

## **SUE GRAND**

### **Poverty and the Nameless Subject**

In psychoanalysis, empathy has been formulated as an intimate project, which proceeds between two distinct, and identifiable, figures: the patient and the analyst. Regardless of the complications that unfold, we are grounded in a private and dyadic structure. Our work begins with two named roles, and with two persons filling those roles, even though multiple personifications will fill our unconscious space. We don't query the dyadic foundation of analytic empathy, because it is rooted in our cultural understanding of identity and human relatedness. In this paper, I suggest that these assumptions can limit our empathic capacity, when we treat a patient who was used as child labor, in conditions of mass poverty. If a patient has been a tool in a vast, economic machine, he may require a shift in the nature, and in the focus, of analytic empathy. Instead of addressing a system of self-other configurations, we may find ourselves addressing collectivized self states, which are in need of recognition. How does the patient alert the analyst to this need? How does this shift de-stabilize our theoretical, clinical, and cultural assumptions? To illuminate these questions, I present a case study of patient who was raised in a family of migrant workers. When I try to restore his personal subjectivity, he alerts me to the cultural disjunctions which derail this pursuit in the analytic situation.

*Dr. Sue Grand is faculty and supervisor at the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy; faculty, the Steve Mitchell Center for Relational Psychoanalysis; faculty, Psychoanalytic Society of Northern Calif., associate editor, Psychoanalytic Dialogues and the author of The Reproduction of Evil: A Clinical and Cultural Perspective.*