

Consciousness

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'Do not become a father unless you can deliver your offspring from the cycle of life and death' - thus goes a Hindu Buddhist saying. It is certainly thought provoking, particularly following this year's revelations in Austria about the actions of Josef Fritzl; more un-fatherly actions none of us can begin to imagine.

The Buddhists also describe trust as a clay pot, and not a very robust one. I think this image is heart-warming. It gives me the impression of cupped hands holding the pot with great tenderness and consciousness. And this brings me to perhaps my favourite subject: consciousness, and its twin, unconsciousness. Jung, when asked what would stop war, said that his belief was that if we 'withdrew all our projections' there would be no need for war.

It is my belief that projections (which can be interpreted positively as well as negatively – look at Beatlemania, but then look at Nazism; look, at the risk of alienating everyone on the planet, at love, the most common projection, and look at hatred) all come from the same unconscious place.

We cannot 'project' from our conscious minds, it would be like trying to pull ourselves up by our boot straps, it would be like saying – I am going to fall in love with this person, through choice. It just wouldn't work. The velocity of the projected comes from below, the underneath, the underworld, the unconscious. Our conscious minds, hugely influenced by our unconscious minds and in some cases taken over by our unconscious minds, have free will to draw from.

This is where Good and Evil can be argued to come into it, although it is my assertion that when we perceive someone as Evil, it is a case where the unconscious mind has indeed taken over the conscious and is instructing the incumbent conscious mind to behave in the manner of its choosing. In the opposite camp, of Good, the same could be said of a practising saint. The frightening thing for all of us, I suppose, is that we all have the potential within us for either extreme, good or evil, by the very fact of having an unconscious mind.

Thus Jung's dictum that we should withdraw our projections if we wish to end war demands two consequences. First, that we work hard to understand better our unconscious, to 'lighten the darkness', so that we will not send out the negative projections which bring such devastating consequences as war. Second, by so doing, by becoming more 'conscious', we must sacrifice a little of the elixir of love, given that we now will understand better from where this glorious feeling has come. This sacrifice brings with it the maturity of mind that one sees in such people as Ghandi, beacons still burning in the dark.