MAGNUM OPUS:

CITRINITAS

Module 2:
Transference and Counter Transference
(Part 1)

"Even the most experienced psychotherapist will discover again and again that he is caught up in a bond, a combination resting on mutual unconsciousness. And though he may believe himself to be in possession of all the necessary knowledge concerning the constellated archetypes, he will in the end come to realize that there are very many things indeed of which his academic knowledge never dreamed."

"The practice of psychotherapy"
C.G. Jung p. 178

Transference and Countertransference
Part 1
Compiled by The Centre for Applied Jungian Studies

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Transcript

The topic of transference and counter-transference is an interesting topic from our perspective; in other words from the perspective of Applied Jungian Psychology, because typically the topic really is a very clinical topic; unlike a lot of Jungian ideas, literature on transference and counter-transference focuses on the clinical dynamics, specifically the relationship between the analyst and the analysand or patient.

So it might seem like a strange topic from our perspective, but two things; I think that – Jung's work on the topic – which really was using the alchemical metaphor of the coniunctio that takes the topic outside of the clinical framework into a much broader framework. And the other thing is that the amount of research that has been done on transference and counter-transference and the fact that it's such a big focus point in psychoanalysis has meant there's a lot of very interesting data, it's got some really interesting applications, and there's some valuable stuff that we can take from it and learn from it.

The clinical perspective

When we talk about transference counter-transference – I'm going to talk a little bit about the history, but very briefly, so there's a passage here, from Andrew Samuels' Chapter in The Handbook of Jungian Psychology, from Freud, that gives an early insight into the phenomenon of transference. This is what Freud writes – this was written in 1925; he says,

"One day I had an experience which showed me in the crudest light what I'd long suspected. It related to one of my most acquiescent patients with whom hypnosis had enabled me to bring about the most marvellous results, and who I was engaged in relieving of her suffering by tracing back her attacks of pain to their origins."

Freud always got "marvellous" results; he must have been a miraculous therapist, and secondly, when he used hypnosis this was in the very early days of psychoanalysis, so he's going back to a very early time in his career. He abandoned hypnosis when he developed his psychoanalytic theories.

"As she woke up on one occasion, she threw her arms around my neck."

(That was, when she woke up from the hypnosis.)

"The unexpected entrance of a servant relieved us of a painful discussion, but from that time onwards there was a tacit understanding between us that the

hypnotic treatment should be discontinued. I was modest enough not to attribute the event to my own irresistible, personal attraction."

(Unlike Jung, who, I suspect, would have attributed it to his attraction).

"And I felt that I had now grasped the nature of the mysterious element that was at work behind hypnotism. In order to exclude it, or at all events to isolate it, it was necessary to abandon hypnotism."

And so he did; he abandoned hypnotism, but patients throwing their arms around his neck, I suspect, did not stop, because the phenomenon of the patient falling in love with her analyst was not purely as a consequence of the hypnotic technique, it was just a consequence of what has come to be called transference; of the recognition that what would happen in an analytical setting was that the patient would transfer some sort of primal relationship onto the therapist, or onto the analyst; most typically, a relationship that was initially developed in relation to their parents, to either the mother or the father. And the unresolved relationship issues that were experienced with the parent then had the opportunity of being worked through in an analytical setting, but it involved the fact that the patient would unconsciously relate to the analyst as he or she had related to the parent, and a lot of feelings that were unexpressed in relation to the parent would then potentially be expressed in relationship to the analyst.

For example, if we follow Freud's idea, and we accept the idea that there's a very strong, erotic element in the relationship of a child to their parent – of course, the most stringent taboos prohibit the expression of this eroticism; I

mean the eroticism is expressed in the infant-parent relationship – but it's expressed in a very contained and a very constrained way. So some of those erotic feelings that the person was unable to express in relation to the parent may now be expressed in relation to the analyst.

So, the old idea that you end up marrying your mother or father is suggestive of the fact that there is an unfulfilled, erotic relationship with your – typically with your – contra-gender parent. And so this phenomenon would often inform, unconsciously, the dynamics that were present in the relationship between the patient and the analyst.

Now just to make this point that it's not only – so not to make it sound too, sort of, singular in character, or too Utopian; I don't know if you'd call that Utopian or romantic but the point that I want to make is this, that obviously it's not that I need only parental love, but it also could be parental anger, frustration, hatred – unexpressed hatred -, feelings of inadequacy, feelings of castration, etc. that would also constellate in the transference. So, for example, if I experienced my mother as, abandoning me, then in relationship to my analyst – I mean all the more so if my analyst is a woman, but the analyst doesn't necessarily have to be a woman in order for me to project the mother onto her; I could project the mother onto my male analyst as well –, the point is if I perceive my analyst in a sort of a mothering, nurturing, parental role, and my primal relationship dynamic with my mother was a sense of being abandoned by her, and of her not loving me, and not being there for me etc., then I'm going to transfer that dynamic onto the analyst as well. So, it's not

only eroticism; it's not only love, but it's also things like abandonment, anxiety, castrations, hatred, frustrations etc. The way I wanted to murder my father, similarly I may come to the point that I would like to murder my analyst.

Another way of thinking about it is, the following occurs; that – I bring certain content into the analytical setting. So, I'm talking to my analyst about my mother that I feel didn't love me as much as she loved my brother; I feel that she – at some point in my relationship with her, she – withdrew her love from me and I felt abandoned, and my relationship with the feminine thereafter was one of experiencing the feminine as somehow ambivalent in relation to me. So this is the content of my analytical session; this is what I'm bringing into the analysis.

The idea is that the dynamic of the analysis somehow mirrors the content that is being brought in. So I'm consciously speaking about this feeling of abandonment and of the ambivalent mother. And as I'm consciously speaking about it, unconsciously I'm transferring that very thing that I'm talking about onto the analyst. And if the analyst is not very, very well trained or very in touch with his or her own inner life – and even if they are – there's a very strong possibility that the analyst starts to feel ambivalent towards me. So I transfer this ambivalence onto the analyst, and the transference now actually lives in the analyst. So the ambivalent mother that was in my inner life is somehow present in the analyst's psychology, and the analyst starts to experience him or herself as feeling somewhat ambivalent; like,

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"For goodness sake! Is he going to carry on moaning for another thirty minutes! I've heard this thing about his mother for the last three years. I mean for God's sake! Can you just get over it! "

And then presumably, if the analyst is well trained, they become aware of this feeling of ambivalence that they are experiencing.

But the idea is, and that's the point, – that what's really intriguing about this is that it goes beyond projection. So when we talk about transference – of course transference involves projection; I'm projecting onto my analyst my ambivalent mother – the analyst starts to experience him or herself as ambivalent; starts to feel within themselves this embodied or syntonic transference; they actually start to feel the ambivalence.

How does that happen?

The Theory of Transference and Counter transference

Okay, so that is what we're going to talk about, the truth is, of course, nobody knows but they've got a few theories. I'll tell you what the theories are and then you can make up your own mind, well, I'm going to tell you about one particular theory that I really like. I think that's what makes this fascinating because it's really strange how that happens. We can understand that I project, but why you should start feeling the unconscious content in you, is really kind of a fascinating, intriguing idea. But let me just take a step back because there're a few things I want to say before we get there.

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There's an interesting precursor to this idea in the Platonic dialogues, particularly in the Socratic dialogue – you know -, Plato's main character is Socrates, and typically Socrates interacts with his interlocutor by asking them the question, "What does it mean to have a good temper?", or "What is justice?", or "What is knowledge?". So he sort of plays the ignoramus and he asks the interlocutor the question, "Can you please explain to me what it means to be just and fair?" and then the interlocutor gives some sort of superficial answer and then Socrates says, "Well I don't quite understand, can you just explain it more?" and he starts to press the interlocutor further and further along the topic. And very often what you find in the Socratic dialogues is that the very thing that the interlocutor is meant to be explaining is absent from their behaviour (and dialogue).

So in the case that someone's trying to explain knowledge, ultimately the interlocutor says, "Well I don't know", or, "Somebody said something but I can't quite remember …" or if they're trying to explain what it means to be even tempered. Eventually they become enraged with Socrates and they start to shout, so the content that is being interrogated in the Socratic discussion starts to become enacted by the participants of the discussion, usually by Socrates' interlocutors who start to – through their very behaviour, to – demonstrate their inadequate 'genuine understanding' of the topic. So they talk about justice or knowledge but they themselves are unjust, and lacking knowledge, or lacking even temperament, or whatever the case may be. So

that, I think is an interesting precursor to this idea of how the content of the discussion is present, not only in the words that are being exchanged – the dialogue -, but in the emotions and the behaviour of the participants of the discussion.

I made the point that our interest is not principally the clinical setting; we're interested in these ideas outside of the clinical setting. The phenomenon of transference and counter-transference is definitely a human, universal phenomenon; not something that is limited to clinical work. It's just that it's been studied in the laboratory of psychoanalysis, if you will. And that just gives us a good insight into it.

The four different categories

Jung – well sorry, I'm actually following Andrew Samuels on this, and I give you the references because he's worth reading on this, but I'm following the work of Andrew Samuels who's broadly following Jung. And Andrew Samuels – talks about the presence of the transference counter-transference phenomenon in, four different ways; four different categories.

1. The one is interpersonal encounters. So that is the kind of encounter that we're talking about, between analyst and analysand, or between two lovers, or two friends, or father and daughter, or whoever it may be.

2. And then also, intrapersonal or intra-psychic encounters, so that is the idea of the relationship between complexes in the psychology. So maybe going back to our topic of desire and shame, and we might say that these are two – there's a relationship, but a relationship of some sort of tension between these two – opposing complexes; one is the desire and one is the shame, and this phenomenon of transference counter-transference happens as well, in the inner dynamics of the subject's psychology. So it's not only something that happens in the world.

3. And then also the relationship between the inner and the outer world, so between the anima and the persona; so the idea, that, the world brings me certain information; I'm processing certain information that's coming to me from the world, and I'm processing certain information that comes to me, from my inner world; from what I'm feeling and thinking etc. So, once again there – this, sort of – this relationship of the coniunctio, or transference counter-transference, can take place.

4.   And then also, just the classical, psychoanalytic relationship between the conscious and unconscious psyches.

Interpersonal encounters

All of these then, are ways in which the phenomenon of transference and counter-transference can be studied and is present. For our purposes and for the purposes of this module, we are going to pick one of them because to focus on all of them would be too much. What I want us to focus on in this module is the interpersonal encounters. So I'm interested in the phenomenon as it applies to our relationships with other people, and it is within that framework that it is classically considered, of course, in an analytical setting, and it is also within that framework that we are going to consider it; so, in other words, our engagement with reasonably intense and intimate relationships in our life. In other words I'm talking about relationships of a romantic or intimate nature; I'm talking about relationships where one has a friendship with somebody; or when one works with somebody but where there is a reasonable degree of relatedness and intimacy, so that the phenomenon of transference and counter-transference takes place.   Maybe it doesn't always take place but that's the kind of fertile soil in which it ordinarily would take root.

We can talk about three things here; so we talk about transference that I think I've explained to some extent, and then we can talk about counter-transference. Now counter-transference is the idea that when you transfer something onto me, okay, I unconsciously become aware of what you've transferred onto me and I start to feel a certain way, but I don't realise that I'm feeling that way because of what you transferred onto me; I just start to experience in your company, I feel a particular way. Maybe I feel elevated, or I feel depressed, or I feel uneasy, or I feel ambivalent, or I feel happy, but there's some sort of an emotional reaction that I experience when I am with you and in your company.

Counter-transference is that, as a consequence of that experience (your transference), I then transfer something onto you. So, for example, if I feel – let's assume that in your company I feel – elevated; I feel happy. Then I start to think,

"Jeez! Alan's a good guy, you know, I don't know what it is about him but you know, he … I just really like him; he's such a wonderful guy. And doesn't he always seem happy to you?"

Now he may not be happy at all; he may be completely neutral, but because I feel happy in his company, I start to transfer; I start to project onto him, and I

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start to see him in these terms. I respond to his transference (whatever it may be) with counter-transference.

Or alternatively, if I feel, in your company – I'm sure you've all had this experience, that in certain people's company you feel depleted; you start to feel like you've got no energy; they just sort of drain you. Then, I might start to counter transfer like,

"This is somebody who needs help; I just get the feeling with this person, they seem hurt; they seem wounded. I don't know what it is but it sort of provokes like an empathetic, relationship; response, in me."

So the fact that a kind of a melancholy – your unconscious melancholy – is transferred onto me, I start to perceive you somehow as in need of being saved, or in need of being cheered up, or I say to you, "Come on, what's wrong with you? Come on, why're you looking so depressed?" But somehow, I then respond to what it is that you are transferring onto me, through my own subjective filter. It might have absolutely nothing to do with where you're at, or what is appropriate to you.

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So let's say, for argument's sake, that what you transfer onto me is maybe melancholy, and let's say that my mother was very melancholic. So it provokes in me, that response that I had towards my mother, like, "I need to cheer you up. Can I get you anything?" or the inverse, "Oh my God, stay away from me." It would typically trigger my primal response to that dynamic, so whatever my developmental response was, to that kind of an emotion or that kind of experience, it would typically trigger in me so in terms of a memory, as it would. But, the idea here; the important idea; the significant point to get here, is that all of this is happening on an unconscious level, so it's not that I'm consciously aware of, "Look, in your company I notice that I feel melancholic." It's just that, I start to feel melancholic and unconsciously respond to it, for example.

And then the other one is the idea of embodied transference. And the idea of embodied transference is the idea that I really start to experience that transference in me. So, for example, analysts would report that after the patient has left and gone home, and even hours later, they may feel very depressed; they may feel angry; they may feel frustrated, without any understanding of where that depression, or anger, or anxiety, comes from, but it's the idea that, it's as if through the transference process it actually starts to – I start to embody it; it starts to – live in me almost in a kind of a somatic level. When we talk about the transference counter-transference phenomenon, we're talking about – unconscious dynamics in relationship to other people or

simply, 'the other' in Lacanian terms. So you'll often hear me speak about 'the other'; that term comes from Lacan and it's just the of the other person; we just shorten it by saying, 'the other'.

We're talking about the transference of a primal relationship pattern; that's a key thing to get here. In other words, the idea is that we develop at a very early age – one might say, if one follows Jung here, that it's not only developmental but that we come into the world with it; we develop –, certain fundamental, primal ways of relating to the other person, and these are evident in our relationship with our parents, and our relationship with our siblings, and our relationships with teachers, and our relationships with our peers, at a young age. And although we grow up, and we become terribly sophisticated, and we learn the lexicon of politeness, and we have the idea that we are now very mature and we're no longer schoolyard brats, but that primal way of relating that was present in us as infants and as children, remains present and its basic form doesn't really change. And so when we talk about transference, what we are saying is that I'm unconsciously relating to you through this primal relationship pattern; I'm relating to you in the way I've been relating to people since I came into the world.

The three different levels of transference

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The one is feeling. In other words, you make me feel a particular way; when I'm with you I – let's go back to the idea of the ambivalent mother, so when I'm with you and I - transfer, onto you, the ambivalent mother, I feel a sense of ambivalence from you. Whether you are in fact ambivalent or not is another question, but I experience you as ambivalent; I feel unloved; I feel abandoned;

I feel that you don't really care about me; I feel that I'm not getting your attention; I feel that you don't value me. And if I transfer onto you and you start to either counter transfer or you embody my transference, the idea is that you may well feel ambivalent towards me, even if, your natural state; your default position, is not one of ambivalence. You start to feel ambivalent because my transference of ambivalence is so powerful; it lives in my unconscious in such a significant way, that you feel ambivalent.

And this is a phenomenon that we experience all the time; that you meet somebody and you feel a particular way towards that person without having any rational explanation or recourse as to why you should feel that way. Some people, you just automatically value. Now sometimes it's obvious; they're sexy and they're rich, so of course you're going to value them. But sometimes it's not obvious; there's something about the person you just think "This is somebody I'd like to spend time with; this is somebody that … why don't we go for coffee? Give me your number". There's an automatic attraction. Or with other people you' don't really want to give them the time of day. It's not

anything obvious; they may not be unpleasant; they may not have said anything untoward, but you just don't feel a sense of connection; it's not even that there's no connection; there is a connection; the connection is that, "I don't value you; I don't think you are worth my time; yeah, it was nice seeing you, okay …" you know. So it happens on the level of feeling; so that's the first obvious level that we experience the transference counter-transference phenomenon.

Then very important, and also in the explanatory model that I'll use, is the level of fantasy and imagination. So in the transference phenomenon there's fantasy. Now, I mean, obviously the most perfect example here is erotic transference. So, I transfer onto you that you are the lover that I've been looking for, and obviously, it involves fantasy. I start to imagine; I imagine what you look like naked – I mean obviously, that's the natural starting point. So then I start to imagine this passionate relationship that we could have, and I imagine how you're going to hold me in your arms, and I imagine what I'm going to feel like, and I imagine where we're going to be, and I imagine the things that I'm going to say to you, and … and … and … okay.

And equally, if you counter transfer, then you do the same. So, for example, I am in awe of you; so I'm like, "Hello (!), how are you? It's so wonderful to see you and how've you been?" etc. Now you start to feel elevated, you know; you start to feel like, "I'm good; I'm good, you know and how're you?" You

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start to take on the role because yes, I am somebody who should be treated like this. So I participate in your fantasy and I start to have my own fantasies.

Or alternatively, if I come to you and I'm sort of off-handed with you, and I'm abrupt with you, and maybe you start to feel like, "Yeah, I don't blame him for being abrupt, you know; I'd also be abrupt with me because, you know, look what I look like" and you start to participate in my fantasy life whether it's a positive, or a negative, or whatever the transference is. You start to enter into that fantasy and the idea is that, so we experience it on the level of emotion and we experience it on the level, of fantasy; of imagery. And of course, this imaginary level and this fantasy level are very significant from the perspective of Jungian psychology.

And then lastly it is experienced on the level of behaviour as well. So if I transfer my ambivalent mother or I transfer my castrating father, onto you, I start to behave towards you the way I behaved to my mother – my ambivalent mother or my absent mother – or my castrating father. Okay, so I transfer the castrating father onto you and then I start to feel castrated by you, and I'm a little bit obsequious, and I don't feel fully present; I feel a little bit intimidated, so I start to behave towards you in line with my transference and once again, not untypically, you will start to behave towards me in line with what it is that I've transferred.

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So I've transferred the castrating father onto you, you too will castrate me.

So the idea is then, that when we talk about the phenomenon, we're talking about it on those three levels: - feeling, fantasy and behaviour.

We're talking about a clear, unconscious communication to the other about how they should feel, fantasise and behave, towards you. So, the transference is an unconscious communication that says to the other, "Listen, irrespective of what I consciously put out there and the way I'm consciously behaving, this is who I really am. And so you just kind of have an intuitive feeling, "This is somebody I can trust" or, "This is not someone that I can trust" or, "This is someone that I'd like to do business with" or, "I'd like to be friends with" or not. Not because of anything that I have said or done – so sometimes you might say, "Well, I didn't like the way he behaved" or, "I don't like his way of doing business" but other times you may not be able to say that; you just say, "I don't know why; I just … he's not someone I want to do business with", because I've told you something about myself unconsciously, and unconsciously, you've registered it.

Practical application

So the phenomenon is a very clear, unconscious communication on who I am and how you should behave towards me; how, unconsciously, I believe you should behave towards me. In other words, this is how I'm used to being treated. So I'm talking, talking, talking but you're not only listening to what I'm saying, you're feeling something; you're feeling something about what I'm saying; you're getting this unconscious communication, "But what is he really saying?"

Now this phenomenon, that in the early days of psychoanalysis was problematic and controversial etc., has become a tool that is widely used in psychoanalysis and in relational psychology. And the idea is that it's used in two interesting ways: - the one way is that you come to the session and you say, "I'm so incredibly frustrated with my wife" or, "I'm so incredibly frustrated with my boss", and then the psychologist says, "Are you saying that you are frustrated with me? Do you feel frustrated with me?" So in other words, you see, it doesn't matter what you're talking about; it doesn't matter what situation, it's always somehow lived in that moment and it can be worked through. So it's the idea, it can be brought into the present moment.

And the other way that it's worked with is that it's used as a tool to try and understand what the patient is communicating, that is not being said. So if I had a reasonable knowledge of my inner world and, in my session with you; in my encounter with you, I feel things that I know are not typically the way I feel, I interrogate my response; I don't just accept my response as being my

material; I interrogate my response, and I recognise that part of my response is something that you have transferred onto me or that you are provoking in me. So you've given me some insight into what it is that you are bringing, irrespective of what you are saying you are bringing unconsciously, irrespective of what you say.

The Mundus Imaginalis

Okay, so now we come to the question of how this actually takes place. So now obviously, the answer is unknown. That's the answer; how does it happen? – I don't know, and I don't think that anyone knows; I will suggest a persuasive theory.

Research has been done, where what they find is that the fantasy life of the analyst starts to resemble the fantasy life of the analysand, or the patient, without anything having been communicated. So in other words, fantasy, imagination and imagery seem to be transmitted. And obviously that's not transmitted through behaviour. It's on an imaginary level and on a fantasy level we start to participate in similar sort of images without us necessarily having communicated them to one another. And there is a lot of empirical data around that. How is it that the analyst starts to see imagery that belongs

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to the patient's unconscious, prior to the patient having communicated it in the session?

I'm going to share a theory with you that comes from Andrew Samuels. Now, one of Andrew Samuels' mentors was a man by the name of Fordham who was a very important figure in the development of analytical psychology in England. And Fordham spoke about something called syntonic transference, so in other words, he said that there is a sort of a sympathy between the two of us like, I pick up on your needs; you pick up on my needs, and so we start to bring up, in a sense, what each other needs, you know. It's kind of a sympathetic type of a transference.

As Samuels points out, there's something inadequate about that because it's not always syntonic; often it is dystonic. In other words often the image is not one of sympathy or it's not one that is picking up on a need; it could be something that you are upset about, or it could be to do with a trauma, or something that you haven't necessarily spoken about. And somehow I participate in that image.

So, the metaphor that Samuels uses is the mundus imaginalis. Now the idea of the mundus imaginalis comes from a French theologian, philosopher, and Islamic scholar by the name of Henri Corbin, and he made an extensive study

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of Islamic mysticism and he coined this phrase, the mundus imaginalis, based on an Arabic equivalent; I think in Arabic it's 'Alam al-Mithal.

And this idea of the mundus imaginalis became widely used in Jungian psychology, particularly by the American Jungians - specifically James Hillman. So the American school is sometimes referred to as the Imaginal School because James Hillman said that if we combine Jung's idea of the archetypal and the idea of the mundus imaginalis from Corbin, then we have a location for the archetypal; so the archetypal is located in the mundus imaginalis.

I'm going to read you some direct quotations from Corbin that, I think, explain it may be better than I can. So I'm going to quote him and I'll try to explain what it is he's talking about. So he says,

> Thus the name, Na-koja-Abad: a place outside of place, …

> So he's talking about the mundus imaginalis – a place outside a place.

> … a "place" that is not contained in a place, in a topos, …

> In other words it doesn't have a topography.

> … that permits a response, with a gesture of the hand, to the question, "where?"

So in other words, the mundus imaginalis has no topography; it cannot be – you cannot say it's - here or there, or it's here; it's in my brain. It's a place, but it's a place that doesn't have any location in space and time.

Clearly Corbin refers to a place that has no topographical location, and as we'll see as he continues, no extension in the space-time continuum within which the observable universe is contained. So right away we're confronted with a profound mystery, analogous to the mystery of the mind, and has the same questions asked of thoughts. In other words, where do we locate mind? Where and when might a thought be said to exist? This poses a similar dilemma for the researcher seeking to locate a thought event in the space-time continuum. So when you're dreaming, for example, where are you? Where does the dream take place – in your brain? Are you in your brain? So when you're walking around on the beach, where is that beach? Is it on a neuron maybe? So the question of, "Where is it located?" when we talk about thoughts or dreams; it's the same sort of mystery that we ask when we ask, "Where is the mundus imaginalis?"

The way that natural science solves – or attempts to solve - these difficulties is that thoughts are produced by and, in a sense, are contained in the brain. However, as we'll see as we go further, the mundus imaginalis is not able to be defined in this model.

He is saying is that we start out searching for, an internal reality; an interior truth, but when this interior truth is discovered, it then envelops the external reality. And that's a very nice description, I think, for what is taking place in the transference counter-transference phenomenon. An inner truth; a truth that is felt on a psychological unconscious level, starts to envelope the relationship; the relationship starts to become an expression of this inner truth.

Let me go on a little bit further. So this is from Corbin again,

> We observe immediately that we are no longer reduced to the dilemma of thought and extension, (that is not) limited to the empirical world and the world of abstract understanding.

So in other words, we're talking about a place that is not to do with the physical world and it's also not to do with abstract thought.

Between the two is placed an intermediate world, which our authors designate as 'alam al-mithal, the world of the Image, (the) mundus imaginalis: a world as ontologically real as the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, a world that requires a faculty of perception belonging to it, a faculty that is a

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cognitive function, a noetic value, as fully real as the faculties of sensory perception or intellectual intuition. This faculty is the imaginative power.

So the medial position here, of the mundus imaginalis is emphasised; neither abstract thought nor the empirical world. And I think by 'empirical', Corbin means the material world. Hence a mediating function between thought and matter; is by the world of image, a world accessible through the imaginative capacity but not a product of fantasy; it is rather, as Corbin put it, 'imaginal'.

So that's the key idea, in other words, that the mundis imaginalis is a world of imagery, of imagination, of fantasy that is not about abstract thought; it's not about rational, intellectual thought and it's also not this physical world. It's the world that you go to when you dream; it's the world that you go to when you fantasise; it is the world where you unconsciously participate when you transfer – or come to transfer. So transference: - when I transfer onto you, I'm imagining you in a particular role. You're not really, physically my castrating father or my absent mother, but on some sort of imaginary, fantasy level I perceive you in that role.

Now Samuels is using that as a metaphor to try and understand the transference counter-transference phenomenon. What he's saying is that we all exist in this imaginative realm, and through the phenomenon of culture, of

society, of the media, we have access to a similar, imaginative sort of database, if you want. And that somehow when we are in an intense relationship we're not only in a relationship physically; it's not only behavioural; it's not only physical; it's not only dialectical, but also its imaginative; we are unconsciously connected to each other through both being embedded in the mundus imaginalis, or this imaginative realm.

Now, there's something from Jung that I want to read you as well on this. Jung says this,

> Every logical, intellectual formulation, however perfect it may be, strips the objective impression of its vitality and immediacy. It must do this in order to arrive at any formulation whatsoever, but then just that is lost which seems to the extravert the most important of all – the relationship to the object. The split is not a mere matter of philosophy, but a daily, repeated problem of this relation to himself and the world. And because this is basically the problem at issue, the division cannot be resolved by discussion of the nominalist, realist arguments.

In other words – what he means by that is –, you know Plato has this idea that everything in the world has an ideal form. And then there's a juxtaposing philosophy [nominalism] that says no; there's no ideal form, there's only physical reality. And Jung says,

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> Its solution lies in the third mediating standpoint. Esse in intellectu (the
> intellect) lacks tangible reality; esse in re lacks mind; idea and thing
> come together however, in the human psyche which holds the balance
> between them. What indeed is reality, if not a reality in ourselves? An
> esse in anima.

So this is nice; I think that this is really important. What he's saying is that we
abstract intellectually; abstract mind - we have ideas - and we have the
physical world. And we see these two things as separate.

Rationally, we have the idea that we have mind; we have ideas; we have
intellect, and those things are independent from physical world. But obviously
there's some sort of a relationship between the ideas that we have, and the
world; we believe that the ideas somehow describe the world or somehow, are
representative of the world, and this reality is an imaginative reality; it lives in
the imagination. It's the imagination that connects the abstract to the
concrete.

One more quote; this, from Jung as well,

> The psyche creates reality every day. The only expression I can use for
> this activity is fantasy. Fantasy is as much feeling as thinking; as much

intuition as sensation. Fantasy therefore seems to be the clearest expression of the specific activity of the psyche. It is pre-eminently the creative activity from which answers to all unanswerable questions come. It is the mother of all possibilities where, like all psychological opposites, the inner and outer worlds are joined together in living union. Fantasy it was, and ever is, which fashions a bridge between the irreconcilable claims of subject and object, introversion and extraversion. It is fantasy alone in which the worlds are united.

Which, I guess, is a fancy way of saying that it is in this capacity for imagination and fantasy, that the phenomenon of transference counter-transference takes place, and which I somehow am able to unconsciously intuit, images that are in your unconscious.

So, if Corbin isn't 'far out' enough for you, let me mention somebody else: - there was a very famous Swedish mystic by the name of Emanuel Swedenborg who - formed a spiritual movement called the Swedenborgian Movement. He refers to himself as a Christian mystic; whether or not he's considered a Christian mystic, I'm not sure, but he considered himself to be a Christian mystic, and he was a scientist, and a philosopher. And Swedenborg was a great mystic and he held it to be true that - although, we can deceive each other in the world; I could lie to you; I could tell you some sort of untruth, that

- in the spiritual world there were no lies; that the truth was immediately evident.

And I think that's a similar idea, when we talk about transference counter-transference, and I think it's a similar idea to the mundus imaginalis. So I might say something; I might present myself in a certain way, and all of that might be designed to put forward a particular agenda. I'm trying to present a particular persona, particular truth, a particular way of being, so I wear a suit and a tie, and I drive a fancy car, and I speak the 'Queen's English' or whatever. So obviously I'm trying to put forward a particular way of being in the world; I'm trying to communicate something consciously to you, but the unconscious communicates something else; the unconscious communicates an inner truth.

And that inner truth is communicated irrespective of what I consciously try to put forward.

So if what I'm consciously putting forward is authentic; is an authentic expression of me and of who I am, then I think you feel that there's congruence in my message; you feel that; what I'm saying, and who I am are congruent. Because sometimes you feel, with people, that there's a tremendous incongruence; they're telling you this story about themselves and who they are, but you're feeling something completely different. And this idea of Swedenborg, I think, is a useful idea: - that however we meet physically, that

spiritually there's no deception and that we communicate our inner truth. And I think that is also what is going on in the transference counter-transference situation; the clear communication of an unconscious (spiritual) truth to the other.

Applications:

In terms of your relationships in general:

- What is the most significant need (value) that is met in (and through) your relationships?
- What is the most significant need that is not met in (and through) your relationships?

Select and describe between 1 to 3 significant relationship dynamics. We all presumably display multiple dynamics in our relationship and relatedness to others. For the purposes of this application I want you to select just the most typical and significant dynamics you habitably display, act out, or encounter. These are ideally relationship dynamics that are challenging and ones that you would like to gain some insight into and if possible evolve to more satisfying and less challenging relatedness.

I want you to describe in as much detail as possible:

- How this relationship typically gets underway e.g. I am involved in the dating scene and when I encounter a woman in a suitable context , that I am attracted to, I will make my interest known to her by doing X (approaching and chatting to her, starring at her lecherously, ignoring here, teasing her etc.)

- What response is this typically met with e.g. initially the woman I have approached and chatted to responds amicably and seemingly with interest, or Y (whatever the variable Y is here).

- How does this relationship typically develop e.g. it turns into a meaningful long term relationship, it is usually a one night stand, after a short time either one of us loses interest, initial attraction turns into rejection etc.

- If the consequence of the initial encounter is a meaningful and mutually satisfactory encounter then this is not the dynamic you should select. The dynamic we are interested in here is where some obstacle or challenge is encountered that obstructs meaningful relatedness and or your intentions in relating to the other. NB. The example of romance is just an example; the question is not meant to be limited to romantic encounters.

Using the dynamic you have described above, consider the following: what is your

- Conscious communication, e.g. going back to my previous example of dating, my conscious communication may be something like: I am attracted to you; or I am interested in you; or I would like to get to know you better; or maybe just I want to have sex with you, and so on.

- Unconscious communication, e.g. I am needy and insecure please, please like me or at least feel sympathy for me; or I am supremely confidant and irresistible you are very fortunate I have selected you; or you remind me of my mother and she always rejected me; or I am sincere and open and want to get to know without trying to own you or impose myself upon you etc.

- Now very clearly when it comes to describing what your unconscious dynamic is you are called on to speculate otherwise by definition it would not be unconscious. So admittedly a certain amount of inferential speculation and imagination is called for and you very clearly may get it wrong. Nevertheless I want you to endeavor to answer as honestly and as insightfully as you can. The biggest clue has to do with the response to you by the other, what are they seeing, inferring, feeling that is in contrast with your conscious communication?

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