

**Forces Of Destiny:  
Psychoanalysis & The Human Idiom**  
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**Chapter 5 – The Psychoanalyst’s Multiple Functions**

- *The therapist’s creativity is essential to the client’s use of the therapeutic process.*

The therapist’s ability to provide useful interpretations can seem to ‘open up new doors of perception’ for the client, as the therapist provides the client with ‘analytic objects’.

But it is the *client’s* use of such objects that determines whether an idea becomes an insight. Therapeutic insight is always a potential, but its successful accomplishment is a rarity. The therapist’s interpretive work itself is not insightful; it can only generate insight in the other.

**Hesitation & Insight**

We must be prepared, during the therapeutic process, to have our interpretations rejected by the client, and to be put forward again by us at a later time.

At times, the client will need to ‘avert their gaze’ from what we present to them. This constitutes a period of hesitation that is sometimes necessary to any eventual use of the actual offering. This hesitation allows for ‘an internal space to be made’, in which they can hold the offering.

By ‘looking away’, the client is holding the offering somewhere in mind, and needs time and space to make the offering an internal psychic ‘object’ of their own.

This internal holding space allows an external offering to be taken in, and eventually used, without anxiety.

In this regard, we should expect a client to occasionally resist interpretations we make on their behalf, especially of the ‘here and now’ transference that takes place between them and us.

After a period of hesitation, a client will usually return to the offering we made, and make use of it as something of their own.

- *This process of hesitation, and internal space making, is an essential feature of the introjective process.*

It is not something we do not need to comment on with our clients.

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**The Process Of Making An Idea One’s One:**

1. Listening to an idea from the therapist.
2. Creating an internal mental space in which to hold the idea, by looking away.

3. Psychic re-presenting the idea within one's own mental space.
4. Instincts (life forces) now arrive through this internalized idea.
5. Holding of the internal idea allows the external idea to be used without anxiety.
6. The idea is now a 'subjective object' of one's own.

### **The Topographic Return**

For a therapeutic idea to become an insight, it must undergo a 'topographical return' – from the therapist's comment to a preconscious 'holding area' (an inner mental space) where it evokes instinctual representations, unconscious affects, and unconscious memories – and then returns to consciousness after such inner work has occurred.

- *An interpretation is a means of making psychic life bearable, thus enabling the client to gain insight without going mad.*

When we present a client with an interpretation, it can become a factor in fulfilling a client's destiny.

But the client must be allowed a period of hesitation following certain interpretations, especially in the beginning of therapy, and with the offering of a new idea.

The therapist has provided an object (an interpretation), and a technique (allowance, without intrusion, of a period of hesitation) that enables the client to put the idea to complex inner use.

The process itself enhances and matures the psyche, which actually grows more capable of processing life through the therapist's skills.

- *For many people, a competent therapist is someone a person turns to as part of their own destiny drive, to contain and process transferences, to renegotiate the terms of ego structure, and to free the true self to find its way through life experience.*

Of course, we cannot simply assume that this process will occur.

Some clients cannot evolve an inner mental state through hesitation. For others, the therapist's interpretation becomes the object of an envious attack or a contemptuous diminishment.

### **Varying Techniques**

Depth work must vary according to the immediate emotional reality of the session.

In a single session, the therapist may need to interpret the client's mental life in the here and now transference, in order to confront the client's destructive urges.

We can think of this as intensely active work, a dialectic of difference.

In general, the therapist should be more active when the client, by installing his good elements into the other, leaves himself emptied of self-worth.

Then there are moments in therapy when the therapist should be uninterpretive. A client may be lost in thought, or in preconceptions on the way to a potential realization, and this state of mind requires minimal presence from the therapist.

On other occasions, the therapist may need to celebrate the client's growing ego capacities, as a means of facilitating and identifying ego health as a factor in self-evolution and in life.

- *In the end, the value of silence provides the fundamental ambience of the therapeutic process. This is the ideal state of being, being beyond all words, even if some clients never reach it.*
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The therapist is always someone who is performing multiple functions on behalf of the client's best interests.

If the therapist is freed up from the freezing of potential multiple functioning, then they can present the client with more usable 'objects' within the therapeutic space, and thereby avail the true self of more possibilities for '*the movement through an object*' as a fulfillment of one's destiny.

No therapist is ever truly 'neutral' once he or she has met the client. The client begins to establish themselves in the therapist's mind right away.

The therapist's relaxed and receptive willingness to be used as an object, demonstrates their understanding of the function of a 'blank screen'.

The therapist must not only look at the client's feelings, words, and object representations, but simultaneously at his or her own inner responses.

Further, as these inner responses are often composed of the activation of the elements of his or her own personality, the therapist needs to be available for the client's *selective use* of these elements.

### **Playing With The Elements**

- *The client who is using the therapist for their own true self passage unconsciously plays on the parts of the therapist's personality, evoking different elements to perform quite specific functions at any one time.*

These elements, potential 'objects' that are in fact processes, are as essential to the movement of the true self as language is necessary to the speech of the person.

The therapist's function is to address the defenses and internal experiences that prevent the client's use of the object.

Psychic change can be assessed and can begin to occur according to the client's increased ability to evoke and utilize personality elements in the self, and in the therapist.

This becomes an ability to engage in play, or interplay with the other, in which each person is 'free' to associate – not simply to move spontaneously, but to do so in company with an associate.

For example, one type of transference is seeking an 'object of clarification' by presenting a confusion. Another is seeking an 'object memory' by presenting an inability to recall something, and requesting assistance in the recollection.

Yet another is seeking 'object silence' by implying one needs quiet in order to mull something over.

The client may seek object 'confrontation', 'celebration', 'inquiry', 'distress', etc, for the processing of an 'unthought known' experience.

Each of these 'objects' is, in fact, an experience. It involves a self-state and an experience of the other.

As the client endlessly presents discrete needs or states of self in the transference, he or she is requesting something from the therapist.

Training gives the therapist the skill necessary to know how to respond to a client's request for use. This skill is exceptionally complex and is under-represented in the literature.

The skill of practicing depth work is in the ego processing of the client's transference. It is in 'knowing' the predominant transference request and responding to it appropriately by providing an 'object' that serves to deepen and further the process.

Going through one's own therapy is essential for internalizing the 'rules' for providing a good therapeutic process for others.

### **The Therapist's Multiple Function**

This refers to the therapist's usefulness as an object, and one of these capacities is providing those elements necessary for the elaboration of the true self.

It is absolutely essential that the therapist's provision of empathy, celebration, aggression, and the processing itself, is authentic.

- *The client's unconscious use of the therapist's true conviction is vital to his or her eventual well-being.*

The therapist must, then, proceed to intervene (or to remain silent) partly on the basis of their inner sense of conviction in the effort to speak the truth.

This search is a paradox.

The therapist's effort to represent what is true – for the client and for themselves – is an act, simultaneously, of freedom and limitation. The therapist is free to feel or think about anything, but the effort to represent only that which feels, seems, or appears true will limit the therapist's behavior and verbal representations. (This may be so obvious that it hardly appears worth mentioning.)

### **Subject Relations Theory**

The client free associates. So does the therapist. The therapy is an interplay of two subjectivities, although the therapist has an established area of self and mind devoted to the psychic processing and interpretive knowing of the client.

The area between two human subjects on the verge of human dialectic is only a potential space. To become an intermediate area of experiencing, the two participants require a certain reciprocal freedom to play.

A client who is ill can attack the therapy with such skill that playing is not possible, and with some clients such a point will never be reached, at least as a reliable accomplishment.

But when the client is at play, the therapeutic space is a transitional area shared by two participants who contribute to those objects that are the creation of such play. These objects are the client's and therapist's verbal associations to one another, in the particular mood or environment they create.

- *One of the therapist's functions, therefore, is to work therapeutically to create an intermediate area of experiencing.*

Bollas pleads for greater recognition in depth work of the unique idiom of each person.

Depth work is exceptionally suited to the analysis and facilitation of this true self idiom as the therapist who provides the client with field of objects.

As the client uses and organizes the objects, he or she may live the true self through these experiences. This form of living, however, cannot be collected into a narrative content. The true self cannot be fully described.

Each person begins life with his or her own true self. This is an inherited potential that comes into being through the stimulation of life experience.

The presence of the object elicits desire. Desire is the urge to initiate an active use of the object – to make love to it, to read it, to listen to it, etc.

The fashioning of life is something like an aesthetic: a form revealed through one's way of being.

There is a particular urge to fashion a life, and this destiny drive is the ceaseless effort to select and use objects in order to give lived expression to one's true self.

- *Perhaps the creativity of a human lifetime is the talent in articulating one's idiom.*

If the person continues to be and feel true to themselves (not living compliantly) and is surprised by the continuing elaboration of the self, then that person is fulfilling their destiny.

For a very long time, the client may create and re-create, in the transference and its countertransference, the object world that forecloses true self elaboration.

Bollas has found, even in the midst of the client's re-creation of his or her early object world, when we are employed to become part of a theatre, that gradually then client begins to use us differently.

One use of us will be followed by another, in a movement of uses, without this being formed into a story. The feeling we will often have is one of pleasure at being made use of and being useful.

*What are the forces of destiny?*

There is a force of the true self's potential which becomes an urge to articulate one's idiom.

The forces of destiny require an object world prepared for its use, and a child can only elaborate his or her idiom through those objects provided for him or her by the parents.

A parent's attunement to the child will largely determine whether this child's evolution will be a fulfillment of their destiny (true self) or whether it will be seemingly dictated by the interventions of fate (false self).

A person who meets up with a parent who is a good enough transformational object will have a sense of hope built into object use. Perhaps this is why a person can have a sense of destiny.

- *Is not one of the pleasures of loving and being loved the realization that one is truly known?*

Is not falling in love some kind of deep affection for the precise idiom of the other – for the way the other walks, laughs, sits, smiles, expresses feelings?

When in love is it not the small or undramatic and precise features of the other that are so important – the way the other uses their hands to gesture, the way the other arranges ordinary objects, the way the other views the world in small and distinctive ways?

To love and be loved is an act of deep appreciative knowing.

The evolution of the true self depends on the mother's transformational skills and each human subject's sense of characterological ability – the talent to live – will partly derive from his mother's understanding of his or her idiom.

One of the forces of destiny in a therapy process resides in the intelligent use potential of the therapist, enabling him or her to become part of the elaboration of his client's true self.