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The Traumas of Displacement and Not Belonging

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Abstract

The integration of the personality opens from the traumatic throes causing despair and confusion manifesting in dissociations in body and psyche. This paper traces the effects of trauma from displacement occurring culturally and psychologically as each affects the other. The perspective of Jungian analytical psychology referencing the concept of the shadow is combined with French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva referring to the abject. These are diverse yet aligned analytical approaches to widen understanding of the interactions between self and other, psyche and body. The clinical examples are narratives exemplifying the traumas from lacks in belonging to culture, family and self.

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The Traumas of Displacement and Not Belonging

As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being (Jung, 1963, p.326).

The integration of the personality opens from the traumatic throes causing despair and confusion manifest in dissociation of body and psyche. This paper traces the effects of trauma from displacement occurring culturally and psychologically as they affect each other. The perspective of Jungian analytical psychology referencing the concept of the shadow is combined with French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva referring to the abject. These are diverse yet aligned approaches to provide understanding of the interweaving between self and other, psyche and body. The clinical examples are narratives of the traumas from lacks in belonging to culture, family and self. These are the intersubjective matrices forming the psychological edifice for our personal and cultural existence.

In our current era we confront a lack of knowledge for those who are different and are they are knocking at our door personally, psychologically, and culturally. Yet, we have repudiated the idea we owe something to these inner and outer others. Instead, there is a climate of separation and exclusion leaving some belonging and others with trauma and longing. The inequality centers on the physical and psychological practices of bordering, exclusion, and the lack of acceptance, adding to unconsciousness and stunting development.

This represents the perennial issues of unity and diversity, monism and pluralism with their historical and archetypal roots. The identity and internal narrative of those born with other ethnicity, class, religion or country of origin experience being on a precarious edge and set apart. Those deprived of inclusion, recognition, and respect are “condemned to harbor feelings of invalidation of their personhood in virtual aloneness” (Mills, 2019, p. 6). This sets up estrangement in various relationships whether self to self and/or self to others. The one ascribed as ‘the enemy’ profoundly feels rejection in subtle and not so subtle ways. This person intuitively feels deficiency when defined as other, entangled in frustrated desire and lack, and battling for recognition. This can be traumatic, create doubt about legitimacy, and escalate to despair. In a very basic sense, trauma derives from being without security, empathic attachment or inclusion. The sense of self becomes disturbed and a person suffers the failure of linkage between body, affect and mind.

Carl Jung, psychiatrist in the twentieth century described such states as “complexes, autonomous ‘splinter psyches’, fragments, which became split off because of traumatic experience” (Jung, 1934, para.203). These events form a living reality of ideas, beliefs, memories, feelings and images. Indelible traces, traumatic blanks and distortions in the individual and collective unconscious are passed from generation to generation in an unending spiral. The emotional and physical losses combining with the need for belonging can feel so intolerable we try to deny it while the pain paradoxically takes us to the core of who we are. The psyche communicates the unconscious experiences with the possibility of being interrupted through individual and collective acts of consciousness.

The psychological injuries from emotional maltreatment and separation from family, home and loved ones appear in dreams, relationships and through the transference and countertransference reenacted in psychotherapy. Life can

become desiccated from the past relational and cultural traumas with the lingering memories stored in the psyche and often emerge years later.

The past reenacted in current experiences can ignite a need for the personality to unite, indicating a move towards finding personal meaning and value. For example, a displaced woman, a refugee dreamt a year before escaping her country about a huge hole into which people and buildings were falling. She stood and watched but did not fall in. The memory and horror of the dream stayed with her and she recounted it when she was finally in a safe place. Only then could she begin to unravel what had happened to her.

Excluded in the USA

The perspective of Jungian analytical psychology regards the self as formed by and existing in the cultural and psychosocial experiences of the individual. The normative aspects of the self are created out of unconscious internalizations of the social order; as inside, so outside, and vice versa.

To comprehend the psychological includes exploring differences, lack of belonging, loneliness and the sense of isolation (Singer & Kimbles, 2004, p. 125). A man in his thirties, Hispanic in family of origin and born in the USA, described his childhood school experience. “In grade school I suffered repeated physical torment, harassment and humiliation by ruthless bullies. I did not fit their machismo culture of gangs and guns. I began to believe that in some cosmic way, I deserved the abuse. I developed my first suicidal thoughts in the third grade; I was nine years old. I knew I could not ever belong with people like them”.

Traumatized, unprotected by an emotional and physically harsh family and feeling lonely, this man vividly recalls the exclusion and fear, the despair. To this day, he is wary of the macho culture of his neighborhood. The feeling has now transferred to the larger world and he has not found secure place. He prefers to be unnoticed, under the radar. He has aliases on social media so he will not be traceable. His father was a brutal and harsh military man who dealt with the ethnic prejudice by fighting, carrying a gun, teaching his son to be aggressive and in support of the dominant culture. But, the son could comply with none of it.

He lives in an existential state of apprehension, perceiving the world divided between the oppressors and oppressed. He identifies with the latter. This reflects the political, familial, and psychological structure he has felt all his life. It seems worse now. In the current political climate he is worried for himself and his family. He says even his friends are into the attitude it is all right to separate children from parents at the border. He says even those like him do not understand. What is the use of his voice? So many are for assimilation and to get rid of people like him. He says they could be deported at any time as his wife only has a green card. He lives like he did as a child—in a group who do not support or care about him. He is on edge, expresses upset as he talks about being unsafe and having to be vigilant.

The circumstances of traumatic events can include abuse of power, betrayal of trust, entrapment, helplessness, pain, confusion, and loss. This man retains apprehension of authority, getting deported, unwanted, misunderstood, and the

pervasive awareness of being stopped by the police. He said he does not fit in the system, be it the general culture, his heritage as interpreted by his father, the gangs or other family members. Low self-esteem has been the result, creating anxiety and depression. Worries he will be accused and unable to convince ‘the man’ consume his thoughts. His right to exist teeters precariously.

“The more extreme traumatically engendered condition is that in which any capacity to represent self-experience is ruptured: a state of paralysis in which even the blank impress is lost within a void” ([Connolly, 2011](#), p. 5). The defense, as traumatic as the original traumas, focuses on mere survival while attempts to find identity and individuate can seem dangerous. The isolative defense is a protective mechanism reflecting the annihilation anxiety with the reaction of folding in on oneself. Like with this man, current internal and external situations are presenting material he formerly could not decode. It was too overwhelming then. Now the trauma is making itself felt repeating the old emotional distancing and alienation from others.

He is an example of what happens when the ordinary defenses fail in the face of psychic pain and anxiety, stemming in part from the cultural pressures and familial traumatic experiences of not belonging or feeling safety. The psyche may respond by turning upon itself, internally featuring a brutal persecutor versus the innocent victim, hampering his spirit. This affect-imagery is disturbing yet also serves a protective function, albeit a costly one in keeping him isolated.

As with him, when a person experiences trauma what follows is depression and projections onto others as more powerful. The questions of identity and belonging arise only to prove precarious. At these moments, one is faced with a choice — not only between past and present, between membership in one group or another, between geographically staying and leaving, but also a more fundamental concern about identity. This connotes how we see ourselves, what we believe in, and how others perceive us. The defining relation between place, belief system, and identity reveals the dialectical tension between inner states and social realities.

The exclusion stirs longing as without sufficient inclusion the self becomes disturbed and the personality feels shattered. This man struggles against the traumatizing imposition and dehumanization from the socio-cultural impress. The psychological disaster is accompanied by the loss of meaning and consequent angst expressing gaps, polarities and projections. At the crux are the psychological tasks of linking the known and unknown, conscious and unconscious and balancing the tension between.

The identified outsider registers the emotionality of longing, feeling displaced, disparaged and different. This is like those personality parts we might hide, feel shame about and tend to deny. In-depth psychological treatment is concerned with the formerly excluded, the losses and feelings of anger, guilt, sorrow and yearning. This influences how we cope with the inevitable lacks, disappointments and directional changes in life.

According to French psychoanalyst Andre Green, the fundamentals of analysis are striving to complete the mourning process as he contended the experiences of our self are achieved against the background of loss and absence (Green, 1986, p. 142). These are also the effects of trauma that linger, diminishing one personally and culturally.

The impact of differences in culture and social class has implications on the psychological transference and

countertransference relationship. These include feelings often unaddressed concerning class roots and social hierarchy. Class, like cultural background, is absorbed into the psyche “affecting sense of self, sense of self-worth and belonging, arousing shame, envy, and many misperceptions” (Kiehl, 2016, p. 468). There is also the trauma from being born into a lower class and feeling lack of equality and privilege based on money and status.

Class-related anxieties are made up of the deepest most shame sensitive vulnerabilities regarding belonging, wanting, and worries about being found lacking (Corpt, 2013, p.8). The hidden injuries of class come from one’s primary identification with a social class of people who have suffered power discrepancies, assaults to their dignity, lack of opportunity or a compromised sense of positive possibilities (Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p.11) In response to these lacks, “the analysand may resort to hiding or disavowing the importance of their class-related concerns in order to maintain a sense of belonging” (Kiehl, 2016, p. 476).

Jungian psychology attends to the cross-cultural aspects of the personality through the recognizing the collective unconscious, the symbolic, imagistic, archetypal and psychological layers and where we can understand each other. The forces at work are enmity and love, energies that are more than personal and include collective phenomena, spurring ongoing tensions, activity and eventual growth. There we often face cultural divides wider than realized. The multicultural nature of the psyche includes the unknown and the stranger. “It becomes a matter of opening our hearts and minds to that which is foreign” (Kimbles & Samuels, 2004, p. 140).

Displaced as ‘the Enemy’

A Middle Eastern woman has been living in the Western world for many years but now is struggling with the trauma from projections of cultural shadows. She is experiencing internal conflict and distress. The reaction inside was a frozen self, blank spaces, and vulnerability. The effect was avoiding intimacy and also numbing. “Part of the person remains too young; experienced as ‘the child’, while the true self remains hidden deep within the personality. She becomes an ‘as-if’ self” (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 241). The malady of the soul appears in this ‘as-if’ personality based on façade and illusions to mask the needs, traumas and self-despair. In therapy there appears both the coping adult self in contrast to the obscured and abused younger aspects.

Although professionally successful, this woman’s system has collapsed, wracked with what she called melancholy, exhaustion, and self-loathing. Jung described the traumatic complex “forces itself tyrannically upon the conscious mind. The explosion of affect is a complete invasion of the individual. It pounces upon him like an enemy or a wild animal” (Jung 1966, para, 267). Part of her personality was cast off from her total self and she was surprised to realize her fragility and need for care. An ill-functioning self, causing illness in psyche and body pushed her into therapeutic work for reasserting her ability to survive and find meaning.

This talented and intelligent woman said she has lost belonging and the inner spaces were filled with emptiness, blankness of mind, and no thoughts. “Victims of trauma are left to pick up the pieces of what feels like a blown apart self and reassemble them. One of the major casualties of this disintegration is the capacity to think” (Cavalli, 2012, p. 597).

She developed a persona or façade to hide the extent of her desperation, mourning the decline of her functioning, leaving her ineffective, inert and with malaise. Quite painfully, she felt deprived of individual and collective significance or meaning. She faced issues of aging, decreasingly attractive, feeling unloved, abandoned, emotionally paralyzed, displaced and her body felt strange.

For this woman, the self turned on itself, the body insisting on attention as the repressed traumatic memories returned, exhausting her and zapping energy. Holding the tension between psyche and body, grief and memory reveal the internalized conflicts, the unmet emotional needs. Psychological exploration is a journey reconstituting identity from traumas tearing it apart psychologically and physically. Jungian thought recognizes the body like the psyche is a symbolic communicator of traumas, dissociations and unconscious contents, all messages from the self.

This woman expressed: “Inside me is silence. Who and what am I? I feel only inner pain and panic”. She previously felt acceptance and belonging, especially professionally. But now she felt only a damaged and disappearing self, overcome and depressed. She questioned in therapy if she would be met with denigration or understanding due to her Middle Eastern background. The anticipation of estrangement and misunderstanding mirrored the outer intrapersonal conflict. Both therapist and client began together to participate in the unknown, strange, foreign, those areas that can limit or expand.

She reflected a story of several also from the Middle East who came for psychological treatment at the same time with stories of trauma, not verbalized as such, but it was there. They identified with the richness of Persian culture like the poet Rumi, were in their fifties, searching for various forms of attachment. Each reported distance from mother and being special to father. They all missed their culture but not to permanently return. Their traumatic experiences of not belonging and feeling other came in various forms. One was told to hide her background from customers; another was a professor who felt detached from the work previously giving her meaning; another was divorcing and recognizing the sacrifice she made from her roots to adapt, so much that she gave up the language of her origins along with her ethnic sounding last name.

Each came with attitudes, actions, affects, assumptions and rituals learned from parents and embodying the cultural influences laid down from childhood (Kimbles & Singer, 2004, p. 200) Their traumas were suffered as adults most probably replicating events from childhood, but disremembered. The trauma complex expressing itself in moods and repetitive behaviors lives on in the psyche as unassimilated material. Nothing really goes away but there comes a time when the old defenses become unbearable, unchanging and no longer controllable (Kimbles & Singer, 2004, p. 85).

This woman descended into an abyss, detached from life, and strange to her self. She was encountering the darkness of melancholia, a failure of the imaginary realm and the symbolic, the conflict between ‘as-if’ and real, psyche and body, shadow and stranger. The grief, mourning and emptiness appeared in the return of emotions long repressed from the traumas of her country, family and current life. Although she shut off feelings long ago, the earlier traumatic memories remained, lurking and commanding enormous amounts of energy and self-deception.

In reference to this Andre Green stated, “The mind has the capacity to bring something back again which has been related

to an object, without the object being there (Green, 1979, p. 30). In a dream she related, "I am lost. I find myself on a street with many openings. People on the street do not help. Where do I belong? I wander around increasingly disorganized. Where is the path? I am so upset and panicky. I remind myself that things will work out. It seems I have to go up and down some stairs. This seems familiar. Yes, now I remember I was here before. But this time I have to find the exit." The dream illustrates the delays, hesitations and questions that arise about finding place of belonging. Dreams are both subjective and objective replicating the inner and outer figures and situations. The dream language is symbolic and unfolds beyond the literal translations. This dream portrays the feeling of being rudderless, without guidance, direction or orientation and yet taking steps out of this maze.

Like in the dream the woman reports feeling neither here nor there. Everything seems off. For her, this manifests daily as body attacks with food and she suffers under the equally oppressive weight of mindlessness. She is assailed with fears when driving and feels without motive to live. She dreamt of a child dying whom she is trying to save and cannot. Was this referring to something new within herself that she anticipated could not survive? She did not say but rather verbalized impoverishment of soul, ego, and a diminution in self-regard. She wrote in her journal: "This morning I once again glanced over what I had written a few years ago and it made me shiver. Something in this piece terrifies me. I feel it may open up some venues to the discovery of my own self-selves".

Her unconscious memories formed an estranged and melancholic language in her body and psyche, now a crucible for mourning. She lacked confidence with others, felt guilt and shame, lacking self-acceptance or love. She was psychologically stuck, at home, unable to function, lost. Mindlessly she watched the television she previously disparaged. As Jung said, "This struggle has something to do with creation, with the unending battle between affirmation and negation" (Jung, 1967, p. 48). As a child she recalled writing many journals, asking why people did awful things and questioning their motives.

The Abject

Julia Kristeva, another French psychoanalyst with the concept she named the abject locates the energy from trauma residing in both the psyche and body. The abject is where meaning collapses, the place where the 'I am not' is opposed to 'I am'. The complex arena of the abject pushes margins while acknowledging something awful has happened, something fallen into nothing, dissolved, decayed to its primeval self. Here is this woman standing with her world crashed not yet realizing the repair needed. To acknowledge the materiality of our existence can be perceived as traumatic when it threatens our desired reality. Abjection is an operation of the psyche through which subjective identity is constituted, but also excluding anything threatening one's own borders. These are the zones devoid of any emotional contact or correspondence between the narrator and the world.

Julia Kristeva refers to the notion of alienation, or splitting of the self as the result of the repression of feelings. She addresses the notion of the stranger, the foreigner, outsider, or person who feels alien in a society not their own--as well as the notion of strangeness within the self, a deep sense of being, or its absence. She suggests we touch the otherness,

escape its hatred and burden though accepting the differences it implies (Kristeva, 1994, p. 3). If we can recognize the foreign within us, we will not have to create distance from the seemingly strange.

Moreover, Julia Kristeva commented (1992, p. 267) the secret and unknown wounds drive one to wander. She says when instinct turns self-destructive, the ego, from early in life, lacks cohesion and falls into bits (Kristeva, 1992, p. 19). The complex arena of the abject pushes margins, acknowledges that something awful has happened, something grand had fallen into nothing, dissolved, decayed to its primeval self. Kristeva describes the “feeling of falling into pieces that may be caused either by drive-related nonintegration impeding the cohesion of the self, or by disintegration accompanied by anxieties. Disintegration of the self is a thanatic reaction to a threat that is itself thanatic” (Kristeva, 1992, p. 18). The person withdraws into a phantasy world, and struggles to accept the impact of reality, loss, limitation and curtailment. Wounds and blows to the heart signify the past unmourned, the trauma, grief and loneliness needing expression. The emotional reactions from trauma, especially separation anxiety, bring out the involuntary memory pieces and other compelling feelings to give structure for healing.

This woman’s traumas and the responses to it represent the predicaments of many in the 21st century suffering the dislocations, alienation and leaving behind manifesting in psychological division. These are the personal, cultural and historical processes appearing in therapy. “In many cases in psychiatry, the patient who comes to us has a story that is not told, and which as a rule no one knows of. To my mind, therapy only really begins after the investigation of that wholly personal story. It is the patient’s secret, the rock against which he is shattered. If I know his secret story, I have a key to the treatment. The doctor’s task is to find out how to gain that knowledge . . . In therapy the problem is always the whole person, never the symptom alone” (Jung, 1963, p. 116).

Jungian psychology recognizes the shadow comprised of parts resisted, the ‘others’ rejected but needing integration, like the abject. The shadow encompasses all that is unconscious in personal and collective culture, including personal and trans-generational traumas. The shadow feels destabilizing, disruptive and challenges self and relationships in ways that are unfamiliar, unsettling and difficult. Both Kristeva and Jung acknowledged the unconscious memories forming an estranged and melancholic language becoming the vessel of mourning and also for healing.

Trauma

Trauma is a set of circumstances the individual cannot assimilate, and this varies according to different individuals. Some seem able to overcome it, and some others remain blocked. Traumatic experiences can produce an inner displacement and reorganization of one’s mental life focusing on the traumatic complexes. “In the most severe traumatic conditions, this can be understood as a displacement of the central axis of Self, in which the ego complex yields its position to other complexes, with a deep change in the organization and functioning of self. The experience of trauma highlights the way in which we live in a matrix of conscious and unconscious links between inner and outer worlds” (Luci, 2020, p. 261). The trauma is not only in what was experienced, but also occurs in recalling them. When the pieces of the trauma are reactivated the person is back in their imagination about the experiences as now remembered. However, the difference is

that in the telling a person, like in therapy, is no longer alone with the wounds, despair and distress.

Psychic trauma occurs when reality overwhelms with a brutality and speed exceeding the capacity to experience. The word *traumatic* is from the Greek referring to a piercing of the skin, a breaking of the psychological and physical envelope. It intrudes through the protecting shield and overwhelms the defenses against anxiety in a form also providing confirmation of those deepest anxieties. Trauma is the wound crying out expressing the attempt to remember and to tell. This is a tragedy to the entire system yet may also be so subtle the distressing ramifications go unaddressed for years. What compensate are often compulsive activities to erase any gaps so the psychic space seems full. The problem is the trauma goes unattended.

Much energy is spent hiding the overwhelming aspects or process the onslaught that was both too high and too low in physical and psychological arousal (Solomon, 2004, p. 646). From the feeling of irreparable damage the person cannot afford to experience reality, as it is expected continue the devastation. The internal and external world becomes separated, poised between what is feared in the mind and likewise in the outside world. These people might remain in what is called the 'resting place of illusion' and they try to make this place their home (Britton, 1998, p. 61). However, this compensatory reaction turns pathological when becoming a permanent area of retreat.

These people proceed 'as-if' they are fine and needing nothing. However, the center cannot hold due to the lack of early satisfying experiences of attachment. Trauma and loss arise from feeling unlovable. Julia Kristeva (2009, p. 186) explains trauma as follows: "I hate it, because I love it, and in order not to use it, I imbed it in myself; but because I hate it, that other within myself is a bad self, I am bad, I am nonexistence". The suffering arises from the consequences of what is missing. From the psychological pain one can become an observer of life, removed, standing on the outside. "The impoverishment of the self is attributed to the early traumatizing experiences with the longed for and idealized other" (Solomon, 2004, p. 639).

The personality has "internalized the absence, emptiness, a lifeless void and blank experience without access to the true self" (Solomon, 2004, p. 641). The core cannot be accessed and this creates part of the maladaptive life response. These people are living in never land, a place of infinite postponement and half-identity (Solomon, 2004, p. 639). The dissociation develops as a survival attempt along with a need for the illusory to compensate the depressive anxiety.

This woman's somatic and psychological symptoms were speaking a distress that had been early silenced. French psychoanalyst Andre Green said, "the work of writing presupposes a wound and a loss, a work of mourning, of which the text is the transformation" (1986, p. 322). She decided to write out her social and cultural experiences, transforming the private events into public reflection, putting into words the unbearable nature of the events and the unbearable nature of their survival and transformation into meaning.

Jungian psychotherapy sessions included descriptions of her lack of fulfillment, insecurities, feeling unlovable and even toxic to others. She noticed a tree in the yard outside my office and described one branch reaching out and leaning on the other. She commented it was not burdened and the connection now gave support. "Analytic work that encompasses relational as well as interpretive agents of change can bring about the integration and increased connectivity between and

within both hemispheres of the mind-brain that lead to a change in the nature of attachment which will then permit the self to emerge more fully through the process of individuation” (Wilkinson, 2006, p. 113).

Paternal trauma

This is not a simple story as trauma has a complexity of intricate challenges. From an intrapsychic perspective, trauma can be conceptualized as inner displacement (Luci, 2020, p. 275). The body and psyche are bombarded and in defeat. It feels as if there is no point and nothing about oneself will be perfect enough. Dissociation develops between body and psyche with the blocking of love from intrusion into bodily integrity. “Whether the trauma is physical, psychological or sexual it sets off a ripple of hormonal changes that organize the brain to cope in a hostile world. Absence of a good enough attachment to the primary caretaker and/or layer upon layer of trauma makes the development of dissociated states and post-traumatic stress disorder more likely” (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 237).

This is an example of a woman describing herself as uncomfortable in her skin. She struggles with weight, tries to hide her body shame and discomfort, changes clothes often each day, seeking some ease or peace. However, it proved to be more than that. The soul seemed to be crying out and she did not know how to listen. The early narcissistic wounds and assaults to her system each day had become impossible for her to symbolize or name. The emotional and physical traumas and subsequent grief and suffering affected her imaginary realm or its symbolic entry so she now cannot feel or mourn.

Traumatic effects occur when the child has to please, obey or rescue the parent to obtain a semblance of parenting for herself. The lack of parent's love in her childhood was combined with emotional abuse and developed into a depressive loss of meaning in her life. When father relatedness is abusive the lack of early experiences affirming the self retains lasting effects. The loss of what can be called psychic skin, or a protective layer of the self occurs through trauma situations. There is an inner displacement in the self from the traumatic interplay between inner and outer worlds. This profoundly alters the previous organization between the ego-complex and its relation to other autonomous complexes in the personality (Luci, 2020, p. 269).

Defensive postures become erected against the fear of collapse. British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott said, “the (parent's) adaptation is not good enough... in practice the infant lives, but lives falsely” ... “Through this False Self the infant builds a false set of relationships, and...even attains a show of being real” (Winnicott, 1960, p.146). The person feels not really living or sleepwalking through life. “The alternative to being is reacting, and reacting interrupts being and annihilates. Being and annihilation become the two alternatives” (Winnicott, 1990, p. 47).

For this woman the self became wounded from almost daily emotional bullying and put downs by the father. His rule was law and there were no disagreements allowed and no love enacted. A frustrated man, unable to manifest his talents, he brutally demanded allegiance from his children. He never noticed how she struggled as a child, never inquired about her goals and dreams, and ignored her emotionally. She cried herself to sleep at night but told no one. As a child she was subject to his random explosiveness, verbal attacks, and she helpless with no power or control. She never knew why he

verbally argued and attacked or was morose and without expressions of love.

The dynamic of him as the strict patriarch created for her an inner fragility, listening to others to gauge the right response, needing to please so she would avoid any critique. In this situation the wound became the central organizing factor in the personality and the world apprehended as a re-traumatizing place. She spent much emotional time responding to the anticipated intrusions of others while needing to hide the personality fragmentation and vulnerability. From young her continuity of being was constantly interrupted. She had little opportunity to gain solidity, as she felt constantly bombarded. In effect, there was paralysis of the self. This internal situation of the traumatizing father limited the capacity of integration, individuation and development.

The psychological trauma constellation can manifest in various forms of self-attack, despair and narcissistic hatred. It feeds an internalized cycle of oppression from paternal neglect, abandonment and emotional rigidity making it difficult to love or care for oneself. It can lead to psychosomatic symptoms, lack in the capacity for symbolization, and limited psychological insight. The body can be used as the storehouse for affect. There is “inability to contain and reflect upon affective experience, not having internalized a process of containment of affect. Such patients can experience some of their affect but cannot form a representation. There is no ability to symbolize and develop meaning” (Willemssen, 2014, p. 699). This woman suffered failure in linkage between body, affect, and mind.

Conscious experience has to be manipulated and much distortion is based on the need to blend in and avoid distress. From the early traumas a cloak of invisibility develops. It is safer to go unnoticed. But it is lonely. She walks around as if not seen and she prefers this, or seems to. It does not happen. She notes feeling strange when glimpsing her self in a store window, as it brings a slight shock of disparity and she appears different from the image at home. Home is safe and familiar and the outer world fraught with anxiety. The psyche develops a self-encapsulated system and as such splits from reality, allowing in nothing new. She remained stuck in old patterns, concrete thinking, and failures in perception, as all seemed threatening. These are states of traumatic breakdown where understanding ceases and feeling overwhelms. The trauma activates anxieties and generates dissociation to avoid contact with the traumatic event. She feels shame about revealing herself and the vulnerability is so tender she pretends and worries she will be rejected. Meanwhile, she remains at impasse, as the unknown seems a venture too frightening.

“Trauma creates a capacity to destroy the internal organization so that trust and ability to think symbolically collapses” (Cavalli, 2012, p. 599). The father as a psychological presence in her psyche was critical, brutally argumentative and impenetrable. “The trauma in the parent functions as a disorganizing force which transforms the parent into an unpredictable adult who cannot think and feel and has no capacity for containment and empathy” (Cavalli, 2021, p. 601). She could not attach to him and this created anxiety, low self-esteem, and need for cover-up. Yet, the internal trauma response of shutting down, defensive and fearful remained. For example, she often could not take in new information, kept words and thoughts inside, organizing them before each therapy session to not make a mistake and to be right. There was a pervasive feeling of helplessness and emotional isolation allowing little accompaniment by anyone else. She avoided exposing any fragility or vulnerability, even in therapy. This was similar to when she had to be strong and perfect as a child in the presence of her father. Empathy failed to reach her and the persecutor father seemed

everywhere. She had a dream in which someone said she had to take care of her father. She did not know what this meant but began to realize the dream message had to relate to her. What cost has there been to her personality? The dream seems to imply the true and total self could not come through and remained unmet. The subsequent split in the selves causes psychic numbness, loss of passion; the pathology of needing to maintain certainty but not realizing the cost, the loss of the symbolic, the expansive, or a safe alterity with others. What remained was an inability to express feelings of grief, to expose what felt fragile, to be able to healthily depend on others. Jung commented, “As a result of some psychic upheaval whole tracts of our being can plunge back into the unconscious and vanish from the surface for years and decades...disturbances caused by affects are known technically as phenomena of dissociation, and are indicative of a psychic split” (Jung, 1934, para. 286).

Analytical Repair

The experience of ‘I’ is constructed from a multitude of unconscious mechanisms and processes. We are not isolates but exist in multiple, shifting relationships encountering the other through our conscious and unconscious attitudes. This process as it occurs in therapy demands truth and vulnerability through the transference and countertransference for the self to emerge. The analytical relationship is a place for enacting a corrective experience, a kind of repair to the trauma of broken connections. Through tolerance of the void and the persistence of analyst and patient, connections between body and mind begin to emerge (Green, 1986, p. 153). The psyche looks to complete itself, to manifest in higher modes of consciousness, to fill the lack, to unify opposites and elevate itself on its quest for truth and fulfillment. Movement from trauma to care is an organic developmental process possible to be restarted in the psychotherapy analytical relationship.

In relation to this, British Jungian analyst Jean Knox (2004, p. 16) said “being an analyst requires us constantly to focus on the subjective, to fine-tune to the intuitive, poetic, symbolic narrative that emerges in an analytic session. This requires the therapist’s capacity to resonate with the multiple and sometimes contradictory threads of the patient’s narrative in the co-construction of symbolic space”. The analyst’s search for unconscious meaning in the patient’s communications is an agent of change. Jung contended both parties in analytic work are changed as self and other unite in this many fold process (Jung, 1955, p. 49).

Trauma has effects on emotional, intellectual and imaginative life and development of the self (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 235). The experiences of the transference and countertransference in the analytical consulting room reenact the dissociative defenses arising from the traumatized situations and the individuals caught there. It is the analyst’s responsibility to help the patient to find a language for the irrepresentable (Cavalli, 2012, p. 611). The analyst has to connect with the patient’s void to give voice and life to what seems to be unrepresentable and has been without expression. Psychological defense may serve an adaptive function to buffer anxiety and fear in the instance in which it arises. However, if over generalized into other contexts and relationships, perceptions of self and the world can become rigid and inaccurate.

An axiom of Jungian psychology is that each phenomenon contains within itself the means by which it can be interpreted. While the tensions between opposing forces might ease over time, “the united personality will never quite lose the painful

sense of innate discord. Complete redemption from the sufferings of this world is and must remain an illusion” (Jung, 1966, para. 400). Within the psyche a principle of synthesis seeks to find balance, holding the tension of the opposites, and bridging the gap between ego-consciousness and the unconscious. If the tension can be sustained without succumbing to the urge to identify with one side or the other, the unexpected healing images emerge. This springs from the vitality, energy, and urge for individuation or becoming one self.

Summary

The people exemplified here and their narratives illustrate the effects of trauma personally and culturally. Their stories and traumatic responses demonstrate the innate need for acceptance and repair to the fragmented personality. Lonely, depersonalized and without belonging, one may withdraw interpersonally and intrapsychically. This can escalate to a void of futility, meaninglessness, and the body and psyche deadened and numb. These elements are addressed in Jungian psychological treatment. With attention the traumatic complex can be detoxified and the individual freed to embrace, constructively express, and develop themselves and their relationships.

The challenge is to bridge cultures and create linkages and expression for the multi-cultural psyche. The aim is not to eliminate ‘otherness’, but to integrate and use the tension in the opposites for self-discovery and personality repair. Engagement with the ‘other’ brings about recognition of the self, reconciliation and mutual understanding. Jung stated, “No man lives within his own psychic sphere like a snail in its shell, separated from everybody else, but is connected with his unconscious humanity” (1934, para. 480).

Look inside yourself;

everything that you want,

you are already that.”

— *Rumi, Hush, Don't Say Anything to God: Passionate Poems of Rumi*

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