

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

A central endeavour in phenomenological psychology has been to describe the open clearing that is the ontological ground of human existence, and thereby to undercut theoretical differences and approaches to understanding the structures of human existence, including the structures of human transformation. Mary Watkins's essay is a meditation on that ground, the opening of Being, where "Being" is not a personal capacity, as it is often (mis)understood in the humanistic tradition. Rather, Being is that moment of coming into Presence of both person and world in a single, liberating occurrence. As Watkins argues, it is the liberation of Being that is the authentic call of human existence, a call which is itself healing. She also poses a challenge to phenomenology's customary preoccupation with individual persons and experiences and its generally unreflective complacency regarding the broader socio-political contexts in which personal experiences are constituted. In this way she outlines the possibility of understanding the work we do as psychologists as a genuinely "liberation psychology," in which the politics of that claim should not be neglected.

DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY AND THE LIBERATION OF BEING

Mary Watkins

Martin-Baro (1994), the Jesuit psychologist murdered by a Salvadorean death squad in 1989, called in his work for the creation of a "liberation psychology." I would like to begin to explore what depth psychology can contribute to such an undertaking. At the same time, I would like liberation psychology to challenge and help rework problematic aspects of depth psychology. Depth psychology can be seen as an effort which radically challenges dominant cultural paradigms of selfhood and reality. It can also be seen as reflecting, conserving, and perpetuating aspects of the cultural status quo that contribute to human suffering. It is a confusing mixture of oppressive and libertory practices and theories. It is a mixture which perhaps the lens of a psychology of liberation can help us begin to clarify, so that liberation of one level does not mitigate against but supports liberation on other levels.

Liberation psychology, borne from the inspiration of liberation theology, argues that psychology itself requires liberation before it can be a clear force for liberation. The first step in such a process is to situate itself as a discipline within a cultural and historical context. Only in this way can the implications of the values in its theories and practices for the maintenance or transformation of particular aspects of culture be articulated. For depth psychology this would require creating awareness of its historical and cultural roots in European and American experience, in largely middle- and upper-class, male, Judaeo-Christian experience. Liberation psychology would ask what the implications of these roots are, particularly when this psychology is applied to members of other groups. One central implication of these origins that liberation psychology critiques is that depth psychology has not adequately understood and articulated the relationship between socio-cultural/economic structures and individual suffering. The focus on intrapsychic dynamics and the dyadic transference relationship between patient and therapist often neglects the relationship between cultural and individual pathology. Indeed, the underlying paradigm of self in American culture –

rooted as it is in the Enlightenment, Puritanism, and the rise of industrialism and capitalism – would have us each think we are individually responsible for our shortcomings, gifts, pain, and health. A more contextualized view of self would seek to articulate the interrelations between what we have cordoned off as internal/private and what we take to be public/social.

psychology has for the most part not been very clear about the intimate relationship between an unalienated personal existence and unalienated social existence, between individual control and collective power, between the liberation of each person and the liberation of a whole people. Moreover, psychology has often contributed to obscuring the relationship between personal estrangement and social oppression, presenting the pathology of persons as if it were something removed from history and society, and behavioral disorders as if they played themselves out entirely in the individual plane.

(Martin-Baro 1994: 27)

When we consider human development and individuation, too often we have seen these as processes located within the individual. One can work on one's own "development" without regard to the other, even while acting in ways that use or impede the other in his/her own development.

Third-World liberationists have rejected the term "development" for cultural and economic progress, for too often it implied adopting an economic system that required their oppression or their neighbor's. Liberation was chosen as a better term for the goal of cultural change, for it is relational, based on a paradigm of interdependence. The liberation of one is inextricably tied to the liberation of all. Perhaps liberation is also a better term for psychological development in a perspective that strives for the acknowledgment of interdependence.

In a psychology of liberation the term "the other" is as crucial as the term "the self." Openness to the revelation of the other is as necessary as openness to the liberation of one's own thoughts, feeling, and images. Liberation is a holistic term that urges us to consider economic, political, spiritual, and psychological liberation together. In its holism it helps us to resist thinking that one could be psychologically liberated or individuated while economically or culturally enslaved or curtailing of the freedom of others. It urges us to look at how psyche reflects these other levels of human existence.

I believe that at the heart of its methods depth psychology is a psychology of liberation, but that it has focused on psychological liberation without enough clarity on the total context that is needed for human liberation. Without maintaining awareness of this broader context, its impulse toward liberation can actually subvert its own goal. Cushman (1995) argues that when we question why in our time the interior or the psychological has been chosen as the backdrop for human concern and activity, we discover that it

has allowed us to retreat from disappointment and disillusionment about the lack of community and tradition from which we suffer. I would add that this retreat to the psychological has also buffered us from our feelings of impotence and ineffectuality in creating the kinds of communities and social order that we most deeply desire to be homed by, and that we already know are more conducive to psychological well-being.

I would like first to turn to some of depth psychology's liberational methods, as exemplified in the work of some of its major founders, and then explore the application of these to wider contexts. Because of the mixture of radical and conservative tendencies in each theory, one could choose other aspects of depth psychology to argue against the points I will make. I am choosing to articulate those threads which I see as most conducive to a psychology of liberation!

When we look at the basic methods the founders of depth psychology proposed to their patients to help them address their suffering, we find a common movement toward what could be called the liberation of being. This is so despite differing theoretical allegiances which led the masters to various interpretive schemas. The common impulse across depth psychologies to liberate being links depth psychology to perennial spiritual traditions across time. It also speaks to the particular configurations of suffering in our cultural-historical time that western depth psychotherapy has been committed to address and heal. By focusing on this aspect of therapeutic practice – the liberation of being – I hope first to clarify the ways in which depth psychology can contribute to a psychology of liberation, and then to address how it needs to widen its sensibility toward oppression and liberation, embracing the challenge of the globalization of psychology (Sampson 1989).

Depth psychology has cultivated ways of being with what has been oppressed and marginalized that are applicable to interpersonal and intercultural settings. As I outline where the impulse to the liberation of being is within the methods of the various schools of depth psychology, let us also examine the manner of being they are honing so that we can see its relevance to liberational practices on other levels of human existence.

The schools of depth psychology suggest the importance of being able to bracket a controlling ego-directed manner of being in order to allow the free occurring or autonomy of being. In their therapeutic endeavors one cannot get to where one is going directly, through discursive, logical thinking. Van den Berg (1971) argues that the historical emergence of a strong, bounded, masterful ego constellated the co-emergence of what is called the dynamic unconscious. The logical rationality of the ego has pushed emotion, intuition, and image into the shadows of the margin. Analytic technique calls these marginalized ways of knowing into the consulting room, radically redistributing power from the oneness of the ego to the voices of the many. Despite the theoretical disagreements between the principal schools of depth psychotherapy, each argues that healing can occur when the spontaneous

movement of being – feelings, thoughts, words, images, or bodily energy – can arise without hindrance. Freud and Jung were intensely interested in the content of what arose through their methods of free association and active imagination, and much of their analytic, interpretive work focused on this content. I would like to suggest, however, that it is often the mode of being that allows this content to come forth that is most essential to healing efforts. Heard with the ears of a liberation psychology, it is the openness to retrieve from the process of marginalization that which has been rendered inferior and denigrated that is central to healing. This mode of allowing *what is* to arise, is as crucial interpersonally, culturally, and interculturally as it is to so-called intrapsychic phenomena.

Free association

For Freud, patient and doctor were involved in corollary movements of mind, whose aims were the liberation of thoughts, fantasies and memories from their repressed status. While highly valuing reason, he understood that what is extruded from consciousness makes itself known in symptoms and neurotic suffering. For this reason he sought to address consciousness that had become too narrowed by asking both patient and doctor to welcome the previously repressed/oppressed.

He instructed the patient to give voice to all thoughts, memories, and images which enter her mind, whether spontaneously arising or while associating to a dream fragment or symptom. She was to try to restrain from any conscious selection or censoring of thoughts, regardless of their being unpleasant or appearing ridiculous, irrelevant, or uninteresting. Through this “fundamental rule,” as it was called, one was to report literally whatever “falls into the mind” (*Einfälle*). In free association a voluntary selecting of thoughts is gradually eliminated so that a different order, the order of the unconscious, can arise. In Freud’s words, “when conscious purposive ideas are abandoned, concealed purposive ideas assume control of the current of ideas” (1900: 531). One abandons a “systematic and purposeful search with a known aim” to “an apparently blind and uncontrolled meandering” (Jones 1961:155). This meandering radically supplements the truth that the critical rationality of the ego can provide. He describes this meandering as requiring a “mobile attention,” not unlike one’s attention in a hypnotic state or while falling asleep.

The “critical faculty” leads us to “reject some of the ideas that occur to [us] after perceiving them, to cut short others without following the trains of thought which they would open up to [us], and to behave in such a way toward still others that they never become conscious at all and are accordingly suppressed before being perceived” (Freud 1900: 102). In its efforts at exclusion, it hides a fuller truth. By observing where resistance to free arising of thoughts occurred, Freud could inquire into the conflict over expression:

what is seeking to be expressed and what is seeking to prevent expression and why. In attending to this antithesis and intervening as a midwife of the repressed, healing was aided.

Freud would ask the patient to let himself go as you would do in a conversation which leads you from cabbages to kings, let ideas “emerge ‘of their own free will’ ” (Freud 1900: 102). This “widening of consciousness” on the patient’s part was aided by the atmosphere gifted by the therapist’s own “evenly-hovering attention,” which would attempt to avoid selecting things to focus on from the patient’s material so that premature ideas of order were not superimposed on the free associations. Both doctor and patient were to avoid psychotherapy’s becoming a scene for the discussion of the already known, instead of a place where mind begins to occur freely, as resistances are lifted through interpretation.

Liberation psychology urges us not to apply knowledge from one group to all other groups. As a praxis, it asks that we go alongside those we are trying to understand, to allow them to speak of their problems with their own voice. The psychologist is not to enter as an expert, but to act as a midwife to those who have been disempowered, so that they can begin to be the protagonists of their own history. In this we can hear Freud’s connection between the process of extrusion and the origination of symptoms and suffering. His method of making room for the repressed/oppressed, welcoming it, and of allowing its own order and meaning to become apparent, rather than to be dictated to by the dominant ideology of the egos of the doctor and the patient are consistent with a psychology of liberation. On both cultural and intrapsychic levels such a practice radically revises and supplements the previous sense of truth.

Active imagination

After his break with Freud, Jung applied a widened conception of the fundamental rule to himself in an attempt to heal and understand himself: “Since I know nothing at all, I shall do whatever occurs to me” (1962: 173). From 1912–1917 he found himself building sand castles, hewing stones, painting mandalas, holding conversations with imaginal figures; that is, he allowed images to arise and tried to body them forth in his activities. In turning his attention to the flow of images, Jung met an imaginal figure, Philemon, whom he said taught him about the autonomy of the psyche. By this Jung meant that there are things in the psyche which we do not produce, things which have a life of their own (1962: 183).

The method of active imagination was proposed to liberate this autonomous life of images and figures, so that a relationship between the conscious and the unconscious could be formed. This dialogue between the conscious point of view with which one is habitually identified and the freely arising images provided not only for a compensation of conscious attitudes by

unconscious ones, but for an interpenetration and gradual synthesis of the conscious and the unconscious.

"Moreover," said Jung, "this work [of active imagination] has a definite effect . . . whatever [one] has put into it works back on him and produces a change of attitude which I tried to define by mentioning the *non-ego-centre*" (1935: 173). The process of active imagination gradually moves the center of one's awareness from habitual identification with the ego, which is often one-sided, to a more central position where one is less severed from the various outposts of the personality. Indeed, Jung – and Hillman (1971) since – stressed the polycentered nature of psyche. Active imagination is a method that invites the specificity of each perspective to be articulated, particularly insofar as it differs from the ego's.

In active imagination, as in free association, one tries to stop the ways the ego tries to remain in control of psychic experience so that the spontaneous movement of thoughts and images can begin to emerge into awareness. It is this repositioning which, I believe, has a healing effect, regardless of the content of the imagery or thoughts. This is a crucial point. It is sometimes tempting for Jungian and archetypal therapists to become excessively focused on the imagery per se. Interest in imagery for its own sake can obscure the significance of having moved to a place of witnessing which invites the other, the marginalized, to appear. It is this stance that is capable of being curious about and interactive with what has been "foreign" that is a critical contribution of these methods to a psychology of liberation.

Jung's racism and anti-Semitism, as well as his suspicion of politics, would not seem to ally him with any "liberation" movement. However, his acknowledgment of and respect for psychic multiplicity, his articulation of imaginative dialogue (rather than interpretation) as a method for psychic transformation, and his vision of a place to stand amidst multiplicity that is not fettered by efforts at control and domination, are deeply in the spirit of a psychology of liberation. At times in his writings he clearly seemed to grasp the interpenetration of self and other, though his elaboration on greeting the other appears much more highly developed with respect to "interior" psychic realities.

Jung certainly had an interest in other cultures – African, Native American, Chinese, Indian – and he spoke of the necessity to respect them. He even studied these cultures in an attempt at cultural self-reflection. Nevertheless, he remained somewhat unclear concerning the limitations of his own Germanic, Christian and romantic roots, and of the conceptual colonialism that these roots tended to perpetuate. Moreover, his interest in the collective aspects of psyche, beneath differences, was keener than his interest in beginning to articulate a truly multicultural depth psychology.

Samuels (1993) in his ground breaking book, *The Political Psyche*, outlines how to map Jung's grasp of multiplicity onto the domain of cultural differences. Samuels's ideas are central to a depth psychology of liberation. He

urges depth psychologists to work in an interdisciplinary fashion, acknowledging the limitations of a purely psychological point of view, so that phenomena can be grasped in their political and economic complexity, rather than having these domains reduced to psychology. He advocates the aligning of depth psychology with the powerless rather than the powerful (as Jung did), in order to use its psychological expertise to help articulate the experience of marginalized others. Such work aids in releasing such others from the stereotypes of the dominant culture. The analyst's goal is not to become an expert of ethnic and cultural differences, but "a mediator who enables the patient to experience and express his or her *own* difference" (Samuels 1993: 328).

Were the spirit of how Jung approaches intrapsychic experience fully lived out within analytical psychology, it could move it from Jung's fascination with the collective to a truly multicultural psychology, making room for the particularities of each specific Other (see Adams 1997). Here *depth* psychology could also refer to penetrating and articulating the depth of differences – interculturally, interpersonally, and intrapsychically.

Liberating the capacity to play

At the core of Winnicott's object relations psychotherapy was a questioning about how we get a sense of feeling alive and real, sensibilities fundamental to feeling our lives are worth living. In his attention to the early relationship between mother and child he observed how a baby can be made precociously to comply with her mother's needs and desires, in order to maintain a relationship with her. In doing so, however, the child distances from her own needs and desires, and loses a sense of connection with what freely arises in her own experience, be it desires, feelings, thoughts. This inhibition of the spontaneity that characterizes the aliveness of the person is, for Winnicott, synonymous with illness. It breeds a sense of futility and hopelessness. Psychotherapy, he argued, must then provide a space, a "holding place," in which it is safe enough for spontaneous experience, play, to arise. In this free arising there is awakened the pleasure of being alive, the foundation of psychic health.

The transition from ego-mindedness to a space in which images, thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations might arise was the focus of Winnicott's psychotherapy. Indeed, for him, psychotherapy "has to do with two people playing together" (1971: 38). When playing is not yet possible, therapy is aimed at overcoming the blocks to play, so that the spontaneity of being can occur. Winnicott was clear that what mattered most about play was not its content, or the analyst's subsequent interpretations, but the state that characterizes play: "a near-withdrawal state," a state in which one can be surprised by oneself, a "non-purposive state."

Winnicott claimed that in play "one is free to be creative and [that] it is

only in being creative that the individual discovers the [true] self" (1971: 55). Creativity is a "coming together after relaxation, which is the opposite of integration" (ibid.: 64). He might have a several-hour session with an adult, where she is free to lay on the floor, free to transition out of the ego mode of relating one's difficulties, into a transitional space in which being could freely occur. This spontaneous space is also a resting place, where the efforts of control, mastery, and knowing are relaxed. In it the mind can fall back into the body. When psyche and soma cease to be defensively split, one experiences what Winnicott described as the true self. This self collects together the details of the experience of aliveness, which yield a sense of realness.

The analyst must not scurry to create impressive interpretations, but clear the space so that the patient can surprise herself with an understanding that emerges. The capacity to play was superordinate to the capacity to know.

In Winnicott we find an allegiance not to thought, feelings, images or bodily experience per se, but to that state of being in which one's inherent liveliness can become the foundation of activity in the world. His dictum was clear, "After being – doing and being done to. But first, being" (1971: 85). That freedom in one of these areas – the movement of thoughts, images, bodily energy, playing – effects movement in the others is often experienced, and indicates how bifurcating our theories and approaches can be. One of the central values of liberation theology that a liberation psychology borrows is the emphasis on the promotion of life and the articulation of the historical and sociocultural conditions that mitigate against and those which liberate life and liveliness (Martin-Baro 1994: 26). Martin-Baro and Paulo Freire would agree with Winnicott that it is only in a context that promotes liveliness that true creativity can emerge, creativity which is necessary to the vitality of the culture, as well as the individual.

Winnicott's meticulous description of how a child precociously complies to a mother's needs and desires in order to be loved could have been the beginning of an object relations theory of how psychic structure complies to the dominant paradigms of the culture, even when this causes pathology. Despite an interest in culture as the "place" of transitional experience, he did not see the culture streaming into the child's identity through the mother's needs and desires, and in the very structuring of the infant-mother relationship. Karen Horney (1937) opened the window out of the reduction of most psychodynamics to the mother-child relationship by asking what is acting in a cultural way to create so many mothers with narcissistic and depressive suffering. This window keeps getting closed.

Winnicott sets up the facilitating conditions for feeling alive – for being – in his consulting room, but says little about how the culture – beyond the mother – can attempt to give these very qualities to children: safety, reliability, consistency, the making of time and space to receive the other, the refusal to dominate the other through our ideas for him, the understanding of the necessity for uncertainty and wandering for the birthing of meaning and

liveliness. He did not have perspective on the cultural context of his own practice and theory. In effect, Winnicott describes the "facilitating environment" as a nuclear family with a mother as sole caretaker of a child, and he does not question this as the recent cultural-historical invention that it is. At least in his major writings, he does not discuss the profound effect of the rise of industrialism on family structure: its erosion of "extended" families, its removal of the father from the home, its creating material desire to propel a capitalist economy that structures much of the daily life of mother and children. He endeavored to support individual mothers, but without critically examining the social structures that most impacted on their mental health and, thus, on that of their children.

Perhaps, however, the method of how Winnicott worked with the constraining of being by compliance can have a wider application than he imagined. His individual therapy sought to illumine how such constraint arose in response to the demands of relationship and then to practice loosening this constraint within an area of safety, with the aims of liveliness, creativity, and meaning. Once we understand how broad are the forces to which we comply, Winnicott's work could have wider implications for healing. Without insight into the wider forces to which we comply, however, his work distorts the sources of our suffering, compromising our efforts to address them.

Phenomenology's practice of world-openness

Central to the practice of phenomenologically oriented psychotherapies is the understanding that psychopathology is a constriction away from *what is*. The analyst attempts to create an openness, a spaciousness, so that what the patient has extruded can gradually emerge into its own authentic presence (Boss 1963). The awareness of *what is* constitutes healing, as it alleviates the sufferings that arise from efforts to extrude, defend, and distort.

Charles Scott says that the "therapeutic occurs as one is able to welcome events" (1982: 159). The capacity to welcome events cuts across domains. It is as relevant in welcoming the being of the other as it is in allowing the multiplicity of ourselves. It is an openness toward things as they are, an "openness toward the forthcoming of hiddenness" (ibid.: 83). This openness requires that we suspend our ego-interests, intentions, and desires, with their relentless judgments. Such an openness corresponds to a liberation of being.

In a similar vein, Fromm – psychoanalyst, social critic, member of the Frankfurt critical theory group – argued that the rise of capitalism and industrialism created a cultural shift from an emphasis on being to having. Such a transition entailed a further strengthening of the ego and its capacities for control and mastery. This strengthening was won by disassociating from the broader base of psyche, body, nature, community, and the spiritual, until the autonomy of the ego became seen as a goal. The movements of

mind that support such an ego involve copious comparisons between self and other, meticulous monitoring of issues of sufficiency, inferiority and superiority, a heightened critical and judgmental capacity, maintenance of power, control and autonomy.

All of the psychotherapeutic practices I have outlined above are effective in softening such an ego, and in creating a different mode of participation. Opinion, criticism, judgment, premature understanding, and interference are explicitly bracketed so that they do not limit the appearance of what has been cast out. Listening and dialogical interaction are the means of coming to know what has been extruded. Through dialogical interaction, as in active imagination, the other can effect the self, as much as the self can effect the other. Control and domination are supplanted by dialogue and understanding. These are powerful tools with which to participate interpersonally and interculturally. It is a potential legacy from depth psychology to community activism that I deeply treasure, and which I hope will find a greater scope of usefulness.

Liberation across domains: vignettes from psychotherapy, large-group dialogue, and "Theatre of the Oppressed"

Psychotherapy

I would like to highlight the attempt on the clinician's part to listen for issues of oppression and liberation across domains – the so-called intrapsychic, the spiritual, the interpersonal, and the cultural. To shift to an interdependent paradigm of self – where the well-being of one is understood to be dependent on the manner of relations with others, the invisibles, earth, community, culture and global interconnectedness – we must practice holding liberation of being in the widest and deepest ways possible.

The clinical vignette is of a type that will be familiar to psychotherapists, yet it offers a sense of how the liberation of being in one domain – in this case with a feeling of anger and an impulse to murder – can in time broaden to include the liberation of being in relationships with oneself, one's partner, children, and friends, in cultural understanding and community action.

Carolyn came to therapy at the age of thirty-nine, married, mother of three, exhausted, depressed, anxious, and obsessive. Her brother's recent death by alcohol had made it impossible to hide from her own suffering. She was no longer able to navigate daily life with as much defense and pretense.

It emerged in therapy that Carolyn's father practiced a destructive form of patriarchy, exercising his position with abusive power toward the mother and abusive sexuality with his daughter. Both were frightened of his over-ruling and rageful presence. He clearly felt his daughter's body was his own property, as reaching in to touch her breasts on her wedding day amply describes.

Her mother became progressively under the sway of alcoholism and was correspondingly unavailable to Carolyn. The father was openly promiscuous with other women, parading his sexual potency.

Carolyn was able to remember her first incident of escape into obsessive thinking. In late latency she saw her father kiss a woman in clear view of herself. For a moment she felt like killing him. Then she looked up. There were branches on the tree above him, and she began to count them meticulously. By the time I saw her twenty-seven years later, such counting formed a backdrop to her daily activities, enabling her to distance from her pain and confusion, while radically narrowing her field of vision. She would count each dish as it went into the dishwasher, each piece of laundry as it was being folded. She could not leave the house until a high level of order and cleanliness had been achieved. Even on Christmas Day she scurried between her children to throw away the wrappers from the presents as they were opened. Her job as a fitness instructor was also in part an effort to control the body, though her own body would not succumb, and often stopped her with multiple painful injuries.

She was preoccupied by what others wanted from her, taking great pains to please them. She reported a lack of sexual desire, and experienced intrusive imagery of her father during sexual activity. Even when masturbating she could not experience an orgasm as hers, but would find herself looking down at herself as she would during intercourse.

In therapy she was initially confused about what she herself thought and felt. In her other relationships she had taken refuge in being the respondent. Therapy by its very structure of turning attention to her challenged this passivity, and highlighted her inability to allow herself to arise freely in the presence of another. She was too frightened to lay down on the analytic couch and, at first, even to close her eyes. We explored her fantasies of what would happen if she were to do either of these. In her image the other – myself – would become larger and larger, dwarfing and controlling her almost to her extinction. Her vigilance was a clear attempt to defend herself from domination by the other. A dream expressed the intensity of her fear:

I was in some doctor's office on a stretcher being held down. I can feel the scratchiness of his wool pants. He puts his finger in his pocket and told me to suck on it. Then he turns and his penis is erect and it is in my mouth through his pants. He has no face. I see him only from the waist down. Someone else is holding me down. I awake screaming.

Here the domination of sexual abuse is mapped onto the figure of the doctor. Laying down is utterly unsafe. In a state of need herself – being at the doctor's – her vulnerability is exploited for the doctor's pleasure. The situation overpowers her, holding her into the abusive and abrasive moment.

In another dream she angrily confronts her father and a lover of his. Helping her greet her spontaneous feelings of anger was the initial key to subsequent liberation of feelings, thoughts, images, bodily experiences – and, indeed, the world of other people.

In her relations with her parents she feigned cheerfulness, survived visits, censored the expression towards them of spontaneous feelings and thoughts, and rigidly maintained the schedule of contact by phone and visit that they had prescribed for her. Any deviation from this pattern provoked anger and rejection by her parents.

The re-emergence of anger – kept largely in check by her unexamined obsessive preoccupations – broke her ability to perform seamlessly the role of the grateful, happy daughter. As this role began to dissolve, it clarified how it had become generalized to other contexts – with friends, her church, her children's school. There too she had remained hidden from herself and others by organizing her activity around the needs and desires of the other. Her increasing lethargy and depression now viscerally felt connected to the degree that she had left herself out of these arrangements. But then who was she actually? What did she actually feel and think? The spaciousness in therapy that allows one to wait for feelings and thoughts was both anxiety provoking and greatly desired. Therapy allowed her to begin a practice of self-initiation rather than pure responsiveness: a self-initiation that arose from waiting patiently for her own thoughts, feelings, and desires to arise.

As she began to crawl out from under the expectations others had of her, she became increasingly aware of her expectations for those closest to her, particularly her husband. She became aware that she had needed him to be a solid mountain behind which to take refuge. When he ventured into the expression of his doubts, particularly regarding his work, she felt she wanted him to stop and resume his former pose as self-assured and certain. The evolution of the marriage, of her capacity to allow the other to arise freely, was utterly dependent on her awareness of the extent of constraint to which she had submitted. The more hardy her own contact with her truth and voice, the more she could allow him vulnerability and uncertainty.

As she became able to discuss the extent of sexual abuse in her experience, I encouraged her to join a sexual abuse group. Through deep listening to the others in the group, as well as having the courage to speak her own story, she came to understand the ways in which internalized destructive gender relations form some of the most intimate dimensions of psyche. This was critical to her growing interest in women's studies as a potential path of study and subsequent livelihood. As she focused on her role in the community, she was clear that the joyless taking on of responsibility which felt burdensome needed to be replaced by activities that enlivened her and those with whom she worked.

After two years of working together she came to therapy several days after Christmas. She had been determined to sit with her children as they joyously

unwrapped their presents and to be present within the moment to the intensity of her feelings of their preciousness to her and her love toward them. Surrounded by torn paper, and scattered ribbons, she had been able to let Christmas morning arise in all its messiness!

In the climate of "managed care" in the USA, and the insurance companies' destruction of long-term psychotherapy, it is important to say that the release from depression for Carolyn could not be meaningfully won by drugs or short-term psychotherapy. Both would be a systemic re-enactment of abuse, overpowering her needs and desires by the system's desire for profit. The unfolding of being that has been tightly constrained can only happen in time, in safety, ultimately in a relationship that welcomes what is in the other and what arises in the "between" of the relationship.

A liberation of feeling was critical as an initial key to other liberations, but insufficient in itself. To liberate feeling alone would not help her see the relationship between her constriction of herself and her constriction of those close to her. It would not help her see into the relationship between her subjugation of herself and her father's subjugation of her, and into the history of gender relations in the culture that it mirrored. The practice of being open to her feelings and thoughts could be linked to the practices of being aware of her body and of being open to those close to her. As she became more familiar with the landscape of her own desires, and cognizant of the familial and cultural pressures that mitigated against their emergence, her sense of her future work shifted, from one which, in part, contributed to further control of the body to one which sought to understand further women in relation to culture.

Given that liberation in one domain can be broadened to include others, one can argue that depth psychologists could engage in work at any of these levels and hold it in such a way that broader liberation could be evidenced. I would like to give several examples of such work to nourish our therapeutic imagination. This broadening of the possible modes of intervention is necessary as the depth therapies are seriously eroded by economic pressures. Beyond this, however, is the necessity to liberate depth therapeutic practice itself from existing only in the consulting room. It is more possible to imagine ourselves working in different contexts as we understand how our paradigms of selfhood and the personal have constrained us into the present format of healing – mostly one on one, with a focus on what is conceived to be the personal.

Large-group dialogue

On community and intergroup levels the same qualities of being which are necessary for the free arising of personal being are in great need for cultural life. As we have become encapsulated into individualistic identities, preoccupied with our personal survival and well-being, the thought of the

culture has become fragmented. Bohm (1996) proposed a large-group dialogue process to address this fragmentation. While one is encouraged to give voice to thoughts, one is urged not to overidentify with opinions, but rather to try to see the assumptions behind them. We hear a familiar language – one is not to defend an opinion or to attack that of another person. One sits more to the side and listens to the diversity which is present. Through such deep listening the group can begin to think together, with a foundation in the complexity of the issue at hand as voiced through the many present. The respectful, inquiring manner of presence with each other becomes more focal than particular content. The relevance of this attentional stance for the mediation and resolution of deep intergroup and intragroup conflict is clear. The defense of an idea without deep listening into assumptions and the competing ideas of neighbors is a form of oppression, particularly if one has power to impose the idea on others.

Recently, in an initial dialogue of a group of thirty-seven adult learners beginning in a graduate school context, each person had the opportunity to share something, most of which was relevant to the experience of beginning school again. For many group members – all of whom were Caucasian – beginning school was portrayed as exciting, as “coming home.” A Mexican-American student offered his experience of entering an American elementary school, unable to speak English. He was given an older student as a translator. The translator refused to interrupt the teacher to ask if the boy could go to the bathroom. Unable to communicate this himself, and mindful of the school rule not to leave the classroom without permission, he finally wet his pants in full view of the other students. On another occasion his younger sister ran to him upset by something that had happened at school. The school-yard monitor separated them, sister crying, for there was to be no Spanish spoken at the school. Another Mexican-American student shared a similar experience where she was forbidden to speak Spanish with her closest friend while at school, and so was alienated and lonely among a sea of Anglo students. Later in the dialogue a Japanese student struggling with his difficulties being in an English-speaking classroom said simply, “I feel as though there is a huge boulder on my chest, and yet I must continue to walk.” A Caucasian student from the South was moved to say that until that evening she had never heard directly the pain caused by prejudice and racism. Several women students shared their hope that they would be able finally to speak in a classroom, after their earlier school experience of being silenced and their childhood experiences of being sexually abused and silenced into secrecy. Several others offered their anxiety at needing to be perceived as highly capable, aware that this was already alienating them from others and causing them to dominate the classroom discussion.

Through such a dialogue process the experience of beginning school in midlife is opened up so that the memories and hopes brought to the common

moment of beginning together can be heard in their depth and diversity. In the listening one hears the voices of internal conversations, the forging of fear and corrosive self-doubt through racism and sexism; one witnesses what is shared in the moment and the breadth of the differences that exist. That which has previously been exiled in similar settings is allowed presence.

Theatre of the oppressed and the liberation of desire

Paulo Freire, the founder of the Brazilian literacy movement and author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1989), describes a two-part process of liberation in a group setting. The first part, called conscientization, invites participants to describe their worries and concerns. Through a process of active inquiry the group searches for the relationship between a concern and the structure of cultural reality that creates it. In oppressive situations the structural dynamics are often obscured in order to preserve existing power relationships. The liberation of voices in the group and concerted examination of what is experienced challenge oppressive practices.

Once the relationship between personal suffering and cultural practice has been clarified, the group is able to engage in the second step, annunciation. In annunciation the members of the group, understanding the dynamics of their lived situation, can begin to imagine utopically how they deeply desire their situation to be transformed.

Augusto Boal (1995) has translated these principles into a theatre of the oppressed. Situations that cause suffering are enacted. The audience is released from passivity and enlisted to create dramatic solutions to the problems posed. In such theatre work those who are ordinarily dispossessed begin to rehearse alternative possibilities that can be incarnated in their world.

City At Peace is an arts project in Santa Barbara that works with youth effected by gangs, drugs and alcohol, dysfunctional families, lack of community and school responsiveness. The teenagers meet weekly to learn mediation and conflict resolution skills, to share their daily experience, and to translate their experience into the arts. One 16-year-old shared in her poetry her experience of her father's death on his job, caused by heavy machinery that was operated by a fellow employee who was drunk. The latter, though clearly at fault, was never reprimanded. She had never been given a chance to speak with this man. Her prose raged at the injustice of her father's death and her lack of opportunity even to talk to the man involved in her father's death. “But why not?” query members of the project. Might it be possible through a process of mediation to bring together Claire and her family with this man, so that each could be heard and the potential for reconciliation be given an opportunity? One of the group leaders shared the Quaker model of restorative justice, where just such a meeting between the perpetrator and the victim and the victim's family is enabled to occur through the court system, putting a personal face onto the event and allowing the chance for direct

reparation and forgiveness, rather than abstract justice only. The group members are eager to help put such a system into place for Claire and others.

In another example, the students enact moments of racism they have experienced in their schools. The brawl is slowed down, so that each character is given a chance to voice his thoughts and feelings, and then his deeper desires regarding the divisions by which his life has been eroded.

The practice of nonviolent conflict resolution has enabled these young people to listen to each other. The quick and violent impulsivity of gang life is gradually supplanted by hearing into moments that would formerly have been experienced mainly in action. The liberation of being that the practice of deep listening affords, the liberation of being that the arts and theatre invite, leads into the liberation of desire for intergroup healing of hostilities.

A depth psychologist committed to the liberation of being might be found in the consulting room, the classroom, the teen theatre group, the prison or hospital, in an outdoor nature classroom, or in the office of a policy maker. In each of these sites the impulse toward the liberation of being can be nourished . . . if only we can hear and see the many levels of liberation that are needed and clarify the manner of their interpenetration. The basic stance of depth psychology – to call forth marginalized being, to respect the multiple voices which comprise truth, and to invite dialogue – can be practiced across the domains of the intrapsychic, interpersonal, intercultural, and ecological.

Such a depth psychologist would also be an interested cultural historian, able to situate her theories and practices. As Martin-Baro says,

[this] does not mean throwing out all of our knowledge; what it supposes, rather, is that we will relativize that knowledge and critically revise it from the perspective of the popular majorities. Only then will the theories and models show their validity or deficiency, their utility or lack thereof, their universality or provincialism. Only then will the techniques we have learned display their liberating potential or seeds of subjugation.

(Martin-Baro 1994: 28)

A depth psychological stance informed by such a view of liberation would align research in depth psychology not only with phenomenological and clinical approaches to the unfolding of meaning, but to a tradition of participatory action research which seeks to liberate through the practice of research, engaging those who expect to be subjects as collaborators and co-authors whose knowledge can provide the wisdom for interventions and their assessment. Since sociocultural and economic structures are understood to impact psychological structure and well-being, efforts at understanding these are critical to a more comprehensive depth psychology, a psychology which

is meeting the world rather than shrinking from it in a defensive posture. Such a depth psychology can be a multicultural psychology. It can hold the beauty of its basic stance while penetrating and addressing the complexity of forces that undermine the liberation of being.

References

- Adams, M. V. (1997) *The Multicultural Imagination: Race, Color, and the Unconscious*, London: Routledge.
- Boal, A. (1995) *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Psychotherapy*, London: Routledge.
- Bohm, D. (1996) *On Dialogue*, London: Routledge.
- Boss, M. (1963) *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis*, trans. L. Lefebvre, New York: Basic Books.
- Cushman, P. (1995) *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Freire, P. (1989) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum.
- Freud, S. (1900/1953) "The Interpretation of Dreams," Standard Edition of *Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. IV*, trans. J. Strachey, London: Hogarth Press.
- Fromm, E. (1976) *To Have or to Be*, New York: Bantam Books.
- Hillman, J. (1971) "Psychology: monotheistic or polytheistic?" *Spring*, 193–208.
- (1992) *We've Had A Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse*, San Francisco: HarperCollins.
- Horney, K. (1937) *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, New York: Norton.
- Jones, E. (1961) *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, New York: Basic Books.
- Jung, C.G. (1935) "The Tavistock lectures", *CW* 18, 5–182.
- Jung, C.G. (1962) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, New York: Pantheon Books.
- Martin-Baro, I. (1994) *Writings for a Liberation Psychology*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sampson, E. (1989) "The challenge of social change for psychology: globalization and psychology's theory of the person", *American Psychologist*, 44, 6, 914–921.
- Samuels, A. (1993) *The Political Psyche*, London: Routledge.
- Scott, C. (1982) *Boundaries in Mind: A Study of Immediate Awareness*, New York: Crossroads.
- van den Berg, J. H. (1971) "Phenomenology and metabletics," *Humanitas*, VII, 3, 279–290.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971) *Playing and Reality*, London: Tavistock.