

Twinship and Consciousness: A Psychotherapeutic Journey¹

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I am a twin. Am I broken? Broken-up or broken-in after psychoanalytic therapy. Is duality – the logic of opposites – the name of the game? The world a game? Duality and divisiveness. Racism. Famine. Abuse. War. World with sun behind the clouds.

When I sat in the big twin-pram opposite the other one, I saw, and was astonished that it was space that was doing the seeing, in the beginning. With separate bodies and one mind we knelt to meet the world. Sun is bright, she said. And hot, I said. Snow is white, she said. And glittery, I said. And freezing, she said, and silent. Astonishing, we said – astonishing to sit here in the big twin-pram in our warm woolly coats and bonnets looking at it, and, we said, the intricacy of having cold cheeks and warm bodies, and being. This knowledge of being and its properties passed between us. We learnt that around the butterfly the air is spacious, the sun warm; a ladybird so right, a caterpillar so friendly; they tell of a good world.

But the headmaster had us wear blazers on a hot summer's day, the eleven-plus divided our neighbourhood into the have-nots and the haves, the establishment did not accept unilateral disarmament, fell in love, had children, Kennedies (Jack and Robert) murdered, we must endeavour, search, understand, read. This enquiry and the excitement of it filled our lives.

I went through a crisis. My twin went through a crisis. Call them break-downs. We needed putting back together. But what did they do?

They broke us up. Of course they did; they were analysts. Intending to put us back together later when the parts were perfected. Id, ego, super-ego littered the consulting room like a pack of cards before the parlour games began; our wholeness was ignored. There was no spirituality, only pathology – no health-driven crises, such as an uprising of psychic energy seeking to rearrange the psychic landscape to complete the individuation process. We endeavoured to understand.

In this way our agency, my agency, her agency – our sense of personhood – were diminished while purporting to empower us. Though the newer psychoanalytic thinking was relatedness, it was apparent that nineteenth-century scientific mechanism, with its emphasis on the separate part, was still embedded in the model and was being passed down the generations of therapists. How could this not be so when its main tenet and practice are individuation – the separation of the client-baby from therapist-mother, practised through austere attachment/separation techniques? This is the kind of muddle, or impaction, that David Bohm, the physicist/philosopher, speaks of when he explores the evolution of consciousness.

I have a fancy, a dream, which may be called a phantasy, that my book on which this article is based, *Twinship and Consciousness* – my tiny contribution to the world – describes the descent of *homo sapiens*, the wrong evolutionary turn into fragmentation and alienation while hinting at a state of potential being – for twinship may

describe the sun and the sum. Yes, a phantasy. Consequently, rather than solely looking at the particulars of the binary attitude – comparison and all that entails – competition, rivalry, envy and hate – it is perhaps more necessary to explore the causes of it. The causes of duality – the binary attitude pervading society. The broken-upness of twinship seemed a gift through which to do so.

Such a claim! Such omnipotence! Smacks of needing something being clipped, nipped in the bud, something being accessed by the scrutiny of the esoteric therapeutic gaze. Who was I to write my views, who had only ever written poetry? I was a patient, at best a client, not a thinker, in psychoanalytic therapy. If I cried I was desiring to merge with the mother-therapist. If I talked of my difficulties from my existential perspective, I was intellectual – I knew, I read the books, though my therapist was fairly tactful, deflecting rather than damning, saying she didn't understand me; it was dismissal. It was only later I knew the reason for the dismissal – to render me an infant in order to play out the mother/child scenario. In this way it made me into a 'thing' for itself. Both my thought and feeling were negated.

My expectation of working with an adult in reciprocal equality was short-lived. Now in hindsight I can see the skill with which my therapist manufactured the '*seeming*' relationship while the psychoanalytic agenda was being enacted. I had to surrender to the model, the bigger picture, which was like the approach of a bulldozer, inexorable and relentless, cutting out everything else to bring all into the orbit of the transference.

So – what made me think I could possibly approach such profound questions? I reiterate, it was the seeming gift of twinship, the experience of close relationship, of love and loveliness, the humanity at our base, and the sharing of the sap running through all consciousness which had me not accept this terrible assumption of separateness. It was also the relationship with my therapist, for the good apple off the tree of life was evident and could be seen and felt beyond the model.

So, this 'that' is not separateness. What is it? This communion? It was not a private twin-language. This 'that' is between all people; suspicion of infantile merging would have us forget and break the bond. And bond the break. This is what set me on a path to investigate separateness and unity.

Of course there were not only the profundities to consider; to my ordinary mind there were anomalies: my thoughts were phantasies, hers were theories; there was the insistence of neutrality whilst working from a stance – and with such assurance, too; there was my outrage at the promotion of hate, that is, that infants learn to love through first hating the mother.

Yet, in this frisson-based culture where ideas chafe or bullets bang against one another, it is hardly surprising that twentieth-century theorists have speculated that infantile development is accomplished through difference and separateness; 'If all goes well the infant can actually come to gain from the experience of frustration, since incomplete adaptation to need makes objects real, that is to say hated as well as loved' (Winnicott, 1971). One can imagine how radically attractive this may appear to a young would-be trainee from middle-class repressive England.

However, to enter into the narrow tunnel of the analytic script was in stark contrast to the space which was being revealed to us. Hitherto, until the crisis we felt we had been in a process which, very very slowly, we came to think of as spiritual; there was a force beyond ourselves moving up the body; we experienced a world, a realm of being of which one could never dream; there was the urge to love, a sense of well-being, there was crying in bliss but also in great anguish; we experienced the collective unconscious and much else. But while I was accessing these experiences from the unconscious, psychoanalysis required that I access another, different kind of experience. Mine were deemed grey areas. After all, this was the psychoanalytic model, not the transpersonal.

What was required of me was to uncover repressed hate and thus to corroborate another

main concept of the model – namely, that hate is innate. To do so, it was felt, was half way to accommodating and resolving the ambivalence which, it was presumed, was causing my anguish.

The frightening thing was that being influenced by another mind-set did change the phenomena being thrown up from the so-called unconscious. I did supply the required experiences. Were they the correct ones? So what was a person? It also threw up intense feelings which could be perceived as hate, but were more like bewilderment, curiosity, anger and indignation at manipulation, lack of straightness.

Now it was essential I understood. Innate hate! It is a world made for Pavarotti, Mozart, Einstein, quantum physics, fascination and discovery. Innate hate. Is that not a contradiction in terms – with the potential of the cosmos blossoming into every kind of diversity? Take, say, the function of the kidney, quite a small organ – and think of the kidney of an ant. Built by nature. Yet the iron lung, its substitute built by man, is a big cumbersome thing. My nurse friend, Jean, told me this. There we were sitting in M&S's café communing, not hating. Just as my twin, Carol, and I not only used to help each comprehend creation, but *before therapy*, used to co-operate in understanding what was happening to us. What a mystery that an animal should attempt to talk about the fine silk of consciousness.

Hating, it seems to me, arises with the very idea of being and feeling oneself to be separate (psychologically). To regard oneself as 'me' and others as 'not-me' introduces the opposites, and suggests difference, comparison, rivalry, superiority/inferiority, dominance/submission, and with it inevitable tension; for as Krishnamurti said, 'Where there is division there will be conflict'. I think this is where hate originates – in the opposites. Polarity and separateness are all right in the physical material world – something is either big or small, hard or soft, one can only be sitting down or standing up. However, taking such qualities into the psychological domain is inappropriate because consciousness is so much more than this. (When I understood this, I felt I'd found God.) Yet such

interpersonal tension has come to be regarded as the frisson of life itself. And you spend all your time trying to bring yourself up to scratch, to empower yourself, become absorbed in finding yourself instead of God. If you postulate an id, ego, super-ego, you apparently think they are different and treat them so, and difference appears to bring conflict. It's like trying to know the ocean through knowing the waves. When there was wholeness, the ocean, all along. You couldn't make it up – differentiation/separation – the hallmark of developmental maturity in psychoanalytic thought. Of course there is something in this view. But not everything. Breaking up into disjoint parts – will – well, disjoint them.

These are the kinds of things I began to be aware of. This is what led me to attempt to consider the big questions. What is the self? What am I? Who is my twin? She who was me before the splitting of the egg. Separateness and unity – a paradox to build a life on.

Being an average kind of person and having come to understand even this little bit, I can see the impossibility of getting it right. One is not necessarily equipped to *really* grasp the depth of these things at an age when training is taking place. I think the genuine insights of Freud and Jung, et al., are not put into practice because of this. And with therapists, say, coming from middle England, then the opening up of 'me' and 'my' feelings – the individualism arriving from America in the '60s – one could see how this would appear to be the panacea to solve all ills. Yet, perhaps it is no more than a muddle arising from the underpinnings of an out-date-paradigm – a strange, personal outgrowth of scientific mechanism. But the animal continues to re-enter the mystery of the animal attempting to talk about the fine silk of consciousness.

Note

1 This article is based on my book *Twinship and Consciousness: A Psychotherapeutic Journey through Separateness and Unity*, Austin Macauley, London, 2021. (In a future issue, we will include a review of *Twinship and*

Consciousness as well as an interview with the author – ed.).

References

- Krishnamurti, J. (1997). *Reflections on the Self*, ed. R. Martin. Chicago: Open Court.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1971). *Playing and Reality*. London: Brunner-Routledge.

About the contributor



Wendy Clayton is a twin. She is married with two sons and three grandchildren and is a retired English teacher and a published poet who is fascinated by the wonder of everything, loving to wander the moors close to the earth and sky, as well as snorkelling to explore the seas. Curiosity about consciousness led to

involvement in the work of the philosopher, J. Krishnamurti and that of David Bohm, the physicist/philosopher. Absorbing all this changed the twinship, thus entered psychotherapy.