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II
Spatial metaphors and somatic communication: the embodiment of multigenerational experiences of helplessness and futility in an obese patient

Abstract: This paper explores the analysis of an obese woman who came to experience her flesh as a bodying forth of personal and multigenerational family and cultural experiences of helplessness. The paper discusses the ideas and images that formed the basis of how I engaged with these themes as they presented countertransferentially. My thesis is that clinical approaches which draw on spatial metaphors for the psyche offer valuable tools for working with people whose inner world expresses itself somatically because such metaphors can be used to engage simultaneously with the personal, cultural, and ancestral dimensions of these unconscious communications. The paper builds on Jung's view of the psyche as comprised of pockets of inner otherness (complexes), on Redfearn's image of psyche as landscape-like and on Samuels' thinking on embodied countertransference and on the political psyche. It also draws on Butler's work on the body as a social phenomenon and on the theme of being a helpless non-person or nobody as explored in Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* which retells Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from the perspective of two of the play's 'bit' characters.

Key words: Butler, complex, countertransference, depression, Jung, metaphor, obesity, Redfearn, Samuels, spatial, Stoppard

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Introduction: temporal and spatial metaphors for the unconscious

In his paper 'Theory as metaphor: clinical knowledge and its communication', Warren Colman observes that all analytic thinking is metaphorical in nature (2009, p. 200). Likewise, Mary Midgley points out the power of metaphor citing the extent to which competitive, 'survival of the fittest' images have come to dominate our thinking about evolution. She observes that

> the trouble with metaphors is that they don't just mirror … beliefs, they also shape them. Our imagery is never just surface paint, it expresses, advertises and strengthens our preferred interpretations. It also carries unconscious bias from the age we live in. …
>
> (Midgley 2011, p. 26)

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Similarly, I am interested in the strengths and weaknesses which arise from how different analytic theories build on temporal and spatial metaphors for the psyche.

Freud: from spatial to temporal metaphor

In 'From somnambulism to the archetypes: the French roots of Jung's split with Freud' John Haule argues that an important aspect of Freud's use of spatial and temporal metaphors was his relationship to the work of the late 19th century French dissociationists who believed that their patients' neurotic, hysterical, obsessive or other disorders were organized around an underlying fixed idea or image.[1] These fixed ideas were understood to be the result of a constitutional mental weakness which only developed into a neurosis when the individual became exhausted through overwork, emotional shocks or illness. This exhaustion led to a weakening of mental synthesis which can be thought of as a weakening of conscious ego integrity (Haule 1992, p. 244).

Between 1885 and 1886 Freud spent some months attending Charcot's lectures in Paris at the Salpêtrière but was subsequently rebuffed in Vienna for giving a too enthusiastic report of Charcot's work. By 1895 Freud was moving away from the views of the dissociationists and in *Studies in Hysteria* he argued that the patient's fixed idea was a reminiscence of a traumatic event which was the initial 'cause' of their dissociation (ibid., pp. 245–46). As Freud's thinking developed he could no longer maintain this trauma theory and proposed, instead, a theory of sexual stages of development. This move retained the fixed idea as definitive of the patient's neurosis, but Freud's emerging emphasis on it as *causative* is a crucial step in the development of psychoanalysis. As Haule says, at this point, 'Freud replaced a spatial metaphor [for the psyche] (the "co-conscious" sub-personalities of dissociationism) with a temporal metaphor (the sexual stages)' (ibid., pp. 247–48).

Temporal metaphors also prevail over spatial metaphors in other aspects of Freud's work: while his model of the unconscious comprised of the id, ego and superego is spatial (insofar as it is structural) the tone of this structure is strongly developmental / temporal since the ego is understood to have developed out of the much older, instinctual, constitutional id. Likewise, the super-ego is thought of as a sub-element of the ego which is an incorporation of wider parental and social values absorbed while growing up (again, a developmental process). The structural, fixed relationship between id, ego and superego which develops out of the temporal metaphor that underlies this model is the very opposite of the open-ended, flexible relationship between elements of interiority offered by spatial metaphors for the psyche.

[1] The focus of Haule's paper is how, through his concept of the archetype, Jung walked (what Haule refers to as) 'the narrow ridge' between Freud's and Janet's thinking (Haule 1992, p. 256). Here, however, I am interested in the significance of the tension between temporal and spatial metaphors for interiority, a theme which emerges in Haule's account of the context of Jung's early work.

Beyond Freud—spatial metaphors in object relations and in Butler's re-reading of Freud

Temporal, stage-based metaphors for the psyche play an important role in much post-Freudian psychoanalytic thought, especially in models which focus on infant development such as Object Relations. Within that tradition however, some writers have, at times, combined spatial and temporal metaphors to powerful effect. For example, in *Thrills and Regressions* Balint (1959) describes two defensive personality styles which he identifies as philobats and ocnophils. Balint imagines the inner worlds of these defensive styles in physical, landscape-like terms: '[w]hereas the ocnophilic world is structured by physical proximity and touch, the philobatic world is structured by safe distance and sight (ibid., p. 34) and 'the philobatic world consists of friendly expanses dotted more or less densely with potentially dangerous and unpredictable objects...' (ibid.). Similarly, Winnicott's list of unthinkable anxieties or primitive agonies (going to pieces, falling forever, having no relation to the body or having no orientation) are very fleshy and spatial in tone (1962, p. 58).

There are also spatial metaphors at work in the deeper layers of Freud's own writings and post-structuralist feminist philosopher and queer theorist Judith Butler brings them out most effectively. In a post 9/11 essay in which she argues that Freud's understanding of mourning can be used to re-think community and international relations Butler draws on Walter Benjamin's work (1977, pp. 92–97) to suggest that Freud saw melancholia as trying to reverse or suspend time, and that in doing so it produces internal 'landscapes' as its signature effect (1997, p.174). Building on this she writes that '[o]ne might profitably read the Freudian topography that melancholy occasions as ... a spatialised landscape of the mind' (ibid., p. 174). Elsewhere, she also remarks that '[w]hat Freud here calls the "character of the ego" appears to be the sedimentation of objects loved and lost, the archaeological remainder, as it were, of unresolved grief' (ibid., p. 133).

Clearly, as Butler's comments indicate, Freud did, in fact, draw on spatial metaphors for interiority as well as temporal ones. But as Haule points out, Freud's move away from the French dissociationists involved the replacement of a *central* spatial metaphor for the psyche with a temporal one (ibid., p. 247). What Butler is doing is breathing life back into Freud's spatially-based insights which were largely lost in that move.

Jung, complexes, spatial metaphors and inner landscapes

Like Freud, Jung too was influenced by the work of the French dissociationists and Haule suggests that Jung's concept of the unconscious as comprised of feeling-toned complexes grew out of this and his experiments with the word

association test at the Burghölzli Psychiatric Hospital in Zurich between 1901 and 1904 (see Austin 2009, p. 585 for further details). Haule summarizes the comments Jung makes on the complex in his Tavistock Lectures (1935, paras. 148–53) as follows:

1) it has a sort of body with its own physiology so that it can upset the stomach, breathing, heart;
2) it has its own will power and intentions so that it can disturb a train of thought or a course of action just as another human being can do;
3) it is in principle no different from the ego which is itself a complex;
4) it becomes dramatized in our dreams, poetry and drama;
5) it becomes visible and audible in hallucinations;
6) it completely victimizes the personality in insanity (Haule 1992, p. 252).

What emerges in these Lectures and in Jung's other descriptions of complexes is the spatial and visceral quality of Jung's thinking about the unconscious. Complexes are understood to be feeling-toned pockets of interiority with significant variations in tone, mood or affective charge between them. Interiority is envisaged as a three dimensional space which contains numerous complexes, any of which (when active) can affect the subject's experience of their mind, body and emotions and, through those, the subject's experience of the world within and around them. Complexes can also interact with each other while the subject remains unconscious of them.

Spatial / Landscape metaphors and the foreignness at the heart of psychic life

Given Midgley's comments above on the structuring role that metaphors play in our thinking, it is important to consider the biases and weaknesses inherent in these uses of temporal and spatial metaphors for the psyche. For example, the exclusive use of temporal metaphors can lead to an over-focusing on 'getting things (back?) on the developmental track' and on too much attention being paid to culturally recognizable / normalized desires and forms of identity. Likewise, used exclusively, spatial metaphors for the psyche can lead to an endless, narcissistic wandering about in the patient's inner world. Redfearn offers a way of working with this latter risk when he writes:

> If all one's sub-personalities were spread out like a map or landscape, or a vast world of happenings and relationships, there would be places or scenes which were often visited by the conscious 'I', and others which would never have been visited, or have even been avoided.
>
> (Redfearn 1985, p. 117)

Through this highly embodied articulation of Jung's model of the psyche Redfearn offers us a powerful clinical tool for imagining the patient's inner

world as a landscape which, in addition to including familiar, frequently visited places, is likely to include other places which lie on a spectrum between 'aware of, but avoided' through to 'unthinkable, unfeelable and (possibly) unbearable'. Seen in this way the therapeutic process involves more than visiting or making alliances with these alien inner realms. It is, instead, a process of accepting that the centre of gravity of 'who we are' lies forever beyond us, constantly emerging from amongst the pockets of alien otherness that constitute us.[2]

The most ego-alien ends of this spectrum make their presence felt in sessions as highly charged fields which can have an almost 'psychotic' tone of intensity and the clinician may experience intense countertransference effects when close to them. Such pockets can also make their presence felt as 'no-go zones' in sessions where thinking and / or feeling are impossible for the analyst, and often for the patient as well. These regions of the psyche are, by definition, extremely difficult to approach and play a powerful role in shaping where the analytic interaction can and cannot 'go'. Being highly affectively and energetically charged however, they also often contain raw, life-and-death energies which can hold the possibility of change at depth, hence their crucial clinical importance.

Temporality as an inherent fourth dimension of spatial metaphors for the psyche

Another important strength of images of the psyche as landscape-like is that temporality is an inherent dimension of geology and archaeology. Thus a detailed exploration of the landscape of interiority will inevitably 'unearth' developmental processes without having to pursue them directly.[3]

Gary Hartman summarizes how Jung undertook this task of exploration as follows:

> First, he tried to recognize and attend to the aspects of the patient's personality which were 'Not-I' and, second, he allowed the time necessary for the characteristics and personality of the 'Not-I' to emerge.
>
> (Hartman 1994)

[2] Here I am interweaving Jung's concept of the complex and Butler's idea of the self as an ec-static phenomenon, i.e., the self is, of necessity, outside itself, such that 'there is no final moment in which my return to myself takes place' (Butler 2001, pp. 147–48). For further discussion see also Austin (2009).

[3] Clearly this question of the role of temporality and spatiality in the psyche is complex. As Ladson Hinton points out, experiences of 'being "out of the flow" of time, being "frozen in time", seem [to be] at the core of the experience of the victims of trauma' (personal communication 27th April 2011). I suggest, however, that trauma can also leave a person outside of the 'flow of context' as well, so that they remain frozen in place, compulsively scanning their inner and outer landscapes for threats in a hypervigilant manner.

The key to these techniques is that they assume that the authority in the analytic process resides in the patient's unconscious. It does not rest in the analyst's knowledge of symbols and/or myths, or their capacity to make interpretations. Indeed Jung wrote '[t]he concept of the unconscious *posits nothing*, it designates only my *unknowing*' (1992, p. 411; italics in original).[4]

Laplanche and enigmatic inner othernesses

Before moving on to a clinical illustration I would like to touch on the work of contemporary French Freudian Jean Laplanche who, like Jung, draws strongly on spatial metaphors for the psyche. Laplanche places an unresolvable, non-pathological foreignness or otherness at the heart of psychic life and as Allyson Stack comments, for Laplanche:

> those aspects of the adult message that the infant *cannot* translate, metabolize, or assimilate are *repressed* in the form of 'an internal foreign body' or 'psychical other' . . . Thus the unconscious is an 'alien inside me, and even one put inside me by an alien' . . .
> (Stack 2005, p. 65 quoting Laplanche 1999, pp. 64–65; italics in original)

Laplanche refers to these messages as 'enigmatic' since they are 'not puzzles or riddles that can one day be solved by learning and applying the proper codes (linguistic or otherwise)' (Stack 2005, p. 65). Crucially, such messages harbour 'an irreducible, interrogative kernel—a question neither sender nor receiver can ever completely answer' (ibid., p. 66). For Laplanche, individual development arises from the need 'to master, to translate these enigmatic, traumatizing messages', a process which continues for as long as a person lives (ibid., p. 66).

My own image for how Laplanche is interweaving spatial and temporal metaphors comes from Einstein's model of General Relativity where an apple falls to the ground not because of 'gravity' but because it responds to the curvature of space-time near the earth's surface. This curvature of space-time is caused by the Earth's mass. Likewise, I imagine the presence of the inner othernesses around which we are unconsciously organized as shaping our field of interiority. These complexes are so powerful that they affect the trajectories of all our thoughts and feelings in the same way that the paths of movement of all objects are shaped by what we think of as 'gravity' but is actually the curvature of space-time.

In other words, the presence of the inner othernesses / complexes / enigmatic signifiers around which we are unconsciously organized can be detected by the way they affect the paths of our thoughts and feelings. Seen in this light, Laplanche's model resonates strongly with Jung's view of the inner world of complexes or inner othernesses which shape our interiority. Again: crucially

[4] Jung made this comment in a letter to Pastor Max Frischknecht dated 8th February 1946.

Jung's idea of the complex offers a way of placing this unresolvable unknowingness which lies at the core of psychic life at the very centre of the analytic interaction.

In what follows I will explore the use of these ideas in clinical practice by describing my work with a woman (Jo) who, during the course of her analysis, came to experience her flesh as a bodying forth of multigenerational experiences which were associated with belonging to a class of non-persons in her culture of origin. Although these experiences occupied a central (unconscious) role in her family and related to wider patterns in her cultural background, none of this material was accessible to thought or feeling in analysis for many years—it expressed itself solely through Jo's body, her transference and my countertransference.

Clinical vignette: Jo

In her initial telephone message Jo, a woman in her mid-50s, said that she wanted to see me because she was concerned that she was getting depressed and she did not want to take the medication that her general practitioner was suggesting. In our first meeting Jo explained that although she had no personal history of depressive illness, she had seen it take a debilitating hold on several members of her extended family and she was frightened that she was sliding towards a very dark place inside herself.

Jo lived alone and had, for a number of years, worked in a professional role in a technical field which she quite liked. However, over the last 3–4 years this role had become increasingly problematic owing to extensive restructuring in her workplace. Jo described her contact with her family (who lived in another State) as intermittent but not problematic and she described herself as having had a number of boyfriends as a younger woman, but none of them had, as she put it, 'worked out'.

Over time Jo began to talk about her body, which was obese (i.e., a Body Mass Index greater than 30)[5] explaining that she had tried Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, various weight loss programmes, self-help groups, personal trainers and gyms all to no avail. At this early stage of our work Jo had no access to her dreams, although she did speak of recurrent, half-waking feelings of confusion and disorientation. She also used extremely harsh, self-hating language when talking about her body, indicating that she felt a great deal of shame and despair about her obesity: she described feeling trapped in the wrong body, a body which would not take any notice of her will, wishes or efforts to change it. She also described a number of deeply humiliating incidents which had occurred (especially as a child and as an adolescent) which related to her overweight body.

[5] BMI is a ratio of body mass (in kilograms) divided by height in metres squared. Normal weight range is considered to be a BMI of between 18.5 and 25, overweight is between 25 and 30, and obese over 30.

Countertransference: a landscape of helplessness and futility

Redfearn's image of the psyche as a landscape of sub-personalities (1985, p. 117) led me to try to get a more fleshed out, embodied sense of my countertransference towards Jo by trying to imagine what kind of landscape and climate she and I might be in in sessions, where we could and could not go in that landscape, and the feeling tone of any resistances or obstacles we encountered. As I did so, I got an image of a small, fogged in, rather bare island with no distinct landscape features and, because of the fog, no visible external reference points. Most conspicuous, however, was the feeling tone associated with this image, which was that there was no point in trying to think about this island or make anything of the experience of being there, and there was no point in trying to leave. Nothing would make any difference.

Samuels' idea of embodied countertransference

Naturally I wondered whether this image and these feelings might simply be a reflection of Jo's conscious anxiety that analysis would not work and that her slide into depression and medication was inevitable. However, Andrew Samuels offers another perspective when he builds on Jung's understanding of the analytic relationship to describe what he calls 'embodied countertransference'. In order to illustrate this form of countertransference Samuels uses the example of a clinician who feels depressed after a session with a particular patient. On examination of themselves the clinician decides that this depression does not feel as if it originates from them and wonders if it might be a result of their close contact with their patient who is depressed at the moment but unaware of it. Samuels writes:

> I call this (my depression) 'reflective countertransference.' In time, I may be able to make use of this knowledge.
> But there is another possibility. My experience of becoming a depressed person may stem from the presence and operation of such a person in the patient's psyche. The patient may have experienced a parent as depressed, and my reaction precisely embodies the patient's emotionally experienced parent. I have also become part of the patient's inner world. I emphasize inner world because I am not attempting any kind of factual reconstruction that would discover a depressed parent. Indeed, the depressed parent may himself or herself be symbolic of a depressive theme active in the patient's psyche rather than literal or causative of anything (parent as symbolic image). This entire state of affairs I have come to call 'embodied countertransference,' and I distinguish it from reflective countertransference. Sometimes, there is no person, and what is embodied is a theme that is active in the patient's psyche.
>
> (Samuels 2000, p. 411)

In the light of these ideas I wondered if my sense of futility and absence around Jo might also reflect a deeper, unconscious theme that was active in her mind

and body. As well as providing an overall metaphor for the psyche, Redfearn's image of the psyche as landscape-like offered a way of thinking about this possibility further by, as it were, trying to map its moment-to-moment effects in sessions.

The value of this approach is that it enables the clinician to work with patterns, shapes and dynamics in sessions without having to understand them, interpret them or try to name them or their contents when to do so would be premature or intrusive. It also respects the enigmatic, unknowable nature of the heart of our inner lives. Working this way translated into paying close attention to small changes in texture and tone between different areas of Jo's interiority as they emerged in sessions. As I did this, I noticed that although the amount of thinking and feeling space Jo had to move around in during sessions was never great, it did seem to vary slightly. Occasionally I wondered aloud how Jo experienced these pockets of her inner world and the variations between them. The aim of this was:

1) to support her to build her own images and vocabulary for her physical experience of internal states and
2) to help her develop an increasing capacity to stay present in her own mind and body as she moved towards places in her internal landscape which she had previously visited rarely or not at all.

Over time, Jo began to comment on (for example) how easy or hard she found it to breathe, feel or think at various points in sessions. On other occasions she described herself as 'breaking up', or the 'ground starting to give way' as she moved towards a particular area of her inner landscape (i.e., as she tried to be present to pockets of her own thoughts or feelings).

This work had to be done very slowly: in previous therapies and self-help groups Jo had, on numerous occasions, been told that she needed to 'get in touch with her body' or 'love her body'. Feeling that she had no capacity to do either of these things, such comments hit the very core of her sense of helplessness and shame, leaving her feeling humiliated and full of despair. Based on these experiences, she felt that she was 'bad at body stuff' (i.e., she had not been able to produce the feelings and responses required by the other) and that she would be 'bad' at this kind of work in our sessions as well. Therefore it took a long time for Jo to accept that the aim of noticing what it was like to move around (or stay still) in her inner world in sessions was *not* to try to change anything: it was simply to try to map her inner world as it emerged and wait to see what, if anything, her attention was drawn towards in that process. Naturally, she was sceptical of the value of this approach for quite a while—it was not focused on the change she was desperate (but felt completely unable) to produce. Nonetheless, over time, she did recognize that her slide towards depression had stopped, and that mattered a great deal to her.

Physical tension and competition between sub-personalities

Redfearn's highly embodied articulation of Jung's view of interiority provided another valuable point of reference when he observes that:

> competition between sub-personalities is often, perhaps always, reflected in zones or areas of tension, inhibition, or in the blocking off of radiating feelings in the body image or in the actual body ...
>
> (Redfearn 1985, p. 84)

If the ego is thought of as a complex (albeit the one we think of as 'home') and the body is thought of as containing numerous other complexes, Redfearn's comments imply that areas of bodily tension and inhibition can be thought of as points of contact between the ego and these somatic pockets of inner otherness (complexes), or as points of contact between the complexes themselves.

Combining this with Jung's way of engaging with the inner othernesses around which the psyche is shaped invites the analyst to work with the patient to try to slow down their experience around these contact zones and see what, if anything, emerges. Therefore I was especially interested when Jo noticed that as she started to talk about a particular relationship at work, her chest became tight and (although not asthmatic) she found it hard to breathe. Naturally I also thought about the transference aspects of these phenomena. At this point, however, I chose to stay with Redfearn's image and wondered whether Jo's tight chest might be an expression of a conflict between her ego and one or more bodily-based sub-personalities. I also wondered whether this conflict might be linked in some way to the sense of helplessness which I experienced as a constant, powerful, but unapproachable presence in sessions.

In order to explore these possibilities I invited Jo to free-associate around her physical sensations. As she did so she recalled a meditation course which she had attended some years earlier in which the teacher had asked the group to pay attention to the still point where the body changes from breathing out to breathing in, and to note that there was a space between breaths in which one could rest. Jo had found this to be a place of great tightness and, as she talked about it, I got a sense of the room around us 'slipping' or 'melting' slightly, which I took to be an indication that we might be near a pocket of Jo's unconscious emotional terrain that was so highly charged that it could distort my perceptions, feelings and thoughts when in its vicinity.

Jo described feeling sad and lonely in this place between breaths and that it contained no traces of 'her'. On further reflection she said that it was also very painful because it contained no traces of 'her people', by which she meant members of her family or cultural group. This was the first time Jo had spoken of her cultural background and she said that the gap between her breaths was 'somehow a place that was not a place' because none of 'her people' had been there. A few days later, she brought a dream which was as follows:

> I am in a dimly lit room just wearing a loose cloth. This is some kind of sex party. No one wants sex with me: I am there to make sex better between others. Between doing this I can move around but I can't leave the party or refuse to do what people want me to.
> Then I'm standing back and can see my body as part of something like a printed circuit. The camera focus is pulled back and I can see that other members of my family are elements in the same circuit. The camera pulls back more and I can see that this circuit joins up with other circuits which are families from the community I grew up in. The camera pulls back even wider and I can see that my community's part of the circuit links to a number of other circuits. The people who live in these other circuits can move around and do different jobs, but my family and community are wired in place in their circuits.

Thinking about Jo's dream

Thinking initially in temporal/developmental terms I wondered whether the first part of Jo's dream might be expressing her experience of relationship (and by implication, analysis) as a process in which she was used as a thing in a game played by self-absorbed others who were utterly indifferent to her existence, let alone her desires. I also wondered about possible infancy and childhood experiences of ruthless inclusion and exclusion in the minds of her objects (possibly linked to her repeated experiences of body-based shame) and about possible experiences of being positioned as a voyeur/passive participant in relation to her early emotional objects' desires and sexuality.

Linking these speculations to my countertransferential feelings of helplessness led me to wonder whether living in an inner world in which others could use her mind and body according to their own imaginings and desires and with no reference to her might account for some of my experience of Jo as simultaneously present and very absent in sessions. I also wondered if the second part of her dream might depict splitting, dissociative defences through which she had left her body and, in a series of steps, moved further and further away in order to distance herself from it as a source of distress. If so, the different elements of Jo's circuit image could be seen as ways in which she had tried to defend against her experience, for example, through pockets which were wired in place, while other aspects of herself were able to move about.

As we talked about her dream, Jo said that (to her surprise) she felt that she knew her role at the sex party well: it felt both extremely uncomfortable and very 'right' to her. Clearly there are many ways of thinking about and working with this comment but based on my sense of how 'unthinkable' states of vulnerability were for Jo, I decided to stay with the idea that landscapes contain archaeological and geological information. Again, my working hypothesis was that if we explored Jo's inner landscape thoroughly enough, temporal, developmental and relational dimensions of her inner world would emerge over time, expressing themselves in ways that were much closer to her own experience (and thus more bearable) than any interpretations I might make.

Redfearn offers a way of working with dreams which supports this kind of exploration based on Jung's idea that each dream element (human, non-human or inanimate) represents an aspect of the patient's inner world, and that a dream offers the possibility of starting to engage with these inner othernesses and with the relationships between them. Building on this Redfearn suggests that when thinking about a dream:

> A glowering landscape, a pastoral idyll, a blasted heath, a limitless sea, a rock in the sea, a ship, a motor car or a house, all would come under the heading of sub-personalities.
>
> (Redfearn 1985, p. 116)

Over a period of some months Jo and I repeatedly returned to her dream and, staying with this emphasis on the physicality of the mood or tone associated with each pocket of inner landscape (and the relationships between them) I encouraged her to 'flesh out' her visceral experience of each of the elements in her dream as fully as possible. For example, we spent a lot of time exploring what it felt like to be the other people and objects in each scene of her dream (e.g., the cloth she was wearing) and what it felt like to see the world and interactions in the dream from that person or object's perspective. This approach builds on Jung's realization that the complexes or haunting inner othernesses around which we are organized often emerge as background 'moods' or background 'feeling tones' in our life, dreams and interactions in analysis. Jung's response was to recommend that the patient needs to 'get his mood to speak to him; his mood must tell him all about itself…' (Jung 1928, para. 348).[6]

As Jo and I did this, we repeatedly encountered pockets of wordlessness and mindlessness, and on numerous occasions we both found it almost impossible to stay awake. By now however, Jo had developed a significant capacity for staying open to these kinds of 'no-go zones' and pockets of thought- and perception-distorting affect. We had also evolved a way of 'talking towards' these wordless places when they arose between us. For example, Jo might say that she had hit a weird place or was finding it hard to think, without being able to give any further details. Similarly, I might comment on how I felt the space between us had changed (for example, in a silence, or when Jo had been talking about a particular subject). Again, these comments were part of a joint attempt to map the psychological terrain we found ourselves in on a moment-to-moment basis in sessions. Over time we became able to do this more and more slowly, noticing and exploring elements of that psychological and emotional landscape in increasing detail.

Tracking my countertransference reactions alongside this I noticed that I often felt a faint wave of nausea when we returned to Jo's dream and on further reflection I realized that this was also associated with a shaky feeling. At first I

[6] My thanks to Jean Knox for bringing this comment of Jung's to my attention.

wondered if I was feeling something like grief or panic, but over time I realized that it was closer to a state of shock following a physical or psychological blow in which the raw physical sensations have not yet had time to form into coherent experiences. This was more like a pixelated, broken up world in which fragments of mind registered shards of imagery and thoughts, and fragments of body registered irreconcilable sensations.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

On further reflection I associated this particular experience of shock with the first time I saw Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* in which the author retells Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from the perspective of two 'bit' characters who are called into existence solely to support Hamlet's world. Thinking about this play formed an important part of how I worked with Jo's dream and so I will now summarize its plot.

At the start of Stoppard's play, Guildenstern tosses a coin which comes down 'heads' seventy-six times in a row. Not knowing that they exist solely to support the world of Hamlet and the Danish Royal Court, he and Rosencrantz cannot make sense of this. They do not realize that as 'props', they were never intended to have agency or inner lives of their own. Consequently, as the play progresses, their attempts to make sense of what is happening to them are eroded by a rising sense that the world they find themselves in is crazy, making it futile to try to make choices which might reflect their own interests. When, at the end of the play, they are put to death as a result of a letter of introduction which they are carrying (which has been swapped by Hamlet), they passively accept their fate, almost with a sense of relief at finally bringing the insane world they inhabit to a close (Stoppard 1967).

From the point of view of my thinking about my countertransference responses to Jo, what matters is that Stoppard invites his audience to feel what it is like to be a helpless 'bit player' and to experience the confusion and futility associated with that role. As he does so, he also offers the audience an opportunity to feel what it might be like to be someone who, like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, was never meant to be a 'person' (i.e., have an interiority) and consider that the only form of identity available to those positioned in this way may be based on taking:

> an existential choice to follow through with their mission, knowing that it will end in death. . . . [Doing so. . .] does not make tragic heroes of them, for their deaths are still meaningless, but it does give them, at last, a kind of identity.
>
> (Fleming 2002, p. 64, quoting Felicia Londré)

In other words, by taking a course of action which results in their own meaningless deaths Rosencrantz and Guildenstern make helplessness, futility,

absence and lack the basis of their identity. In doing so they break with what Derrida calls the 'metaphysics of presence' around which Western identity is structured. By this Derrida means that only identities which privilege the centre over its margins and the marginalized are recognized *as* identities (Fuery 1995, pp. 46–47). In choosing an identity which is (as it were) based on a metaphysics of absence Rosencrantz and Guildenstern choose a form of anti-identity which, although unlivable, is at least true to their positions as nobodies.

On this basis I understand Stoppard to be presenting us with an opportunity to reflect on the violences involved in the formation and maintenance of identity. Donna Haraway expresses this clearly when she describes how having a 'self' and a 'perspective' are positions of immense privilege which rely on (and make unacknowledged use of) the lives and bodies of others who live the lives of non-persons. She writes:

> Vision is *always* a question of the power to see—and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted? These points also apply to testimony from the position of 'oneself.' We are not immediately present to ourselves. Self-knowledge requires a semiotic-material technology to link meanings and bodies.
>
> (Haraway 1997, pp. 287–88; italics in original)

My sense was that Jo's dream, her recurrent difficulties with thinking, feeling and breathing in relation to what she referred to as 'her people', and some of our mutual experiences of pockets of slippage and no-go zones in sessions might be gesturing towards these kinds of violences and abject realms.

By now Jo and I had been working together for quite a long time and I felt that she would be able to 'hold on to herself' if I occasionally went beyond amplifications which focused on aspects of our here-and-now discussions (or silences) and introduced material intended to amplify the bigger themes which were emerging in our work. On this basis I made a link between her position as a 'bit' player at the sex party in her dream and the positions of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Stoppard's play.

Jo did not know the play but was familiar with *Hamlet* and she took up Stoppard's question of what the world of the Danish Royal Court might feel like to a couple of 'nobodies'. I described the coin tossing opening to Stoppard's play and Jo associated it with a thought that the first part of her dream showed her as having grown up in a world where she (somehow) knew what was expected of her, and how to 'perform' within that role, but, at some deep, somatic / unconscious level, knew it to be crazy.

She also linked Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's dispensable status with her feeling of concern about what would happen to her at the end of the party in her dream: since she existed solely to enable the pleasure of others, what kind of a life might she go back to after the party ended? She had an uneasy sense that she (as a nobody) might not survive the dream director's call of 'cut'. As Jo said this I wondered about the space between her breaths where there were

none of 'her people'. I also thought about my earlier countertransference image of her inner landscape as a bare island where there was no point in trying to make anything of the experience of being there, and no point in trying to leave since nothing would make any difference.

Over time what emerged from these discussions was Jo's sense that she came from a cultural group who unconsciously knew that they were never meant to be people—they were 'bit' players in a world where someone else was entitled to an interiority and to the drama of being a person. At both individual and collective levels the members of her cultural group had no past and no future.

Body and mind as social phenomena

As we talked about these themes Jo wondered about the second part of her dream in which she found herself outside her body looking at herself as part of something like a printed circuit. Another comment from Butler came to my mind in which she says 'Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine. Given over from the start to the world of others, it bears their imprint, is formed within the crucible of social life' (Butler 2004, p. 26).

This comment can be read as pointing to the level at which we are physically dependant on others as babies and infants, and that our bodies bear the imprint of these others' care. But it can also be read as suggesting that our bodies are elements of a kind of unconscious 'social circuit' to which we are given over from the start, and whose use of us is imprinted upon us, expressing itself through our bodies. This image challenges the Western fantasy of us each as sovereign masters of 'our own body' implying, instead, that the warp and weft of our bodies (and, by implication, our minds) is cultural. Here I am drawing on Jung's recognition of the social, collective dimensions of the psyche which are unconscious and also on Samuels' development of this idea in his work on the political psyche (see Samuels 1993, especially pp. 24–50 & Samuels 2001, especially pp. 159–73).

Amplifications based on this way of thinking about Jo's dream resonated with her, and she used them to explore the possibility that the second part of her dream represented her community (and its place in wider society) as a network of bodies, each with a role to play in that network.

Previously Jo had also commented that a number of elements in the family part of the circuit in her dream looked burnt out. After further reflection she speculated that these elements might represent the depressed members of her family. Jo contrasted these people / circuit elements with other members of her family and community whom she called the 'hard, shiny ones' who had (as she put it) 'opted for successful lives, having put all that cultural stuff behind them'. These thoughts lead to questions about Jo's role in her family, community

and wider cultural circuit, and (specifically) what her body's job might be in the fulfilment of that role. What follows is a brief summary of the way Jo came to see her body's role in her struggle with being from a cultural group of nobodies / 'no-bodys'.

Jo's body as the 'wiser person inside'

Over time, Jo began to wonder whether the desperate attempts she had made to lose weight as a younger woman had been expressions of her frantic need to erase some awful message which she felt was written on (and spoke through) her body. She envied 'the hard, shiny ones' who, unlike her, had no messy folds of flesh in which painful, shameful memories and stories could hide.

In analysis however, Jo also became aware of a sense that, had she succeeded in permanently losing weight through the various diets and exercise regimes she had pushed herself through she would have, in her words, 'lost her soul'. She came to see herself as someone who could not do the violence to her family and cultural history that she felt it would have taken for her to have 'made' herself thin in this way. Her body seemed to have stubbornly held on to the role of acting (for herself and for others) as a window into a world where willpower and effort were to no avail. Seemingly paradoxically, solidarity with a sense of helplessness was the most precious thing Jo had.

Again, drawing on Jung, Redfearn offers a way of thinking about this when he writes that 'some sub-personalities transcend the "I" and are subjectively superior, even vastly superior, to the conscious "I"' (Redfearn 1985, p. 117).

As this understanding of her inner world developed, Jo's relationship with food began to change and she moved from being (medically) obese to very over weight (a BMI of between 25 and 30). From her perspective, however, what mattered more was that her relationship to food and her body changed. Instead of being a source of constant, low level anxiety, food became a kind of barometer so that if it was 'getting bad again' Jo took it as a communication from her internal world that something needed to be paid attention. Crucially, she also felt that the risk of falling into bottomless depression had abated.

Conclusions

My understanding of what happened in Jo's analysis is that she developed a sense that the helplessnesses and turbulent absences around which her inner life was organized (and which expressed themselves through her body) were a central part of who she was, and that being loyal to them (unconsciously) mattered more to her than losing weight in order to 'pass as normal'.

What also emerged was that:

1) Because the ‘psyche as landscape’ metaphor is not organized around temporal-developmental goals, it offers the clinician a way of working which can
   a) remain relatively free of the analyst’s assumptions (be they temporal/developmental or otherwise) about what might constitute a good-enough outcome for the analysis. It can do this by focusing attention on the details of the sensations, images and dynamics which emerge in the mapping of the patient’s inner landscapes on their own terms, and by letting more complex phenomena, such as developmental achievements and relational capacities, emerge from that focus if and as they will;
   b) turn up surprising and sometimes contradictory elements of identity (including important pockets of non-identity or anti-identity) which are not easily recognizable to mainstream understandings of what it is to be a person, but which may be of great importance to the patient. It does this by attending especially carefully to pockets of perceptual and affective intensity and disturbance which arise in sessions. These elements of the patient’s interiority and relational field are often based on experiences of absence, lack or loss. Again, in Butler’s language they can be thought of as the archaeological remainder of unresolved grief that forms not just the ego, but the underlying geology and archaeology of the psyche (Butler 1997, p. 133).
2) The spatial/landscape metaphors for the psyche which Jung drew from the French dissociationists and which have been added to by a number of post-Jungian writers can be particularly helpful when working with people with eating disorders because these metaphors supports a focus on the physicality of our experience of interiority and our unconscious (often somatic) expression of it. They also make it possible to work with the current and ancestral dimensions of the patient’s unconscious communications, and with the personal and cultural aspects of them simultaneously.

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Translations of Abstract

Cet article explore l'analyse d'une femme obèse qui en est venue à vivre sa chair comme l'incarnation d'expériences culturelles et familiales personnelles et trans-générationnelles d'impuissance. Il examine les idées et les images qui expliquent comment je me suis engagée dans l'étude de ces thèmes tels qu'ils se présentent dans le contre-transfert. Ma thèse est que les approches cliniques qui proposent des métaphores spatiales à la psyché offrent des outils précieux pour le travail avec les personnes dont le monde interne s'exprime de façon somatique, car de telles métaphores peuvent être utilisées pour s'engager en même temps dans les dimensions personnelles, culturelles et ancestrales de ces relations inconscientes. L'article s'appuie sur la vision qu'avait Jung de la psyché comme étant composée de noyaux d'altérité interne (complexes), sur l'image de la psyché comme un paysage selon Redfearn, et sur les idées de Samuels d'un contre-transfert incarné, et d'une psyché politique. Il s'inspire aussi du travail de Butler sur le corps comme phénomène social, et sur l'idée d'être une « non-personne » impuissante ou « personne », comme cela est exploré dans la pièce de Tom Stoppard *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*, qui revisite *Hamlet* de Shakespeare du point de vue de deux « petits » rôles de la pièce.

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Analyse einer fettleibigen Frau, die ihr Fleisch als körperlichen Ausdruck persönlicher und multigenerationaler familiärer und kultureller Erfahrung von Hilflosigkeit wahrnahm. Die Ideen und Bilder werden diskutiert, die die Basis abgaben auf der ich mich diesen Themen, wie sie sich in der Gegenübertragung zeigten, nähern konnte. Meine These ist, daß klinische Herangehensweisen, die sich auf räumliche Metaphern für das Seelische beziehen, wertvolle Mittel bieten für die Arbeit mit Menschen, deren innere Welt sich somatisch darstellt. Jene können genutzt werden um gleichzeitig mit den persönlichen, kulturellen und den die Vorfahren betreffenden Dimensionen dieser unbewußten Kommunikationen umzugehen. Der Beitrag baut auf Jungs Ansicht von der Seele als etwas aus Behältnissen mit innerem Anderen (Komplexen) Bestehenden auf, desgleichen auf Redfearns Bild der Psyche als Landkartenähnlichem sowie auf Samuels Gedanken zu verkörperter Gegenübertragung und zur politischen Psyche. Er bezieht sich weiter auf Butlers Arbeit über den Körper als ein soziales Phänomen und auf das Thema der hilflosen Nicht-Person oder des Nobody, wie es in Tom Stoppards Bühnenstück *Rosenkranz und Güldenstern* untersucht wird, das Shakespeares *Hamlet* aus der Perspektive von zweien der ursprünglichen 'Nebenfiguren' erzählt.

In questo lavoro viene esposta l'analisi di una donna obesa che arrivò a fare esperienza della propria carne come di un corpo di una famiglia multigenerazionale e personale e di esperienze culturali di impotenza. Discuto le idee e le immagini che formarono la base per come mi relazionai a questi temi mentre si presentavano a livello controtransferale. La mia tesi è che approcci clinici che portano a metafore spaziali per la psiche offrono strumenti importanti per lavorare con quelle persone il cui mondo interno si esprime

somaticamente perché tali metafore possono essere usate per contattare simultaneamente le dimensioni ancestrali, culturali e personali di tali comunicazioni inconsce. Questo lavoro si basa sul modo di Jung di vedere la psiche come un contenitore di alterità interne (i complessi), sull'immagine di Redfearn della psiche come paesaggio e sul pensiero di Samuel sul controtransfert incarnato e sulla psiche politica. Mi baso inoltre sul lavoro di Butler sul corpo come fenomeno sociale e sul tema dell'essere una non-persona impotente o un nessuno come viene analizzato nel lavoro di Stoppard *Rosencrantz e Guildstern sono morti* che riracconta l'*Amleto* di Shakespeare dalla prospettiva di due caratteri minori dell'opera.

В этой статье рассказывается об анализе тучной женщины, которая воспринимала свою плоть как телесное выпячивание наружу личных и семейных межпоколенческих и культурных переживаний беспомощности. Здесь обсуждаются идеи и образы, сформировавшие основу авторского подхода к этим темам по мере того, как они возникали в контрпереносе. Клинические подходы, использующие пространственные метафоры психики, предлагают нам ценные инструменты для работы с людьми, чей внутренний мир выражается соматически, именно потому, что такие метафоры могут быть использованы для вовлечения в работу одновременно личного, культурного и восходящего к предкам измерений этих бессознательных коммуникаций. Статья строится на Юнговском взгляде на психику как на состоящую из карманов внутренней инаковости (комплексов), на образе психики, предложенном Редфэрном (психика как ландшафт) и на мыслях Сэмюэлса о телесном контрпереносе и о политической психике. Также привлекаются к рассмотрению работа Батлера о теле как о социальном феномене и тема о пребывании беспомощной не-личностью или никем, как она рассматривается в пьесе Тома Стоппарда «Розенкранц и Гильденстерн мертвы», пересказывающей Шекспировского «Гамлета» с точки зрения двух «незначительных» персонажей.

En este trabajo se explora el análisis de una mujer obesa que vino a experimentar su cuerpo como un la encarnación de experiencias personales y multigeneracionales de la familia, y culturales de impotencia. Se discuten las ideas e imágenes que formaron la base de cómo me comprometí con estos temas contratransferencialmente. Mi tesis es que los enfoques clínicos que utilizan metáforas espaciales ofrecen herramientas valiosas a la psique para el trabajo con personas cuyo mundo interior se expresa somáticamente porque tales metáforas pueden ser utilizadas para comprometer simultáneamente las dimensiones personales, culturales y ancestrales de las comunicaciones inconscientes. El trabajo se construye sobre la idea de Jung de la psique como incluida en los bolsillos de la alteridad interior (los complejos), en la imagen de Redfearn de la psique como paisaje-similar y en los conceptos de Samuels sobre la contratransferencia encarnada y en la psique política. También se trabaja sobre las ideas de Butler del cuerpo como un fenómeno social y en el tema de ser a una no-persona impotente o de nadie como es explorado en la obra de Tom Stoppard '*Rosencrantz y Guildenstern Están Muertos*' la cual reedita el '*Hamlet*' de Shakespeare desde la perspectiva de dos de los caracteres primordiales de la obra.

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