

## Speaking from the Belly

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*Who is it that can tell me who I am?: The Journal of a Psychotherapist.* (2007) London: intheconsultingroom.com Jane Haynes ISBN 9 780955 057984

One of the ways I found once to transmit to a group of trainees some sense of the phenomenological aspect of Jung's theory was to show them postcards from the Brancusi exhibition I had just visited. Brancusi's work, it seemed to me, is grounded in the material from which it is created in a very particular way, which follows and enhances the material itself. So context and the background matrix are vital for the process of creation. Jung's work was confused in terms of his background philosophy: he often contradicted himself, swinging between positive empiricism and heuristics or hermeneutics. Nonetheless threaded through much of his writings is a phenomenology which privileges the embodied psyche, so to speak, and the grounded context from and in which human beings try to conduct their lives.

Jane Haynes' book I think follows this thread. It is a narrative that comes up from the ground of her own experience of analysis interwoven with her working with patients. Throughout the book we are allowed to experience with her the impact of the work on her own emotions and perceptions, and the curious way in which patients' material and life events can find a parallel in our own stories.

Even more intriguingly, in some ways, we are also given narratives written by the patients. Of course it is difficult to assess how far transference was still at play in their accounts, but that is less important it seems to me than a relatively rare glimpse into coherent expression of a patient's perspective on their treatment.

These are very positive aspects of the book, which together with the author's intriguing style and imaginative use of metaphor (which would have warmed the cockles of Jung's heart) make reading it both pleasurable and for the most part gripping.

However interspaced with the narratives are theoretical discussions which I found difficult to evaluate in terms of the readership of the book. The very aspect of the book which is so delightful makes for a difficulty in how to pitch the theory. Although some of the discussion locates itself around fairly sophisticated discussion—that of transference work for instance—it is written as if for a lay reader with an explanation of fairly fundamental concepts. This may of course be an attempt to bridge a readership which is divided in terms of its theoretical knowledge, and in that sense it is probably reasonably successful, if a little confusing at times. There are, though, two things within the theoretical sphere which I want to address. One is the notion of opposing '...a human intervention' to a 'primarily analytic one' as if the two are mutually exclusive.(p108) Perhaps this was not exactly the intention, but nonetheless, there is no discussion of the possibility that both kinds of intervention might be human, or that what the writer calls 'human' might actually be an analytic act.

The issue of asking patients' permission to use their material is quite correctly problematised, but it could have been explored just a little further. Haynes asks, 'whose permission is being requested?' (p119) And then goes on to concretise the question. Although she does indeed continue the discussion in terms of possible transference ramifications, the initial question might be more cogent psychoanalytically if it asked who we think is responding when a patient gives or withholds permission, and who we (or they) think they are responding to.

These are minor quibbles though. It is refreshing to read a psychoanalytic book with an imaginatively unusual structure written in a clear, open style which invites the reader into the narrative with great generosity.