



Mark Argent

Abstract

This workshop explores the music that comes to mind in working with someone in a spiritual direction / therapy context as a form of countertransference. A fairly conventional way to describe transference is what the client thinks is going on for the therapist (or thinks the therapist thinks) which is actually material belonging to the client. The term countertransference was originally coined to describe the equivalent process in the therapist. A much more nuanced understanding would see countertransference things arising within a therapist which arise from the process of the session rather than from the therapist's own material and can be used to add to the unconscious content available to work with. One way of thinking about this is anything that arises within the therapist in a session with a client that would not have arisen if the client were not there. In reality that is impossible to test because it is not possible to do the experiment of living the same session again without the client for comparison. A potentially richer understanding of this is in terms of Bion's idea of "Thinking 2" – thoughts that (seem to) go in search of someone to think them.

This workshop arises from an experience of naming in psychoanalytic supervision that I had jotted down no fragments of music so far in that particular retreat – and then realising that this is something I had never named in supervision. Had my supervisor been a fellow composer, discussion of such things could have taken us in another direction. Instead this opened the sense was that the discussion in supervision was around the things that were around but could not readily be expressed in words. The workshop will be couched in terms of music, but I have similarly recorded things in terms of paintings to paint, or experiences of poems coming along more-or-less fully-formed, so it links to the wider question of creativity and countertransference – and how one's response to another person has fruits in creativity even if its primary task is not conceived of as a form of creative collaboration.

Bio

Mark read Natural Sciences and then Theology at Cambridge and divides his time between creative industries and work in the interface between psychoanalysis and spirituality. His first book was on the composer R.J.S.Stevens and he is currently writing one on psychodynamics and Ignatian spirituality. He has recently given papers in this area at conferences of the International Society for Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations and of

the Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society. Other interests include both writing and playing music, and painting.

His career has included extensive retreat-giving experience and time in South East Asia which has had a profound impact on how he views his own Christian heritage. He was also very involved in establishing the East of England Faiths Council and served as its Secretary 2001-2006. As a composer, most of what he writes is either chamber music, mostly for historic instruments, or vocal music.