

Transference and Projection - the field we're in together

In any space where people are learning, practicing, and opening themselves to something real, transference and projection are not occasional disruptions, they are part of the fabric of the work.

As we deepen into relationship, with the plants, with each other, and with ourselves, older patterns of meaning-making begin to surface. We start to see not only what is here, but what has been here before. **Authority, belonging, exclusion, recognition, being seen or not seen ... all of these can become very real lived experiences in the moment, even though the great part of the charge they contain may come from the past.** They live in the body, and they come into the room with us.

Transference is one way this happens. It is the movement of feeling, expectation, or relational pattern from elsewhere, often from earlier relationships, into the present moment. A tutor may begin to feel like a parent (good or bad), a peer like a sibling (in companionship or conflict), the group like a place of past inclusion or exclusion. These experiences can feel immediate and true, because they are true in the body. *But they are not always about what is actually happening here and now.*

Projection is closely related. It is the act of placing something, often something difficult to hold, onto another person, the group, or even the plants. **Qualities such as authority, judgment, safety, power, wisdom, or rejection can be projected outward, where they seem to reside in someone else.** This can bring clarity at times, but it can also obscure what is really ours to work with.

None of this is a problem to be eliminated. **In many ways, it is the work.**

This training is not designed to remove projection or transference, but to support us all in becoming aware of them, stay in relationship with them, and gradually develop the capacity to differentiate historic charge from present day situation.

- what is happening here ?
- what belongs to your history ?
- and what may be emerging in the - potentially ambiguous - space between ?

The possibilities and complexity of these is why we **always have an open door** to talk through things that may be arising - not therapeutically, as that might be prolonged and deep work - but in a way that invites openness, transparency, clarity and can help unravel multifactorial knots within us.

At times, this can feel disorienting. You may feel strong emotions towards a tutor, a peer, or the structure of the course itself—admiration, resistance, dependency, distrust, longing, frustration. These are not signs that something has gone wrong. **They are often signs that something meaningful is unfolding.** The logic of this is simple - if everything were within our familiar, nothing would be activated, there would be no projections ... the very act of stepping a little beyond our familiar will often activate deep psychic and emotional charge, which can be felt and expressed in many different ways.

What matters is how we meet these moments.

We encourage a way of working that is:

- Reflective rather than reactive
- Curious rather than certain
- Relational rather than isolating

This might look like pausing before acting, speaking something tentatively rather than as a fixed truth, **or bringing a question rather than a conclusion.** It may involve checking something out directly with another person, or sitting with an experience long enough for it to reveal more of its layers.

There is also an important ethical dimension here. **Projection, particularly when unexamined, can place others into roles they have not chosen—teacher, authority, healer, threat—and can shape how we interpret their actions.** Part of the responsibility of this work is learning to recognise when this is happening, and to take steps to come back into clearer ground.

At the same time, we hold this lightly. No one does this perfectly. We are all, at times, inside our projections. The invitation is not to get it right, but to stay in the practice of noticing, reflecting, and returning.

Within a Community of Practice, this becomes shared work. We support each other not by fixing or interpreting one another, but by staying present, speaking honestly, and allowing space for things to unfold without rushing to resolution.

Over time, something begins to shift.

What was once projected outward may become more available inwardly. What felt fixed may become more fluid. **Relationships may hold more complexity without collapsing into certainty.**

And a quieter, more grounded sense of your own authority may begin to emerge, **less dependent on external confirmation, and less entangled in the need to resist it.**

This is part of the distillation of the work. Not the removal of projection, but a deepening capacity to live alongside it with awareness, responsibility, and care.