The third in the shadow of the fourth

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Abstract: The notion of the third in recent years is seen by noted psychoanalysts as the locus of healing. Jung explored the third beginning in 1916 in a way strikingly postmodern in its implications for clinical work and for understanding reality. This article1 proposes that we cannot see the third except in the shadow of the fourth, and attempts to describe what the fourth is. The fourth remains shadowy (suggesting two meanings of shadow); it is only known by living it, for we are part of the larger reality it discloses. In experiencing this fourth, we are led to develop whatever we each leave out. Hence the aliveness of the fourth engenders a new kind of consciousness of the bigger surround, the moreness of reality as a whole that includes and transcends the psyche.

Key words: consciousness, the fourth, the hinge, locus of healing, the third, three and four

The notion of the third has captured the minds of many psychoanalysts in recent years. Taken together, the different theorists see the third as the mutative agent in treatment, as that mysterious something that brings about healing (see Benjamin et al. 2004 passim). The third puts the participants in analysis in touch with regenerative process, ushering them into creative aliveness that undoes deadness. In addition, focus on the third transcends binary oppositions so antithetical to postmodern thinking, giving evidence of the fresh paradigm of our new century and millennium, where either/or position yields to open-ended constructions of meaning.

I propose that we cannot see the third except in the shadow of the fourth which remains shadowy in two senses of the word—as the rejected and as the protective. The fourth’s forms of expression change according to what each of us leaves out of our conscious identity and as influenced by our different cultures.

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1 This article originated in the inaugural talk to The Annual Seattle Inter-Institute Guest Lecture Series 2006. The audience was composed of clinicians of different analytic schools with little familiarity with Jung’s work. My talk straddled the necessity of giving Jung’s theory and giving clinical and cultural examples to keep us engaged in the experiences of the third and fourth (Ulanov 2007, chapter 7). This version focuses on what the fourth is and, although I find it drier, I hope it is also bolder.

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In clinical work, the fourth is there from the beginning and we see it in the third, but the third emerges from the fourth. Experiencing the fourth is the only way to know it, because it exceeds our rational, verbal, and even symbolic grasp. The fourth links us to beyond psyche, the whole world of reality, however we conceive it. Living the fourth is what we feel life is about, what it tends from and toward, its source. It is not just about me or about our shared values, but about the other side, the yonder shore to which we respond, or about that which we despair and may seek to destroy because we feel so broken hearted about connecting to it. In Jungian terms, the fourth is transpsychic reality to which the Self makes a bridge. Exploring the third sponsored by the fourth, I suggest, is a distinct contribution from a Jungian perspective to current discussion of the third.

Brief literature review

Winnicott focused attention on the space between mother and infant, infant and beloved bear (the transitional object), analysand and analyst, finding there, in that transitus between I and other, that our self is both found and created. We do not get the one without the two. Indeed, the external subjectivity of the other (including the world) gets established by its capacity to survive our destructiveness (Winnicott 1971, chapter 6; 1963/1965, pp. 76-77). The third space between self and other enables the one—the self—to be and become, and the two—the other—to be and become real, a resource for living.

I see Winnicott’s transitional space as replicated in subsequent relationships throughout life, particularly in their beginnings, for example, in love, creativity, prayer (Ulanov 2001a). In the beginning of a relationship two kinds of bonds are inaugurated—to the other without, be it lover, mentor, child, idea, musical sound, spiritual object—and to the other within, that is, a specific psychic content aroused in response to the object without, such as erotic desire, a dissociated self-state, a theological intimation. It is in the space in between the outer and the inner other that growth flourishes, discoveries surprise, suffering roots in meaning, destructiveness finds its proper proportion.

For Winnicott the third is the space in between which facilitates oneness and twoness and their interaction. We can diagnose difficulties of analysands in terms of not enough oneness—a self not big enough to include destructiveness; or, not enough twoness—another not big enough to meet our dependence and survive our destructiveness. For Winnicott, the third is a space in which aliveness generates.

André Green asserts that the third locates in the mind of the mother involved with her infant, and, analogously, in the mind of the analyst engaged with the analysand. The infant is one, the mother (or analyst) is two, and the third is the mother’s consciousness of the father who symbolizes both the concrete partner in making this infant, and also the mother’s own subjectivity. The third is what is in the mother’s mind not to do with the baby, though it will affect her relation to the baby (Green 2000, p. 25). If this third is ‘radically excluded’
from the mother’s mind, this is fateful for mental illness for then there is no space in between mother and infant, or analyst and analysand, in which things that turn up in the fertile space such as potential desire, thoughts, words, can become symbolized (ibid., p. 45). Green sees symbolization as the reuniting of two parts that were separated, rebinding this broken unity by a third element distinct from the two parts in reunion. Green summarizes: ‘firstness is being, secondness relating, and thirdness is thinking’ (ibid., p. 63).

My response to the analyst being like the mother who thinks of the father is that the third is what is in our minds not to do with analysands specifically, though it affects them because we bring it with us into the work in our orientation. The third is what we relate to that supports our work, what helps us contribute to patients; it is what we rely on, such as passion about our theory of analysis, or a love of art, or of poetry, or a practice of meditation. Here the third might be likened to a hidden third, a position in the analyst’s orientation, or mind. Winnicott, for example, said his developmental theory was in his bones; he need not even think about it. Nonetheless, his perspective informed the space between him and his patient.

We all know of therapeutic situations where this gap between analyst and analysand does not emerge and no back and forth in the space in between to flex imagination and symbolization occurs. Instead, the analyst’s mind is blotted out; the analysand registers no associations; nothing clicks.

For Lacan the third is speech, represented by the symbolic father interposed between the mother and infant, and between analysand and unconscious. If the third does not interpose itself (Lacan’s ‘le mot’), nothing interrupts the potential merger of mother and baby, analyst and analysand, I and unconscious. Without this third space in between the two, one can kill or be killed, for example, in the image of the mother nursing forever and then turning and eating the baby. Or, we could cite analyses that go on for decades, years and years, erasing the hard fact that an analytical couple does not substitute for a real couple.

Lacan and Green locate the third in the analyst’s mind, a point of observation removed from the immediate here and now incarnate reality of analysand and analyst. This removal to an observation point that only the analyst is privy to, introduces a hierarchy into analytical work, as if only the analyst knows, dispenses insight and healing. Nonetheless, I would say, the third as hidden, as the analyst’s sustaining affect and ideas about analysis, and about reality, that support the labour of analysis, is the third as position.

The intersubjectivists, and the more recent relational group of analysts, see the third as a system or structure of reciprocal influence in which the analysand comes to recognize the analyst’s subjectivity. Instead of the impassive, objective neutrality of the analyst who interprets, here the analyst discloses subjective responses and facts. The third builds up as the one and the two communicate their subjectivity. Though I would see the third as more of a process in motion than a structure in which the two are situated, nonetheless, here the third is recognized as something happening in the space between the two.
Thomas Ogden understands the third as an intersubjectivity growing from the unconscious permeability between analyst and analysand. The analytic pair construct an ‘intersubjective third’, a ‘third subjectivity’ that is distinct from the subjectivities of the two. The analytic pair experience the third as an unfolding flux transformed by their separate understandings of what is happening between them (Ogden 1999, pp. 25n, 30). Each participate in the new analytic objects created between them, but asymmetrically, with more emphasis on the inner object world of the analysand. But the analyst pays close attention to his own reverie as a clue to the drift of the unconscious of the analysand (ibid., pp. 109-10, 190).

Ogden remembers, for example, his annoyance with his garage man, or his noticing the fancy label of his client’s coat that she carelessly tossed on the floor, or his evasion of his dying friend’s loneliness. Through this shadow route, that is, affects that fall outside or even contradict our preferred analytic attitude, he traces connections to his patient’s irritations, spyings, evasions. What may look like the analyst’s failure to be receptive but instead being preoccupied, turns out, upon examination, to be specific to a particular moment in a particular analysis and a shift comes about into joint creation. Ogden rarely speaks about such reveries to his patient, but urges analysts to speak from that space (ibid., pp. 158, 162, 175, 187). The analyst’s unconscious process gets elaborated in specific ways by what is going on unconsciously in his analysand. This intersubjective unconscious process generated between the analytic pair creates new intersubjective events that have not existed before for either party (ibid., p. 190).

This is an extension, I think, of what has been called objective counter-transference. The analyst gets informed through registering his unconscious experience about what is going on unconsciously in the patient. He discovers that his unconscious events are in fact responses to what is unconscious in the patient. Ogden describes what Jungians might call shadow meandering, that is, affects and contents that conflict with the persona we believe appropriate as analysts. Yet it is always our inferiorities that link us together, knitting us all into the human family like so many fellow refugees. The archetypal shadow is not illustrated by Ogden, nor is the analysand’s reverie included as a pertinent factor in creating the third. I would say, for Ogden, the third is a space and a function, or a space that functions to create new objects between the two and within each.

Jessica Benjamin sees the third as the process the analyst and analysand create between them. Each surrenders to the flow of feeling linking them as two subjects, only then to split apart into a subject reduced to an object, then to repair the breach and become again two stronger subjects in recognizing and forgiving each other (Benjamin 2003; 2005, pp. 197-98). When an impasse in communication occurs, each feels treated as a mere object by the other, feeling alternately helpless to mend the disconnection and blaming the other for the rupture, or accusing oneself of failure. Repair begins when each lets go of
ego stances to discern their own part in the breach and appreciate again the subjectivity of the other. This rhythm of connection, breakdown, repair is the process of the third to which both yield. Any of us who have been mothers of infants recognize this rhythm, now transposed into analytic work. Although Benjamin wants to transcend binary dualism, the implicit model of mother-infant reasserts the power hierarchy.

As long ago as 1959, the theologian Paul Tillich posited the third as the source of healing, saying there is ‘essential goodness, existential estrangement, and the possibility of something, a “third”, beyond essence and existence, through which cleavage is overcome and healed’ (Tillich 1959, p. 119). In short, the ‘third’ is a vision of ‘reconciliation’; ‘the third is Life’ (cited in Lowe 1984, pp. 250, 253). Theologically, we could say that the third partakes of the Holy Spirit, that source and force that digs into the secrets of the heart and the depths of the Godhead.

In sum, I find of great value these analysts’ ideas about the third: it is space from which aliveness springs; it is a position in the sense of a hidden third, what we analysts rely on as what we believe we are trying to do in analysis; it functions to create new insights in us and in the analysand and between us. But more is here. I suggest that we cannot see this third except in the shadow of the fourth, something Jung explored decades ago that has postmodern implications for clinical work and for understanding reality.

Jung and the third

In 1916 Jung wrote a pivotal essay on what he called the transcendent function which is where he locates what is now called, and what he called then, the third (Jung 1916/1960). Our conflicts split us into two: consciously we want to diet, unconsciously gobble. Consciously we want to free ourselves from enthrallment to a fetish; unconsciously our behaviour of fascination endlessly repeats itself. Consciously we want to commit suicide; unconsciously a dream reveals that a part of us is already dead and should be buried (Ulanov 1996a, chapter 3). Our conflicts also split us apart from other people, each of us insisting on opposing views, a splitting we see in analytical groups, religious traditions, political parties, nations. The transcendent function is a natural psychic process of going back and forth between opposites to create a third out of the opposing two.

For Jung, the space of the third begins as a gap of opposition and misunderstanding and grows into a space of conversation where new things happen. In this sense of space Jung’s notion of the third is akin to Winnicott’s transitional space. For Jung, however, there is an additional component to this space between analyst and analysand that Jung calls the objective psyche, that is, patterns of psychic energy that arise from the archetypal layer of the psyche. These spontaneous self organizing motifs arrange both analysand and analyst in different patterns of interaction that cannot be reduced to developmental
influences. (An example might be the mother-infant paradigm within which Winnicott, and others, conceive analysis.) This aspect of the interaction between analysand and analyst adds a sense of something more, something unknown, that they experience themselves inside of and yet also able to discover and observe (Ulanov 1996c, pp. 126, 128; 1997/2004, p. 324). The third as space between opposites emerges in the transference/countertransference space between analyst and analysand, and also in the space emerging within each of them, between conscious and unconscious viewpoints and behaviours.

In analysis, the analyst often must carry one of the contrary points of view warring in the patient, bringing the left out opposite into steady conversation with the analysand’s ego position, until the analysand can consciously bear the tension of carrying both opposites. The analyst, at first, does not know about the adverse position but finds herself arranged within the transference-countertransference field to embody it. As the analyst comes to reflect on the role she has been embodying, the third is akin here to a position that Green and Lacan posit, that is, what is going on in the analyst’s mind that influences the analysis. However, in contrast to those authors, the analyst, for Jung, does not know about this beforehand, but discovers it from living it. The third is not position as theory applied to different cases, but rather an unfolding perception of how something arranges analyst and analysand, a something that exceeds developmental expectations. For example, as a beginning analyst in my twenties, working with a man in his sixties, I was surprised to find myself arranged as a father figure.

The third for Jung also locates in the spontaneous appearance of the ‘reconciling third’ if we can bear consciously the tension of being ‘crucified between the opposites and delivered up to the torture’ (Jung 1973, 8/20/45, p. 376; see also Ulanov 1996b, p. 194). Here the third is a function, a process in action, from which emerges a new thing: ‘the solution, seemingly of its own accord, appears out of nature. Then and then only is it convincing. It is felt as ‘grace’. Since the solution proceeds out of the confrontation and clash of opposites, it is usually an unfathomable mixture of conscious and unconscious factors, and therefore a symbol, a coin split into two halves which fit together precisely’ (Jung 1963a, p. 335).

Not only does this marvellous third thing—a new attitude, a new symbol, a new behaviour—help resolve the bedevilling conflict of the two, it also makes us feel threaded into the centre of life itself. This is where Jung’s notion of the third articulates something in addition to the third as space, position, function. Our particular opposites pass through the great opposites of life itself:

What the union of opposites really ‘means’ transcends imagination...*tertium non datur*...we are dealing with an eternal image, an archetype...Whenever this image is obscured [man’s] life loses its proper meaning and consequently its balance. So long as he knows that he is the carrier of life and that it is therefore important for him to live, then the mystery of his soul lives also—no matter whether he is conscious of it or not. But if he no longer sees the meaning of his life in its fulfilment, and no longer
believes in his eternal right to this fulfilment, then he has betrayed and lost his soul, substituting for it a madness which leads to destruction….

(Jung 1963b, para. 201)

Healing psychological conflicts thus transforms the soul.

Here we see the shadowy fourth making itself known, in that intimation of moreness, that sense that our suffering, and the resolution of it in the third, participates in and contributes to a larger community. The third, that spontaneously appears in response to our labours with the opposing two, connects us to the collective human family, and further. The new image is not solely personal in origin or application, but points as well to my group and yet includes all groups, and points to reality beyond all of us yet includes us. The moreness we spy in the new image arising in the third is the human community and reality as a whole (see Schwartz-Salant 1998, pp. 68-69). Perceiving this lends fluidity (familiar to postmodern consciousness) to the new image: it is at once definite form, precious, immediate, and mine, and also belonging to anyone, not fixed, of the ages.

Decades of clinical work have convinced me that people’s experience of this transcendent function working within them brings them direct experience of something transcendent beyond them (Ulanov 1996). Here again, we sense the fourth both prompting the third and arising from it as something more than conversation with one’s own depths and with the inspiring energies between analyst and analysand. Here, something mysterious pushes and pulls us into conversation with itself through and beyond those other conversations, and deconstructs what we depend upon. We are let loose from our moorings, set free into another discourse or terrified by becoming unmoored and cast into the void (Ulanov 1996c, p. 139). Jung makes this connection, saying the creative solution ‘represents the result of joint labours of conscious and the unconscious, and attains the likeness of the God-image in the form of the mandala’ (Jung 1963b, para. 201). Our personal clash of opposites reveals that it, and we, live within a greater whole: ‘The clash, which is at first of a purely personal nature, is soon followed by the insight that the subjective conflict is only a single instance of the universal clash of opposites’ (ibid.). The third emerges from the fourth, is sponsored by the fourth (see Cambray 2006, p. 11).

For Jung, healing does not locate precisely in the third space or position or function, though it comes through each of those within the transference/countertransference field between the analytic pair, and also within the analytic pair between conscious and unconscious opposing perspectives in each of them, and also in the position of each person in how they think about what they are doing in analysis, and also in the surprising arrival of the new creative solution that shelters our sorrows, and extends from and gives perception of the larger fourth—a whole reality, of which our experience of the third is a tiny example. Connection to the transcendent function working in us by which the third is created, a kind of everyday transcendence, opens us to the Deus
Absconditus, the god hidden in and yet beyond the depths of our own psyche and the joinings with the other in analysis.

But questions loom. Who or what is the source of this moreness? Who or what is the giver of this creative solution? Is it connected to us personally? Can we be in touch with it? The third raises the question of the fourth. Each of us must grow toward our own answers to such questions because what we believe to be the source of the mutative agent of healing directly affects the work we do with analysands. For Jung healing turns on the relation of third and fourth.

**Jung and the fourth**

Jung explored such questions and traced the third to its archetypal roots, in the axiom of Maria Prophetessa, the Hebrew prophet taken to be the sister of Moses, the Copt, the seer of alchemy, who ‘cried without restraint, “One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the Third comes the One as the Fourth” (Jung 1963b, para. 619; 1953, para. 209). Jung cites Plato speaking of the three/four mystery, and Goethe in *Faust* referring to the fourth as he ‘who thought for them all’ (Jung 1953, para. 26; 1948/1958, para. 243). Even though four is not the ultimate number (Jung 1963b, para. 264; see Ulanov 2001b, p. 74), Jung emphasizes it as the structure of the personality’s four functions, and as ordering the cosmos (Jung 1938/1958, paras. 62-63, 90, 98, 105).

Of particular relevance for clinical work is Jung’s evidence that the fourth makes itself known through the human psyche, and links it to what lies far outside us. The mysterious fourth leads ‘straight to the Anthropos idea that stands for [our] wholeness, that is, the conception of a unitary being who existed before man and at the same time represents [our] goal. The one joins the three as the fourth and thus produces the synthesis of the four in a unity’ (Jung 1953, paras. 210; 1963b, para. 619). In this way the fourth acts like the ‘life force (*vis animans*)’ or the “glue of the world” (*glutinum mundi*) which is the medium between mind and body and the union of both’ (Jung 1953, para. 209). The fourth, then, speaks of human wholeness and our serving the whole of reality, of finding where we fit in and feeling joy in contributing our bit to the entire mosaic, thereby experiencing the unity underlying our multiplicity, and the multiplicity in our unity. Religion speaks of this experience as loving God; alchemy speaks of it as perceiving the link between psyche and matter, beholding the *unus mundus*, that matter and psyche share the same stuff.

Jung saw the goal of our individuation ‘symbolized by the putting together of the four’ and he took the quaternity as ‘a symbol of the self’ (Jung 1948/1958, para. 281; 1938/1958, para. 98). Yet the age-old quaternity symbol has also always been ‘associated with the idea of a world-creating deity’ (Jung 1938/1958, para. 100). A link is discerned between personal individuation and a transcendent wholeness of reality itself. Jung found that his patients, in the face of such symbols of the fourth arising in their symptoms and
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dreams, ‘took it to symbolize...something in themselves. They felt it belonged intimately to themselves as a sort of creative background, a life-producing sun in the depths of the unconscious’ (Jung 1938/1958, para. 100). Jung sees the quaternity as ‘a more or less direct representation of the God who is manifest in his creation... We might, therefore, conclude that the symbol spontaneously produced in the dreams of modern people means something similar—the God within’ (Jung 1938/1958, para. 101).

Thus we find both from clinical work with analysands and from theoretical research into the history of symbols, that the small and great are linked. Jung says, ‘this mystical idea is forced upon the conscious mind by dreams and visions... My observations date to 1914’ (ibid.). Hence, ‘the self which can only be perceived subjectively as a most intimate and unique thing requires universality as a background’ (Jung 1948/1958, para. 282).

Where we are now, individually and socially, I believe, is sorting out the fourth that engineers the third, for it is in their interchange that healing generates. Another way to say this is that we find ourselves at a pivot point of our personal individuation contributing to, or subtracting from, collective survival. Our ability to do this psychological social work derives from depending on how we conceive of the fourth. What is that hidden god within us that connects to the God without for each of us? What do we believe the fourth is, operating in each analysand and in each of us as analysts? Where do we find the shadowy fourth? And what do we find there?

We find the fourth in what each of us has left out of our living and it presents itself in specific and differently accented ways for each of us. All the stuff, the materia prima that does not get included in conscious living, both personal and communal, bundles into the fourth. Just as we cannot find the vibrant third except in the shadow of the fourth, we cannot perceive the fourth sponsoring connections to healing without going through the shadow of undifferentiated stuff lying in the unconscious. Jung speaks of it as ‘the recalcitrant fourth’ hence we find it in all that lies missing outside the model of conscious social and individual integration (Jung 1948/1958, para. 280).

The unconscious is the interrupter (Phillips 1995, p. 7), that ‘gives the painful lie to all idealistic pronouncements, the earthiness that clings to our human nature and sadly clouds the crystal clarity we long for... But at the same time is...the basis for the preparation of the philosophical gold’... (Jung 1967, para. 207). To find that gold, we must house the fourth and discover the fourth housing us in the ordinary living of our lives.

Shadow is the operative word here, for to make real the insights that promote individuation means accepting the imperfect, the cloudy, the earthy, the opposite of our ideals. This acceptance is crucial in our new century and millennium for it applies collectively as well as to individuals. If the basic question of the twentieth century was being versus non-being, the paradigmatic shift into the twenty-first century turns on the question how to be committed with all our heart, soul, mind and strength to what we believe as true, good and beautiful,
and simultaneously to accept that our neighbour, near and far, within us and in
the next country, engages a similar commitment to a different spiritual object, a
different vision of the good. Though still wrestling with contradictory opposites,
we shift the emphasis to the creative solutions of each point of view, comparing
and contrasting, meditating upon the origin point from which such solutions
arise and the directions in which they point.

We see that the solutions are concrete and definite and also relative, none of
them the answer for everyone. Hence we enter a postmodern fluidity again, but
are not set adrift, for each of us in the finite contexts in which we live must
wrestle our specific solutions into living. If we lose this soul work, madness
substitutes for it, and destruction follows. Finding what specifically the fourth
prompts us to see, and, on the basis of such living experience, what we believe
the fourth to be, contributes to building a third space collectively as well as
personally, in which peace may be negotiated, and maybe flourish.

The shared general areas of what is left out are familiar to us as clinicians.
Chief among them is the bad, the destructive, what is deemed evil, what not
only competes with our ideals of the good, but seeks to dismantle the good,
exterminate it (Jung 1953, paras. 123, 297). We see this in any fundamentalist
approach, be it to religious, political, environmental, psychological positions.
Those who fall outside our definition of the good are to be put outside our
group, even killed. This splitting and projectively identifying a scapegoat is
the solution of the two, and is done in the name of the precious third we
think we are conserving, symbolized by the land, the tribe, the theory, the
god.

Another principal energy left out of conscious living is the feminine, despite
all the advances through feminism. The feminine as a mode of being belonging
to all genders, as a mode of being in its own right, not less than, not equal
to, but *sui generis* can be a means through which the fourth promotes its own
conversation with us (Jung 1976, para. 1552; 1953, para. 192; Toyoda 2006;
Douglas 2006; Ulanov 1971, p. 144). With it comes grounded, not abstract
knowledge, embodied wisdom, not generalities, the earth of daily life, not the
heaven of a next life, the mixture of affect and idea, poetry and concepts, the
universal through the local, particular and personal.

An unsuspected part we leave out is talent, hope, virtue, a ruthless drive to
creativity. If the fourth is engineering us to include all the parts of ourselves to
create a wholeness to match the inclusiveness of reality as a whole, it burdens
us with the good as well as the bad. Think of Mozart’s early death, hearing
tunes all the time driving him to set them down, arrange the parts for whole
orchestras, singers, quartets, pianists (Solomon 1995, pp. 286, 291, 293). Think
of Jung complaining of the daimon that drove him at the cost to other people
for which he expressed regret but nonetheless went on feeling himself in its grip
(Jung 1963a, pp. 222, 336, 356). Often this hidden creativity is mixed in with
our neurotic complexes. Like the wheat infiltrated by the tares, it must be left
to harvest-time to differentiate them (Matthew 13: 29-30).
Whatever we experience as functioning in an inferior way in us, those capacities that lie undeveloped, outside conscious control and hence immune to modifying influence of personal and social reality is another major left-out place, home to the manoeuvring of the fourth, which, says Jung, ‘refuses to come along with the others and often goes wildly off on its own’ (Jung 1948/1958, para. 245; see also ibid., paras. 184, 290; 1953, paras. 31, 193; 1971, paras. 763-64). The inferior function brings the whole unconscious with it and reaches back to the animal root-impulse in us but also dwelling ‘with the gods … and seeks, and itself is, what I have elsewhere called “the treasure hard to attain”’ (Jung 1953, para. 205).

The shadowy nature of the fourth takes on two meanings, one destructive with which we are familiar, as those unintegrated impulses and desires that burst into our behaviour and oppose our conscious values, or through inertia or fear, sabotage our living according to those values. In the midst of the anonymous affect of the group, for example, it is very hard to remember our puny ego has a vote. We can empathize with Tillich’s recognition that though he consciously stood against Nazism refusing to raise his arm to the Führer, he feared, because of the pressure of the group around him, he would unconsciously find his arm saluting (Tillich 1959, and personal communication).

Less familiar is the shadow as protective. The Psalms speak of our finding shelter in the shadow of God’s wings (Ps 63:7). Light can be glaring and trail with it inadvertent racism, as if dark always means bad. We forget that in clinical work the patient’s core grows in the dark, and in spiritual work, the acme of spiritual perception can be clothed in black. Our holding something of the analysand in the shadows, insulated from the light of premature interpretation, protects us analysts from impinging our agenda on the analysand (Ulanov 1992/2004, p. 250).

What lies in the inferior function grows at a slower rate than our developed functions. The darkness of shadow slows us down and thus allows us the delights of the body in contrast to the swift angel wings of insight. The shadows of death, when we lose one we love, also offer protection for life, generating a ruthless choice to embrace the pleasure of orange leaves, tart apples, soft evenings with katydids chanting, the bright clarity of the winter air, the rollicking laughing with friends, the thrill of sexual release. The very darkness of death can free us to set the beloved other free to be other, that is dead, or living a life with God, whatever we believe happens after death.

The link between the individual and collective shadow is found, I believe, in what I call the hinge of our own shadow (Ulanov 2007, chapter 6) that trips the trap door through which we fall from our personal penumbra—what we experience as stain, blight, shackling, blind spot, undared talent or hope—into an abyss of psychic nullity where any atrocity becomes possible. The fourth lurks in the shadows because bundled there are the specific left out parts of each of us and of our groups collectively—the bad, the feminine, the earth, the superior, the inferior, the body, and the hidden god coming into the world through a bush.
bursting into flames, or through stable muck, or the confusion of voices calling one to become a prophet, or the flight from luxury and family into misery and aloneness to discern the true nature of existence.

The fourth can get us through whatever lurks in the shadows; the door is unlocked because there we are undeveloped, without the armour of consciousness. It is not that the fourth is the shadow or the feminine or any of the left out contents I have described. It is that the fourth can work through those venues to gain easy access to our egos, pushing and pulling, wooing and manoeuvring us into relation with itself.

To ground the notion of the shadowy fourth sponsoring the third, I will give a small part of a long analysis of a middle age woman I will call Pamir who began our work by announcing, ‘I want to go deeper into my creative self; I am lonely and sad and full of fear, not in my body’.

**Pamir**

We began our work without the third. In Winnicott’s terms, there was not enough oneness in this woman of two cultures, American and Near-Eastern, enmeshed in her family. My countertransference alerted me to how grave the enmeshment was. Listening to her I felt myself going to sleep, not feeling sleepy, but pulled under, conked out, no space to get air or my footing. There was no third as position either, for I struggled just to stay alert and had no understanding of what was nullifying my subjectivity and relatedness to her.

Slowly, I came to see that I was experiencing the analysand’s absence of space for experience of herself as an independent subject. From this third as position, I eventually said that I felt a sleepiness that was unlike ordinary sleepiness, more like going unconscious, just knocked out, when she was speaking about her relation to her family and especially her mother, and that I would snap awake when she spoke of something alive to her. When I said I felt sleepy, she exclaimed that she feels sleepy when she lives in reaction to things being imposed on her, especially being the good daughter to her mother, and does not say what she herself feels or thinks. We connected through this sleepiness and looked at it together as a shared response to something manoeuvring us in relation to itself, whatever that was. From this kind of conversation back and forth, the third as space developed between us.

We shared a dim awareness that together, not just the analysand, or alternatively me, we were like the sleeping princess needing to be awakened to full livingness. I sensed that shadowy something when the analysand would begin each session going back over the last session to clarify, solidify, coagulate what she had glimpsed, but especially to find words for the felt sense of it, the meaning of what she had reached in the previous hour, or did not reach. It was as if what had happened had not fully happened, had not securely stepped over into life. This effort to reach meaning dissolved; she called it a shredding and shedding of her efforts to organize our sessions, and then began to speak of
feeling very alone and afraid. She felt keenly the minimal success of her business and her dread of the world out there. She said she failed at things because she was not living them out of her root. She felt her aloneness came from abandoning ‘the self which is different’ that does not belong in either of her two cultures.

The third as process, in a state of flux, not a fixed entity, functioning to arrive at the mediating third, the new image or attitude or behaviour, that resolves conflicting opposites, began to emerge. She described opposites between which she felt caught. Her American tendencies pushed her to initiate her own life and point of view; as a teenager she wanted to become a cheerleader. Her Near-Eastern qualities told her gently to facilitate a pleasing environment for others to feel in harmony; she remembered sitting quietly present on a tuffet in the living room with her parents after the evening meal, like a ‘child princess’. Her life as an independent subject integrating these cultural imperatives had not steadily awakened, but only blinked off and on. I had at first to descend into almost unconsciousness to know firsthand what she did not yet know: how to create and discover the self she was meant to be.

Back and forth we went between American self-assertion and Near-Eastern soul, which, even though ‘weak, dependent and childish’, she also associated with loving full-out the cat she brought from the Near-Eastern country, with arousal at the thought of women making love with one another which she understood as ‘wanting to find out what my body is like’. She remembered then a dream from several years before she began our analytical work in which a dark Polynesian girl turned up in bed with her and her husband, and she did not like this intruder. But she came to associate this girl’s vibrant red and orange clothes with her own freer sensual life with her husband.

During this period of work, a year and a half into the analysis, she expressed shock at ‘how childish I have been; I have abandoned myself, and led my life in a childish state’. By this she meant, not earning significant money, not doing her share of housework, failing to achieve certain training for her profession, but above all else, behaving like a quiet pleasing girl, ceding to everyone else grown-up authority superior to her own. She felt she had been an overly protected, spoiled child, but not loved for who she was. She said sadly, ‘I feel I lost my soul growing up; it is not at home in the world. My parents never got that I was this particular soul. And I did not see her and no one else did. I turned away from the little girl in me, denied and abandoned her. She knew about soul’. Overwhelmed with how much she felt she had not accomplished or lived, she would attack herself as ‘no good’ and fall into a fog, a depression.

As this child part moved into centre stage of the analysis, Pamir began to relate to it, talk about it as an other, talk to it, consult it, and become conscious when she would again fall into identification with it. She would complain to me that I did not treat her as special when I could not put my hands on my notes of our last session, that I had misplaced her folder. Taken aback when I said, yes, I left it at home where I took it to review all our work, she saw how she oscillated between assuming the other must treat her as special and usually failed, and the
fact that she and her work in analysis are recognized as important enough to be thought over and felt about and re-viewed.

In the midst of this process of the child emerging as an other with a point of view often different from her own, a sense of child as archetypal, distinct from her personal memories and lacunae of experience, captured our imaginations. Again we were arranged together to see how this pattern of energy made itself known in opposite ways. Access to renewed energies, youthful zest, a sense of rebirth appeared in the transference (‘I’m sick and tired of putting you and everyone else on a pedestal and myself down here; I want to relate as an equal’); in active imagination (‘the little girl says I deaden her when I do not write my thoughts but look up in books for everyone else’s’); and in dreams (see example below). On the negative side of the child image, a kind of abandon of communal and ethical standards can get constellated, a free-for-all-do-anything-you-desire air because the child sees only its own point of view. In my analysand’s case, she began to see how much she had left for her husband to do in daily chores, and felt ashamed. New feeling trickled in, a combination of playfulness and autonomy in doing chores in her own way and tempo, but doing them and wanting to. In the transference, she said, ‘You prod me to get conscious. You haven’t given in to being my mother. I’ve always felt I could be myself here’.

Pamir gained confidence as an adult woman, now two years plus of analysis, and, as she put it, ‘went way down in depression, and dark, and feel something holding me back’. She then confided a secret activity: an anal itching that had persisted for years, that she would resist scratching (which she also called itching), until it woke her up at night. Then she would indulge in a frenzy of scratching (‘itching’), and return to sleep. Itch means ‘a peculiar tingling or uneasy irritation of the skin which causes desire to scratch the part affected’ (Random House 1975, p. 711). She was awakened from unconsciousness to desire, and, indeed, this nether location included sexual excitement, which, along with vaginal pleasure, comprised part of lovemaking with her husband. The desire was now psychic. She exclaimed, ‘Something comes alive in me! It’s fighting for my soul. I want to go after what I want; I do not want things as I have done them. What is my task? What is my soul to be doing?’

Another set of opposites took over centre stage, her body and her soul life. Sheltered in the customs of another culture, she had no instruction about her body as a woman, felt scared and bewildered by her first menses, sneaked looks in books to find out what was going on. She learned of masturbation only in her adulthood. Persistent gynaecological trouble necessitated medical attention and procedures throughout her adult life, and pregnancy did not happen, and was set aside. Along with the customs of her family culture, I understood that her unconscious identification with a child part of herself well into her adulthood as relevant to not seeking artificial means to have a child.

She had pursued for years a sincere spiritual practice of meditation, reading, prayer, and she found a life for her soul in a religious group that combined Hindu meditation, yoga practices and devotion to a guru with a form of
western Christianity. But she felt she became disembodied; the practice did not translate into more living in the world. We began to see the urgency of the anal itching as the exact compensation to spiritual uplifting, bringing her down into her body in an unmistakable way. This strong set of opposites, in a sort of secret handshake, worked to push her into living her soul in her body in this world.

Contrary to Freud's essay on the anal character, she is not overly orderly, parsimonious, or obstinate, but just the opposite, as if to indicate, as Freud says, that 'one may expect to find but little of the “anal character” in persons who have retained the erotogenic quality of the anal zone into adult life’ (Freud 1908, p. 32). Also relevant to her is the anal stage in Erikson’s schema that centres around the task of developing will and autonomy versus self-doubt (Erikson 1959, stage two).

As she held in consciousness both opposites of daily spiritual meditation and nightly anal itching, a new image appeared that reconciled them. In different pictures, she drew a woman with an elephant trunk. Pamir drew her face framed by big elephant feet stretched out straight. She has strength, my analysand said, and there is something sweet about her; the trunk is for sniffing, and the weight of her grounds me. Pamir connected this image with her longstanding meditation practice, saying the elephant’s sensitivity to vibrations in the earth through feet and trunk (for example detecting the coming tsunami in Southeast Asia or of an approaching predator) was also the Om vibration, the cosmic pulsing of universal consciousness. At home, she embodied the elephant, she said, on all fours with her rear in the air, as if with big feet pressing into the floor, with primitive grunts from her gut, sniffing, and solid deliberate walking.

Her drawings of the elephant woman showed massive legs and buttocks (in contrast to her own slender physical shape). She would bend over with her back to a mirror and look through her parted legs to see reflected, she said, her animal body, that whole anal/genital area. She said, ‘I am an animal, a human animal; I go back to something I lost, and get consciousness of that whole area. I am allowing myself to experience it’. In her enactments of elephant presence she found her left out body opening to sexual pleasure, and a playfulness as well a weighty coming down to earth. The pictures were strong: the buttocks, thighs, anal and genital area dominated, and her breasts hanging down between her legs, looked, with their nipples, like eyes. She drew herself seeing herself looking at herself. The last elephant picture featured the vagina as the central focus.

This whole eruption through the unconscious was previewed by a dream of ‘Horses being hung over wires; their legs hanging down for “pedicure” (being shod). Then they slowly begin to fall, to come to the ground. The wires break. It is like a stampede. There are many of them, I am caught in the middle and at first frightened, but then decide not to be afraid. The horse starts kissing me and I say, “I love you too”.

The dream pictures a huge amount of animal energy coming down to be lived. The high voltage of her spiritual practice where, she said, she was always going
up, has ensnared the horse animal energy that must get shoes to run on the ground. The dream-ego decides not to be afraid, but to receive this energy that could stampede, to love it. In the transference, she exclaimed, ‘I am an adult with you, myself, not a child pleasing. I want to break out! I like who I am with you’. She said, ‘Coming into my body is shaking me at my foundations, waking me up to my essence so I don’t squander it, but to be a presence that the divine presence works through’.

It was here that Pamir began to face what particularly got left out of her growing. For others, it would be something equally specific to their personalities. Her ability to face what was coming was previewed by the dream-ego’s decision not to be afraid of being stampeded by the horses’ energy, but to receive it. That tiny ego response opened her to the particular hinge, the pivot point between her personal shadow and its collective dimensions. She had said of herself she had always ‘hidden out in weakness and helplessness’; dreaming the alternative made it possible to choose a different path. She suffered weeks of shadow stuff between the horse dream and the image of the elephant woman. She felt hurt and rage at being criticized for a job she did, at not being valued enough by colleagues on the job, of being seen as childish and vulnerable. Her self-doubt alternated with bouts of fierce anger. This passage where she often felt shut up in semi-darkness, led to her forming her own critique of the job and a determination to go back on her own terms with something specific to offer, instead of giving away the power to others. I do not think she would have found the elephant woman image rising up in her, let alone the itching transforming into desire to be what her soul summoned her to be, without first having descended into the shuttered parts of herself.

This shadow work repeated in different forms after the appearance of the elephant image, on into the next two years of analysis. She stood against her mother’s wishes (a woman in her eighties), for example, to visit on a holiday weekend, for the sake of giving full attention to her husband’s little time off from work. She and her mother worked their way to a better understanding, a tribute, I felt, to their underlying love for one another. She stood against the rejection of an authoritative person in her spiritual tradition, disagreeing with what she saw as a power inflation to become the idol of veneration in place of the guru, who himself directed all adoration to God. In the transference, she squawked at me as ‘being tough, not giving into me making you be a Mommy who says all is o.k.’, while at the same time saying, ‘I want more from you. I have doubted myself at such a deep level that I want you to say Wow! when I am now reading my journal about my soul life. I do focus on God; I am not solemn but in colours, not fearful. I want to be myself, playful and quiet, in stillness, inner contentment’. I felt she pulled me into a new vitality and freedom, that, contrary to her stated fears that this outburst would be destructive to our relationship, it galvanized it at a new level. She said, ‘I come in and put authority on you and you don’t take it. You are not my mother. We are two selves here’. At the same time, her business began to pick up, little by little, and her husband remarked,
with appreciation, on her cheerful demeanour in doing house and travel chores; they had more fun.

Protected in the shadow, both mixed up with self-doubt and sheltered in the dark, another quality now differentiated to be included in Pamir’s conscious living: modesty. She said, ‘my job is to tend the altar, to tend the flame on the altar’. Reaching this, her itching ceased. If we believe the psyche is objective, and not just enclosed in individual identities, and if, from a spiritual perspective, we believe the Spirit exists in reality and is not a personal possession, then, where Pamir arrives is a significant contribution to the whole of us, the human family, and reality as a whole. She opened a blockage to tend the altar flame that burns for all of us. She grew more weighty, much like the elephant, whose sensitive trunk is attuned to energy inspiriting everyone, the elephant whose symbolism points to victory over obstacles, bearing the weight of the universe, embodying wisdom, caring, patience.

Three and four and consciousness

The fourth that sponsors the generative third leads back to the mundane, to our livingness in the world. The fourth, however shadowy, engineers our living in the third. The fourth gets in directly through what each of us leaves out, through what the analytical couple leaves out—the wild animal, the formless pleroma, the God who wants to step over into visible life. As Pamir said of her guru (for whom she had an affectionate nickname) ‘he makes the non-visible visible’. The third partakes of all the descriptions I gave in the review of literature of the third: it is intersubjective, conscious and unconscious, including reverie, gaps, impasses, reconciliations; it shows itself as fluid, moving between the analytic pair and within each of them as space, position, process, function. The fourth is the whole thing, the wholeness of reality which flows in and through this moment.

In the third our focus shifts from the one versus two into both together in the third. Glimpsing the fourth, our focus shifts again. The two held in the third are moved to see they are together enlivened by the circulating fourth. The sense of not me or you but us that the third conveys, opens further to experiencing us beheld by the fourth which is in us, through us, endorsing our living in the third and moving us into relation with itself as reality that resides deep within and transcends the psyche.

Healing, in this way of looking, turns on the three and the four, their interaction. The analyst may be a new object for the patient’s introjection, and the process between them generates new potentials for relating to self and other, but the mutative agent is not the analyst, nor precisely the third built up between the analytic pair, but something in reality itself symbolized by the fourth working us into positions to perceive and respond (see Ulanov 1997/2004, pp. 345, 347). We are moved to inquire, what do our personal complexes ask of us? What is their meaning as it impacts our personal lives and the collective in which we live.
with others? One’s problems get rearranged from solely being something to be understood and solved to being portals through which we glimpse something we are assigned, so to speak, to work on for the good of the whole. This is not a cheery view, smug with the idea that good comes out of evil. No. This is seeing the whole, if only briefly, and glimpsing our responsibility to it, what is asked of us from our deepest humanity.

The stakes are higher. Jung uses the word Self to refer to the larger centre in the psyche and emphasizes that images for the Self and for God are indistinguishable. I am trying to differentiate this indistinguishableness and emphasize the Self as a bridge to transpsychic reality that we call God or by some other name. Healing comes from that source that wants to step over into concrete living in us and between us.

Clinically, this perspective changes the analytic enterprise. We work with the immediate dream, symptom, impasse, conscious of the background of such questions as what am I to be doing before I die? Where does this problem prompt me to go? Is my suffering with this problem itself a contribution to the whole? Within this background, we can risk descent to fearful, unknown depths. Jung says healing comes when we push the problem back into its archetypal layers and the instinctive self-regulating larger psyche takes over from the worrying, struggling ego, reasserting a balance of the whole psyche which has got out of kilter.

To reach the archetypal level of our problem heals our humiliation for having such a problem that makes us feel cut off from others. Connected at this level, we see our problem is our version of a shared human problem and that relieves us of shame and isolation, as Pamir illustrated. We can see where our problem is a human one, not just our failure, and be assured our wrestling with it is itself a contribution to the human family. Jung goes further and says our problem may also be God’s problem, thus we may be contributing to the source of the whole reality, or however we conceive what God means. Pamir said, ‘I feel a shift’, and I think she meant she saw her spiritual life making a difference in the world, that she did not have to leave it to succeed in the world, yet it had to be scrubbed, so that it was conducted neither in dissociation nor depression. To her, it did not matter if she was recognized as tending to the flame on the altar, only that she did so tenderly and with determination and that the flame was alive, available. That fulfilled her devotion.

In general, the fourth is experienced as this moreness, this purposiveness without predetermined purpose, where we each experience our central images and conflicts threaded through life’s opposites, a purposiveness which we shape into a purpose in the context of our different psychological and cultural circumstances. That fourth does three things: it includes destruction of our certainties and definitions, for it is ever living and moving us, not captured in a fixed definition for all time. It shows us our limits, the limits of our perceptions.

Secondly, for it to take shape in a specific form and sense of purpose, our response is required. That is where the tiny ego is necessary. Without it, the
purposiveness gains no purpose, no channel into living, no stepping over into concrete life. The *apeiron* nature, that is, indeterminacy, of the archetype needs the human ego to find its form. Pamir would not have got all the elephant woman had to give if she had not been willing to engage, enact, embody the energy the image conveyed. In a paper giving clinical events in summary form, it may sound as if this just happens. No. It took Pamir’s hard sustained work, replete with discouragements, and renewed efforts.

Thirdly, the result of the Axiom Maria where from the Three comes the Fourth as the One is different from the beginning One of fusion state or *prima materia* chaos. This Fourth as One includes human consciousness as a participant, and that makes all the difference from a human point of view. Clinically, the back and forth between conscious and unconscious within either person of the analytic pair (Pamir’s working with the child part of herself, for example), which is lived as well in the conversation between the analysand and analyst (our working on the sleepiness that caught us), may be seen as mirroring the conversation between ego and the reality to which the Self makes a bridge.

The purposiveness without purpose may now also be seen as engineering us, each in our different ways, to mirror its conversation with us. Reality’s or God’s, or what each of us calls this origin point, even if we call it nothing, is engineering us to mirror its circulating presence in our daily life. We, who in our dependency and interconnectedness with each other, who need mirroring to come into being at all, may be finding that what we are to be doing is to be mirroring this transcendent presence.

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**Translations of Abstract**

L’accès au tiers est considéré depuis quelques années par d’éménents psychanalystes comme la condition même de la guérison. Jung, quant à lui, explore la notion de tiers dès 1916. Sa vision est étonnamment postmoderne, à la fois dans ses implications cliniques et dans la compréhension de la réalité qu’elle propose. Je postule dans cet article qu’il n’est possible d’envisager le tiers que dans l’ombre d’un quatrième et j’essaie de décrire ce quatrième. Celui-ci demeure dans l’ombre (envisagée dans ses deux acceptions); il n’est connaissable qu’à condition de l’expérimenter car nous sommes partie prenante de la réalité élargie qu’il révèle. En faisant l’expérience de ce quatrième, chacun d’entre nous est amené à développer ce qu’il a laissé de côté. Ainsi, la vie engendrée par le quatrième donne-t-elle accès à une nouvelle forme de conscience aux contours plus vastes, un enrichissement de la réalité envisagée comme un tout, qui inclut et transcende la psyché.

Arbeit ebenfalls zu beschreiben versucht. Es bleibt schattenhaft (was vermuten lässt, dass es zwei Bedeutungen des Schattens gibt) und kann nur erfahren werden, indem es gelebt wird, da wir ein Teil der umfassenderen Realität bilden, die es offenbart. Indem wir dieses Vierte erleben, werden wir dazu gebracht, dasjenige zu entwickeln, was wir bisher jeweils versäumt haben. Folglich leitet die Lebendigkeit, die durch das Vierte erzeugt wird, eine neue Art des Bewusstseins für ein erweitertes Umfeld ein, für ein Mehr an Realität als Ganzem, welches die Psyche einschließt und transzendiert.

Negli anni recenti la nozione di terzo viene considerata da famosi psicoanalisti come il punto cruciale della guarigione. Jung iniziò ad esplorare il terzo nel 1916 con una visione strettamente postmoderna per le sue implicazioni per il lavoro clinico e per comprendere la realtà. Questo articolo sostiene che non possiamo vedere il terzo se non nell’ombra del quarto, e tenta di descrivere cosa sia il quarto. Esso resta oscuro (suggerendo due significati di ombra), lo si conosce solo vivendolo, perché noi siamo parte di una realtà più ampia che esso dischiude. Perciò la vitalità che il quarto genera porta a un nuovo tipo di consapevolezza di un confine più ampio, dell’ampliamento della realtà come un tutto, che include e trascende la psiche.

En años recientes la noción del tercero ha sido vista por el psicoanálisis como el lugar de la cura. Jung comenzó a estudiar al tercero en 1916 en sus implicaciones en el trabajo clínico y en la forma de entender la realidad de una manera sorprendentemente post-moderna. Este artículo propone que sólo podemos ver al tercero a la sombra del cuarto, e intenta describir lo que es el cuarto. Él permanece sombrío (lo cual sugiere dos significados de sombra); él sólo puede ser conocido experimentándolo, por cuanto somos parte de la realidad que revela. Experimentando este cuarto, nos conduce a descubrir lo que cada uno ha dejado fuera. Por tanto la vivencia del cuarto engendra guías para una nueva forma de conciencia de un entorno más extenso, la ampliación de la realidad como un todo, que incluye y trasciende a la psique.

References


