

# Thinking in Analysis<sup>1</sup>

The idea for this article came about during an email conversation between Paris and Chicago. We decided to ask eight analysts, both men and women, who live and work in various parts of the United States and who have different clinical styles and theoretical approaches, to answer as briefly and directly as possible this simple question:

*What, for you personally, does it mean to think in analysis?*

The following pages are the result of this query.

Our hope is that this will open up a dialogue and that the debate around different ways of being Jungian or post-Jungian will be picked up once again and sustained.

*Christian Gaillard (Paris)  
and Murray Stein (Chicago)*

## **A nurturing activity**

*John Beebe (San Francisco)*

It is impossible for me to consider thinking simply as a generic description of the mind's activity. Rather, analytical psychology has trained me to regard thinking as a specific function of consciousness—one intelligence among many, the one that likes to name things and classify them according to the rules of logic. In my own hierarchy of intelligences, thinking is auxiliary to my preferred mode of intuition.

I use my thinking to explain to my analysands what my intuition has already determined is important for them to know. I talk to my analysands so that their situations are made as clear as my capacity to construe them permits. The thinking I offer them aims to be replaced by their own, hopefully better formulations. The Dhammapada says, "We have become what we thought, having been what we thought," and I admit that there is a constructive aspect to what I do.

Beyond therapeutic "reframing," however, I believe that the unconscious also likes to be named exactly. Analytic naming is not only a logos activity for me, although I recognize in

myself a patriarchal ambition to initiate the analysand into the value of making discriminations. Naming can also be a nurturing activity. To share one's thoughts with an analysand about his or her psychological situation involves participating in an ethic of care that overrides all ambition to do justice to that analysand's "material." I agree with Kleinian analysts who have argued that the analysand's task is learning from experience while the analyst's job is to elucidate why the analysand is having such difficulty accomplishing this learning.

I have the least encumbered energy to explore the blocks in the way of my analysands' capacity to learn when I can feel that what I have offered in the way of teaching has been adequate.

## **When it's cooking**

*Patricia Berry (Boston)*

I think in analysis. But by thinking I do not mean a rational function. If it were rational (logical, syllogistic), I probably couldn't do it, and/or it wouldn't be fun.

Also, I do not think of thinking as the opposite of feeling. I can't think of a single instance in analysis when my head went one way, my feeling another.

Generally my thinking is more in the nature of reflection or meditation or musing—a kind of "soft thinking," sometimes silent, though I often muse out loud, allowing my analysand to overhear.

I believe I think when I call to mind, put things together, re-member the analysand's images, dreams, stories, along with my own re-memberings, so a kind of fabricating, building, occurs. Also in doing analysis, one sometimes analyzes (takes apart), as well as diagnoses (distinguishes), prognosticates (foretells)—both forms of *gnosis*, knowing. I sometimes even come to judgments and conclusions. Do I get to these by thinking?

Well, if so, softly—not consciously thinking quite—but certainly I get there by means of a process that requires intensity, focus, concentration, and high heat. Thinking is work, and, as I experience it, involves a rather large

area of being (not just the head). It perhaps seeps from the walls of my office. The surroundings are involved as well. That's when it's cooking.

As for the thinking versus feeling distinction, I believe when I experience a contrast between these modes, I'm probably not doing either very well. *Les extremes se touchent*. When I am thinking well, my thinking is my feeling and vice versa.

### **The thoughts of the self**

*Joseph Cambray (Boston)*

Jung offered many valuable insights about the nature of thinking, such as its role as a function in transforming thoughts into concepts, differentiating active and passive modes, and examining its vicissitudes throughout psychological maturation and in psychopathology. One of the more significant clinical applications of his theories derives from the recognition that the forms of all thought are unconsciously structured through feeling-toned complexes accreted around archetypal cores and that thinking itself is an emergent property of mind governed by a supraordinate self.

Viewing analysis as an intersubjective encounter between psyches—of the members of a dyad—analytic thinking involves mental engagement with and reflection on what may be called “thoughts of the self,” the symbolic representations of the gestalt of intrapsychic and interpersonal realities unfolding along archetypal trajectories at any particular moment. The multidimensional quality and flux of these thoughts places their totality beyond the grasp of ego comprehension, hence they remain incomplete to human consciousness and are best apprehended qualitatively in symbolic forms. Such thoughts necessarily involve the entire psyche-soma, drawing upon both personal and collective elements infused with individual, cultural, and universal histories.

In detecting, recovering, discovering, finding, and creating bits of mind that have been lost, damaged, destroyed, or never formed, as a part of psychotherapeutic treatment and ultimately the individuation process, the analyst's (initial) capacity to attune to, become conscious of, metabolize, and communicate the affect-imagery of the interactive

field, shaped and organized by the possibilities of the self, is essential to constellate thinking in analysis. Struggling to gain and maintain this ability in the face of unavoidable uncertainty and unknowing coupled with increasing affective pressures that accompany ongoing genuine encounters with unconscious processes is one of the primary, though never completely achievable, tasks of analytic work. Bearing the tension of accepting the limitations of thinking without relinquishing the need to continually strive for it vitalizes the dialogue with the Other while assisting the ongoing need to dissolve the momentary identifications with the self as Thinker.

### **An imaginal thinking**

*Lynn Cowan (Minneapolis)*

The British poet William Wordsworth wrote of “thoughts that lie too deep for tears.” This suggests to me that thinking is not just a function of the ego's conscious typology (as in my case), but that there is a kind of thinking that takes place regardless of one's typology and apart from “cognition.” I suppose one could call it “deep thinking,” or thinking that comes from the depth of an image—imaginal thinking, not logical thinking.

Put another way, it is reflecting thoughtfully on the idea that appears in the form of image. Since images present themselves all the time, as the alchemical “subtle body” of ideas and emotions, thinking in analysis is going on all the time whenever we attend an image (in dream, fantasy, mundane events heard as metaphorical stories).

The kind of thinking I find myself doing often in analysis is not the evaluative, logical thinking associated with Jung's thinking type, although there is a place for this. Nor is it extraverted or introverted thinking, since it comes neither from the analyst or analysand but is a way of approaching an image evoked by the image itself. This kind of thinking is reflective rather than concerned with internal logical coherence, and its purpose is not necessarily to serve the ego, as in cognitive therapy, but to reflect thoughtfully on the image that presents itself. Since the basis of such thinking is other than logic, it is somewhat intuitive, considering possible meanings without regard to the emotion the image generates in either the

analysand or analyst. By this I do not mean the emotion is ignored or unimportant; I mean rather that emotion is set next to thought, so that thinking might proceed as focused on the idea or image as possible, without interference of emotion or evaluative function.

### **A valuable map**

*Claire Douglas (Los Angeles)*

Jung believed that “our way of looking at things is conditioned by what we are.” Since I am a female and predominantly introverted thinking type, I am at home using both the right (more “female”) side of my brain, and the left, the more logical, thinking and “masculine” side. Being at home in both worlds gives me an advantage in therapy because I can often put words to the nameless, feeling dimension of analysis and also sink below the words to pay attention to the movement in the space my patient and I are activating together.

To see how this works consider one aspect of analysis—termination. Jung wrote of four stages of the “analytical treatment of the soul”: confession, elucidation, education, and transformation. He saw each stage as a complete process in itself as well as part of a whole. I think therapy can end quite naturally after any of these stages is completed. Often, the younger my patient is, the more naturally termination comes after one of the first three stages or after a specific life problem is confronted and worked through. This can take anywhere from a few sessions to a year or two. In some cases I do short-term analytical therapy, limited to nine or ten sessions, where we left-brainedly set a specific goal and proceed accordingly.

Analysis on a deeper level, though, takes more time. The patient and I have to allow ourselves to get lost, to have what Jung calls a “chemical reaction” to each other. The patient, in order to heal him- or herself, seems to have to try me to the very depths and challenge my “whole being.” This means all of me, including my developed and undeveloped functions. To stay on the thinking level would be far too limiting and dry, but it does serve as a valuable map I keep for emergencies to locate us if we need it.

Reality—the sensation aspect of therapy—needs to be respected. I have a patient

now who is a sensation-thinking type with a successful career as a business manager. He is teaching me a more grounded thinking way to conduct my analytic business. “Forty hours,” he says “and then let’s audit our work together.” I like this for it is a way to use our left brains to value and evaluate the time, money, and energy we are giving to his soul. This is a new type of thinking in analysis for me and one I will pursue.

### **A flash of insight**

*Josip Pasic (Chicago)*

A large part of analysis is made up of talking. Of course, there are silences, even pregnant ones, carrying their creative consequences, but the bottom line is that most sessions are filled with talk. This includes statements about feelings, emotions, ideas, sensations, dream and fantasy images, etc.

The crucial question is: where does the thinking that supports this talking come from? The most immediate answer is: from the respective psyches of the two people involved. Needless to say, this thinking is inevitably biased by the cumbersome personal and collective notions of each psyche.

To look carefully at the psychological problems of the patient is rendered virtually impossible because of the automatic gushing of our conscious thoughts and particularly of our unconscious projections. At the beginning of the analytic relationship, there is often more smothering than actual seeing of the psychological problems being presented. Analysands smother their own problems in projections, and analysts typically project a lot of personal and collective notions too, especially pet theories, philosophies, beliefs, and diagnostic speculations. All of this stems from the essential limitations of thoughts that see in only a very partial and limited way. Moreover, thought is inherently incapable of seeing the whole.

How, if not by thought, then, can one possibly see the whole?

The beginning of the answer to this predicament lies in recognizing that our psychological thinking is fundamentally incapable of true seeing. If but for a moment the entire psyche can be suspended—practically speaking, this means that we are not think-

ing—for this moment at least there is stillness. And in this stillness, which may in fact last only briefly, there may come a flash of insight. Maybe our psychological problems are suddenly seen not as we usually see them, but in a sense as they see themselves. From this kind of seeing—seeing without a seer, so to say—a neutral thought can be drawn out into a field of insight, which shapes a fresh expression.

Seeing whole has no shadow of regret. Seeing all in an instant, there is no need for becoming.

### **The chewing gum and the bicycle**

*Murray Stein (Chicago)*

U.S. President Lyndon Johnson once said about a political opponent that he reckoned the man was too stupid to chew gum and ride a bicycle at the same time. I must confess that I find it hard to listen to a patient and think at the same time. If I'm thinking I'm usually not listening, and if I'm listening attentively I'm generally not thinking. As a consequence of this deficit, I've made a rule for myself as an analyst: *Listen first, think later*. I do not always obey this rule, but I should.

When I do begin thinking, it's not always what Jung called "directed thinking." Thoughts form as I'm listening, and I try to observe them and consider what they mean before sharing them. Some of these thoughts are by-products of the complexes stimulated in my psyche by listening to the words of a patient. An analytic session is, in a sense, an extended word-association experiment with the analyst as subject. Or a thought will form that is compensatory to what the patient is saying. Sometimes directed thinking gets activated by the need to "figure out" what a dream or fantasy or tale means and to produce an interpretation. This may be useful to the process of analysis or it may get in the way.

As I see it, my role as analyst is to help the patient to think and not to do too much thinking myself. (I can think about the case later in the quiet of my study.) If my thinking can clear the way for the patient to arrive at an unconscious thought, or to clarify a state of confusion by thinking more accurately, or to reach an insight, then I consider it a job well done.

### **An experimental thinking**

*Beverley Zabriskie (New York)*

Physicists speak of and imagine superstrings, dimensions of energy strands and fields that connect the world. The multiple strands of associative thought that run through analysts' minds during sessions may be imagined as a mental version of this extraordinary connectedness. This mode of thought follows parallel and intersecting realities within and between analysts and analysands. It pursues the routes of the rational and also covers the looping trails of the non-rational but associatively logical pathways. Neither manic nor schizoid, it moves in and out of immediate contact.

Like mind and psyche, it time travels in the synchronous and simultaneous past, present, and future of both persons. It draws from the hovering background of past experience, individual and collective. Its consciousness of the here and now lives as what one scholar has called "the remembered present." It is and remains cognizant of the feeling tones attached to intimated realms of possibility, both desired and dreaded.

Jung described the personality as "a multiplicity within an inner unity." As different murmurs of internal conversations among the multiplicity come constantly from the various parts of the psyche, each is only ever somewhat known and partially heard. In the course of an analytic session, this musing thought involves a flitting interplay between both parties while each is also involved in the flickering of inner dialogues and debates. Both the patient's telling and the analyst's hearing are funneled through each one's former and current experience, structured through the patient's expectations, received through the analyst's awareness of the other's story, as well as on the grid of one's own pre-conceptions.

This thought is essentially experimental. It pursues an understanding which must continuously be reassessed and readjusted to insure that it remains on the track of the presenting psyche.

### **Notes**

- 1) This paper was first published in French in the *Cahiers Jungiens de Psychanalyse*, 100, Spring 2001.