

NWRPA Newsletter May 2021

Dr Mark Fisher

**Mourning, Separations, and Losses
Tragedies and Entanglements**

A Zoom Webinar

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Summary by Frank Kelley

Dr Mark Fisher's introduction to psychoanalysis took place during the 1970s while a research fellow at Oxford University. Following an individual analysis there was group analysis and then a Lacanian analysis. For many years Mark worked within the NHS. He now runs a clinical and supervisory practice in Liverpool and online.

You may want to read his blog at:

<https://simonmfisher.blogspot.com/2021/05/transference-tragedies-and-entanglements.html>

The idea of entanglement is a useful metaphor which comes from quantum physics.

entanglement.....is a state in which the location of one particle is closely correlated with that of another. In other words, it is the nearest practical thing to having a said particle in two places at once
Evolving Science 2020

Popular psychoanalytic thought talks of a distinct self. But we are entangled with the Other since birth. Otherhood includes human societies, culture, bodies, behaviours, the raw physicality of the environment. It is not just language. Entanglement is a human necessity and involved with separation and loss.

*entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe
is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as
well as any manner of thy friends or of thine
own were; any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind.*

John Donne: modern version of *No Man is An Island*

Lacan profoundly believed that for the patient the analyst is the self who is supposed to know. Therapists are there to meet the patient's hopes for a reduction in their entanglements. But analysis brings even more entanglements. So as well as expertise sufferers demand "love", "understanding", "sympathy", and a whole host of other desires. One customer might want you to kill her. Another has a keen desire to stalk or rape you. Maybe a third has a great need to treat your therapy as nonsense.

To complicate these entanglements therapists can believe they are there to meet these desires. We have fantasies about empathy and the power of our love, of our training and supervision. There is also a sad history of transference being used by the practitioner for non-professional ends.

Maybe the aim of the therapeutic process is disentanglement, if this is possible without swapping one entanglement for another.

Mark recommended reading several classic psychoanalytic texts. *On the Sense of Loneliness* is by Melanie Klein from the third volume of her *Collected Works*. Klein also wrote *The Origins of Transference* in 1952. Also helpful is Sigmund Freud's *Three Essays on Sexuality* and particularly essay two about infantile sexuality.

Everybody knows what Freud is about. However what he wrote about was the elementary forms of sexuality, driven and forceful. The aims and objects are different from adult sexuality. Freud and his colleagues wrote about sexuality, libido and instincts. They were not referring to adult sexualities, relationships, pornography or coupledoms. If you read these essays carefully they are about basic, crude, though complex forms of satisfaction, enjoyment, pleasure.

Lacan reread Freud and talked about *jouissance* and asked what happens when satisfaction fails. It is very difficult to get all the satisfaction an infant needs. A favourite of Mark for illustrating the tragic complexities of searching for an ultimate, complete, fulfilment is by Baron Corvo, otherwise known as Frederick William Rolfe, in *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole: A Romance of Modern Venice*.

Klein wrote that loneliness is an inner state regardless of the circumstances of our lives. This stems from infant psychotic anxieties. The opposite of loneliness is a state of wholeness and oneness. An ideal state one believes one should attain. Love is eternal and blissful. Not achieving this idealised wholeness can be regarded as a form of tragedy.

For Klein this ideal is an illusion. She wrote this work on loneliness near the end of her life. She said she had not got it together and felt lonely at times.

Through his writing and radio programmes Donald Winnicott, the psychoanalyst and paediatrician, had the lasting achievement of taking the pressure of the fantasy of the idealised loving mother off women. They could now be good enough mothers.

The residues of infantile satisfactions and dissatisfactions are the origins of transference. In transference the infantile senses come strangely and vividly alive.

Freud, Klein and Lacan believed in the death drive which is active in everyday life. The effects of the death drive accompany the effects of the life drive (libido) and there is no cure for them. It is impossible to talk about love without hate. These feelings are split but are all connected with satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

These feelings are also tied to the infant's first separation and loss. There will be many separations and losses over a lifetime. These losses can give us the impetus to find new things or can leave us demoralised.

The Kleinian subject has splits all over the place. There are lots of experiences that divide us, losses we cannot compensate ourselves for. And there are also repeated hopes, a lifetime experience of lost and found, lacks and fragmentations. The subject is never a whole object. We are looking for a way out of these entanglements and looking for the missing bits. This is a fruitless quest.

Analysis offers a way of working with entanglements, largely by accepting them. You need to be able to face that you are entangled and your self is bits and pieces. You are held together with bits and pieces.

Thank you to Dr. Mark Fisher. For a fresh look at the basic concepts of psychoanalysis and some wisdoms that allow us to live with ourselves, or rather with our fragmented selves.