can sometimes either energise psychotic content and/or enhance magical defences against delusional ideation, or it can be used defensively to re-inforce both the patient's and the analyst's grandiose narcissistic defenses.

Jung's emphasis on the primacy of subjective internal imagos, sub-personalities or complexes, can seem overly intra-psychic, too solipsistic, an emphasis on content, and so a preclusion of internalised relational forces and of deeply patterned responses and reactions which are reconstellated and repeated through later (and transference) desires and defenses. It is a real problem that

there is no Jungian baby - or it was until we stole Klein's and Winnicott's babies.

It was once thought to be helpful for a person to learn that their unconsciously derived imagery and phantasy is 'typical' and belongs to a deep universal and historical psychic patterning. My clinical experience has been that beyond an initial narcissistic searching for and identification with idealised self-objects, people are often not helped at all by such an inflated and impersonal bolstering of false self-ideation. People both need and want an observation and analysis of their personal and idiosyncratic internalised family demons and wounds, and hence to slowly come to dare; dare to see and feel their way through their illusions, delusions and self-defeating defences, and to develop their own mind.

For some of us, Jung's definitive names for psychic sub-personalities or affective internal part-relations (anima, animus, shadow etc.) are now both too un-particular and too impersonally general, and so have become a useless or deadening language. They incline towards false reification and magic hypostatization. Perhaps, though, here again this privileging of the intra-psychic was conditioned by his experience of severely psychotic and schizophrenic patients, rather than of more normal neuroses? Do academic theoreticians agree with me here? Do any analysts?

Jung best offers a hypothetical but subjectively or experientially qualifiable metapsychology, an analysis of human natures, a dynamic model of psychic structures, and an interpretative amplification of culture from a psychological perspective; this is all well suited to the rigours of academic critical and creative thinking.

But for me, Jung does not say nearly so much that is of practical use to analysts:

1. He does not come up with many techniques or practices or explanations as to why certain responses work and/or what to do and what not to do.
2. Jung often seems to privilege essences over relations; teleological purpose over effective cause; impersonal meaning over personal links; amplification over interpretation.

I suppose it must be a matter of the use we make of Jung, and/or our taste, our values and/or our beliefs that ultimately determines our relation to these issues. Who shares Jung's weighting of personal and collective, a Jungian privileging of the latter? I don't know. But I am again struck by the thought that overtly Jungian thinkers like David, supported by his experience with persons (students) specifically thinking about and being affected by and developing Jung's ideas, are working in a much more Jungian culture than are many analysts and can be well-honed in such a discourse.

Returning, now, to the psycho-political debate around teaching Jung in academe. The psycho-political tension here is surely around perceptions, fantasies and fears of power and territory, including the ownership of ideas, which in its primitive iteration becomes an idea of the ownership of Jung. My own initial response to 'who owns Jung?' was - who cares? But then I realised that actually it depends upon which Jung? Or, rather, Jung put to which use? There are different Jungs put to different uses.

When it becomes a matter of who owns Jung as the name that goes with the clinical practice of Analytical Psychology, then I find that, actually, I do care, especially if unqualified others use his imprimatur thus.

Perhaps an issue here is also who treats Jung and his ideas as a self-object realm. This has to do with attachments and values, with a certain relativism and mourning. As I have said, I think that some academic Jungians pay much more attention and attach far more importance to Jung and Jungiana than

do many analysts, particularly non-classical post-Jungian clinicians. Speaking entirely for myself, Jung, the idea of Jung and Jungian psychology are no longer objects with which or whom I primarily identify. 'Jungian analyst' and 'Jungian analysis' are the two terms that define my public professional identity.

Otherwise I do not identify myself via Jung; I am post-Jungian in that I trained under the auspices of Jungian analysts and a Jungian body and belong to a local and to an international Jungian professional association, but Jung's psychology is no longer a dominant intellectual culture for either my clinical theory or practice. I have so much internalised a whole crowd of other and different theoretical ideas, explanations, experiences, relations and thoughts that I do not look to any one's mind in particular. In fact, I feed and inform my mind with certain philosophers/ies as much as with clinical theorists and practitioners.

I suggest, however, that there are several commonalities that usefully straddle post-Jungian practice and post-Jungian studies where the academic can teach didactically and 'educate' through Socratic doubt, evoking critical thought - neither of which an analyst can do; and through which analysts can filter their clinical experience so as to help amend and develop their practical theory.

One, which I have already mentioned, is the matter of the symbolising function, its formation and its disturbances: the emergence and problems of 'self'. Other tricky and controversial areas include 'individuation' in distinction to the analysis of problems through the transference; amplification in distinction to interpretation; the religious attitude; the usefulness of the idea of the archetypes and archetypal images.

Of continuing significance are Jung's hypotheses around internal, as well as cultural (and social?), motivation and value, in other words, his relevance to the wellsprings of ethics. Can there be there a Jungian contribution to Value

Ethics or indeed to the background of a Ratiocentric Ethics as the philosopher John Cottingham (in *Philosophy and the Good Life*) suggests?

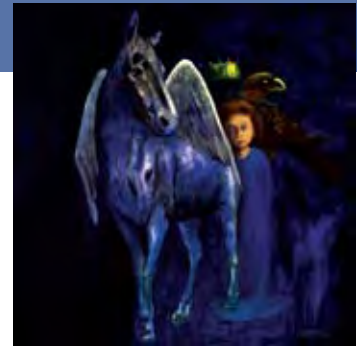
Psychic reality as unconscious fantasy should surely be open to conscious doubt, critical thinking, linking and interpretation, and not swallowed wholesale as more than something arising out of unconscious experience; or do Jungians believe otherwise? In what way do we all believe in, evaluate and react to the autonomous other object within? The psychic reality of teleology is a fantasy of teleology, subjectively an idealist part of animal faith, but actually very precarious; etc. etc.

And finally, the 'numinous'. Neville Symington warns of the dangerous inference of Jung's assertion (which is anyhow philosophically erroneous) that 'the numinosum, the outer reality, is identical with the 'consentium gentium', which, in its turn, is an objective reality'.

For those who believe and feel that the numinous is *more and other* than psychically real fantasies and feelings, partly based on early object experience, a particular pleasurable aesthetic affectivity, a particular poetic sensibility and creativity, a terrible beauty, a psychic maker of personal meaning and therefore a (supremely?) valuable and ethically good internal object (and/or subject-state), well, so be it. For those of us who believe that this is a good enough human-centred explanation of the experience of what some call the Divine, well, may God save us.

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# ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

## AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

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*After a decade of implementing a postgraduate program in analytical psychology, a psychology shaped by the belief that our human experience of reality is very incomplete, it is timely to reflect on what constituted its guiding intention.*

*At the very heart of human experience there is a crack, a gap. It is this gap that accounts for the experience of psychological phenomena. The architects of the program had no desire to fill the gap in fact they saw it as a psychological wound that needed, not an anodyne but rather, an active working of the wound. Keeping the wound open by insisting on the absence of a ready-to-hand explanation, they offered a 'no-answer' as a path to a new dimension, one that transcends the ego, one which is akin to the I/eye of the storm, an emptiness/nothingness that is a place of new learning (learned ignorance). This path is usefully understood as a spiritual practice.*

*The paper offers an account of the conceptual underpinning of this unique educational program and situates it in the Australian context.*

## INTRODUCTION

There are three lines of thinking, intellectual perturbations if you like, that have mutually shaped the decisions that underscored the ongoing development of the Master of Analytical Psychology

degree. These are attitudes of mind rather than theoretical or narrowly ideological positionings. The first is represented by the distinction attributed to the writer Vladimir Nabokov: If you say that the king died and then the queen died you do not have a narrative. All you have is a sequence of events. However, if you say that the king died and then the queen dies of a broken heart, then you have a plot and every narrative needs a plot.

The second is the image of the human reach always exceeding its grasp. In more practical terms: the world of the imaginative processes is more encompassing than the world of the physical senses (including any literal understanding of the political and the social). And finally, an appreciation of learning and the expression of an aesthetic attitude, a focus on structure and style, have a more satisfying outcome than a devotion to great ideas.

On reflection, especially given the passage of ten years, it is possible to see that these three attitudes have done more to give structure and purpose to the teaching program than any particular body of knowledge. The title of the program, analytical psychology, might suggest otherwise given that this is the name that the psychiatrist/psychologist, Carl Jung, gave to his particular psychological project. There is a connection, of course, but it's one that needs some further elaboration. But, before that, there is a little aspect of provenance that needs to be addressed.

The earliest precursor to the Master of Analytical Psychology was an adult education postgraduate program established in the early 1970s. Its learning philosophy was strongly experiential and its application was Australian agriculture. By the mid-1980s it had evolved into a Master of Social Ecology degree and was described as a 'way of knowing ... [rather than] ...a body of knowledge' (Russell, 1991). Experiential learning had a strong practical application to the workplace and was less concerned with productivity than with a particular orientation to the world, namely, seeing activities as dynamic and

overlapping systems. Social ecology was conceived as a design process ‘... one that interconnects the pattern of events and pattern of images’ (Russell, 1999, p. 256). The key characteristics of experiential learning: narrative design and a suspicion of great ideas, which together constituted a valued history, were conserved, first in the development of cultural psychology, and then, in the year 2000, in analytical psychology.

## JUNGAN PSYCHOLOGY AS IMAGINATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Jung’s name, in the history of psychology, is usually associated with a number of fundamental concepts, in particular, terms like ‘psychological complexes’, ‘collective unconscious’, and ‘archetypes’. However, it was not because of these ‘great’ ideas that we, at the University of Western Sydney, were drawn to his writings. It was his insistence on the ‘lived experience’ of the individual, especially the fullness of experience including ‘religious experience,’ that drew us to him. Jung used a rich array of metaphors to give value to these experiences to the extent that he has been judged as being ‘too mystical’ for the minds of most academic psychologists. His adamant privileging of knowing, experientially, over belief, including theory development, is illustrated in a letter to a colleague: ‘... Can anyone say “credo” when he stands *amidst* his experience ... when he knows how superfluous “belief” is, when he more than just “knows”, when the experience has even pressed him to the wall?’ (Jung, 1934/1973, p. 141). It was Jung’s contention that by engaging with the mystery of the experience of life, the sources of which remain outside of our awareness, that it became for him, ‘... the greatest and most incisive experience of my life ... that this door, a highly inconspicuous side-door on an unsuspecting-looking and easily overlooked footpath – narrow and indistinct because only a few have set foot on it – leads to a secret of transformation and renewal ...’ (Jung, 1934/1973, p. 141). When the going got tough, Jung was going to trust his experience of the unknown over any personal or cultural ‘credo’.



Of course, his usage of terms like 'secret' and 'transformation and renewal' do suggest an over-redemptive attitude and give some credence to the too-mystical label. While Jung's enthusiastic language suggested a degree of missionary zeal, it was his pragmatism, his willingness to work creatively with the 'rich thicket of reality', which caught our imagination (see Russell, 2002).

In the judgement of the author, what matters, psychologically, are the fruits that are derived from the rational dialogue with the fullness of experience. Jung, a great admirer of William James, emphasised, above all else, the importance of this ongoing dialogue with experience. In fact, no experience was to be disallowed; everything was to be attended to, even if not accounted for. All the interests and projects we have as conscious beings were to be taken seriously (Flanagan, 1997).

James Hillman, more than any other post-Jungian psychologist, extends Jung's project of dialogue-with-experience into the realm of image making, images that disturb the empirical world of the senses (including the social and the political) in order to more fully do the work that we have evolved, through the experience of consciousness, to do. Hillman uses the image of the Virgin Mary's Annunciation as suggestive of just such a disturbance. He pictures Mary as a young childish innocent, nothing more than a schoolgirl at home in her room, who is suddenly confronted with the Angel. Initially, experiencing only shock and astonishment, her mind rejects the knowledge and her face shows the horror of what's implied. Yet, Hillman says, in her body redemption will be prepared. As a psychological writer, Hillman is keen to include us all in this image of Mary, '... for somewhere we are all virgins, sensitive, shy, psychologically naïve, unexplored in our emotional life, unwilling to be called into involvements, unawakened to the terribleness of truth, resistant to the major challenge, preferring where it is safe, at home, familiar and protected, with books or bits of handiwork, kindly charitable, obedient, well-meaning' (Hillman, 1994, p. 108).

For Hillman there can be no soul-making if there is no disruption, psychological disruption, no *imagination* in his sense of the term. He insists that psychological life begins when the status quo, the socially accepted routines of daily life, are radically upset, ruptured. In his poetic language, he reflects on Mary's newly-found situation: '... from all this goodness little can come unless the psyche's womb receives the fiery seed of one's own unique essence which fulfils its creative longing and from which inner fertilisation issues the experience of renewal' (Hillman, 1994, p. 108). In order to live life, psychologically, one must engage with the rupture, be disturbed, and suffer the divine fertilisation so that an inner life will grow.

In developing analytical psychology as an educational enterprise we followed Hillman's lead in seeing it as, fundamentally, the evocation of imagination: the exploration of and struggling with imagination. If it had anything to do with healing then it was healing the imagination or healing the relationship to the imagination. And the manner of doing this was the development of a psychological sense of imagination (Hillman, 1983). Evocation of imagination implies being open to new possibilities, especially a possibility that does not have the heroic ego as the centre of one's understanding and thus the measure of everything.

Adam Phillips, best known of the post-Freudian writers working today, has been another foundational influence on the 'structure and style' of our program. In paraphrasing his account of what an analyst does in encouraging a description of a dream, we might ask our students about an experience, not: What does it mean? But, *What was it like to be there?* What were you using that unique space to do? The experience (dream, day-time reverie, disturbing experience) becomes the place of - or psychic space for - different versions of self-experience, a setting for other voices. The psychological experience becomes an evocative object as opposed to an informative one (Phillips, 1997).

Phillips does for Freud what Hillman does for Jung: they tell us stories about the two great story makers of the mind (Freud and Jung) but don't hide from us the knowledge that they are, in fact, fictions, stories. However, fictive realities are realities none the less! Phillips talks about the body, the body and its inherent desires, how it learns to *make do* and, hopefully, to make do with a sense of 'art'. The body takes pleasure in creating a story (or better, stories) of what we do to make do (Phillips, 1998). These basic and original desires cannot be directly satisfied but can create a satisfying experience (a satisfying fiction). In Phillip's view, our stories, including our cultural stories, our myth making, become stories of loss. The body's experience of loss/lack becomes the source of invention. Our lives become 'somehow organised around, in relation to, absence' (Phillips, 1998, p. 20).

Freud's early case histories – the *Studies in Hysteria* – were artful stories about how certain women, in a manner essentially outside of their awareness, addressed the perceived loss of the social acceptance of their particular uniqueness. It was their bodies that told stories back to families and to the wider culture. Freud's new-found psychoanalytic method encouraged them to answer back in words, rather than in physical symptoms (Phillips, 1998). Likewise, in their essays, our students are encouraged to answer back to Jung, Freud and ourselves as lecturers, and not be seduced into offering blind acceptance of anyone's strange, or not so strange, theories. The common ground on which Freud and Jung build their projects was story making. As heirs to their projects, we encourage the same. It is relevant to remember that the precursor of psychoanalysis was the nineteenth century European novel.

## ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY AS STORIES OF RUPTURED CERTAINTY

Jung, in the tradition of William James and Giambattista Vico, advocated an as-if attitude to certainty. However, anyone who has read much of Jung knows that, at times, he would write in a manner indicating that he had fallen into the temptation of certainty; that his own experience of certainty reflected a belief in an absolute world. More often, though, he insisted on an attitude of permanent vigilance against the temptation of certainty. His want was to offer the feeling-of-certainty, in relation to his own experience, as an invitation to generalised learning, but not, as sometimes understood, as a generalisation beyond his person, to the status of a public truth. In like manner, the whole analytical psychology program is a sort of invitation to refrain from the habit of falling into the temptation of certainty. The psychological world that we explore is always, because there can be no other way, a world that we bring forth with others. It is a world that we are forever creating and recreating through our flow of emotions and our flow of language.

Analytical psychology, as a flow of narrative language, is particularly suited to the expression of human experience as it is lived. Its value is that of drawing together diverse threads of events and happenings and integrating them into a temporally organised whole. Not only is the complexity of the situation retained but, importantly for a psychological perspective, the emotional and motivational meanings are emphasised (see Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995). The vehicle of explanation in such stories is a plot. The plot provides a story-like causal nexus which it exhibits rather than deductively demonstrating and thus inappropriately suggesting 'certainty'.

Hillman has spent his entire professional life reminding us not to take Jung's use of language literally and to take psychological events more as social constructs than concrete-like facts: a psychical reality and not a material reality.

Freud, long ago, insisted on the same distinction in reference to dream images (Freud, 1900/1954).

### THE PERSON AND THE SELF AS RELATIVELY RECENT INVENTIONS

It is of note that the concept of person entered Western thought largely as a consequence of sustained reflection on the Judeo-Christian Bible (Novak, 1998). A concept was needed so that humans could be talked about as having a rational relationship with God. A relationship that encompassed a past, a present, and an anticipated future: a concept of an entity responsible for actions and choices. No longer could this be just an individual but, rather, in the terms of the fifth-century thinker, Boethius (489-524 CE), a person as a *substantia rationalis subsistens*. With the advent of the Enlightenment, the view that there was one fixed reality, a reality knowable outside of our own experiencing of it, became increasingly difficult to hold. The 'one true church' increasingly became a multitude of churches, a multitude of perspectives. The single universe of the natural world became a multi-verse of experience. What we know of the world is known only through consciousness and it is consciousness that links us to the world. So, in a metaphorical sense, we live in two worlds: a world of sense perception (with a relatively fixed horizon) and a world of imagination (with a forever shifting and expanding horizon).

The social construct of self offered a certain stability, a new seduction of certainty. The self could be, and has become in common-sense understanding, the soul-like entity that extended the person into the psychological realm; the source of emotions, feelings, insights, and dreams (day-time and night-time dreaming). The self has become the answer to the experiential gap that separates the two horizons. The experience of nothingness was simply too much to bear! (See Novak, 1970.) The fact that we can call something by name, such as a 'feeling', suggests that it is a thing, an entity, and the same goes for self.

But feeling and self are verbs in that they do things: they are processes, indeed, complex ones, that generate the experiences of consciousness.

To answer the question: Who am I? I need to tell a story. The more often I tell such a narrative the more likely that the shape of the story will begin to shift. There are many stories that I might tell. Which one is true? Which one represents the real me? Possibly all of them and, possibly, none of them! All such narratives become pluralistic and need to be judged on criteria of a more aesthetic kind. Our Western myth of the self, a vision of a personal identity continuous over time, is perhaps the most illusory belief of all. Yet we do experience just such an identity, our 'autobiographical self' in the terminology of a prominent neuroscientist (Damasio, 2000). It seems we do need a particular sort of story (a personal myth) to tell ourselves: an identity story that encompasses a number of remembered events, some of the goings-on of the present moment, and a future that we dream into. A recurring theme in analytical psychology is the need to find one's own voice to tell this story, a need that Jung referred to a 'religious instinct'. When social and political pressures work to militate against the generation of one's unique voice, one's unique life story, as is a common experience in today's culture, the body rebels just as if it were deprived of appropriate food and drink.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF NOTHINGNESS

The experience of nothingness arises when we consciously become aware of living in the gap between our actual horizons (Novak, 1970). The gap that is our experiential life-space; the experience of Homer's Odysseus needing to sail between the Scylla monster of sense perceptions (the world of fixed realities) and the Charybdis whirlpool of imagination (the world of desire, memory, longing). Accepting the experience of living in the in-between and not giving in to the seduction of needing to fill the gap with a solidity-like self; a felt-certainty that removes the feeling of emptiness, is engaging with

what actually *is*. Freud, towards the end of his life, told his friend Hilda Doolittle (the poet H. D.) that his work was really about an engagement with this difficult terrain that is essentially a place of unknowing. In Freud's own words: 'My discoveries are not primarily a heal-all. My discoveries are a basis for a very grave philosophy' (Doolittle, 1985, p. 13).

The refusal to accept any Archimedean point, any place of pure objectivity, where one can live with a sense of reality without the need for continuous storrying of meaning-making, that is the challenge of analytical psychology. Such a refusal constitutes a practice of the consciousness of acceptance, even, one could say, of appropriation. The necessary practice is to keep the experience of emptiness empty; the tools, techniques, methods need to be designed to assist us to stay in the in-between and not seek a too-easy refuge with a plethora of the *ready-made*; clichés to fill the void. The 'story' underlying the degree program, its myth, is grounded in the experience of nothingness. It recognises the emptiness, terror, and formlessness at the centre of human consciousness. Because it is basic to our consciousness, the experience of nothingness is not paralysing, it is liberating – 'education' in the older sense of the word.

The realisation that insecurity is the natural state for humans, in fact, its healthy state, is paradoxical in today's thinking.

## JUNG AND KEEPING THE WOUND OF CONSCIOUSNESS OPEN

Jung's use of the term 'unconscious' is imaginative; it does not designate a physical place between the two horizons of knowing. He wants it to remain a no-place, a place empty of substance, a place where nothing can be found: 'The concept of unconscious *posits nothing*, it designates only my *unknowing*' (Jung, 1943/1973, p. 411). When he uses the term 'Self' he wants it to be understood as an archetypal image '... with no stable or definite centre in the

unconscious and I [Jung] don't believe such a centre exists. I believe that the thing which I call the Self is an ideal centre ...' (in Serrano, 1968, p. 50). So, for Jung the Self is not a positively existing entity, rather, it exists as an as-if image and brings to our attention the status of a negation, of emptiness; an emptiness that is a fertile space for nourishing an appreciation of the evolutionary status of human consciousness.

Jung's attitude was to trust that the experiential 'unknowing' had purpose and if one trusted this felt-purpose then one's daily activities would become more meaningful. This characteristic *subjectivity*, this fundamental acceptance of the wound of consciousness, offered a sense of redemption from suffering and ease of living (Jung, 1914/1960, para. 407).

To consciously live in this in-between 'is a spiritual goal toward which the whole nature of man strives; it is the sea to which all rivers wend their way, the prize which the hero wrests from the fight with the dragon' (Jung, 1947/1969, para. 415). Jung used the term 'psyche' to convey the experiential goings-on of this in-between space, this fruitful emptiness. And it is fantasy, the language of the imagination, that 'seems to me [Jung] the clearest expression of the specific activity of the psyche' (Jung, 1921/1971, para. 78). It is fantasy images, and the sequences of these images, that are the primary activity of consciousness; 'the psyche creates reality every day' (Jung, 1921/1971, para. 78). Psyche is, in Jung's view, not a substantial entity but the very processes of consciousness.

For Jung, it is this in-between that is the psychic space of inner experience. In a letter to an American correspondent, he claimed that religion 'is not at all a matter of intellectual conviction or philosophy or even belief, but rather a matter of inner experience' (Jung, 1976 p. 183). Jung was convinced that this experience of the in-between was ultimately uncommunicable except in terms of myth or rich cultural storying. 'Myth', he wrote, 'gives the ultimately unimaginable religious experience an image, a form in which to express itself



(Jung, 1976, p. 486). These cultural stories are descriptions of psychic processes ‘told by the many and heard by the many’, and as the primal form of communication, ‘makes community possible’ (Jung, 1976, p. 486).

Consciousness, the awareness-of-awareness as a practice, generates a place for narrative imagination. This is a place of metaphoricity: a rich environment for the creation of metaphors. It is a place of desire and promise and, as a result of productively sitting in this place (which, itself is a no-place): ‘some transfer (*meta-phora*) of meaning is eventually, if always tentatively, achieved ... It is the place where stories, songs, parables, and prophecies resound as human imaginations try to say the unsayable and think the unthinkable’ (Kearney, 2001, p. 8).

Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, in developing the notion of a hermeneutic dialogue, point out that human consciousness can never know itself in terms of an intuitive immediacy. Consciousness must undergo a hermeneutic detour in which it comes to know itself through the mediation of images, language, and experience. Paraphrasing the philosopher of the imagination, Richard Kearney, consciousness cannot *intuit* (*anschauen*) its meaning in and from itself, but must *interpret* (*hermeneuein*) itself by entering into dialogue with the experiences of a particular person (or historical tradition) in a particular social milieu (Kearney, 1995). When Kearney talks about living, concurrently and dynamically, in a conscious dialogue between the *first-order reference* to the actual world of experience, the here and now, and a *second-order reference* to the possible worlds of imagination, the God-of-possibility comes into being. One is reminded of the beautiful and poignant words of Etty Hillesum, shortly before she was executed in a Nazi concentration camp: ‘... one thing is becoming increasingly clear to me: that You [God] cannot help us, that we must help You to help ourselves ... and defend Your dwelling place inside us to the last’ (Hillesum, 1996, p. 178).

Consciousness as dialogue, and religious consciousness as the awareness-of-awareness of the dialogue, is akin to the image of a rock face cracking, very slowly and deliberately, and out of the opening comes something different; some unexpected experience. From this fertile space come images, not formed ideas, which are not limited to visual images and are not limited by lived experience, and are unburdened by needing to conform to a fixed reality. If we learn to linger long enough, and become aware of the changing experience in us, this change merits the term 'transformation'. This is what our imaginative processes do. This is what we have evolved to be able to do and the products of this doing are gifts that we can (and need to) offer back to the community. Jung, in talking about just such a learning process, says that it '... should release an experience that grips us or falls upon us from above, an experience that has substance and body such as those [that] occurred to the ancients. If I were going to symbolise it I would choose the Annunciation' (Jung, 1925/1989. p. 80). However, unlike the pregnancy of the Bible, which was permanent, transcendence in a psychological sense is always a verb in which the movement never comes to rest. It is an experience and not an accomplishment. The term soul-making is used in the literature to convey its experiential and attitudinal nature.

In the title of this paper the term 'practice' is used in order to denote the need for ongoing application, ongoing transformation, ongoing learning; a learning to see *psychologically*. Hillman, in emphasising experience, speaks of the 'image that is soul-making' as the transformative process that in analytical psychology makes an action or attitude into 'seeing psychological'. He makes his point thus: 'The phase beyond fantasy is imagination, which is the work of turning daydreams and fantasies into scenic inscapes wherein one can enter and which are peopled with vivid figures with whom one can converse and feel, and touch their presence' (Hillman, 194, p. 117).

## CONSCIOUSNESS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AS NIHILISM

Analytical psychologist, Wolfgang Giegerich, follows the very Jungian theme of experiencing an absence of God ‘out there’ and the burden of a religion that does not espouse such an object. As Giegerich says: ‘Jung saw in religion a great burden from which he *suffered* [and that he did suffer] is the sign that he experienced it on an entirely *new level* of consciousness’ (Giegerich, 2005, p. 223). Interpreting our situation, our awareness of consciousness, as nihilism is for Giegerich a defence against the decisive rupture that has occurred as we’ve become increasingly aware of the loss of the status quo of previous times. Jung accepted the burden, the loss, and willingly struggled with it. He maintained, with a degree of sadness, that the world to which religions has addressed their answers had gone. What was not threatened, if we are prepared to do the psychological work, is the embodied consciousness that is the reality already at hand if we have the mind to accept it. In Giegerich’s language: ‘We have to learn [not to strive for emptiness, but] to live with and in the emptiness that already prevails. We don’t need [actively] to sacrifice our religions, nor the notion of religion as such ... We only need to own [the sacrifice], to allow it to *be*’ (Giegerich, 2005, p. 230).

## CONSCIOUSNESS AS THE BITTERSWEET OF EROS

The experience of consciousness, like all experiences, is fashioned by desire, by body states that we have named ‘emotions.’ In early Greek literature this embodied experience was attributed to Eros. The Greek scholar and poet, Anne Carson, says that it was the poet Sappho who first called eros ‘bittersweet’ (Carson, 1986). Carson reminds us that eros denotes ‘want’, ‘lack’, ‘desire for what is missing’. Carson, taking Sappho as her inspiration, develops the experience of eros as a dynamic of ambivalent emotions: ‘bittersweet’ as in the title of her book. And, ‘Desire moves. Eros is a verb’ (Carson, p. 17). The experience of consciousness is erotic to the core. Its reach (its desire)

always exceeds its grasp (of concrete objects). In the poem that is Carson's work bench, '... Sappho begins with a sweet apple and ends in infinite hunger. From her [Sappho's] inchoate little poem we learn several things about eros. The reach of desire is defined in action: beautiful (in its object), foiled (in its attempt), endless (in time)' (Carson, p. 29). Eros denotes an absence, a hunger, a desire. The space that is experienced as an absence must be maintained or desire ends. The real subject of this love poem is not the human subject but the empty space that brings forth the desire. It is the presence of want that awakens in the protagonist of the poem a nostalgia for wholeness. Clearly this is an early literary expression of what latter psychologists, particularly, William James and Carl Jung, would hypothesise as a biological function, a function that expresses itself as religious life. The so-called empty space, the experience of loss, is for Jung precisely where an engagement with the divine begins. 'Psychologically speaking' he writes, 'the domain of the "gods" begins where consciousness leaves off, for at that point man is already at the mercy of the natural order, whether he thrives or perish' (Jung, 1942/1969, para. 231). And in another place he writes: 'The gods have become diseases ...' (Jung, 1967, para. 54), and, to put this bold hypothesis in another way, it is through dis-ease that we experience the gods.

## **ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND THE EAST**

Analytical psychology, as it is usually understood, is not known for its hands-on, pragmatic approach. Despite being grounded in the careful observation of experience it is pre-eminently an intellectual enterprise in the spirit of a 'talking cure'. As an educational experience it has developed in much the same direction: experience is talked and written about. As the focus has shifted from an acquisition of a fluency in the use of the main ideas inherent in the Jungian project to an engagement with the empty centre of experience, the mystery at the heart of experience, parallels with the Buddhist tradition of disciplined practice have become increasingly obvious. The absence of an

experiential self, an ego that centres one's attention and is the ground of one's being, is both a concept and a systematic practice in Buddhism (Stewart, 2005). Embracing the groundlessness and finding new ways to pursue this experience in a disciplined manner is not totally new in the world of ideas. In the domain of cognitive science, specific integrations of meditation and mindfulness have been put forward as an alternative to the sense of loss and alienation that is most often the immediate reaction to our cultural experience, namely, the 'death of God' phenomenon common to our age (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991).

Hillman, always with a finger on the pulse of cultural movements, reflects on his own thinking and readily acknowledges how it has arrived at the same place that Eastern thinking had long made its own, namely, the illusion of self and all that that entails. He writes: '[my] psychology is nothing less than a parallel formation of certain Eastern philosophies. Like them, it too dissolves ego, ontology, substantiality and literalisms of self and the division between it and things' (Hillman, 1983, p. 31). Hillman sees the West as having gone down the path of the heroic ego and, as a consequence, has created the false god of self-centredness which has the self as the beginning and end of its cultural myth.

## CONCLUSION

The Jungian approach to understanding the lived-experience has at times been judged as being too person-centred and lacking in its concern for a world in need. The Australian approach to this material has also critiqued the too personal but with a different emphasis. In a post-modern manner, we have accepted the experience of the empty centre, the lack of a self, and have taken the next step: our desire is to willingly embrace the struggle, to welcome the dark night and celebrate the mystery at the heart of human experience. In general, our students have found this to be a nurturing confirmation of

what is already at hand. It is our mutual hope that this validation of what *is* will liberate energies to more freely work with the world in all its complexity and ambiguity.

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The author and editors also wish to thank Helen Norton for permission to reproduce her painting, *Dark Horse*, 2005. Copyright for the image resides with Helen.



# FEAR OF REALITY

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As I sit down to write, the streets of Sydney are cordoned off to make way for world leaders and their entourages. In the name of national security, international negotiations and world peace Sydney-siders have been walled off from the political process and our best harbour restaurants. Some years ago, Melbourne was host city to delegates for the World Economic Forum. The streets were charged with protest as the forum began its deliberations at the Crown Casino. Consider this as an image. Men and women whose task it is to manage much of the world's financial dealings, the flow of global capital, the allocation of investment funds, the redistribution of wealth and the restructuring of business and enterprise, the organisation of work, wages/salaries and the design of product and production had gathered together in a building designed and dedicated to gambling. On the streets, protesters, many young and bold, and hundreds of Victorian police, many young and bold, faced one another, staring in a kind of mutual defiance. Angry; precisely at what? The Melbourne protesters both inside and outside the casino were claiming, as their cause, the righteousness of 'inevitability'.



Remember Y2K, that high point of global anxiety at the turn of twenty-first century? Almost a decade later there is some embarrassment as we turn away from the memory, but it serves to remind us of the huge unease that has constructed itself imaginatively in the psyche of contemporary Western society.

Inevitability has become a necessary process and it takes many forms; globalisation is inevitable, greater and widespread prosperity is inevitable, poverty is inevitable, the Islamic brotherhood is inevitable, the emergence of China is inevitable, the loss of jobs and environment is inevitable, a global market place is inevitable, the loss of local traditions is inevitable, the recovery of local traditions is inevitable, political democracy is inevitable, a global pandemic is inevitable and an undifferentiated anxiety is inevitable.

Jeffrey Sachs called his 2007 Reith lectures *Bursting at the Seams* because, as he says, the world may well burst at the seams. He describes unprecedented challenges that are upon us including global warming, terrorism, extreme poverty and disease and, of course, the unmistakable fact that many of us have much more than we need in the way of CDs, DVDs, bathrooms, dishwashers, air conditioners, leg waxes, vitamin supplements, cruise controls, qualifications and soft toys.

I live in a part of my city that divides itself between the haves and the have yachts.

Recently I watched an *SBS Insight* programme on happiness. There was a Buddhist nun, a very reverend Uniting Church minister, professors of happiness, professors of philosophy, survivors of tragedy, grandparents, an advocate for consumerism and a mixed bag of happy enthusiasts. What is compelling us to make such an industry of happiness? Earlier on this year (2007) a number of us possibly went to *The Happiness and its Causes* conference. Almost every weekend newspaper's magazine, of late, has an article that touches on this anxiety. We can read about the 'happiest man in the world', or the problems

with adult ADHD; we are told over and over again that there is a spiritual crisis in the West. Islam is on the rise, our faith has been tested and found wanting and despite the great advances in all manner of cultural and material things we are no happier or content with life than were our grandparents. To some we appear to be living through disenchanted days while all the time hungering for an intimate communication with an unguarded soul.

It would seem that behind this, some say, is a religious imperative, an assumption that our various social and psychological crises are, at heart, religious predicaments. I am not certain whether this is the circumstance of our times but given that it may be it would be wrong, categorically wrong, if academics endorse, or even turn a blind eye, at any return to an unreconstructed fundamental religious position as seems to be argued for by Sydney Anglicans, Cardinal Pell's Catholicism, a wide Islamic rhetoric and the broad reach of Pentecostal revivalism.

Jung toyed with the idea of *conflict* between religion and science, hoping, I suspect, that religion might win out. In the last of his *Zofingia* Lectures he longs for the return of a mystical approach to religion, even if this entails 'the possibility of social and scientific indifference and call[ing] into question the further progress of civilisation' (Jung, 1896-99, par. 290). But on most points of direct confrontation and conflict between religion and science, Jung always recognised that science was likely to prove the more fitting. 'The imposing arguments of science', he acknowledges, 'represent the highest degree of intellectual certainty yet achieved by the mind of man' (Jung, 1957, par. 543). 'My subjective attitude', he wrote in 1933, 'is that I hold every religious position in high esteem but draw an inexorable dividing line between the content of belief and the requirements of science' (Jung, 1973, p. 125). Before one considers how 'our' contemporary religious predicament might be attended to, at least in the University, it is really important that 'we' acknowledge the incredible efforts and great successes of secular programmes over quite a few centuries now. These efforts have fashioned for us the largely successful infra-

structures of health, education, democratic politics, social peace, the rule of law and managed economies that we each easily take for granted.

Indeed modern secular thought, most recently developed (but not entirely so) in liberal bourgeois democracies has provided us with a particularly useful tool to deal with certain intractable dilemmas; dilemmas that we continually try and understand, anticipate and adapt to. Still, the course of events is so complex that it is often beyond our capacity to readily understand. Not just in matters cosmic, the eleven dimensions of nature and counting, but those much closer to our human endeavour: politics, economics, the environment, relationships, society, identity. All we can do is incrementally respond and adapt. And I reiterate that modern secular thought is the best option, although not necessarily the most popular means by which we can attend to and design this incremental adaptation. At the risk of over blowing this, I would contend that, since the European Renaissance, I cannot think of any significant social reforms initiated by religious institutions save Luther's ultimatum and its impact on individualism. The move towards a humane society has been carried forward by secular interests; abolition of slavery, poor reform, penal reform, housing reform, public education, sexual reform, family reform, health reform and so on. This same reforming momentum continues; land-rights, indigenous reconciliations, women's liberation, refugee safety, multicultural agendas and so-called political correctness. Opposition to reform has invariably come from conservative religious lobby groups.<sup>1</sup> This isn't to suggest that men and women from all of the different religious organisations haven't been involved, indeed they have and many at the forefront of these reforms.

I certainly am neither apologising for what Noel Pearson calls soft-headed left agendas nor do I applaud the culture of coca cola and beer that Nuggett Coombes was so scathing of. But the call by people such as Professor Gary Bouma that we should, in line with strident religiosity, abandon our sophisticated secular institutions, like public universities and I presume therefore

academic critiquing debates, and hand over our world to a theocracy is intellectually criminal.

I acknowledge without hesitation that madness both big and small is part and parcel of our community's daily affairs. It gives me no pleasure to say, as Carmen Lawrence so elegantly put it, that the majority of my fellow citizens were right to oppose the illegal invasion of Iraq, that the war is at a stalemate, thousands of innocent bystanders have died or been seriously injured, bloody suicide bombings remain common enough, to point out that 'we' told you so, isn't comforting (*Sydney Morning Herald*, Sept. 15-16, 2007, p. 39).

Nor do I mean to excuse the excesses of inhumanity that took place across this land as Aboriginal tribes came across wondering Europeans. Still, it is important to remind ourselves that along with the dispossession and murder there arrived different art practices, other ways of co-operating, new languages and a larger cultural variance. These qualities were present early on in our modern history. And, yes, such qualities can prove discomfoting when we think of the stolen lands, the stolen generation, the stolen resources. Yet there is something in these qualities that helps me know we are meant for better things. A depth to our presence in this place takes on slowly, and holding on to it, living with and through it as an imaginative process calls us to engage here and now, with the blood on our hands and our feelings uncertain. Imagination isn't just as etymology would suggest, the faculty of forming images of reality; rather it is a gift that enables us to go beyond reality and to sing reality. Veronica Brady, in a recent ABC radio national broadcast, *The Wisdom Lectures*, speaks of her experience with friends in Southern Spain, of how, despite the long and bloody turmoil that is their history, pleasure remains a principle, a matter of principle, in the way they identify as a people living in and with a place. These are a people who mixed with the sword, their blood and their spunk.

## WHAT IS THE WORK HERE FOR ACADEMICS WORKING WITH ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY?

I don't underestimate that many people who engage in therapy can be depressed and desperate. Fear is real and abuse of all kinds is common enough. But some therapies, like cognitive behaviour modification, and even forms of psychoanalysis/therapy, never leave the simple subjective self. These therapies concentrate only on introspection. In therapy of this type an individual might make up their mind about some aspect of themselves but it doesn't get down into the world of imaginative reality. For this to happen, self-absorption isn't enough. Reality, while tied culturally into ideas about rationality and truth, is better appreciated psychologically if our imagination is matured and sophisticated. Coming to terms with this form of reality is therefore a process in which to truly know ourselves, to unfold ourselves, we need the extended biographical history of the person and their lived-in space – community, society and their cultural stories.

An extended biographical history involves telling stories anew, weaving understanding around fresh and different perceptions. The gift here is that one gets a sense of a personal historical consciousness that deepens the knowledge of who 'I' am in this bigger cultural story. There is no need for a false promise, there is no guarantee of a change in personal happiness, one may be no less neurotic, one is simply made richer, richer in the way a culture is richer when it knows and regards dearly its history; this is knowledge of the soul.

Working with the complexity of the anxieties that accompany our affluence James Hillman suggests we might look to certain *principles* that hopefully transcend particular cultures, and are not determined from the West; principles that in themselves are poetic and at heart religious. Hillman names them *justice*, *beauty*, *destiny* and, I would add, *humour*. They are each recurrent in time and each can be recognised in terms of their presence and by their absence.

In keeping with Hillman it is important not to literalise these while it is necessary to open each into more extensive stories. Hillman suggests that psychologically these principles can be known through their absence. When justice is absent, for example, one reacts with anger at its lack. Similarly one recoils from ugliness and, too, one can show despair at pointlessness. While a relaxed, amused perspective on our flaws, laughing at our follies gives nourishment to our humanity and, in turn, an amused beauty enhances the world. Justice transcends colour and creed, and, to live fully, one embraces with necessity the sense that cultural life is mythically encoded and in the main delightful.

At times it does seem easier to know the world through the absence of what should be. In an age and time where almost any 'thing' can be had without having to take heed of the inherent way it may be placed in the cradle-to-grave matrix of existence; we may just be beginning to notice that something is missing from this bounty.

The central tradition in the Western canon since the Greeks, at least the tradition that runs from Aristotle through Aquinas and on to the beginning of the modern period, holds the view that the cosmos is intelligible and imbued with spirit. There is a claim that our modern adventure has de-spiritualised this cosmic nature and disenchanted the world. For me this remains an open debate; I don't close off pessimistically, still I contend that there can be no return to a past inhabited with sprites and nymphs, well at least not literally. We cannot hope to over-revive an imagined spiritual heritage by putting on the robes of an alchemist magician, pretending that we have found an alternative means of salvation.

This secular cosmopolitan society exists as it does because it is the invention of rational scientific humanism. Religions and spiritual practices of all sorts abide contentedly within this system and they have some contribution to make; some people find them reassuring, some seek solace and guidance in

their teachings, they often pick up a portion of the mess left behind in the wake of change and they can articulate identity for believers. But the argument that 'we' are spiritually bereft and depressed as a consequence of life today seems deceitful in the face of a time when we, here in this country at least, have never known a greater political peace, never been more healthy, never more educated, more wealthy and, in the matter of death, more accommodated. We live longer and, when sick, which we rarely are until terminally so, we go to hospital or a nursing home.

The plurality of religious and spiritual philosophies that we easily include in our diverse social order in no way represents a failure of modern consciousness (as Gary Bouma insists in his book *Australia Soul*) because, I think, the Australian temper is deeply and comfortably secular. With this in mind the depth psychology poetics that hopefully happens at UWS has to be marked by a very local thumb.

Work at the University has to stay relevant to the 'contemporary moments'. What is the meaning of this 'contemporary moment'? In what myth do we live nowadays? The modernist experience of the last 300 years involves a progressive and partial negation of the past; pulling away human experience from religious metaphysics and shifting myth from the social and collective to the individual. Ginette Paris (Pacifica Graduate Institute) says of this that a 'wonderfully erotic seduction has taken place' and we have so very easily fallen in love with our own individual myths. One gets attached to the myth of *me* and, of course, to the symptoms of being an individual. The human mind has a predisposition to renew itself and, together with contemporary image-making technology, we easily invent and construct for ourselves, and then reconstruct, whatever takes our fancy.

Of course there are those who caution against this supermarket of endless choice because the individual can easily be fooled and there may well be no choice. Indeed, wise heads must acknowledge the infectious symptoms of

affluenza. But in shifting away from the rigidity of particular religious and cultural prejudices one is left with the potential of diversity. Diversity, the hallmark of postmodernity, the delight of ironic fluidity; for the Jungian this must surely be the domain of the trickster enabling movement between poles and holding gently to the tension of opposites, employing a psychological humour.

Postmodernism describes a process mostly constrained within cultural spheres; literature, science, visual art, architecture, fashion, lifestyle, e.commerce, flexible work arrangements and so on. This contemporary geo-political order involves both local and global reorientation and is a phenomenon peculiar to many and various societies; societies not always or necessarily determined as nation states, for example, large global corporations and fund management schemes and as well some NGOs, Greenpeace for example. This historical shift is both multifaceted and agonising. Massive shifts began in the 1960s, primarily in Western Europe and the European New World, the U.S.A., Australia etc., splitting apart various formal social structures that had characterised European societies. The failure to secure hegemony in Vietnam and, more recently Iraq, the emergence of a global youth culture, a sexual liberation that was both personal and public, a decline in the birth rate, firstly across the Western demographic and, more recently, a global decline, changes in the nature and participation at the workplace, different types of industry, a freeing up of currency and wealth generation, the liberalising of educational standards; all these and more have spread far more widely than most social regimes could have imagined just fifty years ago.

It is not possible for these changes to have spread so quickly and not leave behind a sense of loss, even disappointment. Many of these changes have been clear and worthwhile but the consequence is still confusing. Who could have imagined that Italy would today have one of the lowest birth rates, and highest divorce rates, with a young population unprepared to take up marriage?



Just thirty years ago, who would have thought that the gay Mardi Gras would be a defining aesthetic festival for the city of Sydney?

I cannot accept that the Copernican and Cartesian scientific revolutions which set off the modern preoccupation with individual freedoms; freedoms that champion and in turn are championed by materialistic societies are devoid of enchantment and romance. These were huge and significant intellectual shifts and the consequent discoveries and technical developments have continued to change the nature of our cosmology. There are plenty who would argue that Western scientific cosmology has disenchanting the wider world, replacing the deities in nature with programmes of systematic development. In this way we may have lost some versions of complex psychological relationships, developed over the many thousands of years between the human soul and the animate earth. But to argue that individual freedom and the accompanying personal and social enrichment that has come to be is had at the price of separation from nature is patently false.

To empathize with Australia, with its history, with the people, with the landscape and biology, it is the modern tradition that provides the most sophisticated means. It is of course too the most honest, almost the only means through which we might observe and participate. Darwin brought our collective attention to the fact that to be alive, or to have lived on this earth means that we share in the continuous way of existence. Central in this is the dynamic of change, the energy and confusion of change, the unpredictability of change. Contrary to what many have held since the Greeks, we are not alienated from, but rather built into the laws of nature; we are quintessentially beings tuned into its laws and qualities. The wish to relate to this grounding, through both understanding and sensual apprehension is our imaginative work. Hence the hold, on our sensibilities of both science and art.

It is the secular and humanist fundamentals of modernism that, I think, powerfully present the view that humans can redeem themselves. It offers freedom

from the bondage of more determined and dogmatic cultural narratives. The wonderful complexity of being-in-the-world is revealed daily and resolved through our living. Narratives fail us when they cannot provide the creative possibility of interpretative power and scope. By this I mean the tale of our lives, our own biographical account of being alive, should be able to produce new understandings which we can apply across a wide range of circumstances. Living in Sydney involves me in continually re-assembling my presence here - it's not just about now, or then, but more about the contemporary moment, a contingency with time and the simultaneous occurrence of things.

Is the doubt about our contemporary world as being an hospitable and worthwhile place in essence a reaction, a conservative reaction to change that has upset the ancient regime? It is all too easy, intellectually easy, to describe the text of the contemporary as wilfully negligent of our *anima mundi*, from which the gods have apparently withdrawn and so long ago that even our memory of them begins to fade. This predisposition misses the historical fact that all sophisticated cultures maintain the stories of their Gods: ours no less than any. We can see this in almost any movie or television drama, in any of the hundreds of religious/spiritual groups practising their faiths, in the unprecedented demand for faith-based education, in the Green movement and in the self-help industry. Not for a moment do I underestimate the ongoing damage that human society imposes upon the earth but so many more of us today live comfortably with the paradox of that bounty and damage, and we can live much more wisely and with compassion than did our ancestors.

Questions, common enough today that want answers to do with meaningfulness have to be the material that academics involved with analytical psychology engage. When Hillman identifies the soul as being of the earth, in the messy ecologies and not a metaphysical entity tied to the destiny of an individual, he is inviting us to recognise that soulfulness comes forth from the living experience. This living involves us collectively with each thing in the cosmos, living its own particular beingness.

There is a particularity to things, particular knowledge is associated with things; ideas, ways of expressing the understanding embodied in a phenomenon. The interconnectedness is apparent, as one becomes more knowledgeable. Knowing about the things of the world pays tribute and respect to our forebears for all their hard work, for the insights that have been constructed into ways of knowing.

It is important to stare intently at the world and the things thereof. To notice the reality of things, how they fit together, how they evolve and change, how they are tied into a complex biological/cultural web. Noticing in detail both what frightens as well as what is beautiful.

To enjoy life, the psyche requires pleasure, joy, and a fascination with the world. This seems impossible in the face of acute anxiety. It is made even more difficult if the preoccupation of (some) depth psychology is in catering and tailoring its response to this fear about the modern situation. There is a shadow enterprise that some depth psychologists engage with, what John Beebe once called 'the maddening rectitude of the analyst' which implies that they know best.

As an academic whose work has been primarily taken up in the field of depth psychology I take as a core idea the necessity to teach the art of not wasting the joy of life. And as well, not turning one's head from reality. I suspect that the next evolution in psychology will be concerned less with pathology, leaving that to neuroscience, and will become more like a philosophical training, capable of preparing the person for the voyage in the country of paradox, curiosity, pain and joy all of which make for the delight of reality.

## NOTES

1. The author acknowledges the terrible consequences visited upon the peoples of the Soviet Union for much of the 20th century.

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*Response*

to David Russell and Brendon Stewart  
*Analytical Psychology as a Spiritual Practice  
 and The Fear of Reality*

*The Geometry of a Life's Work*

CRAIG SAN ROQUE

*ANZSJA, Sydney and Alice Springs, Australia*

In his poem *Suicidio*, Federico Garcia Lorca describes in imagistic mode the state of a young man on the edge of his demise. He describes in lines such as this – ‘and on taking off his gloves, ash fell from his hands’ – the youth’s dissolution: the loss of definition of himself. The startling thing about this poem is the very first line which goes (in translation): ‘Perhaps it happened because you did not know your geometry’.

I have been caught by the idea of inherent psychic geometry - the personal symmetry of one’s professional character and, in particular, the progression of the specific points, shapes, pattern of the ideas with which the Analytical Psychology project at the University of Western Sydney (UWS) has been defined by Brendon Stewart and David Russell and those colleagues whose teaching and sense of design helped form it over time (including Anne Noonan, Giles Clark, Glenda Cloughley, Judith Pickering, myself, and others).

It can be said, without being too simplistic, that Jung works to a particular geometry, he consistently organises his ideas and his formulations of the psyche around configurations of square and circle - his mandala geometry. He was also beset with dualities and opposites and the notion of line. That is to say – a telos – or direction implicit in the idea of individuation. I don’t say

that this is all he does, but if you wanted to simplify Jung down to a few basic diagrams you would probably come up with such a list of patterns. Freud would almost certainly have a triangular dynamic at the core of his theoretical conceptualising. I suggest that all of us probably work at different times in our professional task to specific and characteristic design. These inherent working designs which seize and direct may be unconscious, maybe not. We have survived so far, not suicided, because we have learned a geometry.

And so it this notion of geometry which I offer in my response to the papers of both Brendon and David. Both have here today, to some extent, summarised or distilled the geometry inherent in their theoretical approach to spiritual discipline or spiritual activities as well as to their work at UWS teaching Jung's psychology and philosophical orientations.

In brief I will comment on a few elements in their complementary geometry.

## TIME

Both are cognisant of time, the lineages and the traditions from which they draw. The teaching at UWS made particular effort to introduce and link students to the lineage and matrices of the historical contextual past. Both work in and with the present moment. This underlies their phenomenological appreciation of the subjectivity of experience. The UWS project was about studying, observing and working in the moment with students' experience of the ideas drawn from the line of the past. I consider this joint complementary occupation of David and Brendon with the relation between time past and time present to be an indication of specific personally tested spiritual perspectives which they know, love and acknowledge.

## MATRICES

Both are concerned with the matrices of nature and environment, the person in context. They do not teach Jung or Freud *et al.* as isolates, idea mongers, as singular genius. Always there was a linking back into the matrices of nature, of community, of social and cultural activities and the intellectual history and drama in which ‘psychoanalysis’ – its character and art as both therapy and philosophy – is an active part.

## STORY LINE OR NARRATIVE

Both approached the teaching and indeed the spiritual aspirations of many students with encouragement to find and refine personal narrative, intersected with cultural narrative. Discover and refine the line of one’s own being, but do this without cutting down the story lines of your neighbour. Critique and differentiation, formulation and precision in the design and development of your own narrative voice and content. This implies developing a kind of subjective independence. Find your own geometry. Students were always encouraged to find the story line, linking point *a* to point *b*.

This has led, I think, to a primary position of both David and Brendon. A kind of openness, a cultivated ‘uncertainty principle’ and reluctance to fore-close on students’ ideas and investigations. Mindful, of course, of the needs of academic discipline.

## THE ONE OR THE MANY

David, in his paper, emphasises, from Spinoza, the metaphor of the lens. He asserts that his lens offers a pluralistic perspective, he accommodates plurality and contradiction and has, over his spiritual and academic life, dissolved

attachment to the absolute, the singular idea, and as such has probably also eschewed, as a teacher, taking up positions which require conflict and adversarial precision as the method. David stands for 'debate' but not a clash of absolutes and opinions. He has cultivated a receptivity which absorbs penetrative oppositions. I am aware that intellectual aggression is a mode upon which many thrive; the binary geometry of opposition? David did not teach aggression.

Brendon in turn values what may be called 'the open and empty place' which David was specific about defining in his paper. Both men teach from a respect for emptiness as both generative and stimulus. Brendon, it would seem, is familiar with doubt and allows doubt to simmer. In this, perhaps, both are imbued with the geometry of the Tao. A pattern and phenomenon to which Jung would appear to have arrived in his maturity.

In describing something of what I call the geometry of the approach and method of these men it is possible to see how they extrapolated this geometry into the implicit and explicit design of their work at UWS. Since I taught there with them, I have experienced the effect of their symmetries and their coordinates and this includes their experiences and confrontations with dualities, opposites and triangulations. I have seen where the method in teaching and in the supervision of theses has been successful and where their geometry has been a cause of consternation or bemusement to those who begged definition, who begged conflict and sharpness.

## FINALE

I have suggested that, as an exercise, each of us might consider how our own or colleagues' geometry of being might be drawn: what angles, points, lines, configuration have been the architectural basis of the work which we have built



singly and collectively. (I realise that this is primarily a visual metaphor, there are others, of course, which get at the pattern and structure of a life's work.)

I like the idea of geometry. It is revealing of unconscious and intended formative, fixed patterning in our work, some perhaps compulsive, as in the geometry of a complex; some perhaps creative - as one finds in the bio-geometry of generativity, that duality of the male and the female, or the networking matrices of the perennially fascinating soft geometry of the brain. I think we can profitably apply this idea to the design implicit in the work of all the speakers who have presented their selves, their many selves, to us here at this Conference.

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# THE DEATH OF SHANGRI-LA

## THE UTOPIAN IMAGINATION AND THE DIALECTICS OF HOPE

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### THE NECESSITY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

At a recent radical education conference, in the USA, a colleague asked how many of the participants could imagine a viable alternative to global corporate capitalism. (I use the term as a general *bete noir* – everyone can insert their own particular version.) Basically, few could come up with any coherent and believable alternative image. Experience suggests that they are not alone in having such a difficulty.

It can appear that there simply *are* no alternatives to the supreme rationality of the market. We can seem ‘torn between dreams that seem unrealisable and prospects that hardly seem to matter’ (Ungger, cited in Harvey, 2000: 155). Yet, as Oscar Wilde famously insisted, ‘A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at’ (cited in Harvey, 2000:133).

At a time when the process of globalisation under the banner of corporate capitalism can seem not only unstoppable, but also the only viable option, and when despair and cynicism seem to go hand in hand with rampant consumerism, I believe there is an urgent need for a fuller engagement with a utopian imagination. The essential cataloguing of profound social, psychological and environmental problems must be accompanied by a vision

of hope that is of equal, if not greater imaginal and symbolic profundity. In this dialectics of hope, the goal is for a world that is both more just and more soulful. But, while I seem to be continually confronted by the paucity of any sustainable utopian ideals, I wonder if this is really the case. Has the utopian urge really dissipated in the face of a remorseless logic of global capitalism or has it changed its shape? If so, where could it now be found and what could it look like?<sup>1</sup>

I want to focus on the example of *Shangri-la* and search for its traces in the terrain of contemporary popular culture, for it is here that crucial struggles occur in the politics of everyday life. My aim is not to deny the perilous and oppressive circumstances of everyday life, but to search for images and moments when hope becomes a possibility, when a glimpse of an alternative can be evoked. This is a crucial issue. It can be compared with someone coming to therapy only to be told by the therapist: 'My goodness, you're in a real mess! I don't see how anything can be done to help'. There must be hope if healing is to take place and the task is to find, and work with, the symbols of that hope.

### SHANGRI-LA? WHAT'S THAT?

Over the past twenty-five years much of my research has been on the relationship between Tibet and the West. Although a considerable part of that research and writing has been concerned with the 'problems' in this relationship, particularly the power imbalance, with the oppressiveness of Western fantasies and the use of an idealised Tibet as a form of naïve escapism, this was never my exclusive focus. I was also interested in the flow from Tibet of ideas, practices and values that have influenced and benefited Western cultures and of the opportunities presented in the encounter for the West to renegotiate its relationship with the world, for example in the areas of psychology, therapy, religion, science and environment (Bishop, 1989; 1993; 1997). Therefore,

while fully aware of the complex 'orientalist' issues, I want to take this opportunity to look again at the extraordinary myth of Shangri-la, at its emancipatory qualities. In the same way that Tibet can become obscured or captured by a vision of Shangri-la (Lopez, 1999; Korom, 1997), so, too, Shangri-la, and with it the utopian imagination, can be overshadowed by its complex relationship with Tibet. I certainly don't want to use this talk to debunk Western Tibetan fantasies.

I have chosen Shangri-la because it was the final Western utopia of the second millennium to reach widespread popularity. Traces of this 1930s fantasy of a lost paradise, hidden in a remote valley, can be found throughout popular culture: in film, novel, travel, politics, religion, environmentalism, advertising and cyberspace. Applied equally to international hotels and suburban homes, it has never been exclusively identified with Tibet, although that country gave the myth the fertile ground of its conception and has been intertwined with it ever since. Ambivalence and contradiction, idealisation and hostility, have accompanied this fantasy; a fantasy that embraces both utopia and apocalypse. What is the fate of this myth in an era when expanding globalism and high-tech culture have all-but eliminated the possibility of any Earth-bound hidden valley and uncharted civilisation? Today, Shangri-la is just about dead, due to a critical postmodern sophistication and irony, to global surveillance, corporate globalism, as well as cultural and economic imperialism. While such a death is welcome for those who saw Shangri-la as a prison of naïve idealism, as merely an oppressive Western orientalist fantasy, we must also mourn its passing. What are the cultural and psychological implications of losing any hope of a Shangri-la, of losing the possibility of a far away but nevertheless geographically real, utopian place - a secret sanctuary whose sole purpose, however naively and oppressively formulated, was to save the world at the moment of its ultimate catastrophe? What are the future possibilities for the utopian imagination in the new century? Above all, what can we learn from Shangri-la?

I recently asked one of my undergraduate classes how many had heard of Shangri-la. Out of about 100 students only a dozen put up their hands and of these only a few had any real notion of what Shangri-la was, let alone its connection with Tibet. I told them to ask their parents or grandparents. I was certain they'd know. It is partly a generational thing. It was a fantasy that worked, was real, was even a healing fiction, for three, maybe four generations. Yet, although often now not named as such, there are many idealised images, particularly, but not exclusively of Tibet, that resonate with the qualities of a Shangri-la.

*Lost Horizon*, in both novel and film, told of a brilliant young British diplomat, Conway, who is mysteriously abducted from a turbulent 1930s China and flown, along with some unfortunate companions, into unmapped regions of the Kun Lun mountains bordering northern Tibet (Hilton, 1933). The plane eventually crashes high in the mountains. They are rescued by a party of Tibetans and, after an immensely difficult journey, are taken to their monastery which is located in a hidden valley. Miraculously, after the terrible blizzards, high winds and bitter cold of the journey, the secret valley seems bathed in perpetual spring. Shangri-la, as the place was called, had been established in order to preserve the very 'best' aspects of 'civilisation' against the certainty of impending global warfare with its catastrophic consequences. We are told that people can live until they are many hundreds of years old due to the regenerative atmosphere of the valley, but if they leave, they rapidly age, wither and die. The British diplomat has long been torn between political action and a contemplative life, as opposing solutions to the world's pressing problems. In fact, we discover that his abduction was orchestrated from Shangri-la and he has been chosen to replace its wise and very ancient spiritual leader, originally a Jesuit missionary, who is at last dying. Conway is unsure what to do, but is finally persuaded to leave Shangri-la by his disgruntled companions and to regain the outside world. However, on the journey out he becomes convinced of Shangri-la's truth and his role in its mission.

He then sets out, alone, on a desperate but almost impossible journey, to try to find his way back.

## SHANGRI-LA AND TIBET

The dominant Western fantasy of Tibet is as a 'lost realm', a mysterious, remote fairytale land on the roof of the world, the last home of ancient mystery traditions where parapsychological and occult feats are treated as commonplace, a sublimely peaceful realm outside the crass turmoil of history (Bishop, 1989).<sup>2</sup> Whilst often oppressive, this idealised image has also been mobilised successfully by some exiled Tibetans in recent decades, as they struggle to find ways of enlisting Western sympathy and support, perhaps even to the point of believing it themselves. Some Tibetans have criticised both Westerners and fellow Tibetans for becoming imprisoned within a Shangri-la 'complex'. Conversely, Tibet has often been caught in a cross-fire as Westerners scathingly critique the seeming absurd idealisation of Shangri-la (Bishop, 2000). In such cases, Tibet is identified almost exclusively with the utopian vision. Clearly, the relationship between Tibet and Shangri-la is a complex one.

## SO, WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM SHANGRI-LA?

I believe that the most important challenge in the new century is to overcome a split between social, individual and environmental perspectives, as well as between the spiritual, psychological and the secular. A conversation needs to be set up which values and takes all of these into account. Much of this work has already begun. Like Shangri-la, the 'goal' is an image of a society, a world, that is both more soulful, spiritual *and* more just.

A crucial site of this struggle is popular culture and its place in everyday life. A sustained and sympathetic engagement with this awkward terrain is vital, with its exuberance, its crass commercialism, frustrating contradictions, with its often creative and discerning audiences. Often described as nothing but debased, cheap entertainment, a distraction at best and consumerist manipulation at worst, popular culture reveals itself, just like Shangri-la, as the site of momentous ongoing global struggles, in small acts of resistance and meaning-making.

Indeed, in novel and film, Shangri-la was imagined as being somehow outside popular culture, a culturally superior place where dance bands, radio and cinema were absent. But, crucially, it was conceived entirely within popular culture and draws us, entangles us, in its messy terrain. Paradoxically, therefore, Shangri-la encrypts at the very heart of popular culture a space that is imagined totally free from it.

A full-page colour cartoon, from the respected British newspaper, *The Guardian*, illustrates the complexities and confusions in the relationship between Tibet, Shangri-la and popular culture (Douglas, 1997). Satirising Hollywood's recent films about Tibet, it shows Scorsese in the director's chair, cameras, movie sets and extras dressed as Chinese soldiers with bayonets fixed to their rifles. A realistic image of an earnest-looking Dalai Lama is located at the very centre of the picture. His head is closely adjacent to a van offering 'mobile snacks'. By association this suggests that the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism are just 'fast' foods, a quick snack for mindless Westerners. It would appear that something is being trivialised here. But what? Hollywood? The Dalai Lama? Western fantasies? On the other hand, is the Dalai Lama or the utopia of Shangri-la irrevocably diminished by their involvement and representation in popular culture, whether idealised or satirised? Or, is popular culture and everyday life somehow enhanced and invigorated by it, no matter how bizarre, naïve or distorted are the images? I am reminded of the Tibetan Buddhist image of *The Wheel of Life*, which shows the six realms of

human existence ranging from the heavens to the hells. In each realm appears a manifestation of the Buddha, demonstrating that no matter how distressing or distorted are the circumstances, help and hope are at hand, the potential for awakening is always present if we know how to look for it. As a symbol of hope, wisdom and compassion, or of struggle against social injustice, the Dalai Lama's influence extends far beyond the more limited range of Western Buddhists. While the presence of his image in a satirical, cynical and trivialising cartoon is clearly problematic in terms of the seriousness of his message, at the same time it marks the doorway into another kind of discourse, marks the point of intersection for another order of imagining.

### WHAT ABOUT SHANGRI-LA AS THE ARCHETYPAL UTOPIA?

There were five crucial aspects to this 1930s utopian vision.

1. It was an image of perfection and hence was an object of hope, longing and of desperate nostalgia.
2. Although it was safely *hidden* somehow *outside* modern global history and politics, it was also of this world. It was a place one could imagine actually journeying to. It was a place that a few chosen and exceptional individuals could find and live in, as well as a place that could just be believed in and perhaps, like a beacon, used for inspiration and as an exemplary, spiritual resource.
3. Its apocalyptic purpose, to preserve and ultimately to resurrect civilisation, gave Shangri-la its mission and the urgency of its moment in history. Unlike most utopias, Shangri-la was not a blueprint, it was neither a model to be emulated nor was it a goal to be aimed for. It was imagined to be *a cultural and spiritual ark*, like Noah's, gathering things to ensure their survival and to re-seed the world.



4. An acute and essential ambivalence also lay at the heart of this fantasy. Attitudes towards it were not simply celebratory. Instead of a perfect society Shangri-la was also seen in terms of boredom and aristocratic tyranny, its very spirituality a seductive opiate bordering on madness. Instead of a safe place outside the chaos of a world that had lost contact with fundamental values and was speeding to its doom, several characters in both novel and film curse Shangri-la as a prison whose evil wardens and innocent inmates alike were deluded if not insane. Even the leading protagonist, Conway, is unsure.
5. It was a magical place. A place of beauty and enchantment. It was like a fairy world that was very different to the regime of spiritual authority and order that seemed to dominate both utopian visions and fantasies of Tibet.

Right from the start, Shangri-la came to be used in two very different ways: on the one hand it was a magical hideaway, a nostalgic retreat like a cottage or vacation destination - gone went any bitterness, any pain of loss; gone as well went the apocalypse, the global purpose. On the other hand, Shangri-la was imagined to be an ideal spiritual utopia with a global purpose. But in both cases any ambivalence was lost - there seemed to be no doubt about its desirability. Over the past fifty years a complete vision of Shangri-la is rare, instead various partial aspects are mobilised, for example the apocalyptic mission, its sense of enchantment, or its spiritual perfection, in isolation from the full contours of its imaginal phenomenology.

From a *Western perspective* this 1930s Shangri-la can be seen as a Depression-era compensation, promising a kind of never-never land, a paradise, in contrast with the unemployment, greed, wars and poverty all around. On the other hand, it could be seen as a critique, a refusal, a protest against a seemingly inhuman machine-age, a degenerate but unstoppable global modernity. It was for many a healing fiction. Of course, it could also be seen, nega-

tively, as the culmination of hundreds of years of oppressive Western fantasy-making about Tibet.

However, I believe that the invention or discovery of Shangri-la in the late 1930s can be understood from another, very different perspective.

It is widely recognised, for example, that James Hilton was 'influenced' by Shambhala stories, the ancient Tibetan myth of a mystic kingdom hidden deep in the mountains, one which guides civilisation and eventually will emerge to triumphantly battle with the dark forces poised to take over the world (Bernbaum, 1980). Of course there are important differences between Shambhala and Shangri-la, but the similarities are striking.

I want to suggest that Shangri-la can be seen as part of a transmission of wisdom teachings and mythologising *from* Tibetan culture *to* the West. A process that is still continuing, for example, with the extensive on-going series of Kalachakra initiations by the Dalai Lama. The extraordinary success of a small, third-world country, and, latterly, of a very small group of refugees, in influencing a wide spectrum of Western society and becoming an integral part of Western culture, must be acknowledged. It is simple arrogance to view the success of Tibetan Buddhism, or the widespread interest in things Tibetan, purely in terms of Western appropriation. It denies Tibetans efficacy. It is too Western-centred.

Nor was Shangri-la the first example of this transmission. Just a few years earlier the *Bardo Thodol* (or *Tibetan Book of the Dead*), was 'discovered' in a small Himalayan town. It was a text that belongs to the Tibetan tradition of 'termas' which tells how in the eighth century A.D., Padma Sambhava, hid many spiritual treasures designed to be discovered in the future, when conditions would be appropriate for the reception of the wisdom teachings they contained. Integral to this tradition of 'concealed treasures' are stories about secret and sacred valleys. Indeed, 'In addition to serving as repositories for

such sacred objects, the hidden valleys themselves are regarded as concealed treasures' (Bernbaum, 1980: 64-65). From a Tibetan terma perspective, therefore, it could be said that the Western 'discovery' of the *Bardo Thodol*, occurred at precisely the most appropriate moment for its reception into Western culture (Bishop, 1997). Given that secret valleys are part of this tradition, it is also significant that the reception into the West of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* occurred within a few years of the emergence of the myth of Shangri-la.

Shambhala, Kalachakra, *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Secret Valleys, are all part of the same Tibetan terma tradition, one to which I believe Shangri-la can be linked.

While Shangri-la is a fusion of earlier utopian themes, it also marks the definite emergence of a radically different image, one I have not come across before in Western history: the secret valley that will act as an ark to save civilisation, but which also serves as a spiritual inspiration in the years leading up to the inevitable apocalypse. This marks the transmission of another mode of mythologising.

So, Shangri-la can be seen, not only as a Western creation but also as part of Tibetan Shambhala mythologising, one that has jumped across the boundary between mythological paradigms.

Also, if Shangri-la in some way hints at Shambhala, then perhaps it actually exists. But how can it be said to exist? Wasn't it just something written about in a popular novel and re-created in a Hollywood movie? Here, we can at least point to ideas of the Buddhist Pure Lands (Suzuki, 1970) and to *Himma*, the faculty of visionary imagination described by the Sufi Ibn' Arabi (Corbin, 1969). In both cases, the power of belief, of creative imagination, is essential. For example, Hillman writes of: 'This faithful attention to the imaginal world, this love which transforms mere images into presences, gives them

living being...’ (1967: 118). In a similar vein Suzuki writes: ‘Instead of being born in the Pure Land, for sincere followers, the Pure Land itself is created: it comes into existence.... Therefore instead of our going over to the Pure Land, it comes to us’ (1970: 20). In other words, Shangri-la, or Shambhala, like any utopian vision, challenges our very concepts of objective geographical existence. Indeed, I believe we need to explore the notion of a subtle geography, one that parallels a more common idea of a subtle body.

## VISION AND NOSTALGIA

The utopian imagination is haunted by its shadow, its unacknowledged authoritarianism, its power, its certainty, by the desperate seduction of the purity of its vision down to the last detail. But, while the utopian imagination can express itself in a full utopian vision, this doesn’t have to be the case. It can simply be an urge towards some ideal, or a refusal to accept the conditions of the present. A vague but persistent prompting. A fragmented intimation. A hope or an expectation.

Utopias are an expression of faith: social, spiritual and psychological. Significantly, Pure Land Buddhism, or an emphasis on paradise in Christianity or Sufism, are expressions of a Way of faith. Psychological faith is not a belief in any particular object or place, but a trust in images and in the productive power of the imaginal, in its reality and in its emancipatory potential in realising a more just and soulful world. Psychological faith vitalises our experience of belief (Grinnell, 1970).

While the brilliance and calculated perfection of utopias such as Shangri-la draws attention to their visionary power, a fundamental tension between vision and nostalgia is integral to the utopian imagination.<sup>4</sup> Underlying hope and expectation is a great sense of loss and the unbearable bitter-sweetness, scarcely acknowledged, of impossibility, of non-return. This is a dangerous

terrain: the fierce dogma of visionary idealism and the swampy molasses of over-sentimentalised nostalgia. Vision and nostalgia in tension *and* in partnership.

As a form of lost paradise, Tibet's political situation evokes not simply outrage but also deep nostalgia across a broad range of Tibetans and Westerners. Deep nostalgia can often be a radical political nostalgia - among exiles, refugees and émigrés, among the dispossessed and those who have never possessed, among indigenous populations around the world, in the struggles to sustain cultural integrity in multicultural societies - a deep nostalgia that refuses to accept the present order, that idealises a past in the name of a future hope.

Nostalgia is not a sign of decrepitude, of old age, rather it can signal the summoning of the elders, of the imaginal ancestors. This ancestral issue is crucial now. In every case of a politically radical nostalgia, particularly indigenous politics, but not exclusively so, from Tibet to the highlands of Scotland, from Australian Aboriginals to native Americans, the question of respect for the ancestors is fundamental. How to imagine, respect, evaluate them.

The utopian imagination therefore launches us into an impossible project. It draws us into what Jung called a *complexio oppositorum*, a contradictory mix of opposites.

The title of the original book and film, *Lost Horizon*, suggests that beyond the furthest horizons of our vision, both inner and outer, in a forgotten region of the world or imagination, lies a secret place of utmost importance. It suggests that, so consumed are we with the mundane that our horizons are closed in all around and we have lost a particular horizon which allows us a vision of great importance. Shangri-la is like a beacon reminding us of that 'Lost' horizon. It is a window through which that horizon becomes visible, or at least possible. It is a reminder that something important, a critical other dimension, has been lost or forgotten, even if we are unsure what exactly it

is. The idea of lost, remote or distant should not necessarily be equated with far away in a literal sense. The horizon about which Shangri-la reminds us can be very close indeed.

## SHANGRI-LA AND POPULAR CULTURE

How does Shangri-la appear? How is it summoned? Usually it is through glimpses and fragments, whether in dream, reverie, or in popular culture. We need to go into the world of popular culture in order to find images of hope. For popular culture was where Shangri-la was born and, most importantly, this was where Shangri-la had its utopian mission – to be hidden, encrypted, secure within a world imagined to be morally degenerate, wounded, spiritually bankrupt and irrevocably racing to its self-destruction.

I want to look at four moments when there is the possibility of a Shangri-la appearing in texts and circumstances that at first glance would seem un conducive to a utopian imagining, and try to untangle some of the issues involved, some of the ways in which the encryption can be revealed.

## SHANGRI-LA AND THE DALAI LAMA

The 1996 film *Independence Day* tells of the invasion of the Earth by a technologically superior and ruthless alien civilisation. Their immense starships are shown hovering low over all of the Earth's major cities, blotting out the sky and terrifying the population. Humanity seems on the verge of extermination. Early in the film, one such starship quickly centres itself low and threateningly over the White House. We are taken into the office of the U.S. President as he tries to come to terms with the enormity of the situation. The camera slowly pans across his desk, then pauses for just a second on a close-up of four small, framed, photographs in a row. On the left, close together, are

two family portraits, while on the right is a photo of him and the Pope. But the central photograph clearly shows the President and the Dalai Lama, alone together, laughing, arm in arm. Here are images of the two most powerful figures in human culture, shown united but each at opposite ends of a sharp polarity: secular power and spiritual authority. This is the only reference to Tibet in the film. What kind of meanings could circulate through such a small glimpse? The Dalai Lama is an instantly recognisable signifier of an exemplary moral and spiritual Tibet. His photo appears at the exact moment that apocalypse is evoked and the leader of the world's most powerful nation is in full retreat.

In this film, the apocalyptic connection with Tibet, which is integral to the Shangri-la myth, comes to the fore. The Dalai Lama's photograph is evoked either like some kind of desperate icon or talisman, the Dalai Lama as human embodiment of an Ark-like Shangri-la, or as a nostalgic reminder of human spiritual attainment soon to be annihilated. It reveals a Dalai Lama, and hence perhaps a Shangri-la, that has become integrated into both Western popular culture and high-level global politics.

### THE MAGICAL CHILD APPEARS

In many recent films, such as *Little Buddha*, *The Golden Child*, *The Shadow*, *Seven Years in Tibet* and *Kundun*, the focus has been on the Tibetan male Lama in the form of a wonder child, a figure of benign wisdom and power that can transcend individual death, which can control reincarnation. Often this wisdom/power is enlisted in a fight against absolute evil.

An irritation with the Western idealisation of Tibet consistently produces its opposite, a scornful dismissal, or even anger (Bishop, 2000). Elsewhere there are scathing criticisms of Tibet's authoritarian culture and its feudal past, the oppressive role of the male monastic elite. The child motif suggests naivety,

simplicity, innocence, trust and vulnerability. The child is therefore a perfect figure to represent an idealised Tibet stripped of any confusing associations with political despotism, or religious deception. Perhaps too, it can be read as symbolising a new beginning, a rebirth for Tibet itself? Or the rebirth as promised by Shangri-la? This late twentieth century motif of the wonder-child is certainly different to that of one hundred years earlier, of Tibet in terms of an infantilism - the child as irrational, dependent, irresponsible and pre-moral.

In a significant reversal, just as Tibet becomes symbolised by a wonder child, the West becomes symbolised by the other side of the archetype, by some of the more infantile characteristics. So, *The Golden Child* opens with a close-up of a giant prayer wheel, followed by robed monks solemnly chanting in front of a giant golden statue of the Buddha. The film then cuts to an image of the Statue of Liberty, which is quickly revealed to be merely a small reproduction, in the back of pick up truck. After the U.S. flag, the Stars and Stripes, we are shown, in quick succession: donuts, petrol pumps, and a billboard with HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA. These icons of the U.S.A. seem tacky, temporary and superficial compared with the ancient ritual certainty of the Tibetan objects that surround the wonder child. At best the Americana seems playfully childlike and brashly innocent. Certainly its superficiality seems unable to cope with a struggle against the forces of evil.

Many in the West are looking for some source of wisdom, certainty and personal power. In these films, the exemplary qualities of Tibetan religious culture are condensed into the image of a wonder-child, innocent, wise and pure, with miraculous healing powers. As if a direct cipher for Shangri-la, in these films the child-monk, so separate from the mundane world around him, is also strangely vulnerable to outside forces, but, on the other hand, is mentally and psychically in control.



## SHANGRI-LA.COM

To work, imaginally, with popular culture, also means taking advertising seriously as a complex and contradictory expression. Idealised, 'Shangri-la', Tibetan images are found in a range of commercial advertising.

In an advertisement for SBS, Australia's unique television and radio service dedicated exclusively both to multicultural broadcasting, and a non-racist multicultural society, an Aboriginal male with sacred markings is shown playing a didgeridoo alongside Tibetan monks in full ceremonial attire playing *radongs*, the famous six metre long trumpets. The location is Tibet, or another Himalayan country. The respect accorded to Aboriginal spirituality is echoed in that accorded to Tibetan, particularly among SBS viewers and the readers of the quality newspaper, *The Weekend Australian*, in which the ad appeared. Indigenous Australia is placed alongside indigenous Tibet, mutually reinforcing both struggles. Is this merely an indulgent image of self-congratulation by a liberal elite, or is it a healing fiction, or an image of a hopeful ideal?

The second is for Apple Powerbook. The ad shows four smiling Tibetan monks in full ceremonial attire standing around an equally smiling Western man, seated with a PowerBook computer on his lap (Barglow, 1994: 195-197). Close inspection reveals that on the screen is information about Drepung Loseling monastery in Tibet; about its enforced relocation in India due to Communist Chinese occupation of Tibet; about details of worldwide performances of sacred music and dance by the monks; claims that these traditional practices can heal and purify the planet in these troubled times. Again, here is an idealised 'Shangri-la', cultural politics, religion and psychology in close proximity with entertainment and consumerism. They all share the same stage, the same media, the same rhetoric, the same images and symbols. Boundaries are blurred. It requires careful imaginal work to untangle each form of promotion, to create some small space between them, let alone to evaluate and pass judgement. Is it a case of pure commercial exploitation,

both of Tibetan culture and of a utopian imaging? Or a subtle form of cultural imperialism that draws the Tibetan culture into the technology-centred and market-driven concept of how the world is put together? Or is it showing a compassionate Western technology coming to the rescue of exploited third-world cultures, albeit like endangered species? Is it part of a remetaphorising, a re-souling, of technology, particularly given the connotation of a Shangri-la and the spiritual/occult imagining of cyberspace, often prompted by Western fantasies about Tibet? Of course, it could be all of these, depending on the context and audience.

As advertising increasingly struggles against consumer cynicism, hostility and indifference, traditional cultures are being used as signifiers of authenticity and high moral purpose. In such a case, Tibetan Buddhist imagery could signify an attitude that transcends conspicuous consumption. While on one hand it helps to bypass consumer resistance and provide a powerful endorsement of the advertised product, on the other hand, its presence within consumerised space also confuses and blurs boundaries, revealing the presence of other dimensions and possibilities.

## DREAMING OF SHANGRI-LA

A man dreams he is climbing huge stone steps, embedded into rock, up a grass-covered mountainside. They are well worn. God like, as if for giants. Seems too much work to climb. But he remembers they are meant for god-king and struggles on. He reaches the top and it becomes a slick modern Asian hotel. There is no Dalai Lama. It is an expensive place but not top of the range. He is reminded of Disney and theme parks.

Even the Beijing government is now promoting 'Shangri-la' tourism to a monastery on the borders of Tibet they claim was the one that inspired James Hilton's creation (Sly, 1999).

With Shangri-la.com now a reality, both in cyberspace and as a Chinese-owned luxury hotels, with criticisms that the Potala palace in Lhasa has been turned into a museum stripped of spirituality, with models of the Potala being included in massive theme parks, indeed with the branding and theme-parking of any place and space that promises commercial reward no matter how sacred, no wonder the dreamer is worried.

A recent image showing the Potala dwarfed and framed by a Chinese anti-aircraft gun confirms many Western and exiled-Tibetan fears (Lovelock, 1992/1993). Yet the Potala is still the most-used and crucial image of old Tibet, of the endurance of traditional Tibetan culture and of resistance to the Chinese. The Potala, for all its transformation into a tourist attraction and museum, therefore remains a symbol of memory, of radical nostalgia and defiance (Bishop, 1994).

Like the Potala, Shangri-la is a hybrid, a heterotopia (Foucault, 1980): a single place simultaneously occupied by a plurality of diverse and contradictory imaginings.

## A SPACE IN-BETWEEN

A utopian vision offers a terrain for seeing through, working through, insighting. Not simply accepting, nor simply rejecting. Instead, questioning the dreams we are sold, through a deeper awareness of the imaginal fictions being used, enables us to engage, resist, negotiate and transform.

Imagine a new utopia emerges. How is it communicated? It has to be via media and popular culture. Almost immediately it will become a brand, or used to promote a brand, or involved in entertainment. Will it be rejected out of hand? Nothing would ever get going if this were the case.

Shangri-la seems to be caught between being a utopia and a brand name, between being a tourist destination and the goal of spiritual pilgrimage, between a museum or a theme park and a political and spiritual summons. Is it just a New Age or Hollywood cliché? Perhaps there is more wisdom in Hollywood and in New Age beliefs than many would care to admit. I believe that this messiness is inevitable, perhaps even welcome. There was never a time when the utopian imagination floated free, unblemished, from such 'contaminations'.

I have mentioned that the utopian imagination can offer the image of an outside position to corporate globalisation. It can be an image of an alternative, or a position by which to reflect back upon and critique existing circumstances, or it can be a healing fiction offering hope and expectation.<sup>5</sup> As Shurmer-Smith and Hannam point out, it is in the imagination, particularly the utopian/dystopian imagination, 'that it becomes possible to think the unthinkable, to challenge codes and to deconstruct categories' (1994: 73).

However, the Shangri-la myth also offers an image of a core interiority, the possibility of an interior depth to what can at times seem an homogenised and one-dimensional global order. Not so much a stepping outside, but going through, working through. Utopias reveal and symbolically chart an interior space. They insist that there is symbolic depth and psychological complexity at the very heart of apparently mundane things.

Following on from Oscar Wilde's comment that a map of the world without Utopia marked on it isn't worth having, we can focus on the mythological image of Atlas who, by holding apart the earth and sky, creates a space in-between; a space for imaginal play. Utopias help to sustain such a space. They are located at that interface in-between: in-between belief and rejection, in-between acceptance and refusal.

A vehement critic of global corporatism, Naomi Klein, writes: 'What haunts me is not exactly the absence of literal space so much as a deep craving for metaphorical space.... [even the] back alleys of unsponsored space are slipping away' (2000: 64). Encrypted at the heart of consumer society, Shangri-la is a place free from such notions. In the endless dance between advertisers and consumers, utopian myths such as Shangri-la refuse to be completely subsumed by commercialism. There will always be some crucial part that survives to bring hope or expectation, to act like a virus down-loaded into the body of consumer society.

Shangri-la is both oppressive and emancipatory. It maps out a terrain of struggle. While 'corporatism and consumerism etc.' may well draw the utopian vision onto its terrain, simultaneously, Shangri-la draws global corporatism onto its terrain. It refuses to allow global corporatism to simply determine, uncontested, the ground where the struggle over the imaginal will take place.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the original myth, it was Shangri-la that offered hope in the face of a global apocalypse. As we have seen, fragments of this purpose still remain, very much alive and active. Perhaps it is therefore premature to speak of the death of Shangri-la. But in two recent films, *Seven Years in Tibet* and *Kundun*, the myth is turned inside out and it is Tibet as Shangri-la itself that is facing its own apocalypse.

Can Shangri-la survive independent from Tibet? Probably not. At least not in its present form. The Shangri-la/Tibet conjunction belonged to a different era, one that is now coming to an end.

Shangri-la is an opening that reveals a 'Lost Horizon'. It marks an entry-point for a descent into an imaginal complex(ity), of ambivalence and contradiction. To dismiss a MacShangri-la, or to simply accept it, is to fall once again into the trap of imagining a time, or a culture, when utopian political, religious and psychological visions were somehow pure, were free of struggles over power and meaning, were unsullied and unambiguous. But, the utopian vision is always messy, always paradoxical, qualities that are usually displaced somewhere else, as an unacknowledged shadow side, or swings to the opposite, the fascinatingly gratuitous despair of social chaos and a dystopia.

While the involvement of the utopian vision in commercialism and populism is often painfully unacceptable for visionary purists, who see such a situation as a crass appropriation and contamination, it ensures that the utopian imagination remains in contact with the 'vale of soul making', continues the crucial struggle with the mess and contradictions of everyday life. At the same time, for those who are completely absorbed by the culture of often mindless entertainment and conspicuous consumption, the unexpected appearance of the utopian vision, even as just a distant, hazy glimpse of a corner of a Shangri-la, not only provides a reminder of another dimension, but gives it an archetypal landscape and drama. In this sense, on one level, Shangri-la can be actually encrypted as a 'sacred valley' in an image/text that seems far removed from, or directly opposed and even a threat to, the utopian vision. As we have seen, such a scenario is integral to the phenomenology of Shangri-la: a persistent threat from the outside; a place/perspective that is difficult to find; an impossible access; a constant concern about protecting and sustaining its boundaries.

Even more than before, the utopian imagination is now less about formulating large models of an ideal wholeness, than of providing glimpses, sparks, fragments of hybrid spaces in-between. Nor is the utopian imagination merely future-orientated. Instead it can draw upon the reservoirs of hope expressed

in a deep, radical nostalgia. A utopian imagination can sustain a faith in the imaginal process itself, can provide a glimpse of and faith in, a lost horizon.

## NOTES

1. There has been a recent resurgence of interest by critical scholarship in re-evaluating a utopian imagination and its importance for any emancipatory struggle. See, for example, Harvey's *Spaces of Hope* (2000). More generally, on contemporary utopian images, see Shurmer-Smith & Hannam's *Worlds of Desire, Realms of Power* (1994). For classic volumes that map out the terrain, see Manuel *Utopias and Utopian Thought* (1965); Desroche *The Sociology of Hope* (1979).
2. Shangri-la-ism can be found across a broad spectrum of Western cultural activity (Bishop, 1993). For example, Jung participated in the fantasy although never actually mentioned Shangri-la. For example, in his commentary on the Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation (Collected Works, Vol.11), he insisted that anyone within reach of a telephone couldn't practice yoga or meditation, seemingly unaware that the Potala palace in Lhasa had long been wired up to the telegraph and that the Dalai Lama had personally requested a telephone connection. There are many ways in which Jungian psychology has been intricately woven into this idealised fantasy of a Shangri-la Tibet. While at times this idealisation was oppressive and misleading, it was also evoked to promote healing and emancipation.
3. In recent 'New Age' works such as Redfield's *The Secret of Shambhala* (1999), the often creative and insight-generating conflation and intermixing between Shangri-la and Shambhala symbolism is extensive.
4. Vision, whether that of political activism, religious zeal, or therapeutics, seems to loath nostalgia, unless it can somehow be tamed and harnessed for its heroic actions. From such a perspective nostalgia carries an aura of weakness and malingering, attitudes which follow on from the original formulation of nostalgia which occurred in military psychology. It is imagined to blunt and thwart the heroic imperative, which insists that we don't pander to nostalgia, imagining it as a crepuscular or twilight emotion. The heroic fears that by embracing nostalgia, purposeful action will be devoured, swallowed up, or, even worse, one will wallow in a sweet, sticky, self-indulgent and cowardly dereliction of duty. Nostalgia forces a slow descent, whereas vision wants to move quickly, to ascend. Utopian landscapes are often caught between the desire for a planned, future-oriented purposefulness and the need to draw upon the reserves of memory, often expressed as a deep, radical, nostalgia (Bishop, 1995).

Nowadays, nostalgia is particularly under threat, not just from impatient visionaries and activists, but from the world of commercialised popular culture which has seemingly embraced it. At the turn of the millennium we are experiencing an upsurge of desperate visions and an equally desperate nostalgia (from recycled fashions and consumer sentiments to theme parks and folk-nationalisms) (Samuel, 1994). But usually this is only a packaged, superficial and sanitised version of nostalgia, one that excludes the bitterness and pain. Sanitised ancestors.

5. In his re-evaluation of Edward Said's seminal work on 'orientalism'(1979), Clarke quite rightly points to the emancipatory aspects of the Western encounter with other cultures and how such cultural 'others' have often been used as 'outside' positions from which to reflect back onto and critique Western cultures (1997).

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# ON READING *CARPENTARIA*

A REVIEW OF ALEXIS WRIGHT'S  
MILES FRANKLIN AWARD-WINNING NOVEL

CRAIG SAN ROQUE  
*ANZSJA, Sydney, Alice Springs, Australia*

## ORIENTATION NOTE

This review of *Carpentaria* is a response to suggestions made in conversation with the author and her publishers, Giramondo. My intent was to write an orientation to *Carpentaria* which might place it for northern hemisphere readers who may be unfamiliar with the (contemporary) Australian indigenous situation, and who may also be looking for some local guidance in approaching Alexis Wright's style of narrative, her unique elemental poetic and her indigenous geographic attunement.

It represents my contribution to the ANZSJA 'Uses of Subjective Experience' Conference panel session on Sunday 21 October on indigenous themes/myth/nature/Jung's contribution to psychological working. D.W. Winnicott's phrase, 'maturation and the facilitating environment', the title of one of his books, suggests the direction of my thoughts here. For over twenty years, ever since returning from London in 1986, having graduated as a Jungian analyst, I have been concerned with the project of acknowledging the Australian psychosocial and geographic ecosystem as the maturational 'facilitating environment' for my therapeutic imagination. This may be a strange thing to say - but

it is not all that easy to accept 'the place where we live' as the active location of maturation as a human and as a professional psychoanalyst.

Psychoanalysis is a Euro-centred activity and the measures of success and recognition are mostly determined by the natural interests and intents of the European attunement. I feel that most psychotherapists unconsciously repeat Euro-psyche patternings in the consulting room alchemia. If this is so, then the psychological use of the indigenous state is probably a bit dodgy. The desire to rediscover an Australia that works for myself (psychologically) has led me into isolated and neglected situations. I have deliberately resisted swallowing the comfort/collusion/certainties of a British/ French/ North American psychoanalytic ethos. I have caught myself at specific moments in a session deflecting the urge to colonise Australian patients with the formulae of a Northern interpretation repertoire, as though any couch anywhere in the world could be forever England.

Paradoxically, I also draw happily upon the richness of the Euro-Asian cultural lineage, mythos and sensibility; as any Jungian does, accepting the received wisdom, elegance and complexity of one's own gene pool. I have neither spat it out nor swallowed it whole. And I know I have missed out on certain things, but I have found myself saying over and over again, 'there is something else here, of a psychic nature, to be found or created - of itself; and there is an urgency to that project - lest we discover ourselves too late'. In this project I have found an unlikely mentor in Rafael Lopez Pedraza (*Cultural Anxiety* and *Dionysos in Exile*) who has insisted that the South American nations and the souls of the ugly and underdeveloped have a right to be heard and counted as psychological beings, as legitimate theorists and as healers of the wounded world - as much, or even more so, than any elegant psycho-crat of Belsize Lane or Zurich.

I make the suggestion to you here today (as part of this panel) that there are only a handful of people in our profession, in Australia, who have mindfully

developed a mature acknowledgment of the psychological value and vitality of the indigenous faculty of imagination - that is to say, imagination alive in the specific context of the local environment - in 'country'. These handful tend to acknowledge *personal* relationships with specific indigenous Australians as being significant in the development of their appreciation and comprehension of imaginative Australia - the animating place where we live. This place which we have found (and created) together and have not, as yet, totally destroyed?

Some of that handful of people are present at this conference and each of you has contributed to the strength of mind of the other. (Many of the people of whom I speak are represented as authors in John Cameron's book, *Changing Places: Re-Imagining Australia*.) These are personal associations, subjectively nuanced. We have made use of each other's subjective experience. Many of us have met repeatedly in specific environmental settings - including the various 'Sense of Place' gatherings. We have pooled experiences which are not confined to the objective reading of journals and citing of distant texts. To my mind, Alexis Wright is one of those persons of affinity. I have been associated with Alexis, now closely, now at a distance, in some demanding activities in the Aboriginal domain. Her three books, *The Grog War*, *Plains of Promise*, *Carpentaria*, her politically-oriented activities (Kalkaringi Constitutional Meetings), her essay 'On Writing *Carpentaria*'<sup>1</sup> (Heat, 2007) and the PEN lecture, July 4, 2007, 'On Fear', all display Alexis Wright's advocacy of a specifically located indigenous imagination. On this subject I prefer to keep quiet and let her speak.

Alexis connects ancestral themes, nature experienced, contemporary fact. For this reason I offer the conference this review as an acknowledgment of her work, which is, I believe, a companion piece to our endeavour.

## ON READING *CARPENTARIA*

*'... wherever they found the going good on those well known tracks. Meanwhile a thane of the king's household, a carrier of tales, a traditional singer deeply schooled in the lore of the past, linked a new theme to a strict metre.'* (Seamus Heaney, *Beowulf*, p.59)

### Illuminated fish

The opening lines of *Carpentaria* go thus:

*'The white dove bearing an olive branch never lands. Little girls who come back home after church on Sunday, who look around themselves at the human fallout and announce matter of factly, Armageddon begins here.'*

I have not yet brought myself to the final lines of this novel. I read forward reluctant to come upon the finale. I read the same passage again and again, reading *Carpentaria* back and forward and back. This becomes a vitalising experience. It holds me in a position of self-recognition. (I will explain this later.) Certain passages I repeat, as, when young, I repeated *sotto voce* Rimbaud's paragraphic hypnotic, *Illuminations*, and fragments of *A Season in Hell* - but then, in those days, I was beginning and looking for navigation. Now I am an older man and I read with pleasure those books which hold the maturation of a culture steeped within them. I take pleasure in deep down simple things. I take pleasure in feeding chooks. And the illuminated fish of Norm Phantom.

I spent my childhood in a desiccated Australian country town like that of Desperance in *Carpentaria*. I have lived in the Northern Territory, in Central Australia, in and around the town of Alice Springs. A town like that; tacked on the fringes of Aboriginal country. Alice Springs is where Alexis Wright passed her time (feeding her own hens and rooster) and wringing out this novel.

Alice Springs has more inflicted murders, per capita, than almost any other place in the country. The Australian Institute of Criminology notes that the N.T. has a rate of 8 in a 1000, as against 1.5 per 1000 for the rest of Australia (ABC, 2007). We live in murderous times and I am writing this account because I want what is happening within Alexis' story to be appreciated by those of you whose remnant family and forbears foundered upon these coasts and made of it what you willed. This Aboriginal country has attracted mingled peoples, Chinese, Macassans, Pacific islanders, Lutherans, Greek islanders, Italian builders, Catholic Irish dissidents, Anglican woolgatherers, merchant brokers, cattle breeders and sundry refugees from the holocausts of the world, each with a suitcase and a story. Alexis, being herself a mingled woman with a strong story line from an indigenous ancestry, carries a true tale told in several strict and loose metres at once. Like the human brain, Australia is composed of many interconnecting parts, and a tale told from within this primal country can speak with many tongues, some very old and serpentine, some very new and paradoxical.

'A Different Kind of Courage' is the title Charles Taylor uses for his review of Jonathon Lear's insightful book, *Ethics in The Face of Cultural Devastation* (on the fate of the Crow tribe of Western USA). Charles Taylor (in the *New York Review of Books*, April 2007) points up that the consequences of the 'closing down of a culture' are rather bad for one, despite the proffered opportunities. Taylor and Lear, among others, notice that narratives of the 'end times' of all world indigenous populations are configured with drunkenness and murderous violence. Lear acknowledges the despair of the indigenous Armageddon. The coming of the 'pale riders' did matter in America, just as it did in Australia, yet Lear also recounts imaginative survival activities by Crow and Sioux visionary leaders who, variously, invented ways to combine practical expediency with will; with hope. In such a way 'human beings can find the resources to come back from a virtual dead end and invent a new way: ... in creative continuity with the one that has been condemned...' (Taylor, p. 8). The writer of *Carpentaria* lives in our antipodean 'end times'. Her history

shows that she has collaborated in efforts to redress indigenous injury and constitutional law. It is totally necessary that we attend to the precise detail of improving Aboriginal chances of health and survival in Australia. Well and good. Jonathon Lear and Alexis Wright might add that indigenous survival depends upon mustering and focussing the faculty of imagination (not fantasy). This novel reveals focussed mental strength illumining images of chaos. But there has to be a way out of this present bitter chaos. Can you imagine a way? I wonder, says Alexis; and so she begins.

The bruising truth is that Australasia and Oceania are locations of ‘end times’ for many, and ‘new times’ for others. *Carpentaria* is a narrative of maybe, end times, maybe not. It may be a narrative from the time of grief, and thus the sharply shaped truth of that state may be difficult to swallow. Fish bones.

I have said that I haven’t finished the book, and you may think it audacious to admit this fact. Why am I so far reluctant to come to the end of *Carpentaria*? Why has it taken nine months so far? Why didn’t I gut it in one go, as some friends have been able to do? Maybe it is not the ending which counts, not a revelatory finale, whatever that might turn out to be. What counts is the marination of oneself in the psychic ecosystem of the Queensland Gulf Country, that country which Alexis Wright’s lucid words mirror in a glass; now darkly - now light.

### Death in the time of *Carpentaria*

The end of a man in Gabriel Marquez’ *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is enfolded into an Hispanic ceremonial poetic of death which you may recognise - machismo, crucifixo-fado, Madonna-pieta, tango-lamentation-blade, magical red blood - white feather rooster - white lamb - black goat - black bull - wrecked body on the sand - kitchen floor. The iconography fits in the mythology of the Americas - sorcery thought, voodoo ceremonial, sacrificial payback, suffering Jesus, redemption heroic; maybe, maybe not.

*'...They were sitting down to breakfast when they saw Santiago Nasar enter, soaked in blood and carrying the roots of his entrails in his hands... "Santiago, my son", she shouted at him, "what has happened to you?" "They've killed me, Wene child", he said. He stumbled on the last step, but he got up at once. "He even took care to brush the dirt that was stuck to his guts", my aunt Wene told me. Then he went into his house through the back door that had been open since six and fell on his face in the kitchen.'* (p.122)

*Chronicle of a Death Foretold* ends thus, upon yet another unnecessary annihilation in borderline Amazon river country, among a country people like so many others who have navigated the violence of indigenous Armageddon, danced the conceptions and abortions of erotic despotic cross-ocean meetings. Stories of American colonisation have a place in world literature. Melancholia and romance. Conrad and Marquez. South American colonismo exists. Australasia has hardly achieved such a recognised existence, with a desirable literary genre and panache of its own, even though a most striking ethnography comes from this region. Perhaps it is felt that nothing has happened here; or perhaps because there is no template in the European mind which can recognise what happens, what passes, what lives in the psychic system of Oceanic indigenous peoples flooded now by myths and ambitions from the North.

Death in the time of *Carpentaria* has its very own ceremonial, its poetic iconography and tone. It may take some time and some effort to recognise the mode, the forms of Aboriginal mentality abounding amid the Arafura islands and the Gulf coasts of *Carpentaria*. Here, blood, death, burial, silence (or the meaning of silence), fish, fluid passion, sexual nature, storm cloud, lightning, southern cross, morning star and the giving of oneself for others is, after all, perhaps not of an order familiar enough to connect with the brain configurations of northern life, northern geography, northern meaning. The Gulf people might seem a bit strangely located somewhere in a borderless disorder.



The world view of the white Desperance population, the activity of ‘rubbish-tip Aborigines’, and the oblique defiance in their resistant coexistence might be a bit unexpected. The Gulf might seem just a little bit too insane. The novel itself shifts in structure, in dream elements, in poetic style, narrative words slip, dipping and diving... all this, perhaps, enigmatic content and breathtaking style may whisper that reading *Carpentaria* requires a special kind of work. Well this might be true. The people of high Papua, the Arafura and the deserts of Australia do mental work, and they do a lot of it, upon the objects, activities and myths of Christian Europe and diverse Asia. They have to truly work to make sense of what we, the white people do - and say we do - and think we do. It takes considerable intellectual effort to interpret the fantasies of the West. It also takes considerable intellectual effort on the part of an indigenous writer to render that which is known and familiar (in Oceania) into a form that can be apprehended and appreciated by persons (such as myself) whose conceptions of love, death, hate, knowledge, truth and continuity are enfolded into a European grid system. My point is that Alexis has said that she had to work really hard to get this novel to do what she intuited that she had to do with it - in order to make it a work of contemporary insight and ancestral integrity. It is, as a consequence, a beautiful book. And because it is such a book, and the author did the work, you the reader can relax.

The story does move; it does sweep cinematically. It is operatic; it does hang cliffs. There are rescues and meetings of triumph, there is a full show of apocalyptic humours, cathartic moments, tristesse tropique, duress, divine comedy; she does, after all, want to be read and she has, after all, won a prize or two. Nevertheless, it is not a conventional novel and not a conventional structure and in the reading of *Carpentaria* one may find opportunity to unlearn habitual literary signatures, one may enjoy the practice of suspension of judgement without irritably reaching out for certainty or resolution. Aboriginal existential reality is like that; that is to say, there isn't much certainty and resolution if you are black and Australian and alive. But there is a sense of composi-

tion, there is a connectivity, there are layers of meaning, there is a real mind inside the Aboriginal body. The composition of the human presence around the township and the big bastard mine of *Carpentaria* is enfolded between the breasts of two mythologies, that of the black and that of the white. It is ambivalent and destructive - the interfolding of the two worlds, two laws, two states of being. The interfold also generates something creative and it's the creative impulse that's worth looking for, even if the pre-existing dark-skinned poetic pragmatic way of life is disoriented now by predatory blonde-beast ravage. This much is probably true. The pillage I mean. But it goes the other way also. The heroic settlers (the mayors of Desperance, the policeman, the wives, the vicars, the mine managers and, of course, people like myself) are maddened incrementally by the climate of Aboriginal logic. This is a peculiarity of Aboriginal psychic resistance. Alexis depicts it.

The intersection of all these currents produces the kind of cognitive dissonance which generates a true poetry, a sung beauty or a paranoid self-torture. Alexis writes from that strange intersection. A poetic dissonant? Well, maybe, maybe not, but anyhow, the indigenous force carries on regardless, in primal cyclonic wilfulness and the force is carried deliberately, vehemently on by the Tribunes of *Carpentaria*, the three muddy Magi - Phantom senior, Phantom junior and the Prophet Fishman - accompanied by cavalcades, angelic white Falcons, black Valiant vehicles, young and old spirits wearing shorts, football beanies, scales, fins, feathers and so forth. Familiar contemporary figures, who guard and guide, off-handedly. Familiar figures to anyone who dwells in Australian Aboriginal company, that is.

### Ten burials or so

*'Once upon a time, not even so long ago, while voyaging in the blackest of midnights, a strong sea man... had his memory stolen by thieving sea monsters...'* (*Carpentaria*, p. 43)

There are, in *Carpentaria*, ten, maybe nine, specified annihilations of bodily life. Nine murders - suicides - what you will. Ten or more deceased bodies are disposed of in unusual manner. At least this is my count so far - up to Chapter 13. I am not counting the fish, the bats, the dogs and unspecified victims of cyclone, explosion and road carnage.

You may have seen the film *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, the Tommy Lee Jones/ Guillermo Arriaga eulogy for a singular wet-back Mexican who crosses into Texas, works as a cowboy and is stupidly shot by a masturbating border patroller. The body of Melquiades is carried on horseback to Mexico by the border patroller under duress as punishment by the Lee Jones character, a Texan friend of Melquiades. Lee Jones undertakes this impossible task simply because of a promise made by Jones in a moment of intimacy with the Mexican. It is a quixotic journey. While reading *Carpentaria* you may find yourself unexpectedly watching this elegiac film as counterpoint to the several inconceivably difficult journeys of the body of Elias Smith in a tin boat.

Nine/ten murders and perhaps one life saved. And yet this is no pizza western, no 'Wolf Creek' outback Falconio fantasy. It is, I have heard, for some readers, a shock to be reading something so relentlessly revealing of the death (wish), so elemental, so exact a display of Australia's white brute, oh yes that, and the undertone of sorcery and the unfathomable paradox of indigenous mentalities. This sad, sad tropic. This paradise, which naïve northern hemisphericals conspire to invade and inhabit as a comforting investment.

*Carpentaria* is both loved and avoided. The idea of Wright's book has inspired some of our most comprehending writers to recognise her, Tom Keneally for instance, and that most intelligent national media commentator, Kerry O'Brien, acknowledge the depth and challenge of Wright's status as a powerful artist of indigenous descent. (Interview ABC radio July 5, 2007.) At the same time you may feel yourself not quite knowing - perhaps - how to get

your teeth into this elusively spun yarn. This slow grown yam. This true story about a part of the world that is indeed ‘very far away from everything else’.

*‘It was in those precise moments when Elias Smith was fighting hopelessly to save his identity, when his loss became absolute, that another unusual thing happened in this part of the world, that was far away from everything else...’* (*Carpentaria*, p. 43)

Swan songs for an endlessly un-landed dove

*‘Every time you go into that town, close your ears to those white people who might not even be human, who may be, maybe not...’* (*Carpentaria*, p. 321)

*‘They found they could not communicate anything of how they felt after a few words, so they sat there in silence, pondering who did this to him...’* (*Carpentaria*, p. 347)

I confess to you that I am a psychoanalyst. This is my profession. I am sometimes introduced as an anthropologist, though I am not. Today I write this section while pausing in the preparation of a seminar for remote area mental health practitioners. The seminar draws upon D.W. Winnicott’s ideas on the management of chaos and the ‘development of the capacity for concern’, with reference to Australian Aboriginal circumstances and the Pitjantjatjara/Pintubi concept of *Kanyini*... ‘care for others’ (Hogan/Randall, 2007). You will know perhaps that there is a crisis of care/*kanyinjaku* within (indigenous) Australia. On 20th June, 2007, the Australian Federal government dramatically declared an Emergency Intervention into the Northern Territory, the Prime Minister personally affirming that serious money and effort would be put in place to manage the interpersonal chaos. The relevant ministers have affirmed government intent to break the grip of alcoholic violence, child sexual abuse, welfare dependency, indigenous care-less-ness.

This is my field: petrol sniffing, youth suicide, annihilation of the self. For more than fifteen years I have been among those who have cajoled the Federal government to apply mind and resourcefulness to this, our local apocalypse (as has Alexis Wright). The Emergency Intervention has been a long time in the coming and it came in a sudden pre-election wave. This is why reading Alexis Wright during this period gives me quiet delight, such ‘shock of recognition’. Steadily, page by page, she holds my attention in the position where the appalling condition of the black health and the bewildering condition of white mind and the agitated relationship between black and white can be felt, and thought, again and again. It helps to have a long, long rhythmic story to hold ones’ wavering attention, while the surge of stunned feelings and catastrophic thoughts can swim out of the ennui and disorder. This is a book for those who have suffered Australian Aboriginal Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. AAPTSD? This is a condition which is formally undiagnosed but exists; although for the life of me I can’t figure out where the ‘post’ is. The war is not over. The peculiar dreamlike states of trauma reaction are constant and present. I do not know how this novel would be understood by persons who have not experienced the psychic pain and mingled humour of a country such as this. Perhaps because the narrator’s voice is so beguilingly hypnotic one could simply love it and follow. The voice which speaks in *Carpentaria* slides right to the liver of things, right through kidney to amygdala. It brings you to elementary limbic system experiences of what it is to dwell in a country such as this - a numinous, sun-drowned, exhausted chagrin of a country.

My friend says that reading *Carpentaria* is like breathing. “You breathe it”, she says, “that’s why I read only a little at a time. Breathe too much of it; I might drown.” She can say this because it is so familiar to her, so close, and, like drowning, reading brings back a life passing before her – a life lived in Aboriginal company.

## Normal feelings - grief and suchlike

*'Behold the sight of welcome home, embedded in the never-ending rattling corrugated-iron shanty fortress, built from the sprinklings of holy water, charms, spirits, lures acquired from packets of hair dye, and discarded materials pinched from the rubbish dump across the road.*

*This was Number One house. Normal Phantom's house was the first black-fella place built on the edge of Desperance... The house was a hornet's nest, like Angel Day...'. (Carpentaria, p.12)*

I have inhabited corrugated tin sheds with a 'Norm Phantom'. The hornet's nest of his wife and the rubbish dump, I know, and I have witnessed the meticulous detailed attention to small beauties. My version of Phantom did not paint fish; he managed bonsai trees as his other occupation when he wasn't driving trucks, taking care of drunks and dodging insults. Imagine that; diminutive Japanese bonsai trees nurtured in a shade shelter in 40 degree heat in arid Australia. Meticulous loving water-sprayed care, oh, and yes, there were the fish, now I remember, the goldfish he kept in a tank pressed up near the air conditioner to keep the fish cool. Iridescent, cantankerous old men wedded to reverent, irreverent Mrs Angel Days who rule the roosters. Mrs Angel Day, that utterly narcissistic remnant of a once noble family, regal, cankered Missus Days demanding their pound of flesh. When an Angel Day is in front of you with a hardwood hunting stick poised, you too would politely stoop to tie your shoe lace. And then an hour later lovingly bring her a mug of tea and too much sugar as though nothing untoward had happened. And that night she and other women benevolently patrol the settlement streets sorting out petrol sniffers, drunks and family violence. And the Fishman's caravan of single men? This too is true.

The characters in *Carpentaria* are real enough; they are not stereotypes, not mere figurines. They are ordinary enough Australians going about their native business. Even Bruiser the Mayor of Desperance and Truthful the policeman have recognisable archetypal authenticity. Though, I guess it's true that they

resemble larger than life characters of operatic scale. Alexis, knowing such country people from the inside, does not squeeze their feeling states into vegemite jars as Conventional Consumable Australian National Products. *Carpentaria* is a nail in the fantasy about the emotional life of Australia's indigenous people. This idea deserves a seminar on its own and all I can suggest here is that the indigenous sector of the brain of *Carpentaria's* writer is releasing forms for feelings which you may never know she/we had. She is a most incisive cultural analyst, perhaps an authentic psychoanalytic practitioner, because she brings that which is unconscious to conscious formulation. Familiar, wryly ironic Aboriginal humour flickers throughout the pages and in this way she penetrates into an essence of being and releases the fragrance of a hidden country for the guidance and benefit of others.

I could also say that the text of *Carpentaria* is Australian anthropology. T.G.H. Strehlow in *Songs of Central Australia* collected and translated sung ontopoetic indigenous verses of central Australia in such a way that the gravity of indigenous mind could be felt, heard, appreciated. Eminent W.E.H. Stanner, in his eloquently humble *White Man Got No Dreaming*, asked that a just recognition be given to the reality and romance of the Tjukurrpa - the dreaming state of native country. The Aboriginal kinaesthetic mind and intelligent body apprehends the power; 'the push'; the force of the creation. The poetic form of the Dreaming songs probably follow and evoke the implicit order of a 'poetic structure of being', a subtle matter which philosopher Freya Mathews is beginning to articulate (Mathews, 2007). Perhaps slowly more and more settled Australians allow themselves to be kinaesthetically, intelligently touched by the graciousness of these creatures of the 'Dreaming', larger than storm clouds, who move in the symmetry of the country mind? Consider then, the interpreters of the poets of Australiana, among them Strehlow, Stanner and, shyly, Alexis. Each in their time, each with a tune, 'deeply schooled in the lore of the past', these ethnographic translators help hold connections to our original poets. You could not go wrong to give that schooling to your children.

*'...a creature larger than storm clouds, came down from the stars, laden with its own creative enormity. It moved graciously...'* (*Carpentaria*, p. 1)

### The Fisherman's Hotel

*'It was unfortunate for them that they were incoherently high on petrol, glue, metho or whatever cocktail had been their last meal, when Truthful and Bruiser found them.'* (*Carpentaria*, p. 333)

The bodies again, the bodies keep coming back like Shakespeare's ghosts, the foul doings of *Macbeth*, and the ancient archetypal horrors of northern countries, the rhythmic nightfire tales of Anglo-Saxon Beowulf, Grendel's dismemberment and Grendel's mother, rampant in revenge. I recall Beowulf's heroic descent into watery caverns. Will Phantom and the flood, Norm Phantom and the gropers, underground undersea, Elias and the severed helicopter, claw and arm of Grendel. Revenge, payback, cycles of time. Witches. Sycorax, Ariel, *The Tempest* and the Mediterranean *Metamorphosis* - Ovid, Apuleius - the imaginative convention of transformations of human bodies, animals, plants. Transformations so appreciated by a magical European sensibility which knows how to slide from shape-to-shape, nightmare-to-nightmare; Myrrha plotting sex in the dark with her unsuspecting father. Orpheus dismembered in manic female jealousy, bodies flung from cliff tops, insane emperors, poets crucified, story woven into story, endless reams of unbroken threads from the beginning of time right down to the present. Tell me why, while reading this book I keep slipping into Milk Wood moods, into *Finnegan's Wake*, *Ulysses* - in Irish and Greek pigment; intricate flowing cadence and the beginning spring of all our tales?

Reading this book, I gather clusters of word; words of knowledge, words of hate, words of love. The words are so well cohered that I can cast them as a bait is cast, or weigh them like handfuls of earth, holding them as one holds a handful of red earth by a graveside, mourning and melancholy scattering as



earth scatters on a wooden coffin. Friends, boys, countrymen, who have died wrapped in Australian sand. Aboriginal boys who forgot their weight, lost gravity, forgot their geometry.

Reading this book at a slow pace I can gather parables and memory and know that someone is writing about movements in remote places which I know. An inner country which nevertheless appears on the surface. I will not be locked out of this country and here are words from a dark person who refuses also to be locked out. I can read all this and sleep in it, if I wish, and spit out anything I want.

I do not treat this book like a work of literature. I do not read it as a thriller is read, in tension for the finale. I do not bother to finish it even. It neither begins nor ends anyway. The Phantom Fishman *saga* rolls like Dreaming rolls from place-to-place, event-to-event. Follow a bit now and then, visit it like visiting favoured sites. Take it camping on the coast for a month and put it under your pillow. Sit in a hotel bar for a week in a town like Derby, Western Australia or Normanton, Queensland. A week should do. Leave the book by your left elbow and read a paragraph and watch what happens around you. Don't bother to open it even. But - lest you forget - this is one of the most eloquently written and most kindly books ever yet produced from the antipodes.

### Hope and concern

*'Gulf people have something to say about fish: their Norm Phantom was the big man of the sea. Regardless of the isolation of country people, because talk reaches out and grabs peoples attention everywhere, all nature of people strolled into the Fisherman's Hotel just to clap eyes on the sea man of Carpentaria. In sea men's circles, yarns of Norm Phantom of Desperance were imagined far more than the truth...'* (Carpentaria, p. 95)

Why did I bother to introduce psychoanalysis, a traditional craft now on the rim of exile? Well, because this activity, on the rim of exile, is concerned with the urge to consciousness, with criminality, with the roots of aggression, the role of 'destruction as a cause of coming into being'. The craft is concerned with the cultivation of imagination as a source of human creativity. It is an occupation which allows feeling and thought to marry across the brain. The secret of the conjunction is image. It is possible to relieve suffering and desolation. The secret taught is the secret Fishman follows, Phantom follows and later Hope follows - which is to hold with dedication to an order, a thread - a line deeply set. The profession of fisherman and hunter and analyst is a profession which listens out - as Will Phantom listens out. Will Phantom becomes a man of 'constant vigil'. Each of our skin cultures, the white, the yellow, the red and the black, have a profession which is concerned with the development of the capacity for concern and the holding of the line. In each of these cultures now, in this age of political expediency, much is done to harry and harass bearers of this responsibility. Bearers of long memory. Much is done to obliterate. In *Carpentaria*, Will Phantom's wife, Hope, is jettisoned from a helicopter. Hope falls into the sea.

Once a year, with Dr. Anne Noonan, who also works in indigenous affairs, I present a seminar for the local Institute of Psychiatry on working in Aboriginal settings. This year the seminar comes round while I am reading the chapter on the fate of Hope and her small son. The seminar will be on this theme of 'falling hope'. I will reiterate the need for the development of the capacity for concern for others in a time of devastation. *Carpentaria* is my 'recommended text' mainly because it is a direct counterpoint to Freud's *Totem and Taboo* which draws extensively upon Australian Aboriginal material. No, I am not going to criticise Freud's nineteenth century understanding of the Australian 'primitive' mind, nor will I argue with his use of Baldwin and Spencer to support his Oedipus Law and Primal Father/ Horde theorem. No, I will mention it because at certain hours of his late nights Freud (whose name means 'Joy') set down great stories from the fantasy and pain of his own particular horde.

Freud took seriously the inner world of humans, the content of minds, and he spoke out about the broken children of Vienna. *Carpentaria* is a psychiatric cultural text. In Oceania, there are many lost thoughts wandering like spirits looking for a thinker. I will say this to the psychiatrists. I will say, Alexis is your model. Learn to think like her. One day in the future, Wright will be recognised as a profound receiver of thoughts about her times... By then, she will be an old woman in a woollen beanie, deafly wondering if anyone remembers her story, her Will, her Gulf.

This book is, of course, a major artistic text. It has potential energy. Remember how the Joyce texts puzzled then inspired. I don't know why those texts worked at that time. But one can learn from their example in finding a satisfying orientation to Alexis' potential energy. The point is that *Carpentaria* is a dreaming text; let it seep in sleep as water seeps in a leaky boat. Let it suck as fertile mud sucks at the roots of mangrove. Recall how Joyce handles his Dublin-in-the-mind. Recall how Seamus Heaney cracks open the granite language of ancient Anglo-Saxon, and remember that Alexis' narrator' mind lives in tidal mud flats, sinuous rivers and long storm-troubled sea horizons; recall the seamless dreaming of Milk Wood village and the Welsh voice and recall that Alexis' ear is attuned to language based on the rhythms of onomatopoeic song lines. Why not rest on oars and listen in much the same way as you might with *Ulysses* or the *Wake*. You can dream into it again and again, as we happily do with Shakespeare, even though we know how every drama ends.

### The inherent skeleton of the dreaming

*Dreams come and go, or come to a halt, as had the crickets, as though a certain shocking vibration had simultaneously struck their antennae... Norm looked around him, convinced something terrible had happened, and knew in an instant that there was someone in the room looking at him. This was when he saw Elias, recognising him straightaway, profoundly ghostly, enveloping them both in death, then disconnecting, as his heart cried out loudly*

*with the pain of being torn apart. His friend sat slumped against the wall. Norm cried from the pit of his stomach, like a lost creature of the earth, until the end of all things roared from his mouth.'* (*Carpentaria*, p. 215)

Alexis' cadence is bedded in the conversations of dark men on long car journeys and fishing trips. It is the cadence of stories told by granny women, perhaps playing cards. It is a brusque kind of running language that tracks alongside the repetitive rhythms of the violently cathected lore stories known variously as Tjukurrpa, Altjere or maybe Wanggala in Wright's mothers' family region. (These are only three among many linguistic group terms for Australian indigenous forms of law and poetic lore.)

I assume that most European language readers will have no trouble appreciating the value of and the way in which European mythopoetic lore is put together, or any of the foundation mythologies of world cultures. You will appreciate the formative influence of Middle Eastern texts, Inanna, Gilgamesh, Genesis, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Lamentations, Psalms, Revelations and the simple Nazarene gospels. These are cultural navigational constellations. Some even foster love and directed compassion in the midst of conditions of turmoil and destruction. With this appreciation it will not be difficult to contemplate likely sources which form the net, the matrices of symbolisation into which any author is drawn, consciously or unconsciously. So that said, I think that the felt structure and the known structure of the Dreaming matrix is what gives *Carpentaria* its secret seamless inner skeleton. The story told flows with subtlety from the deep structure patterns of the sung poetry of Oceania and Australasia. The Dreaming patterns influence Alexis's poetic mind, I think.

I am not saying that she is using traditional indigenous stories and characters in exactly the same way that traditional Homeric and Olympian myth permeated the content of Sophocles, Aeschylus, Aristophanes and Euripides. They did versions of great and known mythic themes and they put their plays

together knowing the audience could surf the associations. They were also aware that they could not knowingly, in theatre, reveal sacred Mysteries. I do not say that Alexis recalls a specific ceremony and updates it, she is far more subtle and careful than that, knowing her place perhaps. However, when I read *Carpentaria*, the skeleton appears, it kind of leads my mind because, I confess, that I do appreciate something about the way in which the sung poetic of Australia is put together, and this is why I suggest, here, that Alexis 'poetic genius', as revealed in *Carpentaria*, is, in truth, a contemporary incarnation of a very ancient thing. The structure of the Dreaming (Tjukurrpa/Altjere/Wanggala) is what gives the flotation and buoyancy to her story.

(It might be worth noting in passing that, on the one hand, some people insist that the traditional stories and ceremonial events be recalled, consolidated and repeated as an antidote to despair and as a medicine of hope. Others say, the old ways are better let go. Some add that the 'old ways' and the stories which uphold those practices are too cruel and hard anyway. In any case, the argument goes, survival depends on carefully strategic adaptation to new conditions. Old time cultural myths, if they are going to be repeated at all, must hold or emphasise ideas which carry purpose without sentimental, nostalgic illusion. Active survival is the keynote, not passive fantasy. Some say an old dreaming story is only useful if it tells you where the fish are biting. Others say, that after you've caught fish you need something for a mind to feed upon. Why split realities? The circulation is the thing, from stomach to brain.)

So, having made the point that *Carpentaria* floats on deeper waters, one can therefore enjoy it thus and float rather than worrying about getting to a spell-binding ending, revelatory conclusion - or not. One can simply visit sites in this chapter or that, and hum this fragment of feeling and image or that - for this is how the song lines or Tjukurrpa tracks are constructed. Both in lines and in recurring circulations. There is a linear pattern which follows the precise line across specific country, water or sky constellation of this creation being, or that. So, yes the linear travelling structure is there, as one needs in

any novel or film. A Progression. And, at the same time, those who know the whole epic song can pick up a fragment, a verse and let it flow out from this remembered site and this recalled creation being in action. Here is the place where Elias came ashore. Here is the place where Fishman dismembered the 'Go-for-it' mine. Here is the place where Norm met the Gropers. Here is where Angel Day disappeared. Here is the lagoon where Elias rested. Here is where Hope fell. And here where Bala found his grandfather. Each is a verse. Many such places are generative and many are destructive; involving the rip and tear and fearsome paranoia of a hunting life lived in awesome conditions.

Once one knows the whole cycle the sections can mix and match. An entire ceremony or song line can flow, like a grand tide, or it can splash up like little fish now and then. There is nothing unusual about this non-linear circulation through a set text. Expert actors of Shakespeare can mix and match, combine and evoke, in brilliant combinations, differing elements of the dramatic repertoire. So, no, such a procedure is not unusual, but I do feel like mentioning it as possible clue to how to read *Carpentaria* and go back again with pleasure. The fact that you can do this with this story is an indication of its richness and internal integrity.

I think this is where I begin to leave you because the purpose of this article is only to reassure that it is worth owning the book. It will surely grow in stature, in cultural value. It is worth possessing (not borrowing) so that, every now and then, you can surprise yourself holding a page, waiting until the tale gives itself up to you, in the tradition of traditional men and women, stroking a sacred object a little tenderly. This object is put together by Alexis in her state as a Waanyi woman, mindful of her grandmothers, and mindful of the girls who will come after her generation. She is composing, at the same time, inside the maturely experienced contemporary state of an Alexis (city woman) Wright. This dual composition, part novel part sacred story might really be a 'sacred object' and sometimes, as with sacred objects, you go and

visit them sometimes. You sit cradling such an object, as I have seen desert men do, singing to those old bits of carved rock and carved wood which also cradles them. Maybe one I saw was six hundred years old or older, encraved with an indecipherable story. The men sat and wept, smoke seemed to fill the cavernous air, stories came alive and were talked lovingly, with a tenderness in eyes which most white people never ever see.

### The mystery of *Carpentaria*

*“No police! No one, hear me, go calling the fucking police up here. Don’t talk about this to anyone. Fucking media can piss off. Remember we are mining men and mining men look after their own and mining men keep their bloody mouths shut. We are going to catch these bastards ourselves.” He said this, word for word, after the orders had come all the way from New York, from the very top of a skyscraper, to Graham standing in a muddy lagoon surrounded by a cloud of flies. The mobile phone screamed instructions into Graham’s ear and his face whitened. Strange how a skyscraper in New York could cast spells like magic...’ (Carpentaria, p. 444)*

New York based, African-American Michael Meyer, at a congress in Cape York sponsored by *The Australian* newspaper and Noel Pearson’s group is quoted thus: *‘Mr. Meyers, president and executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition said indigenous cultures were an antiquated concept in the 21st Century. “People have to move out of their ghettoised attitudes, get away from the idea that people belong in certain lands”.’ (The Australian, front page, June 26, 2007).*

You get a lot of this conflict of idea in Wright’s mine conflict saga. The antiquated are destined for the ghetto. The advanced are destined for the mine?

*Carpentaria* is full of suppressed paradox and violence against the people who believe (whimsically) that they belong in certain lands, a fact which is rejected

and accepted and rejected simultaneously. The sticking point of the Federal Intervention has been the issue of revoking the permits to enter Aboriginal land. The argument given is similar to Myers. Such conflict over ownership and right of entry allows one to glimpse a certain familiar brand of Australian madness or, as Alexis puts it, '*Will Phantom ... glimpsed the town's psychosis twinkling in the sunshine...*' (p. 461).

The psychosis of this country is a big issue and is beyond description here but, indeed any persons who work in the pain of Australia might read *Carpentaria* profitably, for indication of the psychic reality of this strange and contrary land, hung on the line of Capricorn - concrete thinking, magical thinking, cargo cults, sorcery; all twinkling in the sunshine - in any fringe camp, in any Desperance; in any country bar, in any displaced hotel, in any parliament house.

Attuned intelligent persons who inhabit a northern hemisphere could, with profit, read *Carpentaria* as a dream of the Antipodes; a Gondwanaland *Tempest*; a tale indicating what might have happened on an island a long time ago; a version of a sinking kingdom. Perhaps the original Prospero actually landed on the shores of northern Australia.

### The end

*"I reckon we will go home then", he said. So, they walked in mud away from the town left to the dogs... Neither spoke, because neither could have heard the other. It was much better to listen to the mass choir of frogs - green, grey, speckled, striped, big and small, dozens of species all assembled around the two seafarers, as they walked...'* (*Carpentaria*, p. 519)

This brings me back to Beowulf, that other saga of seafaring men and female creatures who wait in deep waters. I placed Alexis in the company of a 'king's household... a traditional singer deeply schooled in the lore of the past' and



I have suggested that she has linked a new theme to an old and strict metre, or perhaps found a new measure for an old and strict theme. But a theme of what? What is the metre and measure of Alexis Wright?

Well, today I have come upon this. Had I not spent succinct time in the company of certain distinguished aboriginal men, in particular Paddy Sims, Paddy Stewart, Larry Jungarai and Darby Ross, I would have nought to say, but having taken the trouble to do this, to listen with attention to some authentic ordinary thanes of the desert country I might just be able to recognise what Alexis is up to. And thank God someone like her has worked thoroughly enough at the job to set something down in print.

The intent of this novel is to create and sustain an experience of ‘re-singing the country’. An indigenous Australian sensibility requires of humans persistent recall of country into mind. A circulation is created and preserved. The effect of the circulation of singing country and being sung in return is Self-placement. Social and emotional well-being. Maybe.

Without the re-call to singing the country – to keeping the line of being, holding the tune – *Carpentaria* would be a tragedy, a saga of carrying bodies about the place, wondering where to dispose of the dead, settle spirits and distribute blame. Yet another revenge cycle – a rage against the dying of the light.

Listening to Alexis’ narrator, I discover myself asked to seek out the true significance of the ‘singing of the country’. Exactly why ‘singing the country’ might be a necessity and not a useless desire might be taken up in another article. What exactly ‘singing country’ means can be analysed. There are questions. Where in the brain is animal/ human geographic facility located, processed and linked with what? Why do fishermen sit for hours with a line in their hands? The manner of speaking about this is probably best left to certain sober indigenous people and Taoist philosophers. Those old yellow

people have ways of describing the fluency of natural force and are mindful of the mind of the world moving in humans. They do it in their way and I am coming upon it here in Alexis' way – in her mood, measure, metre, and mode. In her way, this may be a mother's way, in empathy marvelling at her child's intricate and stubborn being and becoming. Poetry and lullaby is composed between people, feeling for and feeling with each other. There is a poetic structure to the country and a poetic structure to the 'singing' of it which is felt and developed while in the factual actual relationship. Fishermen do it. There is no such thing as country without a human and no such thing as a human if he/ she cannot articulate and mesmerise the country. Our orders are to keep the line of being.

Somehow or other, Alexis does it, she has worked at it, she has brought some change of mind about, turned something round in her head probably.

It is a long book, 519 pages double spaced. You need that length and space for the fact of the matter to sink in. You need the time. The measure of time which she uses is the long singing of the country which has been practised for a long, long time. She doesn't talk about it much - it's not a book *about* indigenous poetics. It is the thing itself. Simple, matter of fact, down to earthly magic and throwaway humour. Slowly, the sense of this accomplishment settles in a knot, in a ball, in a hum and I am thankful that I was born to live in this country in the time before 'too late', while there is still time for 'so much song wafting off the watery land, singing the country afresh'.

## NOTES

1. Those with a special interest in Sung Poetry and the more technical aspects of oral traditions may find the website for the *Journal of Oral Tradition* now available online and free of charge at <http://journal.oraltradition.org/>. Note from Lila San Roque ANU.
2. The political, cultural, historical significance of the Dreaming and the current reformations in indigenous affairs advocated by Noel Pearson et al. is succinctly addressed by Robert Manne in his article in the August 2007 edition of the Australian cultural journal, *The Monthly*.

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Xavier Herbert's novel *Capricornia*, first published in 1938, can be placed as an acknowledged ancestor and precedent to *Carpentaria*. Readers may enjoy comparing the two novels. Herbert's *Capricornia* went through 23 reprints between 1938 and 1990. Those familiar with this 500 page classic, set in much the same territory, though at an earlier time, will recognise the associative links and perhaps the wry resonance with this earlier chronicle of Gulf times. They add to each other, yet can exist independently.

Craig San Roque is a psychologist and analyst, based in Sydney and central Australia. He has worked extensively in indigenous affairs and was responsible for the collaborative re-creation of Greek myth as dramatic performance events in central Australia at Intjartnama Aboriginal alcohol rehabilitation outstation, 1996-1999. The 'Sugarman' event is the subject of a documentary film, 1999, dir. David Roberts, [antipodesdocs@bigpond.com](mailto:antipodesdocs@bigpond.com).

## SAN ROQUE PUBLICATIONS ON THEMES RELEVANT TO THIS REVIEW

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- 'On Tjukurrpa and Building Thought', in *Explorations in Psychoanalysis and Ethnography*, ed. J. Mimica, Berghana Books, N.Y., 2007

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## *Panel Contribution*

### Shadows of Mutual Change

**GILES CLARK**  
*ANZSJA, Sydney, Australia*

#### **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-deadly) 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.



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## *Panel Contribution*

# Ancestral and Mythic Themes in the Consulting Room

**JUDITH PICKERING**

*ANZSJA, Sydney, Australia*

### **TOPIC**

Jung's comment: '*[Indigenous people] live[d] in a period and in a milieu in which man was still linked by myth with the world of the ancestors, and thus with nature truly experienced and not merely seen from the outside.*' (C.G.Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, 1983, p.144)

### **EDITORS' NOTE**

This is Dr Judith Pickering's contribution to the second conference panel, held on Sunday 21st October, 2007. This panel was introduced by Dr John Morton. Other panel members included analysts Dr Leslie Devereaux and Dr Craig San Roque and academics Dr Jadran Mimica and Dr Bernie Neville. An expanded version of Dr San Roque's panel contribution can be found in the *Related Papers* section of this publication. Unfortunately there were no other written contributions from this panel available for publication.

### **JUDITH PICKERING**

Invited to participate on a panel featuring discussion between anthropologists, academic psychologists and Jungian analysts on the topic of ancestral and mythic dimensions of the psyche, I reflected on the idea of the analyst as anthropologist and the anthropologist as analyst. Both disciplines are con-

cerned with analysis of the human condition. Analysts focus on understanding the roots of the self, it's potential for growth and realisation, it's perversions, distortions, pathologies, and it's cure, restoration and flourishing.

Anthropological research has traditionally concerned itself with the social, cultural and biological analysis of the human condition. Dr Jadran Mimica, who was also a member of this panel, is editor of a book where anthropologists analyse the 'psychic depths of human cultural life-worlds as explored through psycho-analytic practice'. He writes: 'The unconscious matrix of the human psyche and of the intersubjective (social) reality of any given cultural life-world is a vital domain of anthropological and sociological inquiry and understanding'.

Inspiring this panel, the quote above highlights the overlapping domains of anthropology and analysis. In the original quote, Jung was defining neurosis as being divided against oneself, and he located this internal division in modernity's alienation from the mythological, the spiritual, and ancestral realms.

The historian of religion, Mircea Eliade, also located the crisis of modernity in the disconnection from the creation stories and rituals which ontologically give us meaning and being. Jung, interviewed by Eliade at the Eranos conference in 1952, talked of the crisis of the modern world being due to it being desecralised. The cure lay in rediscovering the deeper sources of our spiritual traditions and creation stories. Eliade argued that myths narrate a sacred history, a metaphysical revelation. 'Being real and sacred, the myth becomes exemplary and consequently repeatable, for it serves as a model' (Eliade, 1960, p. 23). Jung also spoke of how myths and stories, while clothed in their multitudinous forms and infinite variations, reflect psychological situations and are repeated endlessly in human life.

Myths and stories that capture our imagination may do so because they are paradigmatic of certain ways of being in the world, of intra- and interpsychic patterns of relating. While each person's story is unique in its detail, myths and stories that capture our imagination may do so because they encapsulate particular configurations of intra-psychic and inter-relational dynamics that we may, at some level, share.

In my clinical practice I have found certain stories being lived out in both the inner world of clients, in their dreams, and also in their relationships with others, including transferentially. Every analyst grapples with understanding and working through the complexities of early relationships, the inner representations, internalised family dynamics, introjects of parental figures and difficult relational experiences. Not only are early relationships vital for understanding the unresolved issues plaguing our patients, but so too are intergenerational ancestral patterns, histories, traumas, cultural and historical environments and religious beliefs.

I shall illustrate this principle with two clinical cameos, both concerning patients where the focus on intergenerational matters was urgent and central to our work: even though in both cases neither patient was at first aware of this dimension in their current psychic and relational predicaments.

Therapists working in the area of intergenerational transmission of trauma are acutely aware of how it is often the offspring of survivors of trauma who, without even knowing why, are unconsciously driven to enter therapy by the need to uncover past secrets, to piece together an ancestral and cultural history, before the stories and the keys to comprehending what they carry die with their forebears. As Jung wrote:

‘...the patient who comes to us has a story that is not told, and which as a rule no one knows of... It is the patient's secret, the rock against which he is shattered’. (C.G. Jung, 1963, p. 117)

A major therapeutic task for psychotherapists in our present generation is to be on the look-out for such ‘unthought knowns’— in dream imagery, somatic symptomatology, and in the transference-countertransferential material generated in the analytic space.

In the analytic encounter analyst and patient may find themselves in a unique imaginal and embodied environment, a dynamic, interactive space, in which there are fluid realms of experience between internal and external reality, conscious and unconscious communications, shared states of mind, bodily sensations, attunements and malattunements or, as Balint put it, a ‘harmonious [disharmonious] interpenetrating mix up’ (Balint, 1959, pp. 62-69). Analysts become attuned to how their subjective experience in the consulting room becomes like a resonating chamber, echoing and amplifying, tuning into nonverbal, presymbolic, unconscious material, transforming it into conceptions, thoughts, and myth. The analyst takes in primitive emotions, in a state of reverie absorbs unconscious communications, inchoate, fragmented psychic material, becoming an empty vessel for the incarnation of dreams and mythic elements.

As Grotstein puts it, the analyst must have *patience* while continuing to ‘observe and allow a mass of seemingly *random* or *chaotic* associations to settle in his mind’, awaiting the ‘emergence of the *selected fact* (Poincaré, 1963) ... that gives pattern, coherence, and meaning to the hitherto scattered elements’ (Grotstein, 2007, p. 85).

Myth in Bion’s conception refers to ‘the particular mythic template that may be found to organise and join together the analytic object, the O of the session’ (Grotstein, 2007, pp.82-3): the utter truth, reality. Through such subjective passion the patient is able to own their ‘hitherto unbearable’ emotional experience of O. Thus the patient is able to ‘become his lost, split-off, and projected self by re-owning his hitherto unbearable emotions’ (Grotstein, 2007, p. 107).

## FRANCIS

Francis dreams of walking in a forest with her grandmother. It would be frightening except for the warm touch of her grandmother's hand on her back leading her along a path. They find themselves on a precipice and the way forward means jumping a long distance, but there are huge spider webs forming a cradle. They jump and are held safely in the cradle of filigree threads.

Francis had not taken much notice of her ancestry when she first came to see me. Due to racial prejudice growing up in Australia she tended to deny it: 'my wog family' she tells me deprecatingly. I asked her to tell me a little about her grandmother. She said she hadn't much to do with her these days. The dream prompted her to visit: and deepen her relationship with her grandmother, who began to tell her all the stories of her ancestry, how her family came as migrants to a tiny town in South Australia from their tiny village, as seamstresses and cloth merchants.

Francis began painting a series of paintings depicting her dream. She discovered that the forest was highly reminiscent of the forest of her ancestral home.

She writes a thesis which traces her ancestral roots: notions of memory, loss, nostalgia, ancestral spaces and liminal zones are its inspiration. It features themes of displacement from ancestral cultures, her mother tongue and cultural identities. Through therapy and her creative outpouring she found an 'in-between world' which allowed access to a space which transcended time, memory, an eternal dreamtime present.

Francis was able to integrate the once disowned ancestral elements into her life through analysis and through the intellectual rigour of following a path through writing and study. It was vital for her to discuss the personal elements of her thesis in analysis. Both analysis and academia created comple-

mentary facilitating environments for her personal and artistic individuation. Here was an example of how vital it is that the academy provides a facilitating environment, a *temenos* for work which then is not experienced as in conflict with personal journeying to the land of the ancestors, but rather as a field that amplifies and is informed by the deeply personal and interpersonal ground of her being.

## RACHAEL

‘A word like “self” naturally knows more than we do; it uses us and can command us’ (Winnicott 1965, p. 158). An inexplicable sense of urgency propelled ‘Rachael’ into my consulting room, seeming to know more than we did, operating like a third presence, with its own directionality. We were taken into zones of experience that we did not want to enter, and did not know, at first, existed. It was in the intensity of the experience of the intersubjective analytic space that a mythic dimension connected with her ancestry revealed itself.

Throughout my work with ‘Rachael’, watery motifs, images of bodily plumbing, drains, and swimming pools kept surfacing in her dreams, became recovered memories, and generated the metaphoric vocabulary between us. It was as if the dream imagery and its metaphorical associations encapsulated an unknown intergenerational history. It became a conduit for the transmission of (and therefore eventual processing of) intergenerational traumatic complexes never fully worked through by her forebears, which haunted the analytic space until their origin could be located, avowed, thought about, and emotionally faced.

Harrowing and torturous experience revealed itself as through a glass darkly. Within our intersubjective analytic space, through bodily experiences, mental states, fantasies and images, an unknown, untold, but dimly sensed story was

slowly revealed. Uncovering its origins over four years of work allowed the co-creation of a mythic narrative which could encapsulate Rachael's development of a more authentic mode of being in the world.

The dream image conceived intersubjectively and given birth took in its train a stream of associations, images, emotions, and bodily sensations, which shifted and moved between us. Dreams became interconnected waking fantasies drew out further emotive images, memories, yearnings, fears etc. — all pouring into our mixed imaginal realm. This became a narrative history, our language-game, expressing our myths of origin, which give us our changing identities and destinies. This is an example of the uses of subjective experience as an analytic tool: the analyst's countertransference as resonating with and revealing the untold, unthought knows.

In her first session she said "it's been a watery year for me, full of tears. I suffer endometriosis, which gives me water retention". She went on to say "I'm really depressed, like I'm stuck in some kind of watery drain". A dark cloud, which she called her 'deathly mode', seemed to envelop her: she felt like she merely went through the motions of life, as if from behind a mask. She spoke of 'treading water' in her life, unable to enter the swim of things. When she entered a period of deep regression in winter, her imagery was of being submerged in a watery grave. A cancelled session led to a feeling of all the water running down a drain. A sense of immersion, sometimes swimming, sometimes drowning permeated the imaginal and affective space I was in with her: a necessary induction into her internal world.

She brought many swimming pool dreams which showed a terror and fascination with plumbing her depths, and trepidation about diving into life. A recurring dream of a concrete swimming pool emptied of water signalled a malignant 'heart of darkness', the full significance of which only emerged later— an 'unthought known' (Bollas, 1987) that she and I would be living and working through.



There was a sense of our feeling our way together into such zones: sometimes tentatively dipping our toes in the water; sometimes colluding in an unspoken fear and refusal to jump in; sometimes steeling ourselves to draw breath and take the plunge. We were both fully if asymmetrically immersed in a ‘harmonious (or disharmonious) interpenetrating mix up’ (Balint, 1987).

Her dream and waking images of drowning were, we gradually uncovered, linked to a terrible paternal ancestry. The paternal arena within her was compounded by the unresolved issues of her forefathers: an inherited load of unbearable proportions. Dim intimations of her father’s dark past began to float into awareness: a dream of Hitler as a child made her reflect on her own grandfather’s childhood:

“Hitler’s father was brought up to feel shame without any memory. That was how I was brought up with my family, no history, no understanding of that Eastern European side, and there’s a lot of shame around that...Like what all that stuff meant is a whole lot of horrible things.”

In the intersubjective analytic space we both entered horrendous, deadly, watery graves. My own body seemed to act as a container, holding her stuff in my digestive system. This embodied counter-transference experience enabled me to feel my way into what felt like a preverbal, primordial, dimension. A sense of unease continued to haunt me. I felt enclosed in some opaque veil through which I looked as through a glass darkly, as if suffering a ‘blindness of the seeing eye in which one knows and does not know a thing at the same time’ (Freud, 1893, p. 117). I eventually broke through to see what had to be seen: a place of such intense intersubjective analytic experience. I was immersed, vicariously in a place of cold blooded torture, of razor-blade cruelties and genocide. The concrete swimming pool with no water represented a literal, non-metaphoric and psychopathic dimension, a state incapable of moving or being moved, transformed and integrated.

What also came to light was that transferential-countertransferential somatic symptoms were themselves metaphors: it was as if the sorrows, terror and traumas of the ancestors rose like bruises upon our bodies. We were haunted by a sense of knowing more about the past than Rachael was conscious of, this haunting permeating the analytic space. Such material was exposed and recovered to Rachael's benefit only when I allowed myself to really receive and face the implications of the underground sub-texts that neither of us was at first aware.

'When knowledge comes, memory comes too; little by little knowledge and memory are one and the same thing', says Gustav Meyrink (cited in Herzog, 1982). In the analytic space it is pertinent to ask, as did James Herzog in his analysis of the children of survivors, 'Whose memory? Whose knowledge? And, how might one person's knowledge and another person's memory become one and the same thing?' (Herzog, 1982 p.114).

## NOTE

1. This case was based on material previously published in Pickering, J. C. (2002), 'Moving metaphors of self', in R. Meares, ed., *The Self in Conversation*, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia: ANZAP, pp.123-143.

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## *A Work in Progress*

# Some Preliminary Reflections on the Biological Substrate of Meaning-Making

**LEON PETCHKOVSKY**

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In the Introduction to these *Proceedings*, I made the statement that:

‘Jung’s theory of complexes is paradoxically the most biologically embedded of all the psychoanalytic models. But the Jungian movement has yet to realise it fully.’

This is a provocative assertion, but engage with us as we deploy an exploratory argument in which:

- we shall outline a core model of therapeutic intersubjectivity, which has the making of connection and new meaning at its heart;
- we shall then look at the neurobiology of meaning-making (apophenia);
- we will sketch a picture of the Jungian opus which has meaning-making as a central concern both in its historical provenance (Jung’s early psychophysiological Word Association research), and in its *telos*;
- and we shall present some preliminary fMRI findings that expand our understanding of the neurobiological substrate of the Jungian complex.

There is not enough space here to deploy the various arguments in the detail they require. In fact, all of the above propositions are points of departure for substantive studies, and this discussion must be understood as very much a work in progress; a point of view.

### SOME CORE CONCERNS IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYTIC/DEPTH PSYCHOLOGIES

In the last 20 years, convergent developments across the many strands of contemporary psychoanalytic thought have brought us to a point where we can confidently articulate some of the basics of good clinical psychoanalytic practice. What is required is a kind of double consciousness; an ability to track one's own process while simultaneously tracking the patient's, *in interaction*. Furthermore the therapist has to bring an *appreciative* component; and there also has to be a capacity for *reverie*, a non-linear mind-state akin to play. All this emerges optimally within an appropriate *container*.

When all the above is in place, the patient/analysand has the opportunity to progressively develop, in and through this interaction, a sense of their own self (stream of consciousness), and an empathic sense of the *other*. Though seemingly simple enough (every good mother does this with her baby and infant), it can be a deeply challenging therapy task, taking years of effort (on both sides). But it is possible. Here in Australia, Neville Symington and Russell Meares have reviewed the underpinnings of this basic position; Meares especially from the perspective of those recent neurobiological and developmental psychological researches and understandings that give it powerful cross-validation (Symington, 1986; Meares, 2000). It is worth remembering at this point that Russell Meares' work on the 'conversational method' had its genesis in the work of British Jungian Analyst Robert Hobson (Hobson, 1985) who was Russell's mentor in the UK.

But can we take this paradigm one step further? The powerful concept of *emergence* (the way new and unexpected properties arise from patternings of simpler elements) is one of the major themes in contemporary psychoanalysis, especially in its application to our understandings of developmental process, psychopathology, and psychotherapeutic interactions.

### **‘EMERGENCE’, THE DANCE OF THE ‘ENIGMATIC SIGNIFIERS’, AND JUNG’S ‘TRANSCENDENT FUNCTION’**

‘Emergence’ is a term that signifies how new and unexpected properties arise from the interactions of simpler entities. Thus the elements hydrogen and oxygen have very different properties from H<sub>2</sub>O, water. This useful principle has been extended to the biosciences, the mathematics of artificial intelligence, and to contemporary philosophy. Marvin Minski (Minski, 1986) has extended it further to models of mind and, more recently, the principle of ‘emergence’ has gained currency in the contemporary psychoanalytic discourse (Cambray, 2002).

But the psychoanalytic discourse is a ‘model of mind’ with a concept of the *unconscious* at its heart.

Broadly speaking, we all emerge from an unconscious, in the widest senses of this term (not just the dynamically repressed). Some of this is, in principle, utterly irreclaimable. Who can claim an experiential awareness of the function of their spleen? Their COMT genes? Some of it, the pre-verbal, sub-linguistic (the patterns, inherited and acquired, of the mid-brain, the hypothalamus, the hippocampi and the amygdala), profoundly affects experience and behaviour, but percolates to cortical awareness in very limited ways, only partially retrievable, and only poetically expressible at best.

There is a term in current psychoanalytic thinking that captures something of the way in which this subliminality unpacks in the therapeutic encounter. It is the term *enigmatic signifiers*, coined by the psychoanalysts Frosh and Pontalis (Frosh, 2002). It refers to the subliminal cues that are being thrown off all the time by both partners, often at variance with declared positions and intentions.

The psychoanalytic tango is a dance between the *enigmatic signifiers* of each partner. All of this patterning, conscious or not, decants into the therapeutic encounter. Mostly, these patterns have a counterproductive fixity; the stereotypic projective driven-ness that Jung called the 'complex'. And mostly, the analytic dance itself is formulaic, a repetition of those familiar transference/countertransference quadrilles that brought one to analysis in the first instance. However, just occasionally, something new, something emergent, can arise. And, whereas in the physical world new physical properties emerge out of combinations of simpler elements, in the mental world, what (hopefully) emerges in the analytic encounter is new meaning. And new *meaning* can heal.

The discerning Jungian reader will by now have recognised the above as a recasting of Jung's central therapeutic principles of 'Conflict of Opposites' and 'Transcendent Function' into a more contemporary mode. Jung's principle was embedded in a 19th Century Hegelian dialectic of 'thesis' versus 'antithesis', or *conflictio oppositorum*. But the new idiom of emergence has one big advantage. Unlike Hegelian philosophy, the principle of emergence originated in the physical sciences, and is inherently more amenable to physical investigation.

## EMERGENCE, MEANING AND PSYCHIC STRUCTURE

If ‘emergence’, the thrust towards new meaning, and its arising, is at the heart of therapeutic transformations in the psychoanalytic encounter, we might be prompted to ask, what is the nature of its biological substrate? We often forget that a similar curiosity about the biological underpinnings of the unconscious drove Jung’s early researches. Jung’s theory of the complexes and archetypes, and his preoccupation with the search for meaning arose, at least in part, from his exposure to the French neurologist Charcot’s demonstrations of hysterical dissociation states, and from Jung’s work with the word association experiment, that early research exercise in physiological psychology which demonstrated so palpably (by increased reactions times, increased skin conductance, altered heart and breathing patterns) that there were unconscious dynamic ‘structures’, associative nodes of over-determined meaning that Jung called the ‘complexes’, that shape the way in which we experience ourselves and the world and, in turn, influence the way other associations are made.

## JUNG’S PSYCHOLOGY OF APOPHENIA

Jungian psychology can thus be [re?]-construed as an associationist psychology or, more precisely, a psychology of apophenia - usually defined as the experience of seeing meaningful patterns or connections in random data. The term was first used by Klaus Conrad (Conrad, 1958) to describe the ‘unmotivated seeing of connections....[accompanied by] ...an ...experience of abnormal meaningfulness’. Apophenia is sometimes regarded as psychopathological, but clearly cannot be so totally, otherwise we would have to relegate all discoveries? constructions? of patterning to irrelevance and the madhouse.

Giegerich has argued that in a post-modernist world, the search for meaning is the weakest link in Jung’s opus (Giegerich, 2004). And yet, as advances in our understanding of the neurobiology of subjective experience develop, this



‘search for meaning’ may again prove its strongest element, not so much as that search for underlying capital M ‘Meaning’ that Giegerich criticises, but as an enquiry into the meaning-making process itself.

Some of you will be familiar with the work of Brugger at the Zurich University Hospital. In one particular study (Mohr, Brugger et al., 2004) he describes how normal subjects, given an L-Dopa/benserazide (formulated to produce a dopamine surge and sustain it), displayed absurdly high levels of magical ideation. Many of you may also realise that apophenic experiences are a common thread in a broad variety of conditions. These include a wide range of psychiatric disorders, wherein the firm distinctions between schizophrenia, schizotypy, bipolar affective disorder, borderline personality disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and the various drug-induced psychoses are being called into question (Mohr, Brugger et al., 2004, p. 2; Angst, 2007) even in the Anglo-Saxon psychiatric domain (Mellsop, 2007). All these conditions carry, in various ways, an element of apophenic disturbance.

But apophenia is also to be found in normative states. Adolescence in particular, with its pre-frontal brain network pruning and identity re-organisation, can be said to be a developmental phase of normative apophenia (Damman, 2004). A wide range of normative life experiences (grief, trauma, love and infatuation, near-death, psychotic transference, but also creative and artistic inspirations, moments of numinosity, etc.) come with an intrinsic apophenic element.

However, we now also know that the most fundamental motivating system common to all vertebrates is the so-called ‘seeking (curiosity and reward) system’ described by Panksepp (Panksepp, 1998). The ‘seeking - reward’ system includes the mesocortical-mesolimbic dopamine mediated apophenic ‘meaning-making’ system described earlier, and its projections to the endorphin mediated fronto-hypothalamic systems familiar to us from the rat self-stimulation pleasure-centre work of James Olds (Olds and Milner, 1954). It

seems that we are hard-wired to seek meaning; make connections. And when we make those connections, the resultant dopamine surge in turn releases endorphins. This is a two-way system. Dopamine increases curiosity and meaning-making; curiosity and meaning-making increases dopamine activity. The accompanying affect can be experienced as rapturous, numinous even.

How might this be connected with Jung's theory of complexes and archetypes?

Apophenia has not escaped the attention of Jungian scholars, and Jeffery Mishlove in Los Angeles (Mishlove, 2007) has proposed that notions of archetypal synchronistic resonance can be invoked instead of models of dopaminergic neuropathology, to 'explain ostensible paranormal experiences that can neither be accepted as literally constructed nor dismissed as mere artefact or error'. But the two models (metapsychological and neurobiological) are not irreconcilable. This reconciliation is precisely the task of the new 'neuropsychanalysis' spear-headed by the psychoanalyst/neuropsychologist Mark Solms (Solms and Turnbull, 2002).

## **THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF THE DREAM PROCESS AND THE COMPLEXES**

The reader might also know that the Dopamine 2 pathways mentioned earlier also serve dream process in an essential way. Mark Solms (Solms *ibid.*), in his attempt to arrive at the functional neurobiology of the dreaming process, observed that people who have had bilateral mesial-prefrontal leucotomy (i.e. cutting away a vital part of the D2 pathways) retained REM functions but could no longer dream! But there was another region that Solms also describes as essential to dream production, the temporo-occipito-parietal confluence.

From a Jungian perspective, we might say that dreams are the theatre of the complexes, the stage upon which complexes interact. It makes some

sense, then, that recent work in Australia on the fMRI correlates of the Jungian complexes (Petchkovsky et al., 2007) is beginning to suggest that the complexes themselves, those nodes of affect-laden meaning, involve the temporo-occipito-parietal confluence, Solms' *other* essential dream circuit (Solms, *ibid.*). When a complex is activated, part of the dream circuitry is also activated.

The temporo-occipito-parietal confluence, the so called 'God Spot' of the human brain, is also known to be the mediator of transcendent and heautoscopy (out of body) experiences. Could this, therefore, have something to do with the way in which the larger Jungian transpersonal Self unpacks into a more limited (egoic) human awareness? And indeed, our preliminary fMRI results (Petchkovsky et al., 2007) also show that mesial prefrontal and anterior cingulate brain areas associated with ego function (agency, a sense of individuality) light up in a 'complexed' reaction.

## JUNG IN THE 21ST CENTURY

What is the Jungian opus about, if not:

- the search for *meaning*;
- *synchronicity* and other meaningful connections;
- experiences of *numinosity*, ecstasy, spiritual encounters;
- *dreams* and dreaming;
- *creativity*;
- the *complexes* and associationist/dissociationist psychodynamics and psychopathology;
- *psychosis* and its misattributions of *meaning*;
- and how all these might interact in the 'alchemy' of the *therapeutic encounter*, and the healing work of the *transcendent function*.

And as the 21st Century thrust to understand ever more closely the biophysical substrate of subjective experience (including the process of meaning-making at all the above levels) gains momentum, the Jungian movement would seem strategically positioned to play an important part, if only it will engage actively.

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## *These are the closing words*

### ‘Catching the Drift’

CRAIG SAN ROQUE  
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE  
*ANZSJA, Sydney, Australia*

There is an old line of Freud’s on the transference. It goes like this:

‘... an unconscious idea is, as such, quite incapable of entering the preconscious, and ... it can only exercise any effect there by establishing a connection with an idea which already belongs to the preconscious, by *transferring its intensity on to it* and by getting itself “covered” by it.’ (Freud, 1900a, SE V 562, in Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, p. 457) [italics added]

This idea Sigmund probably had before the site of transference was allocated, specifically, to that abyss between the cigar man’s chair and the body on the couch. Later Dr Carl set the site of the intensity in the quadrilateral triangle between his knees and hers - and that was probably well and good. Dr Carl probably did his best work in that animated fountain - the Rosarium - that Mystery which lent this Conference its odd-couple icon.

The old Freud still grips like a monkey wrench - the surfacing intensity bit I mean, transferring to something on the way up - the unthought unknown looking for a thinker - it might have been his best insight, for all I know - the one about unconscious ideas cruising all the time and how to catch the drift. Freud worked out a way to catch the drift in his doctor’s room. Well and good.

Freud's unconscious in every day life suggests to me that the drift is in the streets, in the rain, in any psychic pain, in absolutely any situation at any time of the day or night - the psychic intensity intention impulse is active, alight, restlessly hunting, gathering, linking, pushing, trying to get the goddamn surfacing beta- bitten thing up, like a Jewfish from the river. Or - go the sweet water way – she's delicately, deliciously, gathering a hundred tawny jelly fish on the tide, rehearsing them in the ballet of the selected fact. Phosphorescent Amygdalina's gravid water.

The thing is - she is always coming out; she is always coming to the surface and any time two or three gather together with a bit of intent and just enough humility, and maybe halfway intact alpha function – then - up she comes - in the name of a truth. Mouth wide open like an O.

Unconscious – preconscious 'ideas' with anxiety and intensity attached did hook into the 40 or so people gathered in transit at the Vibe Hotel, Parkville on October 20-21, 2007. And, despite the visible intentions of which Leon writes in the Intro, the truths of intent of that gathering may not have been clear to most of us until after the aftermath, maybe only now as matters surface in these *Proceedings*. So be it. We live in murky times and can show a little mercy to the emergent.

This is an Afterword, the last of fishing the net, there has been enough integration going on in the editing of this collection; we'll let it go now and leave the last words, untrammelled, to two participants.

**KATHLEEN MCPHILLIPS**

Senior lecturer in Humanities, University of Western Sydney

The conference was a great experience to catch up with people I don't see very often and to bring together analysts and academics interested in Analytical Psychology. It is no secret that universities find the study of Jung's work problematic and it often feels like being on the edge when you research, write and teach (if you can) in the area. So just for getting rid of a chunk of isolation, the conference was really valuable.

For me, the stand-out papers were: *'The Making of a Representative'* given by Peter Fullerton who used a Doris Lessing story to explore the role of the analyst working with couples in marital therapy. This provided a wonderful bridge between the imaginative uses of literature and the reality of marital analysis. Also, Leslie Devereaux's sensitive and wistful account of her field-work with the Maya people in South America when she was a young woman. I particularly appreciated her generous acknowledgement to the 'fathers' of the discipline, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, whom I have also studied and critiqued: it was really valuable to hear Leslie's acceptance of their contribution to her thinking, rather than the standard accounts of where they went 'wrong'.

Along with Giles Clark, Leslie raised the question: 'can we ever know the other?'. And what does it mean to be moving towards the other in our respective work? This seems such a profound and necessary question to ask whether we are doing field-work or therapy. And maybe the two forms of work are similar in their orientation to others. There seemed to be a number of touch points between therapy and scholarship, and it was really worthwhile to think about this amongst such a good group of people.

On Saturday morning in her opening comments Margaret Caulfield gave a very brief overview of previous embodiments of Jungian meetings. She men-



tioned that 20 years ago, although women were present they tended to be in the background but not really visible. Margaret said she hoped that had now changed and there was more of a gender balance. Then on Sunday morning Margaret used her opening comments to ask a question about where the shadow might emerge at the conference. For me there was not much doubt. The gender politics were pretty difficult. I became aware of it as Saturday wore on, and the podium was populated by mostly men. I wondered about whether to say something. I discussed it with some of my women friends; they also had noticed it. I observed how difficult it became to think about standing up and saying something. As a woman, to become a speaking subject would have involved the possibility that I may be stereotyped as a whingeing feminist; or worse, a mad hysteric (for some the same thing). I also did not want to criticise my sisters who seemed to be doing a lot of hard work to keep things rolling.

Either way I felt myself censored and resented having to 'carry' the gender load. Why does it have to be women who stand up and point out the gender issues? Do men see it at all? It is so normative for men to speak as the authoritative voice - and plenty of men spoke from the podium, yet when I looked around, there were many women present who could have also spoken. I think Margaret's two questions at the beginning of the day turned out to be very astute.

The other disappointment was that on the last session on Sunday when we could have had a discussion about the future of the conference and discussions, we sat through an unscheduled paper and so lost that opportunity, which was frustrating. I hope there will be a future for this group: the meeting points between analysis and academia feel rich and productive.

## PETER DICKER

Psychologist, Illawarra region

It was a weekend of passionate, if not always coherent, presentations by (Jungian) Analysts and (Jungian) Academics in turn. There was a feeling, however, that it was not until the very end of the conference that the possibility of a true dialogue between these professions could be imagined. One sensed that a highly valuable conversation, between clinician and theoretician, was still waiting to happen.

## MARY GAUTHIER

We close with lines from Mary Gauthier's Texas country album, 'Mercy Now'.

*My father could use a little mercy now  
The fruits of his labor  
Fall and rot slowly on the ground  
His work is almost over  
It won't be long and he won't be around  
I love my father, and he could use some mercy now*

*My brother could use a little mercy now  
He's a stranger to freedom  
He's shackled to his fears and doubts  
The pain that he lives in is  
Almost more than living will allow  
I love my brother, and he could use some mercy now*

*My church and my country could use a little mercy now  
As they sink into a poisoned pit  
That's going to take forever to climb out*

*They carry the weight of the faithful  
Who follow them down  
I love my church and country, they could use some mercy now*

*Every living thing could use a little mercy now  
I know we don't deserve it  
But we need it anyhow  
We hang in the balance  
Dangle 'tween hell and hallowed ground  
Every single one of us could use some mercy now*

And thus it goes.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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