Women's Aggressive Fantasies: A Feminist Post-Jungian Hermeneutic

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Written by Sue Austin

In this paper feminist questions about an aspect of women's experience, namely aggressive fantasies, are framed in terms of psychoanalytic ideas. Elements of post-Jungian thought are then drawn into the discussion, re-casting psychoanalytic insights to produce a post-Jungian hermeneutic for reading women's aggressive fantasies.

Sue Austin is a psychotherapist working in private practice in Sydney, Australia. She is currently a candidate in the final stage of training with the C.G. Jung Institute of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Jungian Analysts, and is half way through writing a PhD on women's aggressive fantasies through the School of Studies in Religion at Sydney University.

Introduction

In this paper feminist questions about an aspect of women's experience, namely aggressive fantasies, are framed in terms of psychoanalytic ideas. Elements of post-Jungian thought are then drawn into the discussion, re-casting psychoanalytic insights to produce a post-Jungian hermeneutic for reading women's aggressive fantasies (1). In traditional Jungian terms this might be regarded as an examination of how the construction of 'femininity' undermines womens' individuation.

The Inner Critic and Resistance to Identity

While discussing what she refers to as the 'fictioning of femininity', Valerie Walkerdine quotes Jacqueline Rose: '[F]eminism's affinity with psychoanalysis rests above all, I would argue, with [the] recognition that there is a resistance to identity which lies at the very core of psychic life' (Walkerdine, 1990, p.103).

This issue of resistance to identity is crucial when considering the nature of subjective experience, and women's subjectivity in particular since 'woman' has traditionally been constructed as 'other' in cultural discourse. As has been articulated extensively by feminism over the last few decades, to be 'other' in this way is to be at odds with one's subjectivity. One of the common manifestations of this experience was described to me by a patient as 'living life with one eye watching yourself on closed-circuit TV, accompanied by a ruthlessly attacking commentary from an invisible, nameless critic who has the authority of God'.

Experiences associated with living with these phenomena have been documented in feminist literature and are increasingly being taken up by the media and popular psychology, usually in the service of 'women's self-esteem issues'. One of the clearest articulators of the raw phenomena, however, is Doris Lessing who, in 1969, described an interaction between the character Martha Quest and 'her inner critic' thus:

> Martha was crying out - sobbing, groveling; she was being wracked by emotion. Then one of the voices detached itself and came close to her inner ear: it was loud, or it was soft; it was jaunty, or it was intimately jeering, but its abiding quality was an antagonism, a dislike of Martha: and Martha was crying out against it - she needed to apologise, to beg

> for forgiveness, she needed to please and to buy absolution: she was groveling on the carpet, weeping, while the voice uttered accusations of hatred (Demaris Wehr, (1987, p.19) quoting from Doris Lessing, 1969, p.518).

Usually, feminist analysis of this kind of material is given in terms of it being a psychic embed which occurs as a near-inevitable result of women growing up in a patriarchy. The common (feminist and non-feminist) assumption is that if a woman simply learns to 'love herself enough', develop enough 'good internal objects', come to terms with her 'inner masculine', or whatever, either the inner critic will stop, or the woman will somehow be better able to stand up to it (2). I would argue, however, that these experiences are more complex than is usually allowed for and that they say something important about women's experiences of, and fantasies around power, aggression, visibility, agency, and much more besides.

It needs to be made clear that I am not suggesting that such experiences are somehow 'good for women' or 'part of women's essential nature'. Nor am I refuting the notion that, to some degree (possibly in large part), they may be to do with women's experience of life under patriarchy. I am simply more interested in questioning what women can do with these experiences to turn them into something which serves their own interests.

Perhaps the phenomena in question could usefully be regarded as aspects of women's resistance to identity which, as Rose points out, lies at the core of psychic life. Again, this statement is not essentialist, it is simply an attempt to frame observed phenomena in such a way as to make meaningful exploration of them possible.

Splitting and Social Reinforcement of Splits

The resistance to identity which Rose refers to is a discomforting, unsettling, potentially tormenting thing which uproots our attempts to build an illusion of coherence, or makes us suffer for our pains when we try to build it. Here, experience is a coalescing, fragmenting, kaleidescoping uncertainty around identity, with discomfort as a constant and a given.

A way of managing this level of experience is to channel the terror associated with it into socially sanctioned forms backed by the institutions and discursive practices which support and perpetuate them. Thus moving beyond these structures may not be as straightforward as it at first seems. Part of what societal violence towards women offers is a way of locating the instability, danger and madness 'out-there'. None of it is 'in-here', 'inside us', or 'inside me', particularly if 'I' happen to be a member of a socially privileged group. A strong case can be made for the position that women do this as a result of living under a patriarchally defined gender-regime. But that does not facilitate change. It is a position which once understood needs to moved beyond, otherwise it becomes self-victimisation. The question is, how?

The curious thing about female identity is that it is so clearly learnt, a fact which makes it both interesting and disconcerting. Walkerdine points out that Freud commented '[T]he constitution [of the little girl] will not adapt itself to its function [heterosexual femininity] without a struggle (Freud 1933, p.117)', (Walkerdine, 1990, p.88) and Judith Butler (1990) argues that female identity is one of the places in social discourse where the extent to which identity (in this case gender identity) is performance is most obvious. To take the argument further we need to look at work done on how girls learn to be women. Specifically of interest is how girls learn to fabricate an illusion of coherent 'feminine' identity which offers them significant defences against the experiences which arise from a fundamental resistance to identity.

Canalisation of Female Desire and *Jouissance-Like Phenomena*

Walkerdine's work on the overt and covert practices of pedagogy provides a useful illustration of the way in which social practices embedded in gender-discourse canalise experience. Along the lines of Foucault's work on the social construction of the subject, Walkerdine draws out how women's desires are shaped so that they function in the interests

of others (i.e., for a society dominated by male interests) rather than in their own best interests. One of her projects has been to look at the narrative structures offered for the management of desire (and any other strong feelings) in magazines aimed at early adolescent girls.

From her analysis Walkerdine concludes that 'if we want to understand the production of girls as subjects and the production of alternatives for girls, we must pay attention to desire and fantasy. It is no good resorting to a rationalist account which consists simply of changing images and attitudes' (Walkerdine, 1990, p.104). Following this thread of how girls are taught to be girls, Walkerdine looks at how girls are trained to behave in classrooms and the purposes this training serves. She points out that for a classroom to operate in a calm, orderly and smooth way, it is useful to have a number of 'helpful' children (almost invariably girls) in the class. Yet in private interviews:

> Many female teachers openly despise the very qualities of helpfulness and careful, neat work which at the same time they constantly demanded from their pupils, often holding up the work books of such girls as examples, or reprimanding the boys for not behaving like the 'responsible' girls. Yet they would simultaneously present such characteristics in the girls as a problem. Furthermore, it was common for female teachers to dislike intensely the girls who displayed them. They would describe them as 'boring', 'wet', and 'wishy-washy'. Such girls had no 'spark', 'fire', or brilliance'. Yet it is such girls who had become these teachers. When describing themselves as children or making reference to girls who reminded them of themselves, it was precisely such qualities that they discussed (ibid., p.75).

These female teachers are split from their own experience of spark and brilliance. Consequently, they cannot tolerate such qualities in the girls they teach. The transgressive, demanding behaviour generally associated with such qualities is admired when it occurs in boys, but not when it occurs in girls. Such behaviour in girls is 'un-feminine' and (at best) regrettable. At worst it becomes directly threatening and must be stopped by constructing it as inextricably linked with unfeminine, unacceptable traits Walkerdine cites an example of a girl who is regarded by a (male) teacher as ' "interested in ideas and abstract problems", "a great problem solver, natural talent". She is "constantly trying out ideas"; this makes her "lazy, selfish" ' (ibid., p.78).

The demanding, greedy, selfish qualities of such talents in girls are intolerable for these teachers, male and female alike. Girls are supposed to be feminine; that is part of what makes them girls: it is a circular definition. Yet to stay within role is to despise oneself, and to despise others who do the same. At this point we see a link to the phenomenon of the internal critic.

The pleasures of breaking up ideas, smashing through systems of thought, cracking the bones of someone else's work are not seemly for a girl. Wresting a solution from a stubborn and lumpish problem is not acceptable. Things are even worse if the solution is clever or nimble: somehow that implies dubious moral fibre if the protagonist is female.

I would suggest that when we try to produce alternatives for girls we run up against the levels of experience Lacan referred to as *jouissance* (3). Suspending for a moment the debate about the nature and existence of female jouissance, we might start from some simple definitions based on Lacan's later work:

> The symbolic prohibition of enjoyment in the Oedipus complex (the incest taboo) is thus, paradoxically, the prohibition of something which is already impossible; its function is therefore to sustain the neurotic illusion that enjoyment would be attainable if it were not forbidden. The very prohibition creates the desire to transgress it, and jouissance is therefore fundamentally transgressive (Evans, 1996, p.92).
> Lacan develops his classic opposition between jouissance and pleasure, an opposition which alludes to the Hegelian/Kojevian distinction between Genuß (enjoyment) and Lust (pleasure). The pleasure principle functions as a limit to enjoyment; it is a law which commands the subject to 'enjoy as little as possible'. At the same time the subject constantly attempts to transgress the prohibitions imposed on

> his enjoyment, to go 'beyond the pleasure principle'. However, the result of transgressing the pleasure principle is not more pleasure, but pain, since there is only a certain amount of pleasure that the subject can bear. Beyond this limit, pleasure becomes pain, and this 'painful pleasure' is what Lacan calls *jouissance*; '*jouissance* is suffering'. The term *jouissance* thus nicely expresses the paradoxical satisfaction that the subject derives from his symptom, or, to put it another way, the suffering he derives from his own satisfaction (Freud's primary gain from illness') (ibid.)

While the 'closed-circuit TV/critic' phenomenon can be seen as a fantasy attempt to bring the experience of being the object of Foucault's Panopticon gaze under control, the perspective which emerges from the above synopses of Lacan's model offers a different insight. From this point of view such fantasies might become an attempt to have a taboo fantasy about being seen, being the object of fascination, and of being looked on with desire. If the subject matter of the fantasy is taboo, the transgressive impulse at the core of the fantasy has to be converted into something painful, something which prevents fulfillment.

This would seem to fit with the masturbatory, and indeed, unconsummative fantasy of beauty and desirability offered to us by women's magazines. A narrow (to the point of fetishised), fictional account of desirability and beauty is offered to women which is almost universally unobtainable (and from any sane point of view, actually undesirable). With this toy, women can play endlessly with the edges of the potentially transgressive fantasy of being desirable, and suffer mightily for it in the form of disappointment and sense of inadequacy. As with *jouissance*, the suffering and the satisfaction are threaded inextricably together. Thus if feminist discourse is to provide alternative notions of subjectivity for girls, it needs to engage with the neurotic illusion of enjoyment, the nature of its forbiddeness, and the transgressive impulses it invokes.

I am not arguing that women are essentially masochistic and deserve the advertising industry as some sort of cruel play-mate. Indeed Walkerdine's researches into the narrative structures of cartoon stories in adolescent girl's magazines explore how an advertising-receptive female subjectivity is formed. In these stories (taken from mid-1980s magazines), girls' desire and ambition are only tolerable when held on behalf of others, or in the role of supporting others. One of the most commonly recurring themes was of the immensely high moral value placed on girls showing super-human tolerance for cruelty, discomfort and being the object of attack: being 'good' will win through. What is more, what will be won is a paradoxical and impossible prize: a secret sense of goodness at the core of one's being which will be evident to some judging, God-like figure, while unknown to the people one deals with in life, lest it make them uncomfortable, or feel inadequate. Walkerdine's point is that these stories are an example par excellence of how female adolescent desire can be canalised along socially acceptable lines.

My argument is that, in the light of Lacan's analysis, this entwined relationship between desire and suffering is easy to exploit. Unless, that is, one becomes more familiar with the transgressive desires which women usually prefer to let society canalise into shapes which produce sitting ducks as advertising targets. Therein, I would argue, lies a possible response to Walkerdine's question of how might we begin to think about alternative subjectivities for girls.

As Lorraine Gamman and Merja Makinen argue however, feminism has failed to look for an 'unsymbolized signifier that would allow girls access to desire and the symbolic code' (Gamman and Mekinen, 1994, p.108). Consequently, an exploration of the experiences out of which notions of this unsymbolised signifier might develop is called for.

If, as David Miller points out through the work of Barthes, pleasure (*plaisir*) ' "contents, fills, grants euphoria", "does not break with culture", "is linked to what is comfortable, -is connective while *jouissance* imposes as state of loss discomforts unsettles assumptions [leaves] nothing . . . the same" ', (Miller, 1990, p.326) we could say that Walkerdine's school girls are offered by their female teachers a fantasy of plaisir if they learn their roles well and excel within their narrow definition. What is not allowed is the *jouissance* of rigorous engagement with anything, ideas in particular. Clearly excluded is the

kind of engagement that means that nothing is left the same, that what was assumed to be true may get knocked to bits. The taboo for these girls is aggression, most clearly visible here as the kind of aggression which accompanies spirit and brilliance.

Actually, the situation is a little more complex: what is offered as *plaisir* as a reward to those who behave themselves is not quite what it seems. It is not possible to be nice enough, thoughtful enough or kind enough to claim *plaisir* from the 'feminine' role. But here we find ourselves back at the possibility of *jouissance*: the satisfaction derived from the symptom, and the suffering derived from satisfaction. The pursuit of a secret sense of goodness offers endless possibilities for torturing oneself and others, be they with an eating disorder, the self-hating internal critic, or whatever. Thus perhaps the pursuit of *plaisir* is subverted into something which glimpses *jouissance*. The problem is that this is a *jouissance* which cannot be recognised as such: it operates as a perverse passion and accesses the thrill of destruction in a compulsively repetitious and trivialising way.

Female *Jouissance*?

For Lacan, the pleasure that is women's *jouissance* lies in what goes beyond the phallic fantasy of totalization on the part of the male (i.e., lies beyond his fantasy of 'the' woman) (Wright, 1992, p.197). Let us speculate then, that the unsymbolized signifier that would allow women access to desire and the symbolic code lies in the realm of what is outside of the social definition of 'the' woman, where impulses towards selfishness, greed and above all aggression can be mobilised.

In the post-Kleinian world, the notion that the ability to tolerate and respond creatively to one's aggressive impulses is tied to the experience of a sense of agency. If this is accurate, the realm of aggressive fantasy could provide a vehicle for women to develop an increased sense of agency, one of the core interests of the feminist movement.

David Hart provides a useful illustration when he discusses his work with a male client who had a 'serious problem with passive-aggressive behaviour', and who saw himself as 'a victim'.

> This man was on vacation far away from home and from analysis, in fact on a trek in the mountains of Nepal, when a decisive event occurred. He was resting in a mountain pass over an abyss when there walked by him a Sherpa carrying an immense load of baggage. My client had a sudden, almost over-powering urge to push this little man off the pass and into the abyss. He struggled with the temptation and the moment passed: the Sherpa went by. But he was left with a shattering realisation of what he could actually do to another person, not merely, as before, of what others were always doing to him. He had a new and vivid sense of himself *as the agent of his life and not merely as a reactive victim* (Hart, 1997, p.97, emphasis added).

Note the link between an experience of one's own destructive potential and a sense of agency. This agency entails a sense of being able to effect change in one's life and move towards what one wants in a way which is experienced as meaningful. *Sense of agency, based on an awareness of one's own capacity for destructiveness, offers a way out of the position of habitual victim.*

The problem is that, as we have seen, part of the definition of female gender identity hinges on the exclusion of aggression. Indeed the common criticism of feminism is that 'feminists are too butch, too aggressive'. Perhaps, however, these comments (although undoubtedly based on the insecurities of those threatened by women no longer being submissive and docile) have a story to tell. Maybe the problem is not that 'feminism makes women aggressive', but that it has yet to develop mature models of aggression which serve women and help them to develop a sense of agency (4).

To move beyond this is to step into (or, more likely, fling or hurl oneself onto) something which cannot be expressed within the performance of 'feminine' womanhood. Perhaps this *is* female *jouissance*. It certainly lies beyond the socially

circulated phallic fantasy of female identity and where it fits into the 'natural' order of things.

Resistance to Identity Revisited

One of the questions Walkerdine goes on to ask is: '[W]hat is the struggle which results from the attempt to be or live as a unitary identity?' (Walkerdine, 1990, p.103). As has been discussed, aggressive fantasy seems to be one of the places where women refuse their role. It is here that the transgressive, disruptive qualities associated with jouissance start to become visible, implying links between the capacity for aggressive fantasy and sense of individuality, if not agency.

How does resistance to identity actually manifest? Giles Clark, while exploring the complex, unconscious aims which motivate people to investigate therapy outlines the following:

> . . . by 'change' I mean the desire to change impotent, stuck, defensive and/or repetitive patterns. Under this there is a desire not to change even to have one's neurotic defences affirmed and strengthened. .. . By 'understanding' I mean the desire to have another person to see into and know one at depth. Under this, as Winnicott says, there is a desire not to be seen, to be unknown and hidden, to maintain a precious secret core. . . . By 'self-preservation' I mean the desire not to fall to bits, not to lose control or go mad. To preserve a sense of self and self-esteem. Under this there is a need to collapse, to lose control and to break down.. . . The fourth motivating aim for seeking psychotherapy is the (fantastic) desire for an absolute and eternal loving relationship, to be loved and to love absolutely and for ever. Hopefully, this omnipotent, infantile illusion . . . will be challenged and transformed by the disillusioning realities and necessities of human nature and relations (Clark, 1995, p.345).

From this we catch a glimpse of the mass of tensions which underlie not only the decision whether or not to embark on therapy, but perhaps the whole of identity.

Dissociability

Since resistance to identity is our core concern, theories which provide ways of viewing this as not being necessarily pathological will be of interest. Gary Hartman comments that Freud was aware of the dissociative split in libido, but saw it as pathological and pathogenic, while Jung saw it as normal and the natural prerequisite for the movement of psychic energy. Clark's comments (above) imply a post-Jungian acceptance of non-pathological refusal of psychological coherence, with part of the task of analysis being gaining some consciousness of it.

While Freud saw dissociation as pathological, the dissociationists who influenced Jung saw it as an exaggeration of the normal (Meier, 1992, p.201). This difference in perspectives has powerful implications and Sonu Shamdasani has argued that locating Jung as primarily a Freudian thinker who broke away misses the point of much of Jung's work. Shamdasani traces the influence of Janet's work on Jung (through Flournoy) and offers strong evidence that Jung's model was far closer to the French dissociationist tradition than it was to Freud's work (Shamdasani, 1998b).

Carl Meier points out that 'many impressions are obliterated in the moment of perception on account of their incompatibility with the habitual attitude of the conscious mind; this seems to occur automatically and unconsciously' (Meier, 1992, p.205). These ego-distonic impression cluster together to create centres of 'Not-I-ness' in the psyche (complexes), hence Jung's taking up of two principles in line with the dissociationist perspective: '1) recognizing and attending to the "Not-I" and, 2) allowing the time necessary for the characteristics and personality of the "Not-I" to emerge' (Hartman).

Thus for Jung, the psyche was fundamentally dissociable. The benefit of this model was that, as Richard Noll argues, it allowed the 'expansion of the personality through greater differentiation' of its contents; it was seen as 'an adaptive move', but one which 'creates an inevitable instability' (Noll, 1992, p.213). At this point we can begin to see why the

dissociationist model of the psyche which Jung inherited and developed might offer something to a feminist project based on a fundamental resistance to identity. Of particular interest is the fact that this is a model with an inherent instability at the core of it, which is seen as having creative potential. Hence we could say that the elements of complex-based psychological experience we are interested in are the (meaningful) symptoms of the struggle between resistance to identity and the need to create a level of coherent identity (or at least the illusion of it) which permits day-to-day life to be engaged with. The post-Jungian, dissociationist perspective on this struggle is that for normal psychological development, relationships need to develop between the 'I' and the 'Not-I'. Furthermore, elements of the 'Not-I' exist in clusters, each of which has something akin to a personality of its own. As an example, we might re-consider the man on the pass, wanting to push the Sherpa to his death. The impulse to do this was way outside of the man's 'I', but 'I' needed to come into relationship with the impulses of this part of the 'Not-I' (and the destructive character of it) in order to move forward and mature.

This way of thinking about the 'Not-I' offers an imaginal embodiment of it, capturing the fleshy compulsiveness of the impulses in question. Clearly a danger is that the 'Not-I' may become over-characterised to such a degree that sense of responsibility for it is undermined. Avoiding that extreme, however, provides a model in which instability and conflict have to co-habit with coherence within identity.

Change, Death and Destruction

To lose or abandon the struggle for a unitary identity completely is to move into madness or a form of death: death of the 'I' that wrestles with what it is to be me. To become over-identified with a unitary identity is to become trapped in a fiction. That fiction also becomes death unless something interrupts it. Given that the stakes of this struggle are so high, its presence is likely to be visible as emotionally highly-charged, split-off fantasies, images, terrors and pleasures. It is a battle which, by its nature, usually takes place on the edges of consciousness so that it appears primarily in dreams, fantasies, hallucinations which take up the conflicts, cracks or gaps in the apparent continuity of the fabric of identity.

Here we return again to Walkerdine's initial comments on the psychoanalytic insight into resistance to identity, and add a Lacanian-psychoanalytic elaboration which links *jouissance* with death.

> The death drive is the name given to that constant desire in the subject to break through the pleasure principle towards the thing [the object of desire] and a certain excess of *jouissance*; thus jouissance is 'the path towards death' . . . Insofar as the drives are attempts to break through the pleasure principle in search of *jouissance*, every drive is a death drive (Evans, 1996, p.92).

Surrender to the transgressive drive of resistance to identity is a form of death; it is also a search for jouissance.

A post-Jungian dissociationist-based reading of the situation of the man on the pass might run as follows. Change was affected in the protagonist by a flash of fantasy which broke through his notion of coherent self-identity (i.e., 'victim'). What was particularly important about this fantasy was that in an instant the protagonist became acquainted with his desire to destroy. Not only that, but the desire he encountered was the desire to destroy another human being in an act of senseless violence. The crucial thing about this fantasy is that it was *not* acted upon it was reflected on, and the 'Not-I' it contained was explored. Quite apart from the moral unacceptability of acting on such an impulse, action would have destroyed the possibility of psychological change. It was precisely because the protagonist had done enough analytic work for the fantasy to be able to break though and then be sat with that change occurred.

In terms of providing a theory to frame this, we might look to the work of Sabina Spielrein, who argued that destruction is the cause of coming into being. Her argument stems from the observation that the sexual drive contains the instinct for destruction, inextricably linked with the instinct for transformation (Spielrein, 1994, p.155).

Thus one cannot experience the desire to create without experiencing the desire to destroy. This is what Walkerdine's female teachers could not bear in their girl pupils, and it is why aggressive fantasy is so important to women. It is something which Jung refers to:

> women often pick up tremendously [in therapy] when they are allowed to think all the disagreeable things which they had denied themselves before (via Douglas, 1990, p.77) (5).

I would suggest, however, that if the client who wanted to push the Sherpa off the track had been female, few indeed would be the analysts who would follow Jung's dictum and work with it in the productive way Hart did with his male client. More commonly, women are pathologised for their anger or elaborate justification is given for it, rendering women's aggressive fantasies an aberration.

The Not-I Within A Post-Jungian Relationship to Other

Renos Papadopolous argues that 'Other' was a core problematic for Jung, (Papadopoulos, 1992, p.390) and one of the post-Jungian theorists most explicitly engaged with this question of theorising the nature of the experience of Other is Paul Kugler. He too uses the work of Lacan to re-frame some of Jung's insights so that they can then be used from a post-structuralist, and sometimes post-modern perspective (Kugler, 1997, p.83).

The aspect of Kugler's work of specific interest here is his discussion of what (or who) is the subject of dreams. He argues that the traditional view of self-reflection is an entrapping one: '[T]he imagos we see in our dreams as Other reflect those aspects of the psyche estranged from consciousness' (Kugler 1993) (6).

Kugler's notion of the Other that is reflected back employs a version of the traditional Jungian concept of 'Self'. But perhaps there is another answer which offers more to a feminist exploration. Elsewhere in Kugler's work, this is hinted at when he argues that:

> Through the acquisition of language the child is ushered into [a] .. . matrix of meaning relations. The importance of this linguistic entry into the collective unconscious cannot be over-emphasised. For in acquiring linguistic competence, the infant (Lat. *infari,* not speaking) has to learn to speak to the world through a network of . . . related signifiers: language.
> The significance of the linguistic matrix lies in the fact that it is a *system of unconscious meaning relations organized in advance of any individual ego*. The child has to accept the collectively assigned meanings in the linguistic matrix; in doing so, he becomes a meaningful entity himself within the psychological matrix of societal meaning relations (original emphasis) (Kugler, 1983, p.6).

This model brings us back towards a Lacanian view of the world. The Other whom we encounter threaded though our subjectivity and find mirrored back to us when we look at our dreams is the Other embedded in the very language which furnishes us with subjectivity. Kugler describes this as an 'alien presence [which] creates a sense of *alterity within the psyche'* (original emphasis) (Kugler, 1993, p.7).

Kugler chooses to anchor his work to a notion of archetypal structures. Lacan takes his back to a notion of the unconscious being structured like a language, reflecting the phallic/symbolic code. My aim is to re-present Kugler's ideas without their anchoring archetypal context in order to leave an opening for a notion of a self-structure such as Andrew Samuels' polycephalous network (Samuels, 1989, p.40) (7). This, in turn, may provide a response to the feminist criticisms of psychology's reliance on internal structures which are singular and do not reflect the internal plurality of centres of concern and consciousness many women describe as being a feature of their interiority (Baker Miller, 1991).

Refusing to explicitly anchor the model to a wider universal structure also means that a choice can be made to link it to a process, instead of an entity. Although both Jung's archetypes and Lacan's symbolic order can be re-read as processes, it is difficult to do so given the degree to which they have been reified in both general discourse and by their original protagonists. My interest is in linking this notion of the 'Not-I' to an enterprise which has no single fixed base.

Butler's model of gender production offers an insight into how such a process might work. She sees gender as the result of a discourse which has been re-iterated so many times that it *looks* 'natural': it looks as if things were ever thus, and ever more shall be so. Mandy Merck makes a similar point when she argues that 'gay is to straight *not* as copy is to original, but as copy is to copy' (Merck, 1993, p.5). Butler also moves to disrupt the notion of fixed sex/culturally determined gender, proposing a understanding in which there is no 'natural order' (8). Part of the value of Butler's version of this model is that she does not naively propose that we can therefore invent what we like and call it gender identity. Her argument is that gender identity is performed within a social discourse which over many reiterations has mapped out and grooved a range of options.

Butler's model offers a perspective from which an individual can choose to *disrupt or subvert* the gender categories dominant in their culture, but not step outside them or overthrow them. Gender is one of the basic categories on which identity as we know it is predicated. As such, Butler's complex constructivist position is that it is not given 'by nature', but is part of a discourse which we are inserted into at birth and whose momentum of tradition we have great difficulty resisting. Thus, gender categories have such a weight of cultural discourse behind them that they look 'natural', but in fact they are imitations of imitations of imitations . . . *ad infinitum.*

Using this model, we can move Kugler's insight in a feminist direction and bring further to the fore what Kugler himself articulates when he quotes Worf: 'the unconscious of language is actually dominating our consciousness. When we speak, we experience the 'claim' that language makes upon us. For words come to us already embedded in phonetic clusters and pregnant with signification . . .' (Kugler, 1983, p.1).

Thus, the 'Not-I' within can be seen not just as a product of language, but as a product of the massive density of cultural history and discourse embedded in that language. This, in turn, anchors us to community, a key vector of identity, and part of what constitutes a sense of unique subjectivity. That is why getting rid of the 'Not-I' within is not only ill-advised, but impossible if subjectivity itself is to be maintained.

Omnipotence and Impotence

In order to explore further the links between the 'Not-I' and aggressive fantasy, we return to Clark's comments on the conflicting impulses which bring a person into therapy. These might be summarised as the desire for, and seeking out the fantasy of/experience of both omnipotence and impotence, and simultaneously, the terror and avoidance of those experiences and fantasies. Marrying this with Rose's psychoanalytic insight that at the core of psychic life there is a resistance to identity, we arrive at a view of the human condition which sees the process of entering into *any relationship* as a matter of managing the conflicting fantasies and impulses associated with omnipotence and impotence. As with the dissociationist model, pathology is a difference of degree, not of kind.

Joseph Redfearn locates his discussion of omnipotent impulses and experiences of impotence in an exploration of the explosive, bomb-like nature of the self, and the creative and destructive aspects of that.

He makes the point that when it comes to potentially explosive clashes:

> . . . it helps to know that a change in attitude towards the clash could transform the fear into a revelation, but it does not help all that much. Talk is cheap, and such a pronouncement is mere talk. The building up of strength and capacity

> to the point where the union of the relevant opposites can be creatively contained may take a great deal of work (Redfearn, 1992, p.113).

So for Redfearn, considerable work needs to be done before this risk can be taken, if it is to have any real chance of being something other than destructive. *Again, it is likely to be no mere accident that Hart's patient was in analysis during the period when he was able to first think creatively about his own destructive impulses.* By doing analytic work, this man was able to access something crucial about how his own fantasies of impotence (seeing himself as victim) and omnipotence (pushing the Sherpa to his death) operated, and how the way he had managed them had become polarised (*only* victim), stuck (*always* victim), and therefore life-constricting.

The wider point is that this was possible through aggressive fantasy, and such fantasy can provide a 'window' though which to view how we manage our impulses towards and fantasies about omnipotence and impotence. What is visible through this is also how we go about making our psychic world inhabitable in the midst of the tensions and conflicts between identity and core resistance to identity and what compromises we make to create a livable psychic space. What also starts to emerge is the price of some of those compromises, particularly when they become extensive and habitual, as in the case of Hart's patient and his victim role.

Donald Winnicott argued that the impulses towards creativity and destructiveness were inextricable, and that the experience of a sense of healthy omnipotence is necessary. The position being offered here takes this further and argues that a sense of impotence is also necessary. Furthermore, along the lines of Samuels' ideas of gender certainty and gender confusion needing to co-exist and compete, I would take up Clark's point and suggest that a sense of omnipotence, impotence and equality need to coexist and compete if life is to be engaged with creatively. Although consideration of these matters can be undertaken from many psychological perspectives, selecting one which resonates with them is likely to throw up more penetrating insights.

Anxiety About Aggression

Redfearn sees 'Jung as struggling hard with his own omnipotent sub-personalities [with the consequence that] his psychology is omnipotence-kindly, although he was fully aware of the dangers of inflation' (Redfearn, 1992, p.136). This comment alone indicates matters of interest: 'empowerment' (i.e., not experiencing oneself as fundamentally and invariably impotent in the face of life) is an issue of direct interest to feminist theorists.

Considering these questions in the light of Jung's own experience of psychological impotence and omnipotence we might consider the comments made by Winnicott, who, in his review of Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections,* traces a complex interaction between creativeness and destructiveness in Jung's work.

Furthermore, although (as Walkerdine points out) Winnicott's choice is to theorise attachment and bonding at the cost of desire and passion, (Walkerdine, 1990, p.73) Winnicott's interest does encompass the internal tensions which lie close to madness and which are acknowledged to be vast and terrifying in all of us. He also observes that:

> Eventually [Jung] reached the centre of his self. As I have suggested earlier, this seems to have been satisfying for him, and yet somewhat of a blind alley if looked at as an achievement for a remarkable and truly big personality. In any case he was preoccupied with the mandala, which from my point of view is a defensive construct, a defence against that spontaneity which has destruction as its next-door neighbour. The mandala is a truly frightening thing for me because of its absolute failure to come to terms with destructiveness, and with chaos, disintegration, and the other madnesses. It is an obsessional flight from disintegration. Jung's description of his last decades spent in search of the centre of his self seems to me to be a description of a slow and wearisome closing down of a lifetime of splendid endeavor. The centre of the self is a relatively useless concept. *What is more important is to reach the basic forces of*

> *individual living, and to me it is certain that if the real basis is creativeness the very next thing is destruction* (Winnicott, 1992, p.327, emphasis added).

Taking this question of destructiveness further, Elio Frattoroli, in an imaginary dialogue between himself and Polly Young-Eisendrath, raises the point that Jung had very little to say about anxiety, while it was Freud's 'lifelong preoccupation'. Frattoroli also speculates:

> . . . maybe Jung's mysticism was never really a fully integrated experience. Maybe the reason it always had a near-psychotic edge to it was because it also represented a flight from profound anxiety which he didn't recognise as such. Probably anxiety about his own destructiveness more than his own sexuality (Frattaroli, 1997, p.180).

This anxiety about destructiveness (and creativity) is of direct relevance to the theorising of women's experience. If Winnicott and Frattoroli's arguments are valid, there is a high probability that some of the clinical phenomena the Jungian and post-Jungian frame draws on will be particularly rich in the kind of material which pertains to the theorising of women's aggressive fantasies. *It is also highly likely that the kind of experiences in question will also be the ones most heavily defended against in much Jungian and post-Jungian theorising, though that too will be of interest, since it may tell us something about what is intolerable about such experiences, and how they are defended against.*

Samuels uses the phenomenon Jung referred to as enantiodromia as a tactic for turning what is problematic or stuck into something useful (Samuels, 1992b, p.18). Enantiodromia is the reversal that occurs when something is taken so far that turns into its opposite. Reading this in a post-Jungian, non-essentialistic way 'the opposite' means simply 'what is experienced by the individual as opposite' (rather than taking on a notion of eternal, universal, given opposites). Thus what might easily be viewed as theoretical weakness in the work of Jung and the post-Jungians can be turned around to see what strength might be embedded in that weakness. The attraction of doing this is that it is a parallel to the overall project aims: to develop a means by which women can take what they experience as frightening and weakness-producing and see what strength and agency they can draw from it.

Furthermore, as James Jarrett points out, Jung was fascinated by the work and life of Frederick Nietzsche, which Jung saw as being a story of power and catastrophe (Jarrett, 1990). In this context we could re-frame that as a fascination with omnipotence and the disastrous consequences of failing to navigate the boundaries between omnipotent fantasy and attempting to live it as reality (9). This thread of fascination which runs through the Jungian and post-Jungian project has been successfully picked up and exploited by Noll, (Noll, 1994) in his accusations that Analytical Psychology is a cult, with Jung as the cult leader. Shamdasani has done the work of disproving the key elements of Noll's purported evidence, (Shamdasani, 1998) but the fascination with these matters which post-Jungians have inherited needs to be discussed explicitly. The push towards this has been under way for some time in the work of Samuels. His interest in questions of power, politics, pluralism, competition and aggression is evident, and the way he has gone about theorising them forms a substantial intellectual backdrop to this paper.

A final clue to the possible mutual value of a meeting between feminism and post-Jungian studies comes from a comment by Wolfgang Giegerich while discussing the question of Jungian/post-Jungian group identity: '[O]ur identity is not based on some contents of doctrine, not on anything positive, but rather on a crack, a plunge, a hole in that infinitely unknown which is a complete x even when it has been experienced and has taken on a concrete shape' (Giegerich, 1992, p.402). These thoughts would seem to link back and add another thread to our explorations of Rose's comments about resistance to identity as a fundamental aspect of psychological being.

Destructiveness

Returning to the question of the struggle with creativeness and destructiveness, Redfearn shares Winnicott's dislike of the mandala as a symbol of 'wholeness' saying that for him '[mandalas] represent to some degree a disembodiment of feeling' and that '[T]he mandala and other circular containing, and defending images reflect the need of the nucleus of the self to become mobilized when disintegration is feared' (Redfearn, 1992, p.149).

To flesh out this criticism, we return to Winnicott who, while discussing Jung's childhood, comments that:

> Jung describes his playing (which had to be done very much alone until he went to school) as a constant building and re-building, followed always by the staging of an earthquake and the destruction of the building. What we cannot find in the material Jung provides is imaginative destruction followed by a sense of guilt and then by construction. It seems that the thing that was repressed in Jung's early infancy, that is, before the infantile breakdown, was primitive aggression . . . (Winnicott, 1992, p.326).

The situation is, however, more complex than Winnicott allowed for. Mario Trevi discerns two tendencies in Jung, the first being that of a systems builder and the second being that of a systems breaker, (Trevi, 1992, p.357) and Samuels points out that the 'rhythm of combining and separating is of special interest to post Jungians' (Samuels, 1992, p.338) (10).

Jung may not have explicitly addressed himself to theorising these dynamics, but a deep struggle with them runs through his work, and through that of some post-Jungians. It would seem fair to say that Jung's own work was born of a struggle to live and die with his own impulses, experiences and anxieties around omnipotence, impotence, and destructiveness, and has given rise to a tradition which has inherited a particular kind of focus on these problems.

Winnicott has a sense of the dangerous, problematic nature of the experiences under discussion and argues that Jung's personal story as one of childhood schizophrenia and that Jung's 'personality displays a strength of a kind which enabled him to heal himself' (Winnicott, 1992, p.320). Whether or not these observations about childhood mental illness are accurate, Winnicott's comments on the shortcomings of the Jungian model sit well with Redfearn's analysis of Jung's interpretation of one of his own dreams. Redfearn writes (of one of Jung's dreams):

> This dream explains to me why the world-destructive, exile aspects of the coniunctio the nuclear bomb aspects, as it were have not been fully explored by Jung. The work on the coniunctio, the mandala, the self, and the individuation process perhaps quite rightly emphasize wholeness and harmony. Blackness, darkness, putrefaction are acknowledged fully by him, but the insane, bombing destructiveness that we perforce have to address, not only in some of our young people but in ourselves, is not. This has been left to our generation. Jung had visions of the blood and filth of war but he projected that onto the canvas of history, as I am saying we have all done (Redfearn, 1992, p.220).

Drawing these comments together and extending them in the direction of this paper, a key aspect of the post-Jungian task is to deal with the consequences of Jung's anxiety about his own destructiveness. This entails a closer engagement with the mad, bomb-like elements of the psyche, as well as its more sadistic and colder counterpart, torturous cruelty. Feminism's task in developing a mature model of women's aggression and anger would seem to be operating in a space which bears close parallels to the post-Jungian dilemma described.

Ambivalent Connections

Exploration of this de-literalised boundary between the I and the 'Not-I' through women's aggressive fantasies also, curiously enough, becomes an encounter with the notion and experience of love, since as Redfearn puts it 'love demands the dissolution of [the I/Not-I] boundary'. This is not to say that dissolving the 'I'/'Not-I' boundary is the same thing as love, it is simply to observe that this process takes us into a complex relationship with the experience of love (11).

Taking up Lacan's comment: '[A]nd why not interpret one face of the Other, the God face, as supported by feminine *jouissance*?', (Wright, 1992, p.157) we might speculate that something emerges in women's aggressive fantasies which might have potential to touch levels of awe, horror, power, fascination and ecstasy which have traditionally been regarded as religious experiences. In this context, Lacan's comment can be taken to imply that elements of women's fantasies about impotence, omnipotence and aggression and the experiences of dissolution of the boundaries/interface between 'I' and 'Not-I' (with its associations with *jouissance*) coincide with what have traditionally been regarded as experiences of God, or, at the very least, of love.

Entwined in this is, however, anxiety about aggression. If Frattoroli's earlier comments are right about the 'near-psychotic edge' to Jung's mysticism functioning out of the need to deny such anxiety, it is here that we should be most careful. Perhaps it is this which accounts for much of the attraction of Jung's work for 'New Age' thinkers (Tacey, 1998).

Such anxiety and flight into defence can be made use of, playing back, as it does, into Clark's insight that self-preservation is a struggle involving:

> . . . the desire not to fall to bits, not to lose control or go mad. To preserve a sense of self and self-esteem. Under this there is a need to collapse, to lose control and breakdown (Clark, 1995, p.345).

Thus aggressive fantasy and the anxiety it produces can provide us with a means of exploring the edges of identity, the places where resistance to identity and refusal to slip into role are most visible. The canalisation of women's desire through social discourse is structured so that one of the points of access to these realms is, for women, fantasies or actions which are imaginally and literally self-destructive or O/other-destructive.

It is out on these edges that encounters with the desire to collapse, lose control and break down set the parameters for spontaneous, flexible identity. Likewise, it is here that fantasies of being destroyed and of destroying oneself and/or others lay the foundations for a sense of agency and the responsibilities entailed in exercising it. Through post-Jungian insights into the creative potential of psychic dissociability, this realm could also provide a breakthrough point for feminist thought and ways of thinking about women's experience of interiority in general.

Notes

1. The ghosts of the early Jungian women haunt this work, in particular that of Marie-Louise Von Franz. To them I owe the recognition that certain imaginal phenomena are both commonplace and crucial in the lives of many women. Personally, however, I find the values and philosophical heritage which the concept of 'animus' (negative or otherwise) is shot through with to be unacceptable.

2. The failure of the assertiveness training movement to engage with these dilemmas is discussed fully by D. Cameron (1994/95).

3. Lacanian psychoanalysis is not the theoretical core of this paper. Since, however, there is so little pre-existing research on the topic under investigation, I have appropriated terminology and ideas from other disciplines. The nature of the task of trying to map what is currently largely a psychological blank-spot will necessitate pushing existing concepts and terms beyond the boundaries they were originally defined within. I am aware of the Lacanian use of the term *jouissance* to describe something which relates (primarily) to male experience, but have chosen to use the term in connection to female experience since it is a term which create some sense of the transgressive pleasures I am trying to discuss.

4. Kathleen Woodward makes a related point in her article Anger . . . and Anger: From Freud to Feminism, where she discusses the problems of ' "righteous", habit forming anger':

Anger as an 'outlaw' emotion (Jagger) is appropriate when associated with the position of the oppressed. But as we grow older, relations of authority almost inevitably shift. For feminists in the academy, power relations have undergone an indisputable sea change in the last fifteen years. Many women who entered the academy under the banner of the politics of anger find themselves today in positions of authority, responsible to many others. The title of a recent talk by Scheman, 'On Waking Up One Morning and Finding We are Them,' gestures towards this phenomenon. For this generation, which is my generation, 'righteous,' habit-forming anger, once understood as a 'right', can take on the shape of abusive arrogance. 'Anger' may be appropriate as a tool of politicisation but after this inaugurated period in time flat-out anger is a blunt instrument. Expressions of anger in public discourse (in essays, in debate) can have very different consequences from expressions of anger in the close quarters of the classroom, for example, where flat-out anger can produce a flashpoint, escalating personal conflict. Thus we need a historical perspective on the uses of anger. If the assertion of the authority of anger in the academic community (the humanities in particular) has had enabling consequences at a certain point in time, that time has largely passed. The paradigm of oppressor-oppressed, once so useful to feminism, is producing serious consequences of its own in terms of generational politics in feminism. With this paradigm in hand, younger women in the academy, for example, analyze their position in relation to older women 'in power' as that of oppressed, their anger authorized by their epistemological privilege of being a student or an assistant professor. Never mind that the general paradigm of oppressor-oppressed is inappropriate in this case. Certainly from this perspective 'anger' senselessly divided women from one another, creating smaller, oppositional groups. This is indeed a serious consequence of the politics of the authority of anger (p.92).

I quote Woodward's work at length as it captures something of the problems of contemporary feminist praxis, and also illustrates the issue under question: how might we go about generating a mature theory of aggression (which would include anger) which serves women's interests?

5. I have never actually been able to find Douglas's reference in Jung's own text. I have tried to locate the copy of the Visions seminars she refers to in *The Woman in The Mirror,* without success (she gives the reference as *Jung: Visions Seminars,* p.413). Recently I purchased a copy of the *Visions Seminars* edited by Douglas herself but have (as yet) been unable to track the reference as it might translate to that edition. I would be most grateful if any reader is able to supply the full reference (date of publication, publisher, editor and page or paragraph number).

6. Kugler comments that imagos: perform '. . .a synthetic function, integrating both external sensory experience with internal psychic reactions. The significant point is that the imago is not simply a reproduction of the outer world (that is a copy of an historical event), but rather, a psychic production' and generally refers to Jung 'having adopted Kant's productive view of imaging' (Kugler, 1993). Support for Jung's position from the findings of contemporary neurology, as well as a discussion of the limitations of the use of Jung's position by some post-Jungians is given by Samuels (1989). One of the important points which emerges in this discussion is that we do not experience imagery directly, but that the ego is constantly changing its position ' as it confronts shifting patterns of imagery . . . consciousness is as labile as its objects' (Samuels, p.44, 1989).

From the point of view of this thesis, the crucial comments from Kugler are that:

> [The] model of self-reflection found in classical psychology and philosophical epistemology works from the assumption that self-reflection is a mirror reflection. The subject-imago being objectively reflected upon is symmetrical (identical) to the subject doing the reflecting. This model of reflexivity adopts the logic of physical reflection. When applied to psychology, the process keeps the reflecting subject always caught in the solipsism of ego consciousness.

. . . Self-reflection in Jungian depth psychology is a process through which the personality turns back on itself in an asymmetrical fashion. This provides a way out of the philosophical solipsism and therapeutic narcissism inherent in the

humanistic model. The mirror at work in the Jungian hermeneutic does not reflect the self-same face. Rather it mirrors back the face of the Other (1993).

7. Andrew Samuels, comments that:

Lipnack and Stamps suggest several ideograms that capture the essence of network as the word is used in its contemporary social or organizational sense. As with pluralism, network offers us both a metaphor for personality and an instrument for monitoring activity within the personality. Once again, the political/social lexicon is relevant for depth psychology (p.40, 1989).

The example of a segmented/polycephalous/ideological/network is given (SPIN) which has fuzzy boundaries. Samuels quotes Lipnack and Stamps:

[C]onnections based on shared values are bound to wax and wane as circumstances change for individuals and society. Just as we cannot enumerate our personal network, which in any case would change by tomorrow, so a group network rarely knows the extent of its membership influence and resources (p.41, 1989).

Samuels then goes on to point out that:

It is not hard to see how the psychology in and of this model of social organisation resonates with what has been proposed so far. A pluralistic psychology is polycephalous; the moral factor constantly intrudes; we never completely know the extent of our inner 'membership, influence and resources' they are unconscious (ibid.).

This pluralistic model is not without critics and Alexander McCurdy (1990) raises questions about the 'shadow' of pluralism in his review of Samuels' book.

8. Butler argues that:

Categories of true sex, discrete gender, and specific sexuality have constituted the stable point of reference for a great deal of feminist theory and politics. These constructs of identity serve as the points of epistemic departure from which theory emerges and politics itself is shaped. In the case of feminism, politics is ostensibly shaped to express the interests, the perspectives 'of women'. But is there a political shape to 'women,' as it were, that precedes and prefigures the political elaboration of their interests and epistemic point of view? How is that identity shaped, and is it a political shaping that takes the very morphology and boundary of the sexed body as ground, surface, or site of cultural inscription? What circumscribes that site as 'the female body'? Is 'the body' or 'the sexed body' the firm foundation on which gender and systems of compulsory sexuality operate? Or is 'the body' itself shaped by political forces with strategic interests in keeping the body bounded and constituted by the markers of sex? (pp.128-129, 1990).

Butler's complex, anti-hetrosexist position on the performative nature of sex, gender and desire seems to me to be richer in possibilities for feminism than the often adopted position that sex is a biological given, while gender is a cultural construction.

9. One of the other recurrent Jungian and post-Jungian interests is the myth of Dionysus. It is particularly interesting that this is a story in which Dionysus, god of wine (Baccus to the Romans), and 'the loosener' is eventually torn to pieces by his female followers, the Maneads or Bacchea (see Hubback, 1990). Questions of the extent to which Greek myth is itself patriarchal notwithstanding, it is interesting to note the centrality of this story in which women tear two men (Penthus and Dionysus) apart in ecstatic frenzy. Perhaps this is the ultimate statement about the nature of female jouissance, or perhaps it tells us more about male fears of what female jouissance might be like.

10. Samuels comments:

In the SAP (Society of Analytical Psychology, London), where I trained, there has been a vogue to focus on Jung's person problems, for example his supposed infantile psychosis: the idea sanctioned by Winnicott (1964) as vitiating the utility of his ideas. Such personalization of the issues is something I have tried to avoid; psychobiography should not be decisive in theoretical dispute (1997).

In many ways, this present work could be accused of something similar. The obvious difference is that here, psychobiography is not being used to resolve a theoretical dispute, but as a means of illustrating a point which would stand without it (albeit a little less strongly).

11. It must be born in mind, however, that the 'I'/'Not-I' boundary is actually an illusory figure of speech a convenient way of talking about what is within and sits close to one's sense of identity and what is within and feels as if it cannot belong to oneself. Furthermore, as family and group therapy practices and feminist therapy have pointed out, 'I' is not singular: we exist in complex inter-relationships to other people, social structures, places and institutions. Individuals exist only in contexts, and context frames the discourse through which what is 'I' and what is 'Not-I'/Other is defined for and by the individual. Thus these 'boundaries' are not literal, although we tend to necessarily hold strongly and defend our views and experiences of them. As Kugler (1993) points out, quoting Octavio Paz 'Otherness is above all the simultaneous perception that we are others without ceasing to be what we are and that, without ceasing to be where we are, our true being is in another place' (Kugler's reference is to Paz p.245, 1975).

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