

Jung was “Thinking Systems”:

An Juxtaposition of Jungian Psychology and Murray Bowen’s Family Systems Theory

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Abstract

In the world of psychotherapy, individual and systems psychologies tend to be viewed as psychological apples and oranges (Nichols, 2013). This paper is an attempt to highlight the compatibility of Analytical Psychology and Bowen Theory, and illustrate how the two theories compliment each other. It is assumed that the reader possesses a working knowledge of Analytical Psychology and a moderate knowledge of Bowen Theory or Family Systems Theory in order to address their subtle aspects. Primary sources are reviewed for theoretical convergence and divergence. It is found that both theorists are interested in the transpersonal, their theories define systems of wholeness with similar concepts of psychological imbalance, and only differ in the projective mediums used to illustrate these concepts.

It seems like many great theorists have something in common. It can be a centering intuition, a general sense of the ultimate, or a drive to shift the current paradigm. Their ideas are powerful because they searched for the deepest kernel of a problem, defining it in simpler terms and with wider implications than their predecessors.

Carl Jung’s Analytical Psychology, though not enjoying the same mainstream acceptance as Freud’s Psychoanalysis, was, and still is, a quantum leap in the way we look at psychic experience. Where Freud was the first to suggest that there are levels of functioning that we may not be aware of, Jung developed a practical and exquisitely personal psychology in the spirit of William James’ radical empiricism. Riding the same 20th-century existential wave as Fritz Perls, Jung imagined a model of the psyche that ignored nothing and assumed everything, one where all experience was of great import to the development of the individual. But Jung went beyond Perls’ gestalt by proposing that opposites within the greater whole compliment and condition each other - that they are one in the same whole (Ajaya, p.50).

For the analyst, Analytical Psychology requires a massive paradigmatic shift in reflective and abstractive capacities. Similarly for the analysand, therapy expedites the otherwise natural development of abstract thought (Piaget, 1952) to view experiential phenomena as symbolic in nature and fuel for self-reflective contemplation. This shift in perspective is so massive for both analyst and analysand that the mainstream field of psychology has failed to grasp the profundity of its implications, and today Analytical Psychology remains a tool for the intellectual elite or *merely* transpersonal professionals.

Murray Bowen is another great theorist who worked to develop a universal theory of human functioning which emerges from natural laws. Also once a devoted student of

psychoanalysis, Bowen grew suspicious of the “groupiness” of the Menninger Clinic and proposed that group dynamics were far more influential to the individual than the clinic was prepared to accept. He eventually left Menninger’s for the newly created NIMH, which was then a fertile ground for misfit researchers pressuring new and exciting areas of study (Wylie, 1991). Through his famous NIMH study on schizophrenia in the mother-child dyad, he observed the profound impact that family dynamics have on the symptomatology of the identified patient. After gradually pulling in more of the patient’s family into the room, it became apparent that a more *systems*-oriented theory was more appropriate to capture the complexity of family functioning. Bowen augmented his psychoanalytic training with a *natural systems theory* to create a *family systems theory*, the framework from which all current family therapy orientations are derived (Wylie, 1991) (Bowen’s original Family Systems Theory is now known as *Bowen Theory* to distinguish from its more derivatives which focused more on therapeutic methods and less on pure theory (Kerr, 1988, p.24)). According to Bowen (Kerr & Bowen, 1988), a natural systems theory can be found repeating at all levels of life like the *Mandelbrot series*, where each construct in the series is made of an infinite number of smaller versions of itself. In systems theory, all systems are part of both subsystems and super systems that adhere to the same basic behavioral rules, from the micro-cellular to animals, societies, nations, worlds, and the universe.

But Bowen was not just looking for a better way to treat his psychotic patients. According to Wylie (1991), Bowen worked with “dogged determination” to find the ultimate theory of truth that would “connect all living matter with the Universe, the Sun, the Earth, all natural phenomena.” He was looking for something deeper and more transpersonal: a pure theory that did not cling to a method or therapy, but a epistemological framework that integrates the knower

into the known as teacher as well as student (Nichols, 2013). Fully grasping Bowen’s theory reframes our concept of the individual psyche as not just an isolated entity subject to limited influence from the outside world, but a product of the evolutionary systemic context from whence it sprang. “*Thinking systems*” in this way challenges the egocentric paradigm that defines humans as unique species which stands apart from the rest of the world, and reconsiders how primal our most basic behaviors remain (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p.4).

Most family therapists failed to grasp the vastness of understanding that such a shift evokes, and *Family Systems Theory* eventually dissolved back into individual psychologies as a narrow therapeutic remedy for family dysfunction instead of the complete panoptic approach to life that it was intended to be (Wylie, 1991). Micheal Kerr (n.d.) describes this in his audio-tape recording *The Later Years* by saying, “In Bowen's view, the shift from individual to family thinking required a quantum leap in the conceptual abilities in the observer.” The leap to systems thinking confronts the non-linear reality in the total interdependence of all life, similar to the ontological approaches found in eastern spiritual traditions which attend to the ultimate nature of reality. In *Psychotherapy Easy And West*, Swami Ajaya, Ph.D. (1983) juxtaposes eastern monistic epistemologies with western dualistic psychotherapies. According to Ajaya, “Systems theory does not merely extend one’s understanding in a linear fashion; it leads to a profound shift in orientation. Problems are understood and solved in a radically different way when using this model than would be from the reductionist perspective” (p. 102).

Systems

Any systems theory describes the behavior of related components persist long enough to develop a function as a whole (Nichols, 2013). Ajaya (1993) describes systems theory as the

science of dualism which attempts to define how opposing forces interact with each other. As humans developed the capacity for self-reflection, they began to gain more conscious control over the ways in which they regulated themselves individually and collectively (Siegel, 2012). Highly evolved social systems are more complex and also more flexible in their functioning. According to Kerr, “The more evolved a system is the more complex it becomes and the more subtle and precise the self-regulatory positive and negative feedback loops become” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

For example, we know that ant colonies organize through complex non-verbal communication, but we also know that the life of an ant is still quite brutal to human standards (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Humans, on the other hand, are highly adaptable social creatures and express complex behaviors like altruism over many generations, and a “preoccupation with kinship to a degree not possible elsewhere” (p. 90). But the benchmark of sophistication for a society is the flexibility and adaptability to stress, which relies on the level of differentiation among all of the individuals. For example, when a single cow becomes startled by an approaching predator, the entire herd may stampede. Humans, on the other hand, have a slightly increased capacity to differentiate themselves from the “herd” in times of stress by choosing to be less reactive and more rational (Gilbert, 2006).

All living systems are by described through self-regulatory behavior known as *positive and negative feedback* loops. Negative feedback loops serve to allow the system to continue functioning through varying conditions by holding it’s components within some appropriate range of functioning. According to Bowen, the primal force of *togetherness* drives family to maintain a steady, *homeostatic* state (Kerr & Bowen, 1988), which is seen in the herd of cows

huddling together for fear of a prowling wolf (Gilbert, 2006). In Analytical Psychology, this force is what feeds neurosis as the unconscious and chronic aversion to an undesirable stimulus resulting in a negative feedback loop in resistance to the conscious will of the ego (Jung, 1953, par. 68).

Positive feedback loops are driven by energy originating outside the system, and aim to change the system’s functioning by instigating a reorganization of the system’s internal structure. The difference between man-made mechanical systems described in general systems theory and living systems described through a natural systems theory) is that living systems have a drive from within to seek out change via interaction with the external world (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). This is exemplified with Jung’s theory of the *transcendent function* (Jung, 1960) as a natural driving force that occurs when conscious and unconscious libidinal energies are balanced, producing some sort of a numinous shift in the psyche. For example, an automobile makes no effort to redefine itself, it simply drives, decays over time, and is eventually scrapped. On the other hand, humans are constantly trying to remake themselves as evidenced by the pervasive search for some kind of spiritual transcendence. A therapist will repeatedly intervene in accordance with this drive, initiating a positive feedback loop with the psychical system of the patient in the hope to coerce it into reorganizing its internal structure.

Change

Hogenson (2005) describes highly complex self-organizing systems as existing in different phasic states, where the accumulation of energy within the system eventually overwhelms the current organizational structure triggering a “singularity of collapse” of the existing structure (p. 274), called a *phase transition* (p. 277). For example, Hogenson describes a

phase transition as the moment that the weight of accumulating sand on a hill triggers an avalanche (p. 274), or a catastrophic gravitational reorganization of the sand particles into a new structure that can support the additional weight. The system is still a pile of sand, but its structure has reorganized and persists in a different form after the phase transition. Phase-transitions are seen in chaos theory as a temporary sense of determinism in the results of a non-linear equation before the results appear to become chaotic again (Fleischman, 1999). Another common example of a phase transition is the chaotically destructive effects of heavy metal distortion on the sound waves of a guitar. As the amplitude of the guitar’s signal is increased, the peaks of the sound waves are pushed beyond the electrical bandwidth of the amplifier’s electronics, creating a flat edge at the top of each wave known as *clipping*. At first this change is relatively unpredictable and resembles the random chaos of *white noise*, but as the amplitude increases and the electrical bandwidth is more evenly and completely saturated, the signal eventually becomes more regular again. This new sound has a very clear and *clean* quality to it, with extremely mechanical qualities of pitch and amplitude, yet it is perceptually unrelated to the original guitar signal. In the social sciences, phase transitions can be seen as the relatively instantaneous development of language in the history of man, the industrial revolution, and the development of the Internet and subsequently the iPhone.

According to Hogenson (2005), archetypal representations also appear in phases of density or sparsity depending on the immediate state of the psyche. Strong phases of *symbolic density* result in the *numinous dreams* of Jungian analysis, or the emergence of prominent figures of great religions as manifestations of the God-image in the Self archetype (Hogenson 2005). These are massive movements of great systemic importance, rich with the contents of the

unconscious, and can lead to an organizational restructuring of the of the individual or collective psyche. The parallel in family therapy is the emotional and psychotic outburst of the schizophrenic patient as a push for individuation, which will either be met by the family with awe and acceptance in a period of progression, or with denial and subjugation in a period of digression. Phase transitions in the anxiety of a family can also lead to unexplainable synchronistic events, for example a child suspiciously needing to be picked up for acting out at school on the same day that one parent crashed their car and the other parent ran out of gas. Depending on the current organization of the family’s collective psyche, these fortuitous events may have drastic results such as divorce in disastrous conditions or even marriage in auspicious conditions.

Individuals in Systems

Both Jung and Bowen created *holistic* and subjective-empirical theories. However, both theorists generated little mainstream scientific research, probably because the empirical facts held therein were largely considered self-evident. The theories are holistic because they revolve around a conceptual center and attempt to explain *all* behavior regardless of the diversity of the content (Ajaya, 1983). Analytical Psychology is oriented around the Archetype of the Self, while Bowen Theory is oriented around the “Self” of the family unit. (Ajaya 1983). In both orientations, a polarizing movement in one area is always compensated by a counterbalancing force in another. For example, in Bowen Theory an exceptionally unstable family member is always offset by one or more exceptionally stable members. In Jungian psychology, denying consciousness to an aspect of the Self will cause that aspect to emerge from the unconscious through dreams or other projective behavior such as artwork or misbehavior. For example, an

excessively rigid and masculine man may repress a terrifyingly chaotic but highly creative Anima, or feminine side, within his unconscious. In either case, the theoretical holism is expressed through the system of psyche or family teetering above it's own center of gravity, limited only by the productive capacity inherent in the system.

Jung's break with Freud was in large part motivated by the Jung's position that both conscious and unconscious material were integral to the psyche, where Freud believed that the unconscious was an inconvenient byproduct of repression to be dealt with and thrown out. This view was a move toward seeing the psyche a whole system of psychic components through which libidinal - or psychic - energy was shared. To Jung, psychopathology was the result of denying consciousness to a part of the psyche through repression. This isolated, or *cut-off*, libidinal energy would then naturally beg to be conscious through imagination, dreams, Freudian slips, and pathology. For Jung, this processes best describes the life of the psyche as a constant tension of opposing compensatory forces, i.e. conscious/unconscious, anima/animus, introversion/extroversion (Ajaya, 1993). This literally transcendent inner tension pushes the individual toward a more integrated wholeness, and progress appears as phases of energetic (or *symbolic* in the case of imagery) density or sparsity as described by Hogenson.

All systems are defined by boundaries which determine how the system as a whole communicates with the outside world (Nichols, 2013). Pre-Jungian psychoanalysis used a definition of psyche similar to a *closed system* which only interacts with the immediate family, and only during the earlier stages of life. Jung described the psyche's boundaries as much more open to influence of unconscious cultural material. He called this aspect of psyche the *collective unconscious*, and defined it as the sum total of all of all anatomy and environmental conditioning

inherited through the individual’s ancestors. All of the conditioning occurring during an individual’s life is called the *personal unconscious*, which equates to Freud’s notion of the unconscious.

This model of the psyche fits Bowen’s natural-systems definition of the family almost exactly. Through his NIMH study on the *schizophrenogenic mother*, Bowen discovered how intensely the individual psyche is conditioned not just by the mother or primary attachment figure but the entire family system and surrounding cultural, political, and religious super-systems. While Jung simply stated the importance of millions of years of genetics and culture, Bowen went further and observed the specific patterns of behavior passed down through countless generations, defining the psyche as nothing but the result of all of the chronological conditioning factors surrounding it (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). To Jung, the unconscious was partially collective, but to Bowen the conscious and unconscious was totally collective. Even Jung understood the impersonal nature of one’s own psyche, as implied by Philemon, Jung’s mysterious inner voice of the Self and/or collective who once said “So, you think you own your thoughts?” (Jaffe, 1989).

Furthermore, both Bowen and Jung would agree that all living things are connected as one vast ocean of energy, or one energetic *unit*; nothing is isolated. It is narrow-minded to compartmentalize any part of the universe into isolated *this* and *thats* but all things interact in a fluid manner as bound by natural laws.

Jung (1997) states: Life is a kind of unit...a continuum...all one tissue in which things live through or by means of each other. Therefore trees cannot be without animals, nor animals without plants...and so on. The whole thing is one tissue and

so no wonder that all the parts function together, because they are all of the same living continuum. (p. 753, 754)

Mysterium Coniunctionis

Freud said that “unconscious motivation” is the prime mover (Wylie, 1991). Bowen elaborated on the paradox of life by saying that all emotional interaction can be characterized by a mix of two opposing forces which he named *individuality* and *togetherness* (Kerr & Bowen, 1988), (Wylie 1991). Jung’s well-known analysis of medieval alchemy illuminates the mystery of life as the challenge of uniting seemingly irreconcilable opposites in the *mysterium coniunctionis*, or mystery of the union (Jung, 1970c, p. 3-6, 6-7). People want to exist in union but also want to remain individual. For Bowen, healthy development includes developing the capacity to choose a healthy level of individuality or togetherness for each moment of life as it passes. This capacity is the core axiom of Bowen Theory and is known as *differentiation of self*, which is called *individuation* in Analytical Psychology. For Jung, individuation is “the process of developing into a whole person with a sense of one’s unique nature and path in life,” defined by an awareness of our “limits and capabilities...largely defined in comparison and relationship to others” (Merritt, 2012). Bowen’s early definition of differentiation is “the more a person can be an individual while in emotional contact with the group” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Later definitions of differentiation became more attuned to the deterministic processes that influence the ability to be an individual while retaining emotional contact; “Differentiation...the ability to distinguish between the intellectual process and the feeling process” (Kerr, 2015). Alan Gurman (as cited by Wylie, 1991) says differentiation is "Maturation, moral development, the ability to cope with stress, modulate anxiety, and assert yourself without stepping on other people's toes; in

short, being your own person—psychodynamic therapists have been talking about all that for years.” In the context of Interpersonal Neurobiology, Daniel Siegel (2012) uses calls this *integration*, which describes “the process of linking differentiated parts into a functional whole.” Siegel describes how mental representations in the brain mirror the experiences that a person is having with the outside world, and how relationships are just as important as internal psychic processes: “Interpersonal experiences directly influence how we mentally construct reality.”

True understanding of the meaning of individuation/differentiation is only possible through experiential application of the theories which define them, i.e. it is not possible to achieve through mere rationalization. In fact, developing this understanding is probably most or all of the path of mental development. Merritt (2012) describes the difference between individuation and *individualism* as healthy and cancerous cells. Healthy cells grow in harmonious relationship with the surrounding cells. Cancerous cells grow out of relationship with the surrounding cells and this disharmony leads to undesirable behavior of the system as a whole, i.e. suffering and death in the patient.

For Bowen, pathology originates or is profoundly influenced by this kind of disharmony within members of the family. He models this systemic imbalance as a *triangle*, which occurs when there is tension between two people and one of them forms an alliance with a third to lessen their discomfort (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). A triangle is a coping strategy for anxiety, and can be seen wherever a living thing avoids an undesirable experience by using some sort of aversion from an undesirable thing. Ironically, the triangle is the most stable formation in the emotional system, but at the same time it prevents the original problem from being resolved. Being on the outside of the triangle is extremely uncomfortable (nobody likes rejection) and the

outsider will compete to be on the inside again by pushing out the newly allied person. The new outsider will then try to get back inside the triangle by expelling the new insider. This cycle repeats, and if unresolved the chronic anxiety of being singled out may result in some physical or mental symptom in the weakest member. A family or group is seen as a series of interlocking triangles where the health of the weakest member is tied directly to the overall health of the system.

The “identified patient,” (IP) as it is called in psychoanalysis, (or “symptom bearer” as it is called in Bowen Theory) has spent so much time on the outside of one or more triangles that their development may be impaired and they may have become the scapegoat for the family’s systemic issues. The family becomes so used to the scapegoating pattern that the IP starts to bear the issues of the family system through an unconscious *family projection process* where the family projects all of their unwanted qualities onto the *cause* of the symptoms of the patient (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). “If only there were no schizophrenia, our family would be happy.” The IP typically bears the weight of several triangles who’s malicious qualities masquerades as compassion for the IP’s symptoms, but ironically only serves to ignore the other member’s role and *emotional dependence* on the IP’s symptoms.

Freud and Jung both wrote about this process occurring within the psyche. This is in line with Siegel’s (2012) model of mental representations where outer phenomena are experienced through mirrored representations within the brain. For example, Jung called a *complex* an energetic split of the psyche that gains some level of autonomy. The complex is named as this or that disease, and is forced to remain outside of the conscious psyche (i.e. remain unconscious) as something separate to be disposed of instead of integrated. Just as the triangulated IP in the

family system, this “member” of the psyche is unconsciously rejected as a *part* of the whole and confused as the complex and undifferentiated *other* that the projection holds it to be. This kind of self-denial can be seen in Jung’s Shadow, which serves as a scapegoat for all of the parts of the psyche that the *ego* is unwilling to accept and integrate into the *persona*. Once the process of experiencing the Shadow is systematically reduced to reveal that all experiences are indeed a part of the Self, the system of the psyche can begin to function more harmoniously.

Thus, Jung and Bowen both arrived at the same conclusion: that healthy relationship is the goal of healthy development. Jung was known to say that “You can’t differentiate on Everest” (Merritt, 2012)...“A real and fundamental change in individuals...can come only from the personal encounter between man and man” (CW 10, Par. 516). Progress is up to the individual but is a social process nonetheless. Bowen’s anecdotal perspective on the foci and projective process of the work is summed up in one statement: “The emotional system is the force that motivates; The relationship system is the way it is expressed”.

Connection

Perhaps Jung’s most profound contribution to the field of psychoanalysis was the complete reclamation of our biological and cultural history. The entire notion of archetypes of the collective unconscious is grounded in the concept that we all share a natural and evolutionary connection with our ancestral roots. We have inherited our minds, desires, and molecular structures from an unbroken chain of antecedent generations. Broadening our perspective in this way allows us to look beyond the sphere of the individual as an isolated, close-system phenomenon and into the vast world of historical conditioning that makes the individual what it is today. Similarly, Bowen not only broadened our awareness to the entire immediate social

context of the patient, but placed absolute importance on the *multigenerational transmission process* that created that context in the first place (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Individuals are conditioned through the family projection process via the inheritance of countless generations of humans, animals, and microbes, and ignoring the contemporary impact of this inheritance ignores the most basic parts of who the individual is today.

Near the end of his life, Bowen complained about how the “family of family therapists” (Wylie, 1991) had grown into a group of clinicians that had forgotten how to think for themselves, and were so concerned with “selling” family therapy methods that they had failed to continue the individual search for truth that Bowen Theory was meant to evoke. In 1967 Bowen presented a report (published in 1972) of his journey of differentiation with his own family of origin. This was his magnum *opus*, which underlined the absolute importance of the therapist’s own work. After the death of an important family member in 1966, he began systematically removing all unhealthy defenses that he had reenforced within his family, for example revealing gossip and standing in solidarity for the first time when members attempted to triangulate him. The result was a catastrophic but temporary break down in the family’s organization of emotional defenses which he exploited by remaining an educated and equanimous and healing force, guiding the members to a healthier and more differentiated way of being together (Wylie, 1991). The result was a family of members that lived more in harmony with each other and responded to stress in a healthier and more flexible way.

Like Jung, Bowen emphasized that the doctor’s own analysis was paramount to the success of his patients. Just as Jung exploited his depression and psychosis as an opportunity for growth, documented in his famously illustrated journal *Liber Novus* (known as *The Red Book*),

Bowen applied his own theory to his most sacred and vulnerable patient, his own Self and family of origin. He showed how the healthy differentiation of any one individual will cause a ripple effect throughout the family system, and that it is a realistic goal to strive for. While Jung’s visions included the most blood-drenched apocalyptic imaginal material, Bowen’s family threatened legal action which would have resulted in the death of the family unit. What these two stories have in common is a combination of bravery and a solid foundation in theory and empirical fact. Even the learned doctor is not immune to his own treatment.

Process

Jung and Bowen were both devoted to psychoanalysis at the beginning of their careers. They worked with the assumption that most human functioning is unconscious and can be projected and observed in some form or another with proper understanding of the basic nature of unconscious material. But the ways in which they were able to observe the material were diametrically opposed.

Jung grew up in the romantic world of European psychology and philosophy which is seen in the subjective vibrance of phenomenological experience (Walsh, 2014). This is apparent through the unparalleled diversity of color and creativity in Jung's work and writing. He was taken with the power of imagery in particular (as opposed to music or theatrics, for example), and myth in general, and his psychology is relatively introverted as all importance is given to inner imaginal experience as a projection of unconscious material. While Jung worked with the assumption that unconscious material was conditioned by a mixture of both personal and cultural/historical/evolutionary experiences, he focused on projection within the individual psyche as the most pure source of data for analysis.

Learning to “think symbolically”, as Jung put it (Wagoner, 2008), one could form a detached but invested relationship with the contents of one’s own mind in order to continuously explore all possible meanings of the contents as they arise. He saw that the face value of the images themselves were less important than their ability to approximate a deeper, more oracular meaning. Once one learns to flow with the images in a more abstract way, a more flexible psyche will begin to develop. Thinking symbolically is the art of hypothesis. It proposes a way to validate all human experience and paves the way for a wealth of creativity and flexibility in clinical work. This integrative and exploratory approach reveals myriad pathways to arrive at the kinds of concrete improvements in the lives of patients that even the most narrow-minded individuals can understand, like better relationships, fewer symptoms, and lower doctor bills.

What is missing is the link between the abstract hypothetical phase of the projective work and the concrete science of relational behavior. If the goal is relationship, then equal importance must be given to the nature of relationship and the structuring of the relational systems that improve it. This is where Bowen Theory completes the circle by reducing the step-by-step process of the relational *state machine* in clear and simple terms.

For Bowen, unconscious material within a group is projected onto the canvas of family functioning. This provides a tangible way to observe the transfer of energy (anxiety) throughout the members of the system. According to theory, corrective restructuring of the functioning between individuals will lead to a more harmonious presentation in the entire family as a unit, which is analogous to improved presentation of a more integrated psyche within the individual in a Jungian session.

Despite their opposing projective techniques, both orientations place all importance on *the facts* as opposed to irrational misdirection, and put the individual in the driver’s seat. Bowen said, “There is no way to chi-square a feeling and make it a scientific fact” (Wylie, 1991). The individual is encouraged to take control of their own experience by engaging full in their own subjective reality, by withdrawing from the corrosion of the collective in order to clean out and re-thread the bolts of their own identity. The empowered Self is then slowly guided back into the primordial weeds of collective origins on a quest to re-integrate the complexes that had before been cast out. While Jung’s writings may take you to the far reaches of your own imaginal galaxy, Bowen will catch you when your rocket lands and help you find your way back home.

Conclusions

Analytical Psychology and Bowen Theory are compatible and complimentary ways to look at the psyche. Analytical Psychology provides a method to “think symbolically” while observing the facts. It encourages the doctor to carefully consider all phenomena basic natural patterns, drawing on past experience with imaginal schemata to approximate the direction in which these patterns might naturally coerce the patient. Bowen Theory embodies this process at the level of the family, but with razor-like concretism. It may serve a doctor to fuse both schools together, carefully holding the systemic balance among the family while drawing from the imaginative experiences of each individual as they tell their story as a reaction to the system of psyche or family. No doubt, a careful mix is needed. For example, exposing an individual’s dreams to uneducated and reactive members of the family would likely be destructive, but searching for an emotional/reactive basis for the mythic narratives that the family exploits to maintain homeostasis would prove beneficial. Thinking symbolically in this context may be a

challenge more suited to the doctor himself, while thinking systems may be a challenge well suited to both doctor and patient.

Further study would include finding an analog for triangulation and cut-off within Jung’s model of psyche. For example, this could manifest in dreams as recurring alliances between characters or objects against the dream ego, or as an egoic fixation on a particular aspect of psyche while ignoring another. Triangulation in dreams could be researched by comparing dream reports of patients with material from family sessions. Further research is also necessary to precisely understand how much of the psyche Jung considered to be derived from the collective.

Toward the end of his career, Bowen felt that his theory of human functioning was complete except for one piece: a theory of personality. He arrived at a combination of sibling position and gender difference to explain the developmental presentation of individuals in a family system. This framework appropriately illustrates individual presentation as a product of a developmental system, but it does not provide the same level of granularity or fluidity in descriptive capacity as Jung’s theory of psychological types. Jung’s types provide an three-dimensional (perception, judgement, attitude) tool which allows for greater descriptive capacity. It would be a fascinating area of research to observe how the various presentation styles described in Jung’s typology interact and evolve through reciprocal and complimentary functioning in the family system. For example, a particularly chaotic intuitive-feeler might cause an equivalent intuitive-feeler to present in a more grounding and bounded sensate-thinker way. Similarly, adding a sensate-thinker to the mix may allow the less-chaotic intuitive-feeler to become a bit more creative and emotional again, while the sensate-thinker may become yet more grounded and bounded to compensate for the now two intuitive-feeler presentations.

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