



# Anxiety, Guilt and Melancholia in the Clinical Hour Related to Climate Change Applying a Professional Model

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### Clinical Note

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## Clinical Note

This model demonstrates one way of conceptualizing the issue of climate change, our most serious problem.

Perhaps it will be useful for others to apply within their own professions.

Everything comes from *Energy*, a familiarly used concept meaning “that which powers.” Sources of energy can be interacting -Human, Machine, Nature or all interacting - areas of the environment like the Sun or Wind. When humans lived in the trees eighty million years ago that interaction increased the facility of hand/eye coordination. Later these skills were adapted to hunting and gathering which led to the creation of tools from found objects, such as stone and wood, used to cultivate the earth for food and building, helping to achieve permanence of place and sustainability. The most unpredictable impact of these developments were not the tools, nor the development of the male strength needed to use them but the very process of creating, which expanded human left -brain capacity.

More sophisticated left -brain creations followed, for example, reading and writing, both powerful tools that use less physical energy. Despite this, women were forbidden to learn them because of their power, still true in some places.

Women’s energy mostly related to food, such as planting and cooking, sacrifice, prayer and mystical roles. The functions of men were to protect from the elements, and enemies. Faith in these more visible daily tasks seemed more reliable than unseen mystical relationships which reinforced the importance of male gender roles and social patterns, as well as demanding physical strength until the advent of the computer.

We refer to tools as “technology” which powers our lives and survival, requiring attention, time, economic resources, an intimate relationship with one’s devices and belief system. Less time and attention is given to connecting our right brain affective functions to our left -brain technological developments. The gap in this relationship seems to be growing which interrupts our inner exploration and leads to a rupture in human identity that produces discomfort, fear and anxiety, leaving us in a limbo of the unfamiliar that seeks soothing to escape the uneasiness; some deal with this with his with drugs, alcohol, overeating, excessive exercise etc. Some develop defensive symptoms. Many of these problems appear in the consulting room.

Freud understood the concept of energy in the human and called it *libido*. Psychoanalysis is a rare theory and discipline precisely because it conceptualizes access as well as integration of both right and left brain functioning. It is the energy source that moves our memories, feelings and thoughts from unconscious to conscious, through the spatial structures of the Id, Ego and Superego. The connection stirs memories, conflicts and feelings of anxiety, guilt, pleasure, melancholia. It is also this connection that stirs us to produce art, poetry empathy, and love, and fantasy that leads to ideas in the future.

If the access between right and left brain is interrupted it may be accessed with the help of professionals. If this sounds abstract so are theories that deal with time, space and relationships as in Physics.

Object Relations Theory may provide a model of time, space and relationship that applies both to our human Connections as well as to those that are our global. Whenever

a relationship changes it is a challenge to our identity and elicits defensive responses such as denial, earlier conflicts, and problems with our social connections.

Szeman and Boyer chose the psychoanalytic concept of the collective “energy unconscious” currently experienced by

the general population from a world that no longer seems secure. Bollas described this as a “deferral of pain,” a form of dissociation and Winnicott as a feeling of “falling forever.” Let us look at how alarms are experienced and expressed in the clinical setting and often collide with personal experiences.

