The universe of our concerns: the human as person in the praxis of analysis

January 1st, 2004 | Add a Comment

Michael Horne, *Seattle, Washington*

Abstract: Since its inception, psychoanalysts and analytical psychologists have used the reductionistic methods of science to explain both human development and analytic practice. The most recent iteration of this tendency uses attachment as the explanatory principle. This disposition has created theories that understand the human solely as an organism. While this is a satisfactory way to view human development, it is not appropriate for the practice of analysis. In this context, the human must be viewed as a person that is explicable in his/her own terms. Interpretation based on reductionism eliminates personhood. Humans appear as persons in 'the feeling of what happens' or of 'being there', and, on the basis of this experience, develop stories in which their personhood evolves. The psychoanalytic, philosophical and neuro-scientific basis for this view of the human as person is discussed, and its relevance for analytic practice is considered.

Introduction

How could the universe be made of stories? Muriel Rukeyser is making an assertion that seems absurd (Rukeyser 1949). However, note that she has not capitalized universe. She is using the word universe as we would when we say, 'the universe of my concerns' or 'my inner universe'. In this phrasing, universe refers to the collection of objects, issues and people with which we are personally involved. Their impact on us evokes meanings. We then express these meanings in stories or narratives that we tell to others in our outer universe, or ourselves in our inner universe.

If Muriel Rukeyser had capitalized Universe, she would have been referring to the collection of concrete objects and forces that we refer to as the Universe. When we reduce these objects in an intellectual technological way, we view them as made up of smaller objects we call atoms. So, ruining the poetics of Muriel Rukeyser's creation, we could say: 'The universe is made of stories and the Universe is made of atoms'.

In this enigmatic line of poetry, Muriel Rukeyser has captured the two ways that we are human: as persons and as organisms. In the first case, we appear as characters in our stories, and in the second case, we exist as a biological entity, made up of a variety of smaller units, with a developmental history, and situated within an ecological system. In the latter mode, we can be studied by the usual scientific methods, but in the former mode, we can only be understood in terms of the characters within the stories that we create and by which we are created.

In psychoanalysis and analytical psychology, we have not clearly understood the distinction between being, as a character in a story, and being, as a construction of atoms. Consequently, we try to explain the activities of the person with data that pertains to the organism, such as our brain activity or our developmental experiences, recently, particularly those related to attachment. These explanations are derived from a

view of the person as a sort of machine based on the interaction of 'scientific' entities such as atomic particles. This becomes especially problematic when we use these theories to guide the practice of analysis, for it is in this setting that we never appear as organisms, but emerge as sets of characters in stories and, therefore, as persons.

This person/organism distinction has been recognized by philosophers since the end of the 19th century (Schnadelbach 1984). They have realized that the distinction is one based on different modes of being, or ontologies**(1)**. There has been an awareness that the human as person does not have a corporeal reality but, rather, appears first in a sensing of 'being there', and then via the medium of language which is used to create the stories of ourselves. To quote Martin Heidegger, 'language is the house of being', by which he means that language is the way that we manifest our being as persons (Heidegger 1977). Despite the conflation of the person/organism distinction by most psychoanalytic theorists, there have been some who have intuited this distinction. These include Jung, Klein, Winnicott and Bion. Philosophers have described the characteristics of our being as persons, but have not satisfactorily elucidated the processes of, or interventions required to facilitate, the evolution of personhood. In facilitating this evolution it makes a great deal of difference in one's therapeutic stance whether one relates to a causal system of interacting atoms or molecules, or to a person creating a meaningful story.

Psychoanalysis and personhood

In his topographical theory, Freud began this trend in psychoanalytic theorizing of conflating the person and the organism by developing his instinctual theory of psychic motivation. Initially he postulated an instinct of sexuality (Freud 1900), and later, instincts of both sexuality and aggression (Freud 1920). In his structural theory, he intuited some sense of personhood via his description of the ego as the mediator between the demands of the unconscious instincts and of external reality (Freud 1923). In his paper 'On narcissism: an introduction' (1914), he further developed this theory by saying that self love was the libidinal cathexis of the ego by the id. This, by implication, was a loving attitude of the id towards the ego as a self. He went on to say that the cathexis of the ego by the id gives the ego its own libidinal energy, which he called egolibido, and which was expressed as a loving attitude, by an implied self, towards objects. In 'Mourning and melancholia' (1917), he introduced the attitude of hate towards objects, and in 'Instincts and their vicissitudes' (Freud 1915), which was written a month after 'Mourning and melancholia, he gave a more personal view of the ego saying: 'the attitudes of love and hate cannot be made use of for the relations of instincts to their objects but are reserved for the relations of the total ego to objects'. Subsequently, Hartmann developed this personal concept of the ego by stressing its adaptive functions which, he said, included the task of the formation of a concept about itself, which he called the self concept (Hartmann 1939). Hartmann's views have come to form the basis of contemporary ego psychology. This view of the ego, however, often leads to a rather mechanical model, with the ego placed at the 'top' of a system that it then 'appropriately regulates'.

Kohut (1971), unhappy with this quasi personal view of self, used Anna Freud's concept of developmental lines (Freud A. 1965) to propose an evolutionary concept of self in a relationship with self-objects**(2)**. He said that with appropriate self-object relationships,

the self achieves a state of cohesion. This achievement might have been seen as a prerequisite to the emergence of the self as a character in its story, but Kohut described it as a quasi entity that was something like a well secured bundle of parts. However, Kohut's theory did bring a greater sense of richness, complexity and relationality to the understanding of self experience. This de-emphasized the controlling functions of the ego, and led to a less mechanical view of the self.

In contrast, Jung, in his observations of the emotional and physiological impact of stimulus words on experimental subjects taking the word association test (Jung 1904/07), highlighted the impact of words themselves on persons. From this data, he developed the concept of the feeling-toned complex, which was a personal elaboration of one's 'being there' as a result of the feeling related impact of one's world (Jung 1907). In this mode of being, the human as person arrived on the scene and was in a position to become a character in his/her story.

Not only did Jung propose that humans appeared via the stories inherent in their complexes, but he also insisted that the ego or self was a complex. By this he was implying that the ego was a character in a story of itself, an autobiography (Jung 1934). He said that this fictional story was always potentially under challenge by the stories of the other complexes. Jung implied that the ego complex was not equivalent to the total person, as there was no one true story of personhood. Rather, personhood was characterized by the *mélange* of competing stories in which it appeared. This view of the human espoused a model of the psyche as a field, and personhood as an emergent quality of the endless dialogic interactions within that field.

Klein's concept of positions is also about personhood. Shorn of the reductionistic concept of the death instinct, she describes the complexity of the stories one is able to tell about appearing as a person. In the paranoid/schizoid position, at any one time, one has only a single tale to tell in which one is involved with characters of only one type, either good or bad. Either way it is a fear filled story about one's potential annihilation by dangerous things in the world. In the depressive position, one is simultaneously involved in two different narratives involving the same characters. In one of these narratives one is loving, and in the other one is filled with hate. These conflicting narratives are accompanied by the fear that the hateful story is the true one, will come to pass, and will result in damage to those things that the person loves (Klein 1952).

Winnicott developed an even more overt concept of a story line of the person. From his observations of infants' and children's play, Winnicott postulated an 'intermediate area of experience' that he said was neither real nor imagined but, rather, illusory (Winnicott 1951). It was neither inside nor outside humans, but somewhere between them. In a later formulation, he called this area of experience 'potential space', saying first that it was 'the location of cultural experience' (Winnicott 1967) and then later, 'the place where we live' (Winnicott 1971a). By this he meant the place where we are. He described the function of play (Winnicott 1971b) as being the mode of creation of being in the world (1971b, 1971c). For Winnicott play was a type of story, in which language was replaced by objects as the signifiers for the appearance of personhood.

Bion has developed the most explicit formulation of the emergence of personhood in stories. He jettisoned all the traditional psychoanalytic concepts, and did an inventory of the basic elements of the analytic process itself. He identified the most primordial of

these elements as being undifferentiated sensory/emotive experiences that he called beta elements. He said that these are converted by mental activity, called alpha function, into alpha elements that he called dream thoughts. Bion said that alpha function does further mental work on dream thoughts, converting them to preconceptions, and then to conceptions, and finally into concepts. Bion called this the growth of thought, which could be also called the development of a story. In his later work, he developed an explicit concept of the being there. He said that the person can 'pass from knowing about phenomena to 'being' that which is 'real.' This occurred by the transformation of the manifestation of the unknown that he called O. He said that 'O does not fall in the domain of knowledge or learning save incidentally; it can be "become" but it cannot be "known"' (Bion 1977). Since O is by implication always available for transformation, there is no possibility that our stories will ever reach a final conclusion.

Philosophy and personhood

A dramatic example of the contribution of philosophy to the understanding of personhood occurred in the early 70s. A piece of naturalistic research was published that studied the outcome for a group of normal volunteers, called pseudo patients, who went to psychiatric emergency rooms saying that they were having repeated experiences of hearing a drumming sound. The great majority were admitted to psychiatric services and, despite the fact that as soon as they were admitted they said that the drumming had ceased, many were kept in the hospital for periods of up to a month. All of them received some type of psychotic diagnosis and were prescribed some form of psychotropic medication (Rosenhan 1973).

All the volunteers in this experiment were treated as organisms since their auditory complaints were assumed to be hallucinations and, therefore, to be caused by brain dysfunction. If the admitting psychiatrists had been open to experiencing the volunteers as persons rather than as organisms, they might have sought out the details of the contexts in which the sounds were occurring, and perhaps a personal story line would have emerged, leading to a much different clinical approach.

The overall mode of reasoning illustrated by these psychiatrists is termed reductionism, as it assumes that phenomena can be explained by reducing them to their basic elements (Gergen 1994). Following Muriel Rukeyser, I have been referring to these elements as atoms. Historically, one of the earliest examples of this type of reasoning was Plato's concept of forms. He said that all physical objects, and even subjective entities such as values, were imperfect replicas of ideal forms. For example, no triangle that we draw on a chalk board can be absolutely perfect; however, there is a conceptually perfect form of a triangle which is the essence of the thing called triangle (Plato 1974). A more contemporary example would be the explanation of depression, by its reduction to its neurophysicochemical components. These are thought by neuroscientists to be the essential forms or entities on which mental phenomena are based. In contrast to the reductionist outlook is the view that the mode of being a person has to be described in terms of their subjective experiences of being in the world. Martin Heidegger was the originator of this approach, and he said that we learn about our being as persons by living out that being (Heidegger 1927/62). Rather than asserting, as Descartes (1960) did, that 'I think, therefore I am', Heidegger said, 'I am, therefore I

think'. He realized that our relationship with our world was disclosed to us by our mood or state of mind. Rather than dividing up the various moods and giving them names, he defined mood by saying that 'a mood makes manifest how one is, and how one is faring'. From the standpoint of what he called 'being there', he said that one can begin to make sense of one's general situation by a process of understanding.

He took great pains to distinguish his descriptive concept of understanding from reductive approaches such as explaining, interpreting or making assertions. Heidegger said that the person expresses his/her understanding of personhood in signifiers, primarily those of language. This linguistic concept of personhood was further developed by Wittgenstein, who said that language is simply a tool that we use to further our everyday activities, rather than it being a system of signs that refers to explicit meaning. These personal activities are governed by socially derived rules, and language is the tool by which our activities become the stories of our personhood (Wittgenstein 1953/97).

Bion's theory of group function dramatically illustrates the being of the person in language. He says that the members of any group form two sets of assumptions or story lines. These are firstly their assumptions about the particular task at hand, which are their conscious stories about themselves in the activity. Secondly, they develop unconscious stories which he called their basic assumptions, which are either paranoid, dependent or manic. The group's ability to carry out the task, as is the case with the individual person, depends on which story takes precedence (Bion 1959).

Neuroscience and personhood

Psychoanalysis and analytical psychology began during the zenith of scientific reductionism at the end of the 19th century (Schnadelbach 1984). Influenced by the *zeitgeist*, both Freud and Jung used reductionistic concepts, such as instincts and archetypes, in their theories of normal and pathological mental functioning, and of clinical practice (Ellenberger 1981). Both men thought that one day the concrete nature of these postulates would be discovered (Freud 1895; Jung 1917).

Since neither of them clearly detected the ontological difference between humans as persons and as organisms, and most other analytic theorists have followed the founders, this reductionistic trend has continued to the present time (Harre 1994; Gergen 2001). The recent burgeoning of knowledge in neuroscience has led to an upsurge of scientifically based reductionistic theories.

The most prominent exemplars of this trend are Fonagy, Solms and Schore (Fonagy etal. 2002; Solms & Turnbull 2002; Schore 2001). All these theorists have used the concept of attachment in their developmental and clinical formulations. This concept was first developed by Bowlby (1958) from his readings in ethology**(3)**. The word 'attachment' was used to describe the tendency of baby animals, from species who display social behaviour, to remain physically close to their mothers during their infancy. It was also noticed that babies who had lost their mothers would show the same tendency with a mother that was not their own. It was assumed that a physiological process called imprinting**(4)** was guiding this behaviour.

Following the observation of this closeness behaviour in naturalistic studies (Bowlby 1969) and in controlled conditions (Ainsworth 1969), its biological basis in humans was

assumed. Psychotherapists spoke of a tie between mother and baby which had resonances of the concrete umbilical tie between foetus and placenta. Further evidence of the biological purpose of this behaviour was assumed to have been discovered when it was noticed that babies showed short and long term distress when deprived of closeness to their mothers (Bowlby et al. 1952), and studies of adults deprived of closeness to their mothers in infancy showed them to have a variety of difficulties in subsequent interpersonal relationships (Hesse 1999).

Recent neuroscientific studies are said to show a variety of brain changes coincident with the period of closeness behaviour in infants, which is said to confirm the empirical reality of the concept of attachment (Schore 2001). Reciprocating and positive infant/mother interaction is said to form the basis of this attachment, and is said to lead to the capacity for affective regulation and mentalization, and the development of a secure sense of self (Fonagy 2002; Schore 2001). These authors define the human solely as an organism, by saying that their findings show that psychotherapists of all types must be 'psychobiologically attuned' to their patients, so that they will be able to regulate their patient's 'inefficient brain processes' with the capacities of their more efficient right brains. In this type of analytic process there is no person with a story.

Despite the fact that a particular author uses highly concretized language, and the text seems to be about something that is highly reductionistic, one or more personal stories are still being told (Derrrida 1978). Rather than making a formal critique of Fonagy's, Solms' and Schore's formulations, I want to make an indirect critique by showing that there is a subliminal 'story' in their texts which brings to life a particular view of personhood that is severely limited. This in turn can cast doubts on their formal theories of the human as organism.

In their discussions of human nature, and their recommendations on analytic practice, they use words such as attunement, resonance, synchronicity, regulation and dysregulation. It seems like they are telling a story about music. However, the piece of music that they are speaking of seems to be one that has little variation. Resonance, for example, means the reinforcement or prolongation of sound by reflection or synchronous vibration. Attunement means to bring a group of musicians, or an instrument, into musical accord, and synchronicity means a state in which events are occurring at the same time (Oxford English Dictionary 1990). Have the authors created a story about a 'one-note person', someone who is controlled and organized, and does not exhibit the variability and unpredictability that characteristically emerge in the analytic relationship? Does this indicate that their theory of the human as organism is simply a story about a certain type of person?

It is the atomization of the mental functions of the human as organism that produces this story of a one dimensional person. Fonagy, Solms and Schore, all focus on the neuroscientific vicissitudes of affect. However, it is not just the neuroscientific reductionism in their texts that creates the one-note person. Rather, it is the reductionistic use of affect *per se* as an explanatory principle that is the cause of this problem. The effects of this type of reductionism can be seen in the analytic theories of other authors, such as Spezzano, who performs only the reduction to affect as the explanatory principle (Spezzano 1993), and also in the whole field of cognitive behavioural therapy where the explanatory reduction is to cognition (Dobson 2002).

Both these levels of reduction can be eliminated by establishing the object of study as consciousness, something which can be neither atomized nor reduced (Searle 1997). Psychoanalysts define consciousness simply as awareness. Psychologists and psychiatrists define it as an atomized collection of functions that include thinking, feeling and perceiving. However, philosophers of mind define it, not as an entity, but as unique states in which there is something that a person qualitatively 'feels like' in order to be in that state (Searle 1997; Audi 1999). Many neuroscientists who study consciousness now also use this definition (Edelman & Tononi 2000).

These 'what is it like' aspects of conscious experience have come to be called *qualia*. They are not qualities or affects but are experiences of being there. We express the nature of *qualia* when we ask someone to tell us 'what does it feel like' to spend an evening with your lover or to have a pain in your tooth. Antonio Damasio, a neurologist and neuroscientist, has called this state 'the feeling of what happens' (Damasio 1999). These are difficult states for neuroscientists to study, as they can't be measured, but can only be reported by the experiencing person as an account or story (Searle 1997).

Many neuroscientists have accepted this formulation, and have concentrated on elucidating the neural structures and mechanisms underpinning conscious states in general (Edelman & Tononi 2000). Damasio, however, has studied patients with neurological lesions that cause distinctive modes of consciousness, in which different, but characteristic types of persons are present. He says that the most rudimentary mode of consciousness involves the activities of a non-aware organizing self, using the word self as a synonym for a state of mind. Damasio calls this the proto-self, and says that this state of mind involves body systems regulation. He says that this depends on two functions, the first being the mapping of the ongoing biophysical state of the organism via means of neural patterns. He calls this mapping function 'the something to which knowing is attributed'. Secondly, it involves the manipulation of these patterns by an organizing, but non-conscious self. These patterns he calls 'the something to be known'. An example of a deficit in these knowing functions is visual agnosia, in which the person is unable to recognize familiar persons by sight. In this case the organizing function for visual data of the non-conscious self is impaired.

Mapping and regulating functions also form the basis for the nature of the person at the next level of consciousness, which Damasio calls core consciousness. He says that this level is involved in the representation of the feeling encounters of the person with objects in the world in the here and now. According to him this representation allows for the planning of behaviour in the light of the information obtained from these encounters. In contrast to the proto-self, where regulation is automatic, the regulation at the core conscious level requires novel solutions and, therefore, requires conscious knowing or self-awareness, which Damasio refers to as storytelling. A deficit in core consciousness occurs in absence epileptic seizures. When one of these seizures occurs the person remains awake and alert and has normal motor and sensory functions. However, he/she loses the capacity for feeling encounters and appears not to recognize people. He/she as a person appears to be 'absent'. When the seizure terminates, the person returns to full consciousness and has no memory of the event. Interestingly, language is not essential to personhood in this mode of consciousness, since people who have global aphasia, in which they cannot comprehend or produce language, are still able to have the feeling of what is happening and communicate appropriately by gestures. They can

tell a story, albeit a limited one.

Damasio calls the highest level of consciousness extended consciousness. At this level, the immediate knowing via feeling, and the mapping of person and object in feeling interchange, is supplemented by memory, and the ability to use signifiers, particularly in the form of language. The presence of memory and symbolic reasoning allows for planning and judgement, and the existence of memory and understanding allows for the creation of an autobiographical self, or a person that can tell stories about him/herself. People with Alzheimer's disease have a loss of extended consciousness due to damage to the brain areas responsible for memory of past events. This damage results in a gradual loss of the autobiographical self or person, who depends on this information to form its story of itself.

Damasio's focus on consciousness as given by the feeling of what happens, or, in the language of consciousness researchers, as *qualia*, or in Heidegger's language, as a state of mind or mood, has two important advantages. Firstly, it allows him to demonstrate that it is this feeling of what is happening, or of being there, that generates the story in which we appear as a person. He says: 'We are, and then we think, and we think only in as much as we are, since thinking is indeed caused by the structures and operations of being' (Damasio 1994). Secondly, his formulation eschews reductionism as the various levels of consciousness are emergent functions (Searle 1997) of complex interactions of a variety of brain regions rather than derivatives of single locations.

Knowing about personhood

When we begin to apprehend 'the feeling of what is happening', we take the first step in appearing as persons that we can tell a story about (Damasio 1999). This story begins as a process of understanding of what the feeling of what has just happened signifies (Heidegger 1927/62). Understanding is a word which is derived from old English and means, literally, standing under. Understandings was another name for legs or feet and for boots or shoes.

People who possessed large or thick boots were said to possess good understandings (Oxford English Dictionary 1990). When some understanding of the feeling of what is happening emerges, we get a sense of 'being there'. We say, 'I'm beginning to get my feet on the ground' and we sense that, 'now I feel I have something that I can say', and a story begins.

Jung noted this sequence in his work on the word association test (Jung 1904/07). Firstly, the person taking the test had a feeling reaction to the stimulus word. He/she had 'a feeling of what had happened'. Understanding was at first absent, and then, sometimes after a considerable pause, it began. With an articulated and verbal response, the beginnings of a story emerged. Jung was also the first analytic theorist to have the intuition that, in order for the personhood of the other to emerge in the analytic encounter, the analyst had to give up all his/her presuppositions about the personhood of the speaker (Jung 1935). Fordham refined the technical parameters of this attitude by saying that the personhood of the analysand came to life via the impact on, or 'the feeling of what was happening' to, the analyst him/herself (Fordham 1978). He said that this occurred if the analyst could enter a state of 'not knowing beforehand' (Fordham 1993).

Bion developed these ways of coming to know about the impact of the personhood of the analysand into a complete analytic method. He advised the analyst to be as free as possible of his/her memory of past sessions or of the history of the analysand, of desire for the analysand to achieve goals, and of understanding that employed reductionistic theoretical concepts. In this mode, he said that the analyst becomes a mental receptacle, or container, for the analysand's projected beta elements, which are apprehended as the analyst's disturbing sense impressions concerning the discourse of the analysand (Bion 1977). According to Bion, the analyst's therapeutic task is to tolerate this disturbance long enough to create rudimentary images from his/her sense impressions.

These then provide the basis for elementary thoughts that are available for conceptions which can be used interpretively. Bion called this process the growth of thought (Bion 1977), and said that it also occurred in the analysand if he/she had the capacity to tolerate 'the feeling of what is happening'. The process that Bion recommends allows the analyst to form a story about the analysand's impact on him/her. This is a story of which the analysand is unaware. When people tell us these stories about our impact on them, we say, 'Oh, I didn't realize I was making that type of impression'. Klein uses the model of projective identification to point towards this process (Klein 1946). The knowing about the personhood of the analysand, which evolves as a result of this mode of doing analysis, involves the formation of multiple stories about him/her. Some of these stories are discovered by the analysand him/herself, and some are revealed by the analyst. These stories represent the coming to life of the many complexes that Jung postulated make up the totality of personhood.

Most of the knowing in psychoanalysis and analytical psychology has been about the human as organism. Since organisms can be 'atomized', dispute about their 'molecular structure' amongst psychoanalysts and analytical psychologists has been fierce (Kirsner 2000). To resolve these disputes, they have turned to the concept of scientific paradigms. Thomas Kuhn introduced this term, which he said referred to a collection of assumptions, methods of acquiring data, and exemplary cases, that were determined by the social consensus of a group of scientists, and which guided their daily work (Kuhn 1962). He called this activity normal science, which, in his view, was analogous to puzzle solving. He said that normal scientific activity continued until enough anomalies occurred to challenge the assumptions and ways of acquiring knowledge of the prevailing paradigm. At that time, a scientific revolution occurred, the paradigm was abolished, and a new one was gradually established. The advent of the heliocentric concept of the planetary motion is a dramatic example of such a change in paradigm.

Since analytic practice involves the human as person, the concept of paradigm in this case is unjustifiable, as the person cannot be 'atomized' and reduced to an underlying principle. Rather, the person can only be understood in relation to the characteristics of its being there in the world.

Conclusions

An understanding of the nature of the human as person offers many advantages. It identifies and emphasizes that it is the person that is involved in the analytic process and shows that personhood cannot be 'atomized'. Once it is realized that the person appears in his/her stories, then the methods of revealing, developing and contrasting

these stories, such as those of Jung, Bion and Klein, can be further refined and developed. Most importantly, it shows that the tendency for the analyst to interpret must be curbed, for once a story is interpreted, it loses the logic that has sustained it and, therefore, the story, and the person who dwells within it, 'dies'. All interpretive methods are atomizing, since they all depend on an interpretive strategy, which in turn depends upon a basic explanatory principle that is said to govern the analytic discourse. Attachment is just one of many explanatory principles used to justify analytic interpretation.

Rather than interpreting the analysand's individual stories, their assumptions can be called into question by contrasting them with other stories that emerge in the dialogical process of the analytic discourse. Jung is pointing in this direction when he says that, in analysis, the ego complex comes into conflict with the shadow, the new and unknown, or, when he says that the unconscious compensates for the one-sided view of consciousness (Jung 1935b). Klein makes this point when she says that, in the depressive position, the self's different views of the object come into conflict, and Bion emphasizes this issue when he implies that the analyst's understanding of the impact of the analysand comes into conflict with the analysand's understanding of him/herself (Klein 1952).

When the analysand's juxtaposed stories are found to be totally incompatible, then the viability of his/her personhood collapses, as there is no story in which he/she can exist. Intense fear and sadness accompany this process. If the tension created by the juxtaposition is maintained, and the analysand does not return to an old story, or the analyst does not try to solve the conflict by an atomizing interpretation, then a completely novel and unique story gradually emerges.

Jung says this occurs via the emergence of a unifying narrative or symbol under which the conflicting stories are subsumed or understood in a new way. He calls this the transcendent function of the Self (Jung 1916). Bion says that it occurs via the transformation of O, which emerges when the analysand's sense of personhood itself collapses. When this occurs, the analysand has no access to the standard forms of signification, and, therefore, has the opportunity of becoming O and, as a result, transforming it into a totally original story. Bion distinguishes between transformations in O, which create original stories, and transformations in K, which is short for accepted forms of knowledge, which generate reorganized stories that do not change the concepts that underpin them. He came to believe that much of analytical theory served this latter defensive purpose (Bion 1977).

Klein, in contrast to Jung and Bion, has no theory of numinous emergence. The resolution of the opposing stories, in her view, occurs via the analysand coming to accept the two stories as both having a certain degree of truth, and, together, creating a new story that 'balances' the elements of both stories. She calls this object constancy, by which she means that the analysand does not change his/her overall story about the object in response to changing circumstances. She retains Freud's atomizing instinct theory, and, as a result, her concept of object constancy has hints of Freud's theory of sublimation, which implies a 'balancing' of instinctual forces.

It is interesting to note that both Bion and Jung eschew any form of atomization of the person in their theories of transformation, and both men formulate ways in which the

divine participates in this process. Perhaps it is only when we conceptualize the human as person that we discover the emergent reality of numinous experience. In stories, persons come to life. An analysis is a set of stories in which the analyst and analysand become bound together in a vital, unique and intimate way. This cannot be done fully within a reductionistic atomizing framework. It can only be done through the dynamic of the interplay of stories.

References

Ainsworth, M. D. (1969). 'Object relations, dependency and attachment: a theoretical review of the infant-mother relationship'. *Child Development*, 40, 969–1027.

Audi, R. (ed.) (1999). *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bion, W. R. (1959). *Experiences in Groups*. New York: Basic Books.

—— (1977). *Seven Servants*. New York: Jason Aronson.

Bowlby, J., Robertson, J. & Rosenbluth, D. (1952). 'A two year old goes to hospital'. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 7, 82–92.

Bowlby, J. (1958). 'The nature of the child's tie to his mother'. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 39, 350–73.

—— (1969). *Attachment and Loss. I. Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.

—— (1977). 'The making and breaking of affectional bonds, I. Aetiology and psychopathology in the light of attachment theory'. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 130, 202–10.

Derrida, J. (1978). *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Damasio, A. R. (1994). *Descarte's Error: Emotion and Reason and the Human Brain*. New York: Putnam.

—— (1999). *The Feeling of What Happens*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Descartes, R. (1960). *Discourse on Method and Meditations*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Dobson, K. (ed.) (2002). *Cognitive Behavioral Therapies*. New York: Guilford Press.

Edelman, G. M. & Tononi, G. (2000). *A Universe of Consciousness; How Matterbecomes Imagination*. New York: Basic Books.

Ellenberger, H. (1981). *The Discovery of the Unconscious*. New York: Basic Books.

The universe of our concerns 47

Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E. L., & Target, M. (2002). *Affect Regulation, Mentalization,and the Development of the Self*. New York: Other Press.

Fordham, M. (1978). 'The analysis of childhood and its limits'. In *Jungian Psychotherapy*. London: Maresfield.

—— (1993). 'On not knowing beforehand'. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 38, 127–36.

Freud, A. (1965). *Normality and Pathology in Childhood: Assessments of Development*.

New York: International Universities Press.

Freud S. (1895). 'Project for a scientific psychology'. *SE 1.*

—— (1900). *The Interpretation of Dreams. SE 4 & 5*.

—— (1914). 'On narcissism: An introduction'. *SE 14.*

—— (1915). 'Instincts and their vicissitudes'. *SE 14.*

—— (1917). 'Mourning and melancholia'. *SE 14.*

—— (1920). *Beyond the Pleasure Principle. SE 18*.

—— (1923). *The Ego and the Id. SE 19*.

Gergen, K. J. (1994). *Realities and Relationships: Soundings in Social Construction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

—— (2001). 'Psychological science in a postmodern context'. *American Psychologist*, 56, 803–13.

Harre, R. & Gillett, G. (1994). *The Discursive Mind*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hartmann, H. (1939). *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*. New York: International Universities Press.

Heidegger, M. (1927/62). *Being and Time*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. (1977). 'Letter on humanism'. In *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. D. F. Krell. San Francisco: HarperCollins.

Hesse, E. (1999). 'The adult attachment interview'. In *Handbook of Attachment:Theory, Research and Clinical Applications*, eds. J. Cassidy & R. Shaver. New York: Guilford Press, 395–428.

Jung, C. G. (1904/07). 'Studies in word association'. *CW 2*.

—— (1907). 'The feeling toned complex and its general effects on the psyche'. *CW 3*.

—— (1916). 'The transcendent function'. *CW 8.*

—— (1917). 'The personal and the collective unconscious'. *CW 8*.

—— (1934). 'A review of the complex theory'. *CW 8*.

—— (1935a). 'The principles of practical psychotherapy'. *CW 16*.

—— (1935b). 'The relations between the ego and the unconscious'. *CW 7*.

Kirsner, D. (2000). *Unfree Associations: Inside Psychoanalytic Institutes*. London: Process Press.

Klein, M. (1946). 'Notes on some schizoid mechanisms'. In *Envy and Gratitude andOther Works 1946–1963*. New York: The Free Press.

—— (1952). 'Some theoretical conclusions regarding the emotional life of the infant'. In *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946–1963*. New York: The Free Press.

Kohut, H. (1971). *The Analysis of the Self*. New York: International Universities Press.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago

Press.

Oxford English Dictionary (1990). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Plato. (1974). *The Republic*. London: Penguin Books.

Rosenhan, D. (1973). 'On being sane in insane places'. *Science*, 179, 250–58.

Rukeyser, M. (1949). *The Life of Poetry*. New York: A. A. Wynn/Current Books.

Schnadelbach, H. (1984). *Philosophy in Germany 1831–1933*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schore, A. N., (2001). 'Minds in the making: attachment, the self-organizing brain, and developmentally-oriented psychoanalytic psychotherapy'. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 37, 299–328.

Searle, J. R. (1997). *The Mystery of Consciousness*. New York: NYREV.

Solms, M. & Turnbull, O. (2002). *The Brain and the Inner World: An Introduction tothe Neuroscience of Subjective Experience*. New York: Other Press.

Spezzano, C. (1993). *Affect in Psychoanalysis: A Relational Perspective*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1951). 'Transitional objects and transitional phenomena'. In *Collected Papers: Through Pediatrics to Psychoanalysis*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

—— (1967). 'The location of cultural experience'. In *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock Publications.

—— (1971a). 'The place where we live'. In *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock Publications.

—— (1971b). 'Playing: a theoretical statement'. In *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock Publications.

—— (1971c). 'Playing: the search for the self'. In *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953/97). *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Footnotes

(1) Having to do with the nature of being.
back to reading

(2) An internal representation of a person that is used by the self to provide it with a sense of cohesion and organization.
back to reading

(3) The scientific and objective study of animal behaviour especially under natural conditions.
back to reading

(4) The development in a young animal of a pattern of trust and recognition of its own species.
back to reading