6

Soul Work

We have noted Freud's pessimism about human nature, and how he denied the supremacy of culture or rationality over instinctual life, which events in the late 1930s, seemed to confirm. Much earlier, in the first decades of the twentieth century, Freud fell out with Carl Gustav Jung over the primacy of sexual and aggressive instincts or drives. Jung developed a system of ideas where libido was a kind of broader life force, rather than purely sexual, which he saw as central to journeys of transformation. Jung, in such terms, was more the optimist, and his influence on adult education (Levinson 1976) and in the transformative learning literature (Dirkx 1997) has been greater.

Jung, for whatever reason, eagerly embraced the human potential for transformation. There are two core ideas in the application of Jungian theory to educational processes: transformative learning is a kind of 'soul work', and a search to integrate different parts of the psyche in processes of what he called individuation. Like the feminine and masculine parts of who we are, the conscious and unconscious, rationality and spirituality, good and bad, being special and ordinary. We illustrate this, in the second part of the chapter, with the story of Daniel Cohen, a Jewish GP working in inner London.

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Jungian theory is rooted in the need for every person to recognize and harmonise polarities: individuation is an ongoing composition of opposites, in ways that are life enhancing. We are living dilemmas, always struggling, and our disorientation is to be worked on as part of becoming the person we can be. Harmonising opposites, in such terms, became very popular in the 1970s, far beyond psychotherapy. It inspired movements and communities that were striving for human flourishing, peace, and ecology: in fact, the theory spoke to many in its apparent simplicity, opening possibilities for a positive integration of who we are; for hope, self-development, and flourishing. Laura has experienced, over more than ten years, in Italy, a form of biographically rooted learning based on Jung as well as Ancient Greek philosophy (Hadot 1995, 2002). This happens in a community of practice called *Philo*, where philosophers, psychoanalysts, educators, academics and teachers meet and collaborate, in order to co-evolve in a culture of transformative practice, inspired by Jung's soul work.

These practices involve recourse to art, literature and theatre as presentational languages that sustain transformation, beyond words and discourse. Jung himself, like Freud, drew on literature, myth and art to make his case. He engaged with various writers, like Dante Alighieri, the Italian author of the Divina Commedia. Jung felt that Dante's ideas emanated from the same creative, universal spirit, working over millennia, to energise and guide our journeys. Freud was more the scientific rationalist who resisted what he saw to be the vagueness, mysticism and the esoteric in Jung's work. He thought that Jung avoided the difficult and disturbing place of sexuality and sexual competitiveness in human life. For Jung libido was broader than a sexual drive, more of a life force within every one of us.

Jung, Libido and the Divine in Us

Jung's paper *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* was originally published in the *International Journal of Psycho-analysis* in 1911 (Sayers 2003). Janet Sayers, an academic and psychoanalyst, notes how he developed the idea—borrowed from William James (1890)—of two

types of thinking: the logical and the symbolic. The former was more directed and focused, adaptive to reality, while the latter was freer, associative, and guided by unconscious motives. It gave access to primitive and archaic forms of thought, as Jung illustrated in a case study of a young American woman and spiritual researcher, Daisy Miller. She fell in love with a naval officer and found herself writing automatically on a journey from southern Italy to Switzerland. She wrote about God, in a poem and play, driven by libidinal energy. She had diverse associations in her writing encompassing a kaleidoscope of characters from Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Haydn, Longfellow and Wagner. These authors, according to Jung, were conduits for archetypal patterns deeply rooted in ancient forces to help us on our way. Sexual love, or libido, or what Jung called psychic energy, could be transformed into glimpses of divine experience, or the god-image. There is a psychic force within that has potential divinity; in Miller's case, the archetypal patterns led to worshiping the spirit of life (Sayers 2003).

Jung and Freud increasingly differed over the nature and purpose of the libido. For Jung, the libido could be transformed by encounters with the divine, or oneness of creation, working within, which included encounters with various spiritual guides. Freud thought the God idea and notions of the divine were a kind of splitting of our messy, mixed psychologies, and projecting our own potential for goodness into 'God'. We needed to face up to potentially divine as well as difficult, hellish aspects of ourselves, which included, in the case of sons, the Oedipal desire to murder the father to possess the mother. For Jung, the Divine was a symbol of transcendence, of everything beyond our understanding. It can involve unpleasant or rude awakenings because it challenges the pride of Ego and its fantasies of control, as well as the ascendancy of consciousness. The Ego should not dominate. In Jung, the self is far bigger than the experiencing subject: the Divine contains what he called the Numen—the numinous—the existence of which is essential for integrating different parts of the psyche. Jung talks of his experience of the Numen in various parts of his work, including his autobiography (Jung 1963). The self contains a living God or divine archetype working within and beyond us. Fearful, maybe, to engage with, but unavoidable in the psychological work of transformation.

Experiences of the numinous or divine bring awe, bliss, fascination, as well as fear, eeriness, bewilderment, and haunting. An unforgettable but also an ineffable experience: grasping this in conceptual language is difficult. Maybe, it is impossible and best expressed in poetry, music, imaginative writing and myth. It has to do with authentic understanding, and feelings of real presence. Jung's psychology is empirical: his archetypes are not purely mystical but rooted in experience, in feeling, senses, real life events. The experience of the self/God can happen at any moment, in synchronicity, for instance, in the experience of a connection between separate events; and it can be there in artistic creation.

So, encounters with the Divine are considered a place for transformative soul work, by drawing on archetypal patterns, or forms and forces, deeply layered in every one of our psyches. A major epistemological difference between Freud and Jung is the differing ground on which they constructed their systems of thought: on metaphors of energy, matter and blockage of drives, as the prime cause of psychic problems (as in Freud); or of symbols, archetypal and even divine forms of life that help us transform, in narrative and spiritual rather than causal ways. In such terms, Freud was more the materialist, while Jung was rooted in the spiritual aspects of human experience. As Andrew Samuels (2015) puts it, 'Freud spoke for the literal, the instinctual, the causative; Jung for the metaphorical and the teleological, asking 'what is sex really for?'. It can even be 'a symbolic expression of an emotional longing for personal regeneration through the contact with the body of another' (p. 98).

Causal and deterministic processes are the basis of positivism, and Freud could be, even strove to be, the positivist: albeit he also initiated a paradigmatic revolution that challenged empiricism and positivism to the core. Rationality, under Freud's gaze, was often a mask, defending against the more archaic forces of sex and competition. Jung was far from being a positivist and was attracted by mystery and hidden forces that silently act in the world, by the ineffable. He chronicles this in his own biographical struggles and a journey into his psychological breakdown (Jung 1963).

The Jungian system is based on forms, including forms of the divine. Forms have a strong power in shaping our lives, cultures, and history; the power of forms finds vivid expression in great art or writing, and

symbolic action can constitute healing, because it gives expression to the potential unity of opposite polarities within. Moreover, the symbols or metaphors of the libido, or spirit of life, Jung insists, are cross-cultural, like the mandala or circle shape, embodying the essential unity of creation. Conscious suffering was open to transformation via divine or archetypal forms of energy working on our complexes. Psychic energy could be found in the union of opposites such as the anima and animus manifest in male and female consciousness (the anima is the personification of the feminine nature in the male unconscious, and the animus is the masculine energy available in the female unconscious). Such creative power could be repressed in gendered rigidity. Here was a more optimistic reading of the human capacity for transformation, through the power, in effect, of love or spirit, empowered by archetypal energies in the collective unconscious, inherited from our ancestors, and a consequence of human struggle over millennia.

Spielrein and Embracing Mutual Transformation

Jung was much influenced by his relationship with Sabina Spielrein, which came to wider attention through David Cronenberg's film, *A Dangerous Method*. This is a 2011 German-Canadian-American-British film, starring Keira Knightley, Viggo Mortensen, Michael Fassbender, and Vincent Cassel. The screenplay was adapted by writer Christopher Hampton from his 2002 stage play *The Talking Cure*, based in turn on the 1993 non-fiction book by John Kerr, *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein*. Set on the eve of World War I, the film describes the turbulent relationship between Jung, the founder of analytical psychology and Freud, father of psychoanalysis. Spielrein became a patient of Jung and later a physician and one of the first female psychoanalysts. The movie purports to deal with these real people and real events in their lives and relationships and yet, in true Hollywood fashion, there is quite a bit of invention to hold the audience's attention. Of course, the average viewer will not know fact from fiction unless they research the historical detail, which most never will (Sayers 2003).

The film's title, 'A Dangerous Method,' derives from a letter by William James written in 1910 to a colleague. James (1920) wrote, with reference to Freud, '… he made on me personally the impression of a man obsessed with fixed ideas. I can make nothing in my own case with his dream theories, and obviously 'symbolism' is a most dangerous method.' (p. 328). In fact it is the darker or shadow side of early psychoanalysis that Cronenberg focuses on. Spielrein was an extremely bright Russian Jewess, who aged 19 was brought to the Burghölzli mental hospital, where Jung worked as a young psychiatrist. She showed extreme symptoms of what at the time was known as hysteria. The traditional treatment for hysteria was hypnosis, but Jung elected to try a new approach, psychoanalysis, or 'the talking cure', under the influence of Freud. The treatment lasted for ten months, during which time her symptoms abated to the point that she assisted Jung in his word-association research; and from thereon was considered cured. Jung supported her desire to go to medical school, where she eventually became a psychiatrist and then a pioneering analyst herself, elected to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1911. She continued working with Jung on and off during her years of medical and psychoanalytic training. She was also analysed by Freud in Vienna.

Spielrein embraced the term transformation, and her ideas influenced Jung. She came to see transformative psychoanalytic processes as having to do with changing and challenging neurotic complexes. There was, she thought, an instinct for transformation (Sayers 2003). In attempting or struggling to deal with our complexes, we seek similar complexes in others (in Spielrein's case an obsession born of seeing her father spanking her older brother, which led to a compulsive concern for her anus and the prevention of defecation; and subsequently masturbation, evoked by 'blissfully shuddersome feelings'). Nevertheless, via love, intimacy and art, transformation was possible. She gave expression to some of this transformative instinct in her intimate relationship with Jung. In her dream work, Spielrein expressed the wish to have a child by him. She enthralled Jung, but the relationship was turbulent for both. They were excited by the similarities of their ideas (around the importance of the verbal and symbolic), and Spielrein wrote of how their souls were deeply akin. They talked of higher callings, as children of the God

archetype. Jung himself thought he was instrumental in awakening the power of religious or mythological forms in her. He in turn was able to encounter the divine through his deep acceptance of her and her spirit (Sayers 2003).

She forgave Jung for what many continue to see as his transgressive sexual behaviour and she felt that their relationship was mutually transformative. She returned to her native Russia in 1923 and was later murdered at the hands of a German SS squad in 1942; her diaries and correspondence with Jung and Freud were only discovered in Zurich, many years later. The bestiality of what we can call European collective psychic history eventually consumed her.

Into the Dark: Dante's Journey of Death and Rebirth

Daniela Boccassini (2017) has drawn fascinating parallels between Jung's understanding of transformative processes and what she considers to be his profound appreciation of Dante. She notes how commentators such as James Hillman (1983) have considered Jung's greatest contribution to modernity to be one of giving substance to the Delphic oracle's injunction to know thyself, or to achieve self-knowledge. Jung saw psychology to be an experiential discourse of learning from the soul, rather than learning about it, in some detached way. Consciousness had to do with the full realisation of the unconscious, in all its complexity, in each of our lives. Chronicled in what Jung called his Red Book (Jung 2009), and mirroring Freud, to an extent, he sought to liberate himself from an auto-congratulating, ideologically rigid, narrow minded establishment, through an unqualified commitment to the deepest possible engagement with the breadth and depth of soul work. Visionary literature was one means to this end, as in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Here was a blueprint for the journey of soul. Boccassini claims that Jung's inner journey of death and rebirth can be understood in Dantean terms. Erudition and the intellect were simply insufficient for the task. Rather it had to do with a kind of initiatory transition into and beyond the depths of

who we might be, towards a numinosity or divine inspiration. A visionary transition into the dark reaches or night side of life, and beyond, towards transformation.

Jung was fascinated by what he saw to be archetypes, or visions, guides and teachers, which is where Dante was an inspiration: in his *Divine Comedy*, and its poetic qualities, evoking the soul's journey. Dante finds guides or teachers like Virgil and Beatrice. Beatrice, 'Bice' the daughter of Folco Portinari, was a Florentine woman who has been considered the prime inspiration for the Beatrice, one of his guides in the *Divine Comedy* (*La Divina Commedia*), in the last four cantos of *Purgatorio* and in the last book, *Paradiso.* There she takes over as guide from the Latin poet Virgil because, as a pagan, Virgil cannot enter Paradise; while she, being the incarnation of beatific love, as her name suggests, can lead him towards the Beatific vision.

Such archetypes are timeless imprints that find expression in culturally and individually specific ways, like Beatrice or Virgil, but their properties are transcultural and trans-individual reflecting a common human inheritance across cultural difference. Episodes of earthly love, as with Spielrein, were conduits to a larger, divine comedy or poetry of the soul. Our transformation lies in forces beyond our own struggles to know. Dante himself, in the face of the personal and cultural distress of his time, began to pay attention to his dreams, and to visions and apparitions. For Jung, the journey is about aloneness as a basic oneness, what we can call a state of connectedness with something bigger than the ego, a glimpse of transformative divine potential that we may all experience. This reading of the *Divine Comedy* is a process of individuation or transformation, while transcendence is a profound shift in the wayfarer's mind and soul. As Boccassini (2017) puts it:

> Already at the outset, Dante's darkest moment of despair coincides with the upholding of a ray of hope. Once he realizes he is lost in the impenetrable wood of life, from that very realization a new awareness suddenly springs forth: «mi ritrovai». «I found myself» is the paradox of this initial experience, of seeing oneself simultaneously lost and found, which in turn paves the way for the appearance of Virgil, the inner guide to whose higher wisdom («saggezza») the wayfarer entrusts himself, having

> miserably failed all other reasonable human attempts to overcome the obstacles that block his way… (p. 5)

Hell, or the inferno, is traversed with the help of Virgil's wisdom, and the spirit of new ways of knowing. And by Beatrice's guidance too, as well as the Virgin Mary, in a kind of union of soul and spirit, enabling him to see the world as it is rather than how we, as individuals, or whole groups fabricate it. Dante is eventually able to enter a kind of earthly paradise, where he is open to the teachings of Beatrice. He has moved from a self-centered, neurotic Florentine consciousness, to a condition of statelessness, and selflessness, and a more universal consciousness, in which love overcomes strife and desperation. In Jungian terms, Dante's inferno is where the shadow side rules—all that we pretend not to be—and we often project what we dislike in ourselves on to others. Purgatory is where the union of consciousness and the unconscious is possible—if with immense suffering—while in Paradise the soul is reshaped and can then serve to help others on the way. A universal sympathy and generosity towards others are born through the recognition of one's own lapses and the withdrawal of the shadow. Boccassini writes:

> So now everything begins to make sense. During his life on earth, Dante, just like everyone else, was seduced by shadows and projections, the divisive (diabolical) images of good, which the psyche projects onto reality. As a consequence, he has fallen victim to his own dreams turned into nightmares. But to recognize this is not enough. Beyond the devious images that emerge from the personal unconscious lie the archetypes, which are real images of good in that they meet their promises in full. Properly speaking, these are symbolic images because they are unitive, and therefore have the power to reintegrate the individual mind where it belongs, that is to say within the vastness of the cosmic mind. (p. 10)

There are connections, here, with Chapters 7 and 9, where we explore the role of the body and symbols in unitive experience, to overcome diabolic dis-connections and celebrate the pattern which connects. So, archetypal energies and inspiration are helpful forces in the journey

through darkness and suffering towards a relative state of repose and wisdom. The trouble, however, is, as in Dante's time, that the seduction of staying the same, and of splitting and projective destructiveness, remain powerful. And the culture or society around us is deeply divisive, based on an epistemology of disconnection. Dante was a political fugitive from Florence and war between two factions. Inner and outer worlds may mirror each other.

Jung drew various parallels between the kind of journey within his 'analytic psychotherapy' and religious processes, especially Catholicism. Soul must ultimately work on soul for transformation, as in, potentially, an I/thou exchange of the Catholic confession. He came to define four stages to the analytic process, two more than Freud (Sayers 2003). The first he called catharsis, which was getting in touch with the secrets we keep from ourselves or do not want to know about. The second was an elucidation of the transference, and how patients need to become more conscious of this, if they are to progress. Intriguingly for our present purposes, he identified two further stages, education and transformation. The educational phase was about the therapist being open to learning from the patient, in the counter-transference, as he had done with Spielrein. The fourth and final stage was the move towards transformation, in which both patient and analyst examine aspects of their natures that continue to haunt: to face denied or disdained aspects of themselves which inhibit psychological growth. Penitents, parishioners, and patients can only feel fully accepted by their priests, pastors or therapists, providing the latter fully accept themselves. This touches on the work that educators might do, in many settings. To face our own shadows and projections if we are to be fully available, as guides and mentors to others. In this way healing replaces destructive forces and the divine finds space to guide every one of us on our way.

These 'divine' aspects of Jung's ideas have been much criticised. Higher authority, whether archetypes or God-figures, could be associated with fascism and Nazism, with which Jung flirted (Sayers 2003). The archetype of the saviour, or leader who embodied the best of a nation led, at the very least, to a fascination with Hitler. The true leader, Jung thought, has the courage to be fully himself. Someone who embodies the best of a particular nation or group. National Socialism

had replaced 'the garbage bin of unrealisable infantile wishes and unresolved family resentment' (cited in Samuels 2015, p. 151). Jung tended to label psychology itself as grounded in cultural or even national as well as supra-national characteristics. There was a Jewish psychology that claimed universality but was actually a product of rootlessness and statelessness and he rejected its wider validity claims in such terms (Samuels 2015). In troubling echoes of National Socialism, he argued that the Aryan peoples were more rooted in the earth, from which fulsome transformation could spring.

Andrew Samuels (2015) asks whether there is something deep within the Jungian approach that made it susceptible to anti-Semitism. Jung's ideas about transformation, for instance, may be infused with an anti-Semitic shadow very much his own. Samuels argues that this problem must be faced in intelligent and humane ways. Jung has suffered because of these associations and they should be tackled head on. Samuels plots how civilization or higher levels of consciousness and achievement came to be associated, over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the nation state. Cultural nationalism came to the fore, rather than any supra-national imagination. For Jung, soil or earth was to have profound even mystical significance in the development of collectivities like America or Germany. This too easily leads to a self-congratulatory ethic of superiority, that our armies and families are better than yours. As are our Gods.

Samuels believes that Jungianism, and we might add notions of transformation, can be rescued from Jung himself. He took certain characteristics as in-born, pre-defined rather than grounding understanding in lived experience. Jung had suggested, as noted, that wholeness lay in bringing together opposites, like German or Jew, female and male, anima and animus. The sophisticated urbanite comes to complement the earthy peasant warrior. There is arguably too much stress on complementarity here, in processes of transformation. What can be done instead is to embrace the actual diversity of experience, or people, especially those from marginalised or minority groups. By getting them to consciously articulate what they may implicitly know but is stereotypically denied in the wider culture, such as their own diversity. In processes of transformation being a Jew, an American woman, an

Afro-American or German; or a white English male or for that matter an Italian woman, becomes more experientially grounded, including how we can challenge the power of negative projections of class, race, gender or sexuality, and of what is marginalised in ourselves. Difference is not predefined or essentialised, but lived auto/biographically, returning, in a sense, to Jung's desire not to see the imposition of one kind of psychological understanding on everyone. In a way, we come back to the importance of grounding journeys of transformation in our auto/biographical particularities, using symbolic forms that can illuminate our specific journeys as well as what we share in common.

Transformative Learning and Education: A Pedagogy of Transformation

Jack Mezirow, in dialogue with John Dirkx (Dirkx et al. 2006), summarised his view of transformative learning as a rational process based on a metacognitive application of critical thinking that transforms an acquired *frame of reference*—a mind-set or worldview of orienting assumptions and expectations, involving values, beliefs, and concepts—by assessing its epistemic assumptions. This process makes frames of reference gradually more inclusive, discriminating, reflective and open to other ways of seeing. This is, in Mezirow's terms, how an adult thinks (2012). Although much learning lies beyond conscious awareness, and is deeply emotional, which Mezirow acknowledges, the essential change agent is rationality. John Dirkx, deeply influenced by Jung, makes a different claim:

> Those of us who take seriously the 'transformative' in transformative learning are interested in a kind of 'deep' learning that challenges existing, taken-for-granted assumptions, notions, and meanings of what learning is about. In exploring the nature of deep learning, some writers focus on the cognitive, epistemic, and sociocultural dimensions of the process. My interests revolve around a kind of learning that integrates our experiences of the outer world, including the experiences of texts and subject matter, with the experience of our inner worlds. Although my focus is

> unabashedly on the subjective, the goal is to develop understanding of this subjective world that is fundamentally human and archetypal. Many of our great psychodynamic scholars used their own inner lives and those around them to explore more deeply the complex and troubling phenomena presented by the human psyche. (Dirkx et al. 2006, pp. 126–127)

Dirkx employs the metaphor of soul work to suggest the complexity of transformative learning. He understands that these ideas can seem mystical and vague. However, inspired by Jung, he is interested in shadowy inner worlds, and dreams and fantasies, that often volunteer questions without being asked. Dirkx's own psyche, like ours, is a complex community of characters, such as the censor, the judge, the trickster and the child. The inner world may occasionally be a place of peace and beauty but is often turbulent. Dirkx wants to restore the idea of soul to the everyday world of higher or adult education: to the awesome beauty of a text, to powerful feelings of seeing clearly, to the inspiration of a lecture, and to a moment of interaction in the classroom that stirs our soul and wills us to continue the pilgrimage of learning or self-knowledge. We can share our experiences and struggles to know with others, which can be inspirational for them in turn. Dirkx quotes the fifteenth-century English poet John Donne, 'No man is an island entire of itself. Everyman is a piece of the continent, a part of the main'. This echoes the sense of communion, and a community of learners, at the heart of both Jung and Dante. Learning becomes a fundamentally collective as well as individual journey, an encounter with the sacred, transcendent and our flawed humanity, in acts of selfless love by teachers in the classroom or doctors in their clinics.

These ideas contain suggestions for a pedagogy of transformation, beyond individual and rational learning. Communities can be spaces for educational improvement, using soul work as a force towards integration, solidarity, mutual recognition, and a spirit of fraternity or sorority. At the beginning of the Nineties, Laura started a methodological exploration of educational cultures among groups of adult learners, professionals, psychotherapists, and university students, where auto/biographical methods ('how did I become the person I am?') merge with embodied and sensory experience, like walking in the woods, or

meditating, or artwork of many kinds (drawing, dancing, performing); and more recently for mythobiography (a Jungian practice of symbolic auto/biography), Socratic dialogue as well as philosophical and poetical readings. These educational practices can sustain transformation without controlling or instructing people. They involve an invitation to adults to improvise and play, setting aside any need to explain, decide or be consciously aware of everything.

Laura is profoundly indebted, in her soul work, to the philosophical community of practice called Philo, founded in 2006, with a group of colleagues from different academic and professional disciplines. The idea was to create a space for individual and collective learning, in the city of Milan. Philo is not a secluded place for an élite of privileged intellectuals but rather for an inclusive group of deeply involved people in the life of their city; and it offers its service to the community. This includes free analytical sessions and group mythobiography for those who cannot afford the highly expensive and exclusive journey of psychoanalysis. Soul work is rooted in context and granted to everybody in their own terms: this has become Laura's main preoccupation.

A Case Study: The Transformative Play of the 'Feminine and Masculine' in Learning to Be a Doctor

Linden illustrated some of these relational, spiritual and transformative processes in his longitudinal, auto/biographical narrative research, over three years, among General Practitioners or family physicians, working in difficult, emotionally demanding parts of inner London (West 2001). The study illustrates the play of opposites, the experienced feminine and masculine, the material and spiritual, science and the spirit in learning to be a doctor. Dr. Daniel Cohen was one of 25 doctors in the study who felt himself to be an outsider in medicine. He suffered a big crisis in his work, 8 years before the study:

> […] the scale of the work and the endlessness of it. The scale being that you can go in at 8 in the morning and be dealing with people's pain continually without a break and go on till 7 or 8 in the evening: to a degree and with a volume that I think is almost inconceivable for most other outsiders. There are very few professions which have got any sort of an analogous workload in terms of its volume or its intensity. But also the endlessness in that there isn't any clear career development. For a GP there is no obvious evolution from that point, which you may reach age 37/38. So the point at which you're expecting to retire in another 30 plus years.

Daniel went into psychotherapy and trained as a therapist, which gave him space for personal development and for cultivating better self and cultural knowledge. Questions of self, family, of being a man, and Jewish, were inseparable from his work as a GP. There was no neat distinction between questions of '*Who am I?*' or '*Where do I come from?*' or '*Why do I have the kind of problems that I think I have?*' and those such as '*Why am I doing my work - what is the nature of my work?*', '*How can I best help the people I'm working with - what is the nature of their problems?*'. There was a seamless web connecting the doctor to patients, their story to his. Daniel's inner world consisted of conversations involving many characters. There was the heroic GP who could solve everything. There was the consumerist patient who said, '*I've read about this thing and I'm as informed as you are and I want it*'. There was the sceptic within who insisted GPs had little time. Sometimes one character predominated, at other moments, someone else. The characters shifted in significance, and each might enter the dialogue, at any moment. Two patients might say of the same drug '*I demand it because I've heard it's a miracle drug*' and '*how dare you give this to me, I've read that it causes cancer in rats*'. Every consultation had its cast of characters and conflicting stories within the doctor as well as the patient. It was a question of living with the diversity, and learning, empathically, how to respond in the moment.

Wanting to Be a Psychiatrist

Daniel never intended to be a GP and imagined himself as a psychiatrist or a psychoanalyst. However, he felt alienated in medical training, even repulsed by institutional psychiatry and simply could not see himself working within the '*National Health Service mental health culture*', with its unreflexive, drug dominated assumptions. He was drawn towards paediatrics, which he thought a discipline combining feelings, including gentleness, with technical and medical expertise; a more feminine culture, so to speak. Except he kept failing exams. He had a poor grasp of the technical detail needed, for instance, to be a neonatal pediatrician. You had to be a very good thinking scientist, he said, which he wasn't. So, he went on to become a GP:

> I think that general practice is at the feminine end of a masculinised culture. I think general practice has always been more touchy/feely, although it is looking over its shoulder the whole time to keep up its street cred with the real blokes in the hospitals.

But there was a struggle, in the profession, between the masculine and the feminine:

> […] two simultaneous processes going on …in a kind of dialectic. One is a hyper masculinisation of the profession … and the grasping of power by GPs … on the one hand, and on the other hand a development of a much more reflective stance among a minority of GPs… And certain people like myself will identify themselves with the 'feminine' position and certain people won't…

> I am constantly striving to contain and manage those sorts of moments in order to create space for feminine types of experience to be possible…. Acceptance, tolerance, understanding of process rather than events and outcomes…things that are fluid rather than things that are chopped up and categorised. A sense of connection and of connection being more important than anything and of values…

A patient came to mind as he told the story:

> She had an illness of a rather mysterious cause and insisted that she needed medication for it and a referral to a psychiatric nurse, all of which I facilitated in a quite a sort of agency type way, in the hope and the expectation that if I stuck with her through this and continued to see her once a month, ostensibly for a review of her medication, that things would emerge. And inevitably after many months have passed she is able to actually reframe what she has gone through in terms of a highly unsatisfactory marriage which …she wasn't really able to face up to before. She is able to see in a way that she… needed the illness to give her time out and to give her time to reflect on this…, [she] has now on her own initiative come off the anti-depressants, is looking at the possibilities of counselling and therapy so that I suppose I have accepted the constraints of a world in which people expect and demand to be diagnosed and medicated in the interests of what I see as a more important long term project which is actually to explore new meaning in their lives.

Recovering Roots: How Telling One's Story Entails Soul Work

Daniel had long been involved in integrating different parts of his identity:

> and finding to my astonishment really that being Jewish and the child of refugees who had fled from Nazism was actually a hugely important part of my identity. Something which sounds absurd now, it was something that had never even crossed my mind that it might be an important part of who Daniel Cohen was. …it was sort of therapy that led me to a review of all of that really and to an understanding that I couldn't, I couldn't shrug it off…and there was suddenly a burgeoning among people of my generation in the late '70s, early '80s, of a curiosity about where we had come from and challenging our parents…about the way they had dealt with their experiences and so there has been a massive kind of 'outing' if you like, of the second generation of refugee children and a

> massive return to the community and to religion. But I also think there has been a focus on ethnicity and a pride in ethnicity that has also surfaced in the wider community around the same time. And it has obviously been happening with Afro-Caribbean people….with Muslims. There is a lot of communities where people, who were actually quite ashamed about their origins in the '60s and '70s, are actually now fiercely proud of it and finding some way to express it. And I think what happened to the Jewish community was part of the wider collective reowning of ethnicity….

His growing spiritual conviction was part of the process. Towards the end of one interview Daniel said:

> […] I was having a conversation with myself at one point about why am I not bringing in more of - one particular dimension of my life which is very much connected with my wife, who is a minister of religion. I don't know if you're aware my wife is doing this, and so I have a third job as a minister's spouse, and it is actually enormously important to me and it affects my work in all sorts of ways. And I was actually asking myself at one point why I wasn't bringing that into play, so it was interesting I, by Freudian slip, I phoned her at the beginning of this interview! Clearly wanting to bring her in in some way, and I suppose that is the most feminine and feminised of all the different kind of aspects of my work. And it is work, I mean I go as a spouse to her congregational events and so on. So, there is all of that, that I was sort hovering on the edge of what I was saying and didn't quite come in.

Linden and David shared thoughts about spirituality and 'God' in the doctor/patient, analyst/client interaction:

> If I can use the theological language it was actually about creating God, it was not there to describe God or try and convince oneself of God as an external objective rather punitive power, but that actually this was about reviving, sustaining and the constant continuous creation of God. I suppose it is about…perceiving oneself as a participant in continuous creation, which cannot be about reason. It can only be about values and meaning and conviction and an act of faith, of actually saying…this will only happen if I will it to happen. That it is a matter of making it for oneself, making God for oneself…. And suddenly you realise in General

> Practice that you are engaged with somebody jointly in a sort of desperately important struggle about how to be good, how to be real, how to make a choice which is right and it's often to do with life and death. …I become aware that the sort of paraphernalia of medicine and prescriptions and operations and referrals and all of that is really a kind of lower order manifestation really of something which is spiritual.

The awareness of his spiritual side came as a shock to someone brought up as a rationalist, with a quasi-Marxist world view. He had treated the spiritual with a kind of contempt. However, he now thought it was a search for meaning and values which were far more important than materialism. This happened within his work and a personal struggle for meaning and purpose. Soul work as the basis of transformative learning. It included engaging with his family history in which there had been an

> unspoken imperative to succeed and not to rebel…I don't think I had anything that could remotely be described as an adolescence. I think I was just sort of completely studious and privately very distressed and outwardly tremendously successful, like hundreds of Jewish teenagers I knew….

He came to recognise that he acted as a kind of bridge, a guide, for many of his patients as an old Jewish GP in the East End of London had once done for his own family, when they sought sanctuary. There was he said an emotional texture in visits to the doctor, which he now identified to be about creating safety and containment. He introduced a Somali woman refugee, and her young, suffering child into the story. His role was to provide a secure base in a technical but also common-sense understanding: of providing a place to be looked after, dependably, in a loving way. He thought that learning to be human was at the core of learning to work effectively with others:

> […] I remember a therapist saying he would be deeply suspicious of any doctor or psychiatrist who wasn't in the job principally to make themselves better. That if you are not on a kind of journey, trying to understand yourself and make yourself whole then you are probably a bit messianic and so I think that is at the heart. And I hope that as a sort of spin off of that, other people get helped as well.

Daniel saw himself as situated between the truth discourse of mainstream medicine and the uncertainties and messiness of whole people, living in a harsh environment. A subversive synthesis was required by taking what was essential from the medical model but locating it within a person and narrative-focused, even spiritual practice of mutual learning.

Conclusion: Transformative Learning as Soul Work

Mezirow insisted that transformative learning involves, at a crucial stage, a rational process of critically assessing epistemic assumptions. It is this dimension, Mezirow argues, that saves transformative learning from being reduced to something like faith, prejudice, vision, or desire. If significant learning outside or beyond conscious awareness is accessed, it can be brought into conscious awareness as part of deliberate critical interrogation. Dirkx (Dirkx et al. 2006) offers a different perspective (as do Daniel Cohen, Jung and Dante). He provides a case study of an adult student who was transformed through an encounter with another culture, in Central America, where issues of time and being, were to the fore. This was very different to America—less pressured, laid back, more about community, less individualistic. The student realised some of the damaging and constraining aspects of his own biography and enculturation in American society. He was raised in an authoritarian family, where being still or taking time was considered sinful; and now the experience of different cultural rhythms brought personal and even spiritual release. It was not simply an epistemic shift, rather repressed psychic energy finding space and understanding. News from psyche, in an encounter with otherness, we might frame it. And of course, Laura adds, the embodied experience of different rhythms, food, smells, light, relationships, all had a role too.

Dirkx's example resonates with Dr. Cohen's story where a changing frame of reference is infused with largely unconscious psychic forces that are neglected in conventional critical reflection processes. In fact, reflective work is more complicated when meeting powerful dynamics

like those above. We enter a border country, we could say, between therapy and learning, the socio-cultural and internal world. Of course, there are elements of critical rationality, but the changing intersubjective and intrasubjective dynamics seem more fundamental: in journeys from Hell, which we all experientially know, through purgatorial moments, which we might have encountered, onwards to a kind of blissful satisfaction in helping others, or in realising that there can be different ways of being, and we are free to choose.

We need therefore a methodology that recognises and illuminates such potentially powerful energies, allowing them gradual expression, within growing conscious awareness. We require a good enough relationship with such forces and one way is to build imaginal dialogue to keep psychic and spiritual life in harmony with the intellectual and auto/biographic, rather than wrenched apart. The process necessitates a quality of reflexivity that is psychic, intuitive, experiential and emotional, as well as cultural and critically analytic. It requires attunement to self and constant learning from experience rather than premature or formulaic closure. Its methods can include journaling, writing, psychotherapy, presentational knowing, art-based education, and spiritual practice to bring lived encounters of opposites, or what has been marginalised, into a more harmonious relationship with who we are. We must identity, in the process, our propensity for splitting and projecting negativity on the other. Unconscious energies then become available to consciousness and help heal our splits and polarities. This is how adult education, and transformative learning, might re-enchant a wider lifelong learning journey. But a new dimension needs to enter our roadmap. The body, and embodied experiences of learning, is the next landmark on the pilgrimage.