

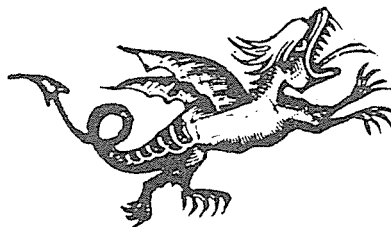
# My Current Reflections on Counter-transference in Psychotherapy

by Robert Crawford

*It is futile for the doctor to shield himself from the influence of the patient and to surround himself with a smoke-screen of fatherly and professional authority. If he does so he merely forbids himself the use of a highly important organ of information, and the patient influences him unconsciously none the less. The unconscious changes in the doctor which the patient thus brings about are well known to many psychotherapists; they are disturbances, or even injuries, peculiar to the profession, which illustrate in a striking way the patient's almost "chemical" influence. One of the best known of them is the counter-transference which the transference evokes. But the effects are often more subtle, and their nature is best conveyed by the old idea of the demon sickness. According to this a sufferer transmits his*

*disease to a healthy person whose powers subdue the demon – but not without a negative influence upon the well-being of the healer.*

(Modern Man in Search of a Soul, by C. G. Jung, Problems of Modern Psychotherapy)



The meaning of this particular passage by C. G. Jung has taken on a greater meaning for me more recently as I have reflected on my experiences as a psychotherapist and it gave me the inspiration for the following poems. The gnostic process has always seemed very human to me, and I find this supported by such happenings depicted in the poems. Hopefully because of this experience, this dimension can emerge more easily if it is present in a protagonist's warm up, and 'the hero's journey' is strengthened as a result.

## Demon Forces

She married young, for love.  
She worked to please her man  
Who was unpleaseable.  
He raised his leaky self esteem  
On her's  
Until it  
Was squashed.  
Then she found a chemical  
To ease the hurt  
Which offered a chimera of hope.  
Chemical hope...  
That worked for a while  
But then became a serpent that bit.  
With courage she leaves the marriage,  
Recovers from her addiction  
And knows again truthful serenity  
Until love comes back.  
Another false dawn,  
Leads her to another cliff.  
Depressed and bruised,  
Her daughter and son bring her,  
And themselves,  
To psychodrama.



I meet her, them and pain.  
We work with scenes of grief:  
The moment she falls in love the second time;  
The heights and the awful fall  
As this second he dumps her:  
Unsaid (surplus reality) the truths reach our room  
And the light of day  
As daughter and Mum present him with their feelings.  
There is nausea in the air.

Suddenly I feel him too  
As Jung describes.  
I am giddy and sick as we approach  
The cathartic climax where he is banished.  
Powerless, into his own Hell.  
Of course he resists with a bitter self-centred urgency.  
("What effrontery, to come here and tell me what to do!")  
But the efforts of the psychodramatist, wife,  
Two adult children and four group members  
Are too much.

Later when we enact a drama with his son,  
We do not feel him.  
He has fled with his civil roles.  
He remains in our lives,  
But his malignancy has dwindled.



### **Demons massing.**

Just beyond the eye  
Jumbled legions lurk,  
Disorganised, resentful,  
The counter roles of hurt.  
They are aggrieved  
And want to melt down hope  
For why should someone escape  
From pit to bliss?  
The malevolent whisps of injury  
Accumulate in clouds  
Of angry Nimbus, charged up dark,  
Planning a lightening strike  
Yet seemingly prevented by an insulative barricade  
Of unawareness, denial, and indifference  
From influencing anyone directly.

Ah! Not quite everyone, however,  
Because here and there exist  
Creative aware souls (like C.G. Jung)  
Who half see these demons,  
Clamouring at the chink  
Like moths fluttering around a bulb.  
They are trying to cross the transition zone  
In sufficient numbers to suffocate  
The hope of both therapist and patient.

It takes a Mystic Knight  
To put these platoons to flight.  
They exact a tribute.