

Other Books by Thomas Ogden

Projective Identification and Psychotherapeutic Technique

The Matrix of the Mind: Object Relations and the
Psychoanalytic Dialogue

The Primitive Edge of Experience

Subjects of Analysis

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On Becoming a Subject

It is too late to turn back. Having read the opening words of this book you have already begun to enter into the unsettling experience of finding yourself becoming a subject whom you have not yet met, but nonetheless recognize. The reader of this book must create a voice with which to speak (think) the words (thoughts) comprising it. Reading is not simply a matter of considering, weighing, or even of trying out the ideas and experiences that are presented by the writer. Reading involves a far more intimate form of encounter. You, the reader, must allow me to occupy you, your thoughts, your mind, since I have no voice with which to speak other than yours. If you are to read this book, you must allow yourself to think my thoughts while I must allow myself to become your thoughts and in that moment neither of us will be able to lay claim to the thought as our own exclusive creation.

The conjunction of my words and your mental voice does not represent a form of ventriloquism. A more complex and interesting human event is involved. A third subject is created

in the experience of reading that is not reducible to either writer or reader. The creation of a third subject (that exists in tension with the writer and the reader as separate subjects) is the essence of the experience of reading, and, as will be explored in this volume, is also at the core of the psychoanalytic experience.

In writing these sentences, I choose each word and phrase and speak to myself through the voice of the reader whom I have created in my own mind. It is the otherness of the reader (whom I imagine and anticipate in my own internal division of myself into writer and reader, subject and object) that allows me to hear myself in preparation for your reading. In your reading, you generate a voice from my words that will create me in a broader sense than I am able to create myself. In that process you and I shall have created one another as a subject who has not existed to this point.

The reader and writer do not create one another ahistorically. The present in which the third subject comes into being is not simply the current moment, but "the present moment of the past" (Eliot 1919), which (past) speaks through us as much as we speak through one another. Laius's, and later, Oedipus's attempts to create an ahistorical present set in motion the cascade of events leading to the deafening roar of the insistence of history and of mortality. We must recognize ourselves in Laius's and Oedipus's efforts to escape history, since each of us resists experiencing ourselves as spoken as well as speaking. Art, literature, history, philosophy, and psychoanalysis all teach us, despite our protestations, that we are indeed spoken, not only by the historical Other, but by the unconscious Other and the intersubjective Other.

You, the reader, will oppose me, deny me, perhaps humor me, but never entirely give way to me. This book will not be "understood" by you; you will not simply receive it, incorporate it, digest it, or the like. To the degree that you will

have anything at all to do with it, you will transform it. (The word *transform* is too tepid a word to describe what you will do to it.) You will destroy it, and out of that destruction (in that destruction) will come a sound that you will not fully recognize. The sound will be a voice, but it will not be one of yours that you have heard before, for you have not previously destroyed me as you will encounter me in your reading of this book. The sound that you will hear is certainly not my voice since the words on this page are silent, composed as much by the white shapes around the black markings as by the markings themselves.

What I am describing is at the same time one of the most mysterious of human experiences and one of the most commonplace—it is the experience of doing battle with one's static self-identity through the recognition of a subjectivity (a human I-ness) that is other to oneself. The confrontation with alterity will not let us rest; that perception of the other I-ness once perceived will not allow us to remain who we were and we cannot rest until we have somehow come to terms with its assault on who we had been prior to being interrupted by it. This book is a disturbance, a disruption to you. You may decide to put the book down, but that would only be a postponement of something that has already been set in motion. This book has already become "an eternal curse on the reader of these pages" (Puig 1980).

If you decide not to postpone the confrontation posed by this book, you will know something of the experience of the analyst as he begins the first meeting (and every subsequent meeting) with an analysand. The analyst must be prepared to destroy and be destroyed by the otherness of the subjectivity of the analysand and to listen for a sound emerging from that collision of subjectivities that is familiar, but different from anything that he has previously heard. This listening must be done "without memory or desire" (Bion 1963), but at the same

time the listener must be rooted in the history that has created (spoken) him if he is to be able to discern the sound of which I am speaking. The destruction of analyst by analysand and of analysand by analyst (as separate subjects) in the collision of subjectivities must not be complete or else the pair has fallen into the abyss of psychosis or autism. Instead, the analyst must listen to (through) the roar of the destruction from its edge, not ever being certain where that edge lies.

The subjects of analysis that will be the focus of this volume bear a dialectical relationship to one another. From the elements of the dialectic of subject and object, a new whole begins to emerge that almost immediately reveals itself to be a new source of dialectical tension. The analytic process, which creates analyst and analysand, is one in which the analysand is not simply the subject *of* analytic inquiry; the analysand at the same time must be the subject *in* that inquiry (that is, creating that inquiry) since his self-reflection is fundamental to the enterprise of psychoanalysis. Similarly, the analyst cannot simply be the observing subject of this endeavor since his subjective experience *in* this endeavor is the only possible avenue through which he gains knowledge of the relationship he is attempting to understand.

Having said something of the interdependence of analyst and analysand (as subjects creating and created, destroying and destroyed by one another), we must introduce a third term, for without it we will not have adequately described the psychoanalytic process in which the analyst and analysand as subjects of analysis create one another. The nature of the third term is that which defines the nature of psychoanalytic experience and differentiates it from all other intersubjective human events. (There exist innumerable forms of human

intersubjectivity, but none involves the form of intersubjectivity that is distinctive to psychoanalysis.)

In the same moment that analyst and analysand are created, a third subject is generated that I shall refer to in this volume as the *analytic third*, since it is a middle term sustaining and sustained by the analyst and analysand as two separate subjects. More accurately, analyst and analysand come into being in the process of the creation of the analytic subject. The analytic third, although created jointly by (what is becoming) the analyst and analysand, is not experienced identically by analyst and analysand since each remains a separate subject in dialectical tension with the other. Moreover, although the analytic third is constituted in the process of the mutual negation/recognition of analyst and analysand, it does not reflect each of its creators *in the same way* any more than the third created in the experience of reading reflects the reader and writer in the same way. In other words, the transference and countertransference reflect one another, but are not mirror images of one another.

The analytic third is not only a form of experience participated in by analyst and analysand, it is at the same time a form of experiencing I-ness (a form of subjectivity) in which (through which) analyst and analysand become other than who they had been to that point. The analyst gives voice to and participates in the creation of experience that is the living past of the analysand and in this way not only hears about the analysand's experience, but *experiences his own creation of it*. The analyst does not experience the past of the analysand; rather, the analyst experiences his own creation of the past of the analysand as generated in his experience of the analytic third.

At the same time, the analysand experiences his own living past as created intersubjectively in the third. The analysand does not reexperience his past; the analysand expe-

riences his past as it is being created for the first time in the process of its being lived in and through the analytic third. (It is therefore a past that could be created only by this particular analytic pair through this particular analytic third.) As an experience lived in (and through) the analytic third, one is never completely alone with oneself (and one's past experience), since one's experience is being created with another person. This feature of the analytic situation creates the conditions for a fundamental recontextualization of formerly unintegrable, split off, unutilizable experience of the analysand.

To conclude (or better, to begin), psychoanalysis can be thought of as an effort to experience, understand, and describe the shifting nature of the dialectic generated by the creation and negation of the analyst by the analysand and of the analysand by the analyst *within the context of the roles constituting the analytic set-up*. The dialectical tension generated by this creative negation and recognition does not present a question to be answered, a riddle to be solved. It is fitting that the riddle of the Sphinx (taken as the paradigm of the analytic mystery of subjectivities confronting one another) does not have an answer. In the myth of Oedipus, there is momentary victory for Oedipus (and for us as audience in identification with Oedipus) in Oedipus's capacity to answer the riddle of the Sphinx and thereby overcome the power of the Sphinx to block entry to Thebes. But the answer to the riddle (more accurately, the very fact that an answer was offered and was accepted) quickly comes to strike us as a disappointing trivialization of the question (just as Oedipus's victory over the Sphinx is ultimately revealed in the narrative to be still another reflection of Oedipus's subjugation to the Other).

The question posed by the Sphinx in the form of a riddle concerning a creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two at midday and three in the evening, is a question about the nature of the human condition in its multiform possibilities

(represented by fourness that becomes twoness that becomes threeness). The answer to the riddle of the Sphinx must include all possible answers to the question of what it is to be human in a community of historically rooted human beings. We must attempt not to allow the fundamental psychoanalytic questions about the nature of human experience generated in the confrontation of subjectivities in the analytic situation to be trivialized with answers that pretend to offer more than an effort to describe a moment in time that is disappearing and becoming something different as we are attempting to recognize what it is.

Each of the chapters of this volume attempts in different ways to explore a conception of psychoanalysis as a unique form of dialectical interplay of the individual subjectivities of analyst and analysand leading to the creation of a new subject (more accurately, a myriad of new subjects: the subjects of analysis).

This introductory chapter is followed by a discussion of the foundations of a psychoanalytic conception of the subject. For Freud, the subject is neither coincident with the conscious, thinking, speaking, self nor is the subject located "behind the repression barrier" in "the unconscious mind." Instead, Freud's conception of subjectivity, in my view, is fundamentally dialectical in nature and is rooted in the idea that the subject is created, maintained, and simultaneously decentered from itself through the dialectical interplay of consciousness and unconsciousness. The principle of presence-in-absence and absence-in-presence subtends the Freudian conception of this dialectical movement.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I discuss the paths by which an intersubjective conception of the subject is developed in the work of Klein and Winnicott (often in ways that they were not aware of). For Klein, the subject is constituted through the