

A dialogue of unconscious

A contribution to the panel ‘Jung and Ferenczi – The Emergent Conversation’

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Abstract: I want to explore the notion of ‘mutual introjection, the developmental essence of an autobiographical dialogue’, an idea that has recently crystallized in the continuing collaborative work of Gershon J. Molad of Israel and myself concerning the autobiographical contribution to the dialogue between analysts (Molad & Vida 2002). One of the sources of this crystallization is the experience of my consultative relationship with a Jungian colleague, who, after reading some of this collaborative work, paraphrased Jung’s implication that if, in the course of treatment, the doctor is not as transformed as the patient, nothing has happened (1946). In this paper, I want to breathe some life into these theoretical-sounding words: ‘mutual introjection, the developmental essence of an autobiographical dialogue’.

Key words: autobiographical dialogue, Ferenczi, Jung-Freud relationship, mutual introjection.

Unlike the relative safety of clinical space, conference space can be a disaster area where too often we analysts, therapists, clinicians, are re-traumatized when we meet one another defensively straining to demonstrate superior knowledge in the impersonal disguise of most clinical and theoretical presentations. At the same time, each clinical and theoretical development, each case presentation, is about the survival of the analyst, though the detail of it is usually secret, private, unacknowledged, unconscious, and this makes it hard to know what we, readers and listeners, have heard or read, and who we are in relation to it (Molad & Vida 2002). But when we can exchange something of our autobiographies, and hold one another’s difficulty as we do with our patient, we have some basis for a real meeting, for some mutual understanding, and for the possible transformation of our own story through the immediacy of genuine contact with another’s survival. This is the model for ‘mutual introjection’ that Gersh Molad and I believe can happen not only in clinical space, but *between analysts who are able to engage in the autobiographical dialogue in conference space.*

In 1995, a visiting friend and colleague John Deri told me that my view of the unconscious was quite congruent with Jung's, and afterwards he sent me a copy of Volume 7 from *The Collected Works, On The Psychology of the Unconscious*. Now, I am a Freudian by lineage. My analytic training began in the early 70s. I can remember only too well the abhorrence I felt (really, *felt*, viscerally) as a candidate whenever Jung was alluded to. This was the product of an identification with Freud's internal state that Kohut said began for candidates with studying *The Interpretation of Dreams*. This, he wrote, was the cornerstone of psychoanalytic training, the foundation of group affiliation and of one's professional identity as a psychoanalyst (1976). And this condition persisted in me for quite a long time.

While I harboured this split in myself, I was at the same time arguing in public for the *healing of splits* in various professional organizations, and I was increasingly disturbed about the old splits I was finding out more about in the continuation of my research and study of the history of psychoanalysis, which had led me to Ferenczi. The dismantling of what can only be called *my prejudice* has come less from an epiphany of intellectual understanding than as both a side effect and a direct consequence of new and renewed personal relationships with specific 'Jungians' – Jean and Tom Kirsch, especially, and there are others.

It took the eventual confluence of two major events in my life to loosen further the defensively constructed professional (and personal) identity that had become uncomfortably tight. One event was my first trip to Hungary in 1993 (to the conference where I originally met John Deri), a trip that brought back the Hungarian I had used as a baby, the disavowed language my mother still insists I *did not learn*, and this struck down the family story that had long interfered with trust in my own perceptions. The second event, six years later, was another international conference, this time in Tel Aviv, where I met Gersh Molad, whose internal language bore a strong, uncanny resemblance to my own and with whom I have been working collaboratively ever since.

These events have influenced a shift in me to a position more receptive and reconciled to the reality that there are splits that cannot be restored, trauma that cannot be healed, and rifts that cannot be repaired. As I occupy this new territory, I find that my feelings and my ideas about Jung have shifted as well, though it is not a simple shift to the opposite end of the spectrum. What I find most interesting is the territory of the difficulty between these two sides (the territory of the difficulty between *sides*), the gap containing the mutual hatred, fear and suspicion derived from thwarted love, that has long persisted, in this instance, between 'analytical psychology' and 'psychoanalysis'. The title of this panel, 'the emergent conversation', speaks to that territory, and in fact, 'the emergent conversation' takes place *in* that territory. It is an immense honour to be invited into this conversation, but I want you to know that I do so without cutting off the memory of where I have been earlier on this journey,

and that means that I carry a certain amount of sorrow and shame and responsibility for how I have been and what I have thought previously.

On January 6, 2001, I wrote to Gersh Molad:

There were some distinct pleasures during the day: a Jungian analyst who has come to me for consultation ('at last', she says, admitting that she has known of me 'for years' and she is curious as to why now, why this patient that she finds she wants to talk about, *a case in which she finds the deepest elements of herself represented*), [and this consultation is] showing signs of turning into something wonderful.

I went on to tell a dream:

The setting was [my husband's and my] current house, with [our sons] home to visit for the afternoon. The four of us were outside, in the yard, but it did not look like this house. It was [our] other house and we were outside by the pool [where we had sat in the jacuzzi with John Deri]. The scene was cropped, like a photograph, so as not to permit a wider view of the surround than the immediate center, where the four of us were. We were calm, the interactions were easy and pleasant. Suddenly a large orange tiger walked by. Large, very orange, almost rust-coloured, a dark-purple orange, like a sunset, and fluffy. Also calm. 'Wasn't that a tiger?' I asked. (No one was very perturbed.) I walked over behind it, as it moved toward a gate that led from that patio around a low curved wall to the neighbour's yard. It seemed that there were zoo officials waiting behind that gate, which was almost a door on which I knocked. A very pleasant man on the other side spoke to me. It seemed that the tiger had already walked through the gate by itself, and he was explaining that yes, it had got out of the main zoo, and had now returned. There was some unspoken acknowledgment of the tiger's wistfulness in making an escape from which it knew it must return. By now, there was also some more insistent background 'understanding' in the dream that this was our new house, even though it looked like the old one. Now, I see that I am drawn to the dream, almost to the point of wanting to enter it physically, [but I am] also pushed away by the overlapping of old and new houses, which strikes me as uneasy, unpleasant, uncalm.

The tiger is a lovely image, actually; it probably refers to the Jungian analyst. She has a mane of quite spectacular honey-coloured hair, wavy rather than curly, that looks just wonderful, neither contrived nor unruly, and she wears tall, palomino-coloured suede boots that look like elongated Indian moccasins, with some fur trim. Part of what is compelling about the time with her is the seamless way the personal is being woven into the consultation, and not just *her* 'personal' but beginning to be some of mine, as we look together at what it means to have lived the life each of us has, and how that affects our meeting with the people who present themselves to us in this professional capacity.

(Vida & Molad January 6, 2001)

Three months later, in anticipation of a presentation we were to make in London in a few weeks' time, I wrote to Gersh Molad:

[I woke up with a] word/name in my mind [the interlaced letters of his name and mine]. The just-before awaking thoughts of which I was conscious were about 'authorship', how you and I were to (re)present the authorship of our work. This composite-name echoes a conversation with my Jungian colleague yesterday morning. Two weeks ago she said that what she really wanted from me was to work with her to get hold of what she didn't know and specifically *what she didn't know that she*

didn't know. This time, she came in with a diagram containing the 'mandorla'¹ that occurred to her during her previous week's vacation. The mandorla [she tells me] is the 15th century Christian symbol for the link of Christ with earth, God, and man. Her image is of two circles of equal size that partially intersect each other, overlapping in the central portion. She thought of the overlapping circles as herself and the patient (the one she is primarily presenting to me). She also thought of the circles as each representing 'shame' and 'desire', and each with a positive and negative aspect (Crosby 2001). The area of overlap, the 'mandorla', is the area of mingling, herself with the patient, transference and countertransference, past and present, the patient's life-details and her own. The final element of her visual image was of the overlapped area seeming to be darker in colouration, because of the piling-up of elements contained, but not in a homogenized way, but, rather, particulate. The mingled particles were distinguishable from one another if looked-at closely enough. In looking at the unfolding work with this patient, we saw that the essential aspect was a capturing of the contradictory parts of the patient's self, the survival that is at the same time a death; the death that is at the same time a survival. The difficulty of being such a person, as well as the difficulty of working with such a person, is that characterizing only one half of those contradictions in any interpretation, in any response, is to create another death, to miss, in fact, the point that the two (survival and death) are inseparable because of this particular history/life experience. 'What would be the goal? What could be hoped-for?' my colleague asked. Entertaining such a question, I thought, was to move outside the area of contradiction and paradox and in essence missed the point. Staying *in* the contradiction, living in it, was what was necessary.

(Vida & Molad, April 21, 2001; and quoted in Molad & Vida [2001])

Only later did my Jungian colleague let me know that I had 'read' her question in the wrong language, even though my conclusion – to stay in the area of contradiction – has been essential to her ongoing work with the patient. More than once have she and I tripped over this language problem, and it is easiest to talk about it as a Freudian vs. a Jungian language, though that is surely oversimplified and not even correct. I, with my Freudian father-tongue, tend to read 'goal' and 'what could be hoped-for' in the language of 'results', whereas her Jungian language is more about 'process' – the goal *is the process*, which at heart is what I am most devoted to (and struggling to accept). My colleague reported a conversation between two friends, one of whom had just finished a five-year, four times a week Freudian analysis, and, when queried, replied, 'I can live with the limitations of who I am'. The Freudian emphasis is on 'limitations', on the periphery; the Jungian emphasis (which is also the direction that Ferenczi had taken) is on 'who I am'. There is a temptation here to dichotomize, to 'choose' one emphasis in preference to the other, but really, they are inseparable.

One recent consultation session began with the language problem, as my Jungian colleague used the words 'not analysed' in referring to an aspect of herself with her patient. What my ears attuned to Freudian language heard was shame inherent in the idea that something should be analysed, as in 'analysed *out*'. 'No', she said, '*analyse* in the sense of to bring in to, to *draw out*'. I had an image then of

¹ 'Mandorla' = 'almond'. The overlapped area of the two circles is almond-shaped.

the left-behind gauze being drawn out of Emma Eckstein's² nasal cavity, which made me think of my recovery of disavowed Hungarian baby-language, and my colleague in turn recalled a rather shocking early childhood story of her own. She then told me her patient's elaborate, intense dream; on the night after hearing it, she herself had a nightmare. Listening to her, I started to take off my outer sweater but stopped midway, unable to tell whether I was too hot or too cold. I was caught in a moment of uncomfortable and unresolvable ambiguity.³

Hearing the dream became a mutual evocation, which led us to question, 'Who will help? And what is "help", anyway?' At that moment, I realized that there was a blank space in my mind about my colleague's own basic family story, which I had to have heard before, but although she repeated it for me then, my sense of remembering did not return until the following session, after we had another language problem with the word 'integrate', which sent us back to the mandorla for translation.

Thus the 'diagram' illuminates clinical moments that are also personal ones, reminding us that even where we overlap we remain particulate, not 'blended in' to one another. There is an openness that allows into the room what neither of us 'knows'. When she and I talk about 'change' we look at the Messianic anticipation for insight delivered by interpretation and contrast it with our own separate clinical experiences, more like the movement of glaciers. The notion of mutual introjection, the developmental essence (and consequence) of an autobiographical dialogue, belongs with the glaciers, for it requires nothing less than a mutual overcoming of danger (the danger that dwells in any mutual process undertaken in different personal languages), to create 'relational trust interwoven with individual success and belief' (Vida & Molad 2003).

[The serious delight of 'mutual introjection' with Connie Crosby, L.C.S.W. and a Board certified Jungian analyst, is the inspiration for this paper.]

TRANSLATIONS OF ABSTRACT

Je désire explorer la notion 'd'introjection mutuelle en tant qu'essence développementale d'un dialogue autobiographique' qui est une idée qui s'est récemment

² Freud's friend Wilhelm Fliess operated on Emma Eckstein, neglecting to remove the gauze which then suppurated and haemorrhaged, endangering her life. This incident was the basis for Freud's famous 'Irma' dream which presented the culpability of Fliess that Freud consciously had to disavow in order to preserve the idealized relation.

³ This sentence owes its existence to Jean Knox, who, in editing this paper for publication, suggested leaving out the Emma Eckstein-related material as too brief to be meaningful. When I responded viscerally to excising it, she wrote, 'I cannot decide whether the drawing out of the gauze is a metaphor for the Freudian sense of analysing out (removing) or the Jungian sense of drawing something out into the open. I think it could be taken either way.' It is, of course, both.

crystallisée dans le travail continu de collaboration entre Gerhon J. Molad d'Israël et moi-même, travail concernant l'apport d'éléments autobiographiques dans le dialogue entre analystes (Molad et Vida 2002). Cette cristallisation s'est faite entre autre dans la relation avec un collègue jungien que je consultais et qui, après avoir lu une partie du travail fait en collaboration, a paraphrasé l'affirmation de Jung selon laquelle si, au cours du traitement le médecin n'est pas autant transformé que le patient, rien ne s'est produit (1946). Dans cet article je cherche à insuffler un peu de vie dans cette formulation percutante d'un point de vue théorique: 'l'introjction mutuelle, en tant qu'essence développementale d'un dialogue autobiographique'.

Ich möchte das Konzept der 'gegenseitigen Introjektion, das entwicklungsgeschichtliche Zentrum eines autobiographischen Dialoges' – eine Vorstellung, die sich kürzlich herauskristallisiert hat in fortgesetzten Zusammenarbeit zwischen Gerhon J. Molad aus Israel und mir selbst über den autobiographischen Beitrag zum Dialog zwischen Analytikern (Molad & Vida 2002). Eine der Quellen dieser Kristallisation besteht in der Erfahrung meiner beratenden Beziehung mit einem Jungianischen Kollegen, welcher nach der Lektüre von Material aus dieser Zusammenarbeit Jungs Bemerkung paraphrasierte, aufgrund der nichts passiert ist, wenn der Arzt im Verlaufe der Behandlung nicht genauso gewandelt ist wie der Patient (1946). In dieser Arbeit möchte ich diesen theoretisch klingenden Worten, 'gegenseitige Introjektion, das entwicklungsgeschichtliche Zentrum eines autobiographischen Dialoges' etwas Leben einhauchen.

Vorrei esplorare la nozione di 'mutua introiezione, l'essenza evolutiva di un dialogo autobiografico', un'idea recentemente consolidatasi attraverso un continuo lavoro di collaborazione fra Gerhon J. Molad di Israele e me stessa e che riguarda il contributo dell'autobiografia al dialogo fra analisti (Molad & Vida 2002). Una delle fonti di tale consolidamento è l'esperienza della mia relazione di consultazione con un collega jungiano, che, dopo aver letto parte del lavoro di collaborazione, parafrasò l'affermazione di Jung che qualora, nel corso del trattamento, il medico non si trasforma tanto quanto il paziente, non è accaduto nulla (1946). In questo lavoro vorrei dare un soffio di vita a queste parole che suonano così teoriche: 'mutua introiezione, l'essenza evolutiva di un dialogo autobiografico'.

Deseo explorar la noción de 'Introyección mutua, la esencia del desarrollo de un diálogo autobiográfico,' Una idea que se ha cristalizado en el trabajo continuo y de colaboración entre Gerhon J. Moland y yo concerniente a la contribución auto-biográfica para el diálogo entre los analistas (Moland & Vida 2002). Una de las fuentes para esta cristalización es la experiencia es mi relación de consulta con un colega Junguiano, el cual, después de leer algo de este trabajo de colaboración, parafrasé a Jung cuando implícitamente dice de que nada ha ocurrido en el curso de un tratamiento, si el doctor no es transformado igual que su paciente, (1946). En este trabajo, quisiera insuflar alguna vida dentro de estas palabras teóricamente resonantes: 'Introyección mutua, la esencia del desarrollo de un diálogo autobiográfico'.

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