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Archetypal Psychology and Object Relations Theory: History and communalities

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Introduction

In this article I will reflect on the history-separate and overlapping-and thus the possible communalities between the theory of archetypal psychology on the one hand and object relations theory on the other. I will suggest that this involves us in considering two basic philosophical dispositions that have permeated Western culture since the nineteenth century, and thus inevitably our own thinking as analytical psychologists. These are:

1. Hegel's dialectical vision concerning the processes of change;
2. the notion of deep structures, particularly that of psychological deep structure.

Each concept has made an important addition to the philosophical bedrock which underpins the ways of thinking about human nature and development that we call analytical and psychoanalytic theory. They are especially useful when we come to think about the differential roles of inner and outer influences in the development of personality, their combination, interaction, and relative importance, as primary to the structure and contents of the personality from birth through to maturity.

The first, the dialectical vision, grew up in Europe, especially in Germany, at the time of the Romantic revolution. It was expounded by the German philosopher Hegel and translated into the realm of social, political, and economic change by Marx and his followers. I consider that the Hegelian notion of dialectics and dialectical change permeates the theories of Freud and Jung and their followers, steeped as they all were in the German-speaking culture of their times.

The dialectical vision offers a view of the world and of reality as

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organised according to basic positions that are in dynamic relation to each other. Two opposing structures or states (thesis and antithesis) at once define each other by negating each other, and, if the conditions are facilitating enough, move towards an integration (synthesis), achieving at least part of a solution or resolution to the conflict. That solution itself becomes inevitably a further new thesis with its concomitant antithesis, leading to another synthesis, and so on. The dialectical vision understands conflicts and contradictions as potentially fruitful collisions that may lead to greater (self) actualisations through the processes of change leading to synthesis. The process of history is seen as a dialectical forward movement, in which mankind progresses through the clashes of contradictory systems. It is a teleological vision which looks to the futurity of things.

Hegel argued that the same dialectical logic could be applied to any system, thus by inference including psychological and interpersonal systems (Hegel 11). The dialectical vision permeates Freud's conflictual hypothesis of the mind in, for example, the notion of the tripartite id-ego-superego structure; it is also there in Jung's notion of the opposing poles of the archetype, of the compensatory function of dreams, of synthesis and the *tertium quid non datur*, and in his idea of the transcendent function. And, of course, the quintessential example is that of the dynamic relationship between consciousness and the unconscious, as they pass through the various stages of personal development. The most relevant example is the build-up of a sense of 'I-ness' over time. This happens as a result of a dynamic process in which the subject experiences himself or herself in relation to a 'not-I' figure, perhaps experienced or perceived initially as a part object. 'I-ness' and otherness create one another, preserve one another, and transform one another. 'The mother creates the infant and the infant creates the mother' (Ogden 21, p. 209). The two develop a relationship over time in which the internalised parts of the one embed themselves within the personality of the other.

The second important concept, that of psychological deep structures, has a long philosophical history from Plato to Kant to the modern day. The concept has been further explored by the philosopher and psycholinguist Naom Chomsky in the last three decades in America (Chomsky 3). Chomsky demonstrated the universality of underlying deep structures in languages, the inheritance of which is *innate* rather than learned. These deep structures are subsequently converted into surface structures by applying a set of transformational rules which are *acquired*. Thus have developed the various different languages.

My thesis is twofold. Firstly, it is possible to think of the archetypes of the collective unconscious as psychological deep structures against

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which the infant's experience of their real parents builds up dialectically, over time, into an amalgam of fantasy and reality experiences. This amalgam is constantly under review, both consciously and unconsciously. Secondly, the Kleinian notion of unconscious fantasies can be viewed in the same way as the archetypes, as deep structural categories which mediate the experiences of the real baby and his mother.

Support for this view will be offered from philosophical and psychological sources including clinical evidence. Other disciplines, too, can be consulted. For example, ethologists such as Tinbergen and Lorenz also posit theories concerning innate structures that exist prior to learned behaviour. These can be observed when a member of a species, in the presence of a stimulus (an 'innate releasing mechanism'), is observed to perform stereotypical and ritualised behaviours. Courting behaviours in certain animals including human beings are a typical example, but we could refer to the whole series of stimulus and response behaviours between the nursing mother-baby couple that ensure that a nurturing, good-enough mother is available to look after the needs of her dependent baby.

The connection between the concept of the archetypes of the collective unconscious and concepts from object relations theory about unconscious phantasy and internalised objects can be understood to be related through the common core principles outlined above. Clinically and introspectively, these are conceived thus: *in all of us there are certain fundamental psychic structures through which the primal self mediates its inner experiences and its earliest relationships; the interactions between the primal self and inner and outer experiences with their multitudinous imageries build up over time to make up the person who we are: a kind of inner and outer family.* Through a dialectical statement of this kind, we can avoid apparently contradictory theoretical statements where the acceptance of one would seem to preclude the other. For example, Fordham's notion of a primal self and Winnicott's notion that there is no such thing as a baby, but rather a nursing couple, can be synthesised by applying the dialectical model. The dialectical model would provide that the child build up experiences of himself and his others that can be plotted on a spectrum of greater or lesser amounts of fantasy and of reality, of internality and externality. This is also true for the mother, albeit at a level appropriate to her adult status.

The Concept of the Archetype

In the history of the development of the concept of the archetype resides much of the history of the vicissitudes that have occurred between psychoanalysis and analytical psychology.

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We know that, in the early years of the century, Freud and Jung enjoyed a close theoretical and personal collaboration. Freud considered the young Swiss psychiatrist to be the likely heir to the leadership of the psychoanalytic movement, and much of Jung's early scientific and theoretical explorations fitted Freud's psychological notions. This was so particularly in Jung's experimental work on the *complex*, which was to become the foundation for the later theory of the *imago* and, after, of the *archetype*.

As a young psychiatrist working at the Burghölzli Psychiatric Hospital, Jung developed the Word Association Test (**Jung 13**), the experimental tool that would establish psychoanalysis as a verifiable science, thus giving it scientific legitimacy according to what would later be thought of as Popper's criteria (**Popper 22**). Of course, Popper expounded his ideas later - namely, that a science is legitimised when it is built up of a series of propositions rendered into operational definitions that are experimentally falsifiable. The requirement was to demonstrate statistically the probability that the data supporting the scientific proposition could not have happened by chance. Given the scientific status of the Word Association Test, it is an irony that the validity of psychoanalysis as a science has been criticised precisely in terms of Popper's criteria concerning the lack of falsifiability of its propositions.

The Word Association Test devised by Jung was a tool for measuring variations in certain autonomic responses and response times given by subjects to a list of carefully selected stimulus words. Anxiety-provoking areas of concern to the individual could be demonstrated by grouping variations in response times with the associations to thematically related stimulus words. These showed the individual's complexes, or the 'feeling-toned' complexes, as Jung called them, in so far as the differences in the variables as measured pointed to different unconscious emotional states evoked by the stimulus words. The key complexes, as demonstrated by different groupings, gave a profile of that individual's problems. Experimentally and conceptually, the results were very impressive, and were hailed as the first scientific verification of the existence and effects of the unconscious and of the theory of repression in the aetiology of the neuroses. Indeed, the Word Association Test developed by Jung was one of the first elegant psychological experiments, and became a classic in scientific history as a paradigm for investigating qualitative subjective states through the quantification of data. It was a major contribution to experimental psychology.

More importantly, at least for the purposes of this paper, the Word Association Test was Jung's great gift to Freud, and certainly his main contribution to the early psychoanalytic movement, providing

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experimental evidence for the existence in the psyche of the mechanisms of repression and the place in the mind where repressed contents go, that is, into the unconscious. It established psychoanalysis as a science, and Freud was most eager to legitimise it in this way.

The establishing of the experimental basis of psychoanalysis would serve, at the same time, as the foundation of Jung's major contribution to what would become analytical psychology. The notion of the *complex*, discovered through the method of ordering

reactions around a thematic group, would lead Jung to the notion of the *imago*, a series of thematically organised symbolisations, and then finally would become the basis of his notion of the *archetypes*, the template through which human experience is channelled. Herein lies the deep structural link between the two movements, psychoanalysis and analytical psychology.

At this point, I would like to introduce a patient, 'Sally', whose material will illustrate many of the points of this paper. For reasons which I hope will become clear later, I am weaving the clinical material into the body of the argument of the paper, as the conceptual development parallels the clinical development.

Sally begins by giving us an ordinary clinical example of the complexes discovered through association:

She arrived for her session in a very agitated state. As she walked around the corner near my consulting room, she came across two policemen walking side by side towards her. She immediately felt extremely panicky, imagined she was going to be stopped and 'examined' (her words) by them, and wondered how she would manage the fifty yards to my door.

If we were to use Sally as a subject for the Word Association Test, we would no doubt find significantly different autonomic reactions and variations in response times to the stimulus word 'policeman' than to other, more neutral, words. We might also expect similar responses to words like 'father' or 'men'. With her exaggerated reaction to the policemen, we would expect to uncover in analysis that she had a father complex with highly persecuting characteristics. In fact, through analytic work, we were able to see that her inner father archetype was very strict and critical, and that her experience of her real father did very little to alleviate the persecuting archetype. The panic she felt fifty yards from my consulting room echoed similar terrifying childhood states in which the source of protection was denied by a threatening force.

After the incident with the policemen, she embarked on a long and painful process, which took almost a year, in which she revealed what had been a preconscious, but became in the analysis an increasingly conscious, belief that she had been abused as a child of 6 by her

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father, during a time when her mother had been hospitalised. Not only had her mother not been there to offer protection, she presumably had no idea that her child was in danger, just as, so Sally perceived, I did not, as I waited for her to arrive for her session. I did not offer 'protection', nor did I know she was 'in danger'.

Returning now to the historical survey, up to this point, Freud took Jung's Word Association Test experiments as validation of his theory of repression into the unconscious through the defence mechanisms. However, around 1912, the relations between Freud and Jung broke down. The overt reason for the break was Jung's publication in 1912 of *Symbols of Transformation* (**Jung 14**). Jung used the idea of 'symbol' in a specific way, as a bridge between the concept of complex and archetype. The question Jung addressed in this work was, where do symbols come from, and what is their function.

In a sense, all the rest is history, for, as we know, in attempting to answer these questions, Jung elaborated a new, more encompassing, definition of the notion of libido. He discarded Freud's notion that libido was 'nothing but' sexual energy, a primitive sexual force which could only be controlled by the censor (later the superego) in collaboration with the ego through the various defence mechanisms.

Jung was convinced from the evidence of clinical material that the libido included, but reached far beyond, personal psychosexual experiences to a much more generalised energy source, the total life force that pulses through all the forms and activities of the integrated psyche-soma system. The *psychic* manifestations of this generalised energy take the form of images, and these in turn become symbols when they act as transformers of energy, eventually offering the possibility of new resolutions of old problems. We know that the archetypal image can reside both at the personal and at the collective level. The concept of generalised libido, containing its own symbolisations, was the second major contribution of Jung, and this time it formed the basis of what would become the tradition of analytical psychology.

For Freud, symbols were translations, or more exactly sublimations, of libidinal (sexual) pressures into another area of imaging, a compromise between id and superego, according to the demands of the reality principle operated by the ego.

For Jung, however, symbols could be that, but could be also much more: they could be creative, purposive, healing, psychological inventions. He considered them to be 'the best possible expression for a complex fact not yet clearly apprehended by consciousness' (**Jung 19**, par. 148). Jung's vision can be characterised as teleological, forward-looking, synthetic; Freud's as reductive, radical, analytic.

As he continued to elaborate his idea of the complexes, Jung began

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to stress the powerful similarities between the images that represent them across individuals, across cultures, and across historical periods. Hereby he was developing more and more concepts about the deep collective structures of the psyche. We need only remember that, in *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung studied the written fantasies of a young American woman, drawing parallels between her fantasies about a lost lover and themes from ancient mythology. Jung's explorations of myth in this work changed his views on the nature of the unconscious. The unconscious was no longer simply the repository of the repressed personal unconscious, it was also the well-spring of human spiritual and cultural creativity.

Little by little, in his writings Jung's terminology was changing. Using the broader concept of libido, and substituting for the

concept of the complex that of imago, he sought to show that it is not just one's personal mother or father about whom one has conflicts, it is the complex network of often culture-bound associations which centre on the mother and father imagos which he later called the archetypes, which, in combination with personal experiences, produce psychic difficulties and conflicts. An imago is a collection of associations expressed in *thematically related* images or symbols. The imago is autonomous and is expressed independently of the ego's will. This is similar to Plato's notion of the idea (εἶδος), an inherited archetypal configuration that is collective and forms the template through which we perceive the world. It is a view expounded much later by the German philosopher, Kant, for whom reality was perceived and thought about through a limited number of categories available to the human mind.

Thus, the mother and father complexes were seen as the sum of the individual's personal experience, positive or negative, of their real mother and their real father *and* the collective experience, the 'mother' and 'father' imagos, which we all have inherited by virtue of being human. In ethological terms, an individual's personal experiences of their own mother and father are functions of an innate inherited predisposition to experience them in particular ways.

Archetypes are variously thought of as unconscious universal structures, inherited blueprints, or templates, which organise psychic energy along certain repeatable and recognisable lines. These innate patterns or predispositions to the formation of typical ideas or behaviours become manifest through images, or symbols. These images have a particular kind of power—we speak of the individual being in 'the grip of the archetype'. We often think of patients in particular phases of treatment as embodying archetypal figures - the trickster, the hero, the *puer aeternus*, or the *puella*. Or, conversely, they may de-identify with them through projection: the father/analyst

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may be the trickster where the patient may be identified with the victim/child.

Archetypal images reside at the imaginal pole opposite to the instinctual/biological (even perhaps biochemical) pole of the psychesoma system. They signify the *shape* of instinctual goals, and are conceived of in opposite pairs, polarising at the extremes into instinctive bodily behaviours at one end, when acting out is most apparent, and spiritual or numinous experiences at the other, when subjective experience is maximal (the apperception of beauty, or religious experiences, may be classed in this area).

The principle of bipolarity governing the archetypal imagery is expressed through extremes of the positive and negative attributes: good versus bad, dark versus light, loving versus hating. The mother archetype can be nurturing, caring, loving; or devouring, annihilating, evil; or abandoning, empty, bad. The father archetype can be helpful, supportive, strong, admired; or (at different times) tyrannical, dominating, castrating, sadistic; or weak, useless, absent. The archetypal aspects of the important figures that we carry inside us by virtue of being human depend to a large extent on the way our real experiences have mediated the bipolar possibilities of the archetypal images. In ordinary development, a series of good-enough experiences, in Winnicott's sense, will prevent extreme polar positions from getting stuck on either positive or negative poles, and thus will facilitate the ego's growth and increasing ability to tolerate the ambivalences, including recognising simultaneous loving and hating feelings towards the object.

At this point I would like to reintroduce my patient, Sally, who encountered two policemen on her way to see me. I hope to show through Sally's material that the notion of archetypes as deep structures is substantially similar to the notion of unconscious phantasy which is at the basis of object relations theory. The negative father imago or archetype had not been modified, but rather had been reinforced by her own personal experience of an abusing father who was experienced as keeping her away from the protection of her mother. Also, the abuse was thought to have taken place during a period in her childhood when her mother was hospitalised. This piece of detective work took about a year for us to unravel.

But then, as a result of a dream, we began another, different phase in our detective work:

She dreamt of her mother in the hospital in which she had been when she, Sally, was six years old. Her mother's head was in plaster. The plaster began to crack.

This dream heralded a new phase in our reconstruction work. The picture is rather more complicated than I initially made out. In a

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way, I have tricked the reader, deliberately, just as Sally and I were tricked in the consulting room by her unconscious inner family. What we learned in this next phase of the analysis was that her mother had been hospitalised during an acute psychotic breakdown when Sally was 6 years old. A further elaboration during reconstruction revealed that when the mother herself was 6 years old, her own mother died, and she was sent to live with a maternal aunt and uncle. The uncle had abused Sally's mother.

So, in fact, Sally was not herself abused; but her mother had been. In reconstruction we found that there was a layer of inner experience (her quasi-conscious idea that she had been abused) that she had internalised and identified with, but which really belonged to her mother. In other words, although it was true that the mother had had a psychotic breakdown at the time when her daughter Sally had reached the age when the mother had been abused, it was not true that Sally's father had abused Sally. He had been a strict disciplinarian and therefore did not contribute much to softening the negative pole of the archetype.

The importance of this piece of reconstruction was to demonstrate that Sally had internalised through identification her mother's experience of having been abused at a specific time in her childhood. The fact that her mother had a breakdown at the

time when Sally reached the age that her mother had been abused meant that Sally experienced her mother's absence as attributable to her father. She had thus joined up the negative pole of the archetypal father figure and her own experience of a dour and rigid father with an internalisation of her mother's experience of a bad uncle figure, to arrive at, or colour, her feeling that her father blocked her mother's availability to her as a source of protection, and her semi-conscious belief that she had been the victim of his incestuous attack. All this we learnt painfully, over time. In the transference, I was experienced at times as the mother who was not able to protect her, or the abusing father, or the abused analyst mother who required her submission through identification.

Returning to our historical survey, the present interpretation of the development of the concepts common to both psychoanalysis and analytical psychology at the deep structural level is mirrored by the history in my patient's reconstructive analysis. The history of the relations between psychoanalysis and analytical psychology became bedevilled by real history (that is, the events in Europe) and the vicissitudes in the relations between individuals. Although Klein and her followers developed ideas very akin to those which Jung and his followers were already addressing, nevertheless Klein would never refer to Jung, and most of her followers would eschew any connection between their concepts and those of Jung, although certainly Winnicott

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and Bion had read him and had attended his Tavistock lectures in the early 1950s. But even Winnicott and Bion went on to write up their own particular and extremely important ideas without reference to Jungian literature, despite similarities in orientations. The splits that have occurred between and within the psychoanalytic and analytical psychology movements were at worst wasteful. At best, they allowed for the development of theoretical differentiations that were valuable in accruing the theoretical and conceptual excellencies of each tradition. Had the situation remained at the level of difference, and not of disparagement, then perhaps the divisions could have heralded creative cross-fertilisations in the arena of theory building. But as it happened, much time was wasted, many opportunities for communication lost, and the inevitable shadow projections muddied the waters of collegiate discourse between different analytic orientations. There is some sense in which we could say that the split took the form of a dialectical clash of opposites and was historically determined, in the Hegelian sense. It took the efforts of certain Jungian analysts, particularly those at the Society of Analytic Psychology who formed around Michael Fordham in his work with children (**Fordham 5**), to begin to incorporate and synthesise the ideas of the two traditions. This article attempts to take the thinking on in that same spirit.

Unconscious Fantasy

Turning now to object relations theory, some care is needed in expounding certain concepts in order to demonstrate the link between them and their forebears in analytical psychology.

Object relations theory could be thought to have begun when Freud and his followers were forced to pay more and more attention to transference phenomena and when Freud decided that reports from his patients of early childhood sexual abuse were the result of fantasies and not of reality. A highly simplified definition of transference would revolve around the notion of a re-enactment in the present of a relationship or situation that belongs to the past. When this happens in the consulting room, then a satisfactory understanding of the transference offers an immediate and detailed way in which the past can be witnessed, experienced, and understood in the present.

The next theoretical building block of object relations theory pertinent to the present discussion was the notion of the introjection of objects. In 'Mourning and melancholia' (**Freud 8**), Freud introduced the concept of a lost loved object which cannot be properly mourned and let go of, but rather remains inside the person's own psyche and

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goes on relating to it there. Freud argued that the reason for doing this is a particularly strong element of hatred and fury towards the loved object as it is internalised in the ego. This hatred and fury become directed at the ego as if they were the object. The famous phrase, 'The shadow of the object falls on the ego', was coined by Freud to relate the pathological state of melancholia to the process of identification and internalisation: in other words, the internalisation of an object and its identification with a part of the individual's own personality.

In the 1930s object relations became the major focus for the school of psychoanalysis developed particularly in London. Melanie Klein came to England before the war in order to establish a base for her own investigations into early infantile life, the results of which were to radically question some of Freud's basic tenets. She developed a method of observation with her play technique, and, from her observations, the bases of object relations theory were conceived. The two important aspects of internal objects that concern us here are 1) that they are mental representations of instincts, and 2) that they are given their particular shape by internalising the experience of a real object, which modifies the original mental representation.

The term 'object' is a technical one, and was used originally in psychoanalysis to denote the *object of an instinctual impulse*. The object was the person, or some other thing, that was the object of the satisfaction of a desire. In Freud's early scientific writing, the object had very little about it that was personal. Rather, it was something upon which impulses of energy were discharged, recognised only for the purposes of the subject's pleasure seeking, satisfaction, and relief.

Through Klein's work, it was possible to see that, in their play, along with real happenings and real relationships, children were enacting also their unconscious *fantasies*. The immediacy, energy, and vigour of the re-enactment suggested that play was in

earnest. It was the child's way of mirroring back to himself his own worst fears and anxieties. The different modes of enactment in the consulting room were seen as the child's efforts to understand powerful experiences in his daily life. Thus, in working with adults, transference can give us an idea of the *history* of the person's efforts to understand these trauma. It was in this area, bridging infantile and adult mental life, that the notion of unconscious fantasy became vital in the theory building.

Klein achieved a theoretical amalgam between Freud's concept of the instincts and her notion of object relations with the idea that there was a primary instinct for relatedness, and that these relations were defined by the attributes of impulses from libidinal sources (oral, anal, urethral, phallic, genital). She found that the child believed the object to be suffused with intents and motivations aligned with the

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child's own particular libidinal impulses active at the moment. Thus, the child relating from the oral phase could believe that its object was another who might itself bite, swallow, spit, chew, or suck the infant, and that often this was conceived as a negative activity, born of envy, frustration, and retaliation. Thus the object was conceived not just as a means by which instinctual libidinal impulses could be discharged; rather the child's relation to the object constituted a fantasy narrative with particular internal and external figures with particular attributes which were appropriate to the erogenous zone most pertinent at the moment.

The theory building Klein achieved with her group during the war years in London, culminating in the 'Controversial Discussions' within the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, represented a fine-tuning *at the developmental level* of constructs that could be understood to be shared by analytical psychologists. In particular her notion of unconscious fantasy, the fundamental construct of object relations theory, is essentially akin to the theory of archetypes. We are aided in this conceptualisation by recalling what we have said about dialectical theory and of psychological deep structure.

This is illustrated in part by the fact that, as analytic theory building progressed, the frontier of the investigation was pushed increasingly back in psychological time. First, Freud focused his interest at around 4 to 5 years of age, the time of the Oedipal complex. But the second wave of psychological investigation pushed back through psychological time to the earliest phases, to the time of birth and even before, to intrauterine life. Both the theory of the archetypes developed by Jung and that of unconscious fantasy elaborated by Klein pursued the investigation to the roots of mental activity. At the personal level, we might understand this by remembering that Jung's own self analysis led him to experiences that we might call today psychotic, and that his hospital patients for whom he was responsible were generally psychotics and schizophrenics. Freud, on the other hand, centred his self analysis around the events in his family at the time of his own passage through the phase that he would subsequently call the Oedipal stage, already representing a developmentally later stage than the mental events we think of as leading to psychosis and schizophrenia. Freud's patient group also consisted of more neurotic patients, or perhaps he concentrated on their neurotic material. He was not attached to a psychiatric hospital as Jung was, but instead was consulted by private patients, and much has been written about the implications for his theory building that he treated mainly uppermiddle-class patients, and often women.

Phyllis Grosskurth, in her biography of Melanie Klein (**Grosskurth 10**), points out that Klein may have been particularly interested in

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exploring the early mental life of very young children because of her own difficulties in mothering and her own early history as a daughter of a highly depressed and disturbed mother and with very difficult sibling relationships. In later life, she was in constant conflict with her own daughter, and they became bitter enemies within the psychoanalytic movement.

Jung in his work with psychotic adults and Klein in her work with the pre-Oedipal child were investigating essentially the same area of the psyche, that which had not yet reached the Oedipal stage of development, that is, had not yet achieved the capacity for reliable whole object perceptions which is thought to pertain to the depressive position. Essentially, Jung and Klein arrived at similar findings, albeit couched in very different terminology. They both proposed the existence of deep, innate psychological structures which directly link to, and serve as vehicles for the expression of, the earliest biological and instinctual experiences of the infant. For both Jung and Klein, the experience of these deep innate structures is mediated by real experiences with the real environment.

Both Klein and Jung took as given the absolute reality of the inner world, first and foremost. Klein wrote:

My hypothesis is that the infant has an innate unconscious awareness of the existence of the mother. We know that young animals at once turn to the mother and find their food from her. The human animal is not different in that respect, and this instinctual knowledge is the basis for the infant's primal relation to the mother (Klein 20, p. 248).

This quote exemplifies Klein's idea of the internal object which preexists the experience of the real mother but which will be mediated by the experience of the real mother. Written in 1959, it is in essence no different from many that could be cited from Jung decades before concerning the archetypal component in our understanding of the psyche with its fundamental links to the instincts. For example, in **1936**, he wrote:

The instincts form very close analogies to the archetypes-so close, in fact, that there is good reason for supposing that the archetypes are the unconscious images of the instincts themselves; in other words they are patterns of instinctive behaviour. The hypothesis of the collective unconscious is, therefore, no more daring than to assume that

there are instincts (**Jung 17**, par. 91).

For both Jung and Klein, the quality of the experience of the contents of this inner world would depend on actual experiences of external reality as they are filtered through and interact with the innate structures that were already there. And for both, how these innate structures were given shape and attributes was a vital consideration.

A seminal paper written in **1948** by Susan Isaacs, a follower of

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Klein, given during the Controversial Discussions, describes how the instincts find a mental expression as a phantasy in the unconscious mind—a phantasy of a relation with an object. Isaacs makes a useful distinction between *phantasy* written with a ‘ph’ or *fantasy* written with an ‘f’. Fantasy with an ‘f’ is more like a daydream available to consciousness. But phantasy with a ‘ph’ belongs to the unconscious. She says, ‘Phantasy may be considered the psychoanalytic representative or the mental correlate, the mental expression of instincts’ (**Isaacs 12**, p. 84). The same is said about archetypal images. Thus, both reside at a universal deep level structure within the mind. Both have an instinctual base, and both are expressed imaginably by more or less unconscious mental representations. These images are experienced on a spectrum, or through a series of bipolar opposites. In early life, when the child is unable to experience reality in the round, and whole object representation has not yet been achieved, whatever is being felt at the moment is felt to be infinite and monolithic, not attenuated by any degrees of uncertainty or contingency, for example, the baby is completely satisfied or completely hungry. This concept of experience in pairs of bipolarities forms the basis of the idea of the mechanism of splitting (Klein) and of the opposites of the archetype (Jung).

Just as the collective unconscious, a layer primitive to the personal unconscious, is conceived of as containing the archetypal images, so the Kleinian pre-Oedipal unconscious is thought of as containing the contents of unconscious fantasies. Each theory, based on clinical material, posits these fantasies and images, waiting, as it were, for personal experience to modify and humanise them.

Both the notion of archetypal imagery and that of unconscious fantasy imply that in each of us is a level of mental representation pertaining to a phylogenetic endowment such that life is experienced along broad lines already laid down over the ages and the generations. The ethologists have shown us that the animal's instinctual inner life is ordered through the IRMs, innate releasing mechanisms, triggering already imprinted responses: chicks emerging from eggs at the right time, birds building nests when it is time to mate, the infant seeking out the breast when it is time to feed. Both John Bowlby (**Bowlby 2**), a psychoanalyst, and Anthony Stevens, an analytical psychologist (**Stevens 28**), point out that similar genetically programmed behaviours take place between mother and baby. The baby's helplessness and dependency, coupled with its immense repertoire of sign stimuli and approach behaviour, trigger appropriate maternal responses. Similarly, the smell, sound, and shape of the mother's breast trigger, for instance, a feeding, sucking response in the infant.

All this is instinctually and biologically sound and has to do with basic survival. Jung called the archetypal image a ‘self portrait of the

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instinct’ (**Jung 16**, par. 277), mind giving mental expression and shape to body sensations and impulses, thereby helping the body to behave as it is programmed to do. Isaacs also said ‘There is no impulse, no instinctive urge or response which is not experienced as unconscious phantasy’ (**Isaacs 12**, p. 83). Hannah Segal writes from the Kleinian viewpoint about this:

The ‘ideas’ representing the instincts will be the original primitive phantasies. The operation of an instinct is expressed and represented in mental life by the phantasy of the satisfaction of that instinct by an appropriate object. Since instincts operate from birth, some crude phantasy life can be assumed as existing from birth. The first hunger and the instinctual stirring to satisfy that hunger are accompanied by the phantasy of an object capable of satisfying that hunger. As phantasies derive directly from instincts on the borderline between the somatic and psychological activity, these original phantasies are experienced as somatic as well as mental phenomena (**Segal 25**, p. 191).

Having considered the relationship between analytical ideas and those of the deep structuralists, including the linguists and the ethologists, we can now refer to dialectical theory as an explanatory model linking many of the components we have been considering. Particularly important in this are the components of theory building and in clinical work those that have to do with the experience of the opposites, of deep structure and of the interaction between internal and environmental influences. All of these in turn are contained in the concept of the archetypes, unconscious phantasy, and internal objects. Just as Kleinians talk about good and bad breasts as polarisations of the quality of the mothering experience, so Jungians speak of the good (nourishing) mother and the bad (devouring) mother. Similarly, for both there is the important experience of the real mother and how this experience impacts on the archetypal or fantasied mother. It is possible to visualise graphically a matrix which would have on its horizontal axis the attributes good/nurturing versus bad/devouring and on the vertical axis objects (either part or whole) the personal/real mother versus the archetypal/fantasied mother. Such a matrix would make sense to both Jungians and Kleinians, and would apply to any archetypal figure, or to any internal object.

Michael Fordham's (**Fordham 4**) elegant construct of the deintegration-reintegration process in the early infantile psyche provides a picture of the movement between these bipolar opposites. Fordham's construct posits a primary or original self as existing at the outset of life, which contains all the innate, archetypal potentials that reside within an individual. These potentials

are manifested through the processes of deintegration and reintegration as they emerge from the original unconscious integrate, the self, and to a greater or lesser extent find correspondences in the external world. The precipitates

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resulting from the active meeting and combining of an infant's archetypal potential and the mother's responses are reintegrated as internalised objects. These represent the ego fragments which gradually cohere, to form the developing ego. The deintegrative/reintegrative process continues throughout life:

whether in an adult or a baby ... any object perceived is composite. It is not only a record of what is 'out there' but is also contributed to by a part of the self which is put into it to give the object meaning. When the object is mainly a record of reality, it may be called a reality object; when it is mainly constructed by the self and so records states of the self, made out of extroceptive and introceptive sense data, then it may be called a self object. It used to be assumed among analytical psychologists ... that a baby's perception was predominately through self objects and that he lived in a sort of mythological world, all the time only gradually building up a picture of reality. That is a very misleading account of infancy. If, however, a sliding scale is envisaged (real object-selfobject) then one can study observations in that light. ... It appears that self objects increase in affectively charged states, whilst in quiet contemplative exploring activities real objects predominate (Fordham 6, p. 56).

The question remains as to how the internalised objects and self objects, in Fordham's sense, combine, unite, aggregate, or war within the individual. There is a sense in which we could say that the whole drama takes place in the individual's own psyche, where the 'parents' are not the parents at all but only their imagos. Here we return to Jung's early writing:

they are representations which have arisen from the conjunction of parental peculiarities with the individual disposition of the child. The imagos are activated and varied in every possible manner by an energy which likewise pertains to the individual; it derives from the sphere of instinct and expresses itself as instinctuality (Jung 15).

The dialectical model is concerned with providing an explanation for processes of change that takes account of the role of conflict, of the play between opposites, and of the movement towards greater and greater integration over time. Thinking about the steps in the evolution of the personality, the dialectical model can be used to explain how a series of incremental steps take place as a result of the collision of, and play between, opposite experiences (good/bad, separate/merged, through an infinite list of polarities) and how they gradually might achieve an internal synthesis. Implied in the model is an explanation of how a failure to develop might occur, when breakdown or a rigid defensiveness would arise through a conflict of opposites with too great pressure on the system and with no means of synthesis. At the same time, it could explain how internal part objects-experienced as opposites-eventually might combine in a whole object perception, assuming a good-enough containing environment, inching towards

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the achievement of the depressive position (Klein), or the capacity to be alone in the presence of another (Winnicott), or the more individuated personality (Jung).

By using the dialectical model as it concerns the processes of change in conditions where oppositional states are liable to occur, as in infancy where the capacity to experience reality as a whole has not been achieved, it may be possible to avoid the antithetical theoretical positions between splitting and deintegration as illustrated by Fordham (Fordham 7) and discussed by Astor (Astor 1). The dialectical model provides for the possibility of value-free statements about the inability of the infant to perceive both of the opposite attributes together at any one moment. Whether or not this results in valueladen perceptions about pathology (the ego splitting of Kleinian theory) or about further accretions of ego integration (the deintegration/reintegration process of Fordham) would depend on what has happened at the point where the change from oppositional to synthesising processes might occur. Either the resolution is creative and achieves a forward-moving, synthesising progression in the psyche, or else the conditions within and without the conflictual situation have led to disintegration or a defensive rigidity maintaining the *status quo*.

Similarly, Daniel Stern (Stern 27), along with other researchers of early infantile development, has made an important distinction between the 'observed infant' (the actual infant observed) and the 'clinical infant' (the adult patient reconstructing his infancy and childhood along with the analyst). Zinkin (Zinkin 29), in his comments on the implications of Stern's contribution to the work of discerning, as he calls it, the 'Klein connection in the London School', enumerates some of the differences and similarities between Kleinian and London Jungian concepts. Further work is needed to judge if the dialectical model, as it is proposed here, could be used to understand whether and when the deep structural contents and events are liable to become pathological (splitting) or non-pathological (synthesising).

In analysis, the central dialectic resides in the opposites of consciousness and the unconscious. There can be no conscious mind without an unconscious mind, and vice versa. 'The dialectical process is centrally involved in the creation of subjectivity ... the sense of "I-ness" by which experience is subtly endowed with the quality that one is thinking one's thoughts and feeling one's feelings' (Ogden 21, p. 209). The patient's panic attack when coming across two policemen while she was on her way to see me provided the first of a series of quasi-conscious steps beginning with the belief that her father had abused her at the time her mother had been hospitalised when she was 6 years old; then to the identification with and internalisation of her own mother's experience of being abused by her uncle when the

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mother was 6. The way we learned this, over time, provided us with a history of the dialectical build up of an inner picture of the relations between her *own* and her *mother's* internal objects. Needless to say, the play between the transference and countertransference experiences was a central resource in gathering the history.

There is a sense in which we could say that the pivot of the argument between Freud and Jung revolved around how literally to take analytical material concerning parental intercourse. The argument might be explained in part by the different types of patient material that Freud and Jung addressed: Freud focused largely on Oedipal material, whereas Jung focused primarily on material in the adult that could be presumed to have its source in earlier, more primitive levels of mental functioning. Freud insisted on the literalness of the primal scene as detected via screen memories, and this may to some extent be explained by the fact that ego development in the 4- to 5-year-old child allows for the fairly reliable discernment of whole objects by this time. (This is different from the arguments about whether there had been real or imagined incest.)

Jung, however, considered that many primal fantasies of adult patients did not arise from real childhood experiences of the primal scene, but were better conceived of as projected into what are experienced as memories from childhood. The sources of these projected 'memories' are the archetypal images of the collective unconscious, images of, for example, the anima and animus in *coniunctio*.

The Centrality of the Coniunctio

For Jung, the *coniunctio* was an alchemical symbol of central psychological importance, denoting the union or marriage of opposites in an intercourse which would have, as its fruition, the birth of a new element, the *tertium quid non datur*. Here, it is possible to see the connection between *coniunctio* and the dialectical vision, both dealing with the conflictual movement between opposite elements, with an outcome in the creative synthesis of the two. Thesis, antithesis, and synthesis replicate King, Queen, and Divine Child: thesis and antithesis, and the King and Queen, invest, as it were, in the futurity of things by creating a third element, endowed with the potentials of the divine (that is, archetypal) couple, but possessing so much more. In clinical terms, we would say that the synthesis occurs through the fiery furnace of the inner world.

This paradigm of psychic functioning denotes a universal pattern of relating between two or more conscious or unconscious elements. Because the *coniunctio* symbolises psychic processes, rebirth and transformation

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images are essential to it. Like all archetypes, *coniunctio* represents two poles of possibility, positive and negative. Therefore, death and loss as well as rebirth are reflected in its imagery.

Returning to our discussion about the theoretical importance of the primal scene in analytical thinking, it is interesting to note that, in this context, although he eschewed the notion of archetypes of the collective unconscious, Freud left scope in his own writings for developing ideas about the archaic sources of adult fantasies concerning the primal scene. In **1916** he wrote:

Whence comes the need for these phantasies [of sexual abuse of a child by its nearest male relatives] and the material for them? There can be no doubt that their sources lie in the instincts ... I believe these primal phantasies ... are a phylogenetic endowment. In them the individual reaches beyond his own experience into primaevael experience at points where his own experience has been too rudimentary ... I have repeatedly been led to suspect that the psychology of the neuroses has stored up in it more of the antiquities of human development than any other source (Freud 9, pp. 370-1).

Unfortunately, this was not pursued by Freud, and it was 'left to' Melanie Klein to develop the 'archetypal' side of the argument. In her work, the imagery of the *coniunctio* is of fundamental importance. For Klein, the infant's unconscious fantasy is imbued with the image of the parents in an almost continuous state of intercourse. In Hannah Segal's words,

The infant will phantasy his parents as exchanging gratifications, oral, urethral, anal or genital, according to the prevalence of his own impulses.... This gives rise to feelings of the most acute deprivation, jealousy and envy, since the parents are perceived as giving each other precisely those gratifications which the infant wishes for himself (Segal 26, p. 173).

The central archetypal image of the primal scene, the image of the coupling parents in all its vicissitudes, including incest fantasies, leaves room for the oppositional couple, with its negative and terrifying affects, as well as for a unifying, containing, and mediating image which signals the potential within the infant for future integration (**Samuels 23**).

It is likely, that an explanation of the old truism that Jungians tend to emphasise the positive aspects, and Kleinians and Freudians the negative aspects of the same experience, resides in the perceived potential for destructive versus creative forms of conflict. Klein pursued the notion of aggression as a manifestation of the death instinct, whereas Jung and his followers elaborated a model of the archetypes in their bipolar oppositions based on a teleological notion of the appropriateness of gradual separation and individuation, a developmental view which encompasses conflict, anger, and aggression

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within a potentially positive, albeit contentious, framework, without necessitating viewing them as ultimately destructive. This culminated in Fordham's notion of the gradual processes of deintegration and reintegration within and through a primal self.

Jung chose alchemy as the vehicle through which to explore those elements in the psyche that could be observed in the transference, and much of the alchemical metaphor centred around the *coniunctio* image—a meeting within the *vas hermeticum* of the base or primitive psychic elements and those processes they undergo in a series of transformations from base to precious substances. We could see the alchemical vessel as the analytic or therapeutic setting, and the elements to be transformed as aspects of the conscious and the unconscious of both the patient and the analyst. In alchemy, the elements to be combined are conceived of as opposites, the combination leading the alchemist to the production of something that was the *tertium quid non datur*. The new condition was unnatural, in the sense of not being found naturally. The alchemical metaphor is rich in its potentialities for viewing the processes that occur within any relationship, particularly that within the transference, because it is concerned (in a similar way to the dialectical vision) with how individuals influence each other, impact upon each other, and their experiences are internalised by each other: what we call the various modes of projection, introjection, identification, and projective identification.

The interrelations between therapist and patient, the openness of both to changes in each other, are clearly valued by Jung: *Hence the personalities of doctor and patient are often infinitely more important for the outcome of the treatment than what the doctor says and thinks.... For two personalities to meet is like mixing two different chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed. In any effective psychological treatment the doctor is bound to influence the patient; but this influence can only take place if the patient has a reciprocal influence on the doctor. You can exert no influence if you are not susceptible to influence (Jung 18, par. 163).*

Two further dominant images linked to the present theme, and studied extensively by Jung in alchemical texts, are those of the hermaphrodite, a combined male-female image, unconscious and lacking differentiation, and the androgyne, the integration of male and female aspects in conscious balance. They are seen, in clinical material, in terms of the wish to merge, at the undifferentiated hermaphroditic end of the spectrum. The more differentiated androgyne imagery, often contained in dream and other material, can point to vicissitudes and variations in the *coniunctio*. It is possible to think of the development from less to more differentiated imagery as being achieved in part through processes facilitating the formation of what SchwartzSalant has called the subtle body. An unconscious couple, separate

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from but connected to the couple in the consulting room, is created and interact together. This occurs by virtue of both the consistent therapeutic setting as a container and through the subtle communications that can occur through the interplay of projective identification, or, in Jung's terms, through *participation mystique*:

Projective identification can initiate the process of gaining access to, and transforming, interactive fields of linking or relating. These fields are imaged, for example, by the couples in the Rosarium. The alchemical process is devoted to overcoming the dangers of fusion states, of the tendency to concretise processes in the third area into something belonging to the ego (Schwartz-Salant 24, p. 44).

Marital or long-term partnership is a further example, wherein a relationship is built up over time and across major life occurrences. It is imaged in the *coniunctio*, in the androgyne, and in the idea of the combined parents, and is mirrored in the analytic relationship. *Hierosgamos*, the image of the *coniunctio* of the sacred marriage, is visioned, in alchemical terms, as the meeting of opposite elements, male and female, which unite to produce a third substance. In the real marriage, it may be a real child. At the symbolic level, the partners will engage in exchanges that will lead to internal transformations that could not have occurred without the other partner.

We are now coming full circle, and return to the image of the mother and infant who form a nurturing couple not without negative as well as positive experiences of each other, who, by their very coming together, create a third element, which we could identify as aspects of the subtle body, or the *tertium quid non datur*, that transcend each of them as separate entities but contain the potentiality for their further mutual and individual differentiations and development as reinternalised by each.

Summary

Throughout our lives, there is a constant dialectical process that enables our essential personal *coniunctio*—our internal and external families—to elaborate and grow. This paper has tried to achieve a particular synthesis between apparently opposing theoretical elements, illustrating with clinical material how this explanatory model may be of use in the elaboration of the intricate and subtle build up of the personality over time in its relation to important others.

The infant's personality is built up through a constant, dynamic three-way interaction between:

- (1) the unique real individual baby (primal self);
- (2) the common innate predisposition to perceive the world through certain fixed categories, i.e., through the archetypal patterns, or

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the images of the instincts, with which each of us is invested by virtue of being human;

- (3) the real parents, both as individuals and as a couple and how their care for the baby with its variations and vicissitudes moderates the experience of I-ness of the infant and the shape of the archetypal structures.

This third category, the quality of the parental environment as it is transmitted in subtle ways to the infant, is itself a result of an interaction between (1) and (2) and (3) *in the previous generation*, the real mother, the real father, and the other carers, themselves carrying an ongoing dynamic process between the elements (1), (2), and (3) from *their* own history.

The infant responds to this complex mixture, and the real parents respond in turn to the developing infant, through a constant to-and-fro communication. How all this happens, back and forth, over time, building up a complex feedback set of stimulus and response patterns that become the foundation of each individual's personality - all this is the stuff of our analytic work. This represents a vision of the history of the mental functioning over the life of an individual which is common to both archetypal analytical psychology and to object relations theory.

So image creates image, and in the work of analytic reconstruction, a history of the internal image building is recreated. This may be similar to, different from, or overlap with the real or objective history. It has fundamental implications for concerns about epistemology in analytic theory building-how do we know what we know and what is it exactly that we *do* know.

This article proposes a way of understanding the intricate and subtle processes of change and development that are described in the traditions of both analytical psychology and object relations theory through the mediation of the dialectical model. In order to accomplish this, theories concerning deep structures are invoked, of which the dialectical model is one.

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