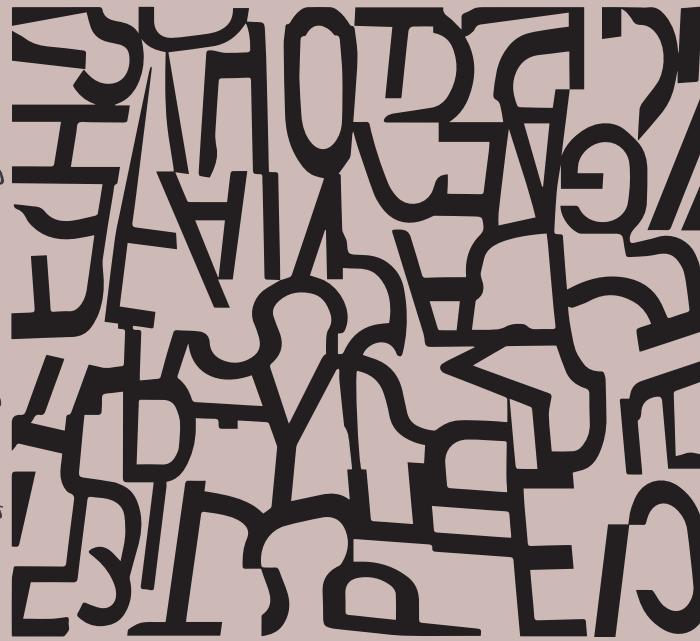


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THE CANDIDATE- or  
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VOLUME N° 7 2017

THE CANDIDATE JOURNAL  
Volume 7  
*The Candidate, or, The Candidate, Barred*

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## Editors' Introduction

**Anna Fishzon, PhD, Emma Lieber, PhD, and  
Olga Poznansky, PhD**

With Issue 7 — titled “~~The Candidate,~~” or, “The Candidate, Barred” — *The Candidate Journal* has a new editorial board. Our editors are a diverse group, comprising psychoanalysts-in-training drawn from the fields of psychology, literature, history, art and dance. And while we are at very different moments in our analytic formation and represent various analytic orientations, we all share a passion for our field that is animated precisely by an attention to difference — difference being in a sense the subject of psychoanalysis.

This introduction reflects this very in-tension: three distinct editorial voices speaking about the dilemmas of candidacy. Such a maintenance of multiple perspectives is an attempt at working within difference to create an introduction reflective of our own unique relations to our practices as analysts. The analyst's position, as Lacan reminds us, is one that, by definition, demands a recognition of absolute difference. In writing our introduction, we strove to acknowledge the otherness of the other and find that analytic place in working together.

### Aspiring to Office

Issue 7 of *The Candidate Journal* follows directly from Issue 6 on “Belonging” (2015), as well as from the questions raised and provoked by “The Candidate's Voice” panel that the journal hosted to celebrate that issue. The “Belonging” issue interrogated the psychoanalyst's relationship to ideas of membership and surroundings, in all of the polyvalence of those terms. “The Candidate's Voice” was an appropriate subject to link with those questions. To the extent that the voice exists at the juncture of belonging and unbelonging, or possession and loss — as the instrument of subjectivity that, the moment it is assumed, disperses into the ether — the voice is the index of a radical split. It's yours without, finally, belonging to you. You can find your voice — through analysis or political engagement or creative adventure or anything else — but the moment you use it, it's gone. We are constantly losing our voices. Which brings us to the title of Issue 7, “~~The Candidate,~~” or, “The Candidate, Barred.”

Certainly, this title hearkens to the Lacanian notion of the barred subject: the idea that as subjects who speak — which is another way of saying, as beings who possess an unconscious — we are radically divided. We are determined by the signifiers that precede us and that, even when they proceed from us, also come from elsewhere, and slip away. But it also suggests a certain interrogation of the position of the candidate, particularly with respect to the institutes to which she applies for entry and that name her as such. In this sense the question of the institutionalization of psychoanalysis and the authorization of analysts is a miniature staging of the broader dramas of identity formation and otherness to which psychoanalysts are uniquely attuned. But as a journal run by analysts-in-training, we are in this issue singularly focused on the experience — whether felt or examined — of the early career clinician and candidate.

Where did the signifier “candidate” come from? According to etymological dictionaries, it is a Latin word originating from the seventeenth century, and its root, *candere*, means “to glow or shine” — like a candle. Candidates for political office in ancient Rome wore white togas, and so literally, “*candidatus*,” or “one aspiring to office,” meant “white-robed.” There is an interesting exchange between the metaphorical and the metonymic in these linguistic passages, as well as between literal and figurative, and although research into the sartorial choices of ancient Roman politicians is beyond the scope of this introduction, something of the question of candor is at the base of candidacy.

This is not necessarily a personal characteristic. It is not lost on us that much of the preparation for this issue took place during an American presidential election in which white robes were nowhere in sight, or that its publication comes months into an administration whose horrors have inspired many Americans to begin using their voices in new ways. It would be stupid to make a psychoanalytic joke about the polyvalence of the imperative “Resist!” besides to say that its injunction is that we finally overcome other injunctions that urge other forms of resistance, among them the anxiety provoked by the act of speech. In this sense, one of the unintended resonances of the signifier “~~The Candidate~~” may be that it registers a protest against a political candidate who is no longer just that. Dee Polyak (2017), in the wake of the election, asked,

How is psychoanalysis pulled towards the neoliberal normal and how does the history of psychoanalysis set up the repressions that make it so difficult to untangle its complicated relation to neoliberalism? These are deep

and complex questions that require rigorous individual and collective thought by psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic modes of thinking.

Although only one article here explicitly confronts the contemporary American political landscape and the psychoanalyst's responsibility within it, the issue as a whole is buoyed by the assumption that psychoanalysts know a good deal about the lifting of repression, as well as by the hope that they will be increasingly attuned to the repressions that psychoanalytic epistemologies and forms of governance have helped promulgate.

But if candor is by no means a requisite behavioral or ethical orientation for a candidate, it is a structural effect. The moment you announce yourself as a candidate at a psychoanalytic institute, for one, you announce all sorts of things about yourself, not least of which is that you are in analysis, that you are part of an analytic legacy — who analyzed whom analyzed whom — with your various transferences on full display. The open secret of course is this is where everyone was at least at some point and to a certain extent in perpetuity, but there is a particular way in which the candidate is buffeted around by this exposure at the beginning, and at the moment of that self-announcement.

Perhaps this is in part why the candidate's voice is such a contested site. In any training or educational apparatus the position of the student is fraught with power negotiations and transference reactions; but at a psychoanalytic institute, presumably, we all know that we all know what we're all looking at. There is no necessary reason that this should be particularly inhibiting for a candidate, or a particularly difficult position from which to assert her voice in all its proper candor, but probably it is. "~~The Candidate~~," or, "The Candidate, Barred" in another of its valences thus refers to the various forms of institutional and psychic blockage that candidates face, as well as to the ways that institutional life appropriates the taboos and dramas that found subjective experience.

In his contribution to this issue, Richard Brouillette argues that institutional life entombs its candidates and members for these very reasons. A training analysis is necessarily unsuccessful if it erects something of institutional power and loyalty in place of the singularity of symptom and cure, and this is why psychoanalysts frequently manage to remain so surprisingly close-mouthed on social issues outside of the institute: we have not yet learned to speak. As Brouillette writes, "the closure induced by institute training creeps into a tacit prohibition, aimed at candidates and analysts, against engaging a popular audience on theory or addressing sociopolitical issues; and this at a time when the work of psychoanalysts is most needed to address failing institutions in the outside world" (p. 51). This is where Brouillette follows Derrida in "Geopsychoanalysis: '...and the rest of the world,'" to which he pays homage throughout, and he thus exhorts candidates to leave their institutes and self-authorize as analysts, incorporating themselves instead into an outside world that surely demands our engagement.

Much like Derrida's piece, Paola Mieli's article in this issue interrogates a symptomatic document produced by a psychoanalytic institutional body, in this case, the "Standards of Psychoanalytic Education" drafted in 2001 by The Psychoanalytic Consortium. In returning to her own questions about this report, which she first published in 2003, Mieli indicates the extent to which recent developments in the professionalization of American psychoanalysis — such as the introduction of the license in psychoanalysis in New York — make increasingly manifest long-standing troubles within institutional psychoanalysis in America, where, under the banner of high standards and career quality control, institutes traffic in a distinctly unpsychoanalytic brand of pedagogy, trading conformity for the irreducibility of difference to which psychoanalysis testifies. In psychoanalysis, with its particular form of logical time, the formula of a "candidate" undergoing "training" and "graduating" as a qualified practitioner is "symptomatic of an idea of 'profession' that is alien to the very *raison d'être* of psychoanalysis. Accepting this terminology is tantamount to turning a deaf ear to its implications, to the dangers of the ideology filtering through them" (p. 16).

Yet a critical interrogation of candidacy also potentially yields other conclusions about the position of the candidate, among them that it is precisely the kind of exposure that the candidate faces, or the particular difficulties of her candor, that also lends the psychoanalytic candidate a certain power — one moreover that is antithetical to whatever is sought in political or institutional nominations. This is the very power that is inherent in the image of the robe: the robe which constitutes the scene of exposure precisely in its action of covering, much as analysis reveals the unconscious by addressing the veil of fantasy or the cloak of dreams. In this sense, the candor of the candidate in her robe must have something to do precisely with wearing something on your sleeve. And what we wear on our sleeves of course is our desire to be analysts and our desire for psychoanalysis.

*This* is what is constitutional of being a candidate, *this* is what is announced when we become candidates, *this* is what defines the position or the title of the candidate: we want to be analysts. It is a place of pure desire, and it is the only

place from which the candidate can speak. If there is anything correctly named in the title of candidate, it is that candidates want to be something. In the life of the institute — and with a recognition of all of the problematics, Oedipal among them, that the nomination of candidates entails — attending to this desire and the ways it can travel must be the site of opening for the candidate.

The articles in this issue address various questions surrounding the place and the experience of candidates in and recent graduates of psychoanalytic institutes and the institutionalization of psychoanalysis more broadly. They also are written by practitioners at various stages of their careers and with various orientations with respect to institute life: candidates, recent graduates, and institute members, as well as those who have chosen to practice and speak about psychoanalysis from a place outside of psychoanalytic institutes. Yet at all times this issue is powered by the assumption that underlies the founding of this journal: that is, that there may be no one better situated to speak about psychoanalysis than those who are in the structural position of desiring it the most. In this sense we hope that the issue can serve as a provocation to hear more candidate voices in the future.

### What Is a Candidate?

This section of the introduction confronts the attribution of the title of candidate to the student of psychoanalysis in order to make manifest the often unarticulated assumptions that underlie the usage and meaning of that word in psychoanalytic institutes. If psychoanalysis confronts us with the irreducibility of difference, the signifier “candidate” stands in opposition to this notion, to the extent that it is employed in training institutes to designate someone who must comply with and accept specific guidelines in order to be nominated into a particular role.

It is indeed a peculiar thing to designate a student of psychoanalysis a candidate — a word the definition of which implies a process toward a certain end or fate, an ending with an outcome already known or expected. It is also a word that denotes a candidate for office, and thus a person with access to certain kinds of political power, privilege and authority. The word “authority” in English comes from the Latin “*autoritat*” and is associated with legitimization, origin, and authorship. The emphasis thus is on one being an agent, placed in a position of power: a far cry from what a psychoanalyst — who among other things often has to give up and refuse the illusion of authority and power — is supposed to be, at least from the perspective of epistemology. While patients often take for granted the authority of the analyst as a gatekeeper to knowledge — given our need to have someone somewhere who knows and understands — psychoanalysts themselves constantly have to grapple with the limits of knowledge and understanding, by virtue of their encounter with the unconscious. Thus, a psychoanalyst is someone who, by choosing to venture into the depths of the unknown, is always already robbed of the power of knowledge.

The question of *What is a candidate?* also aims to engage our relationship to the roles we accept and occupy as candidates, as well as to promote a questioning of these roles and their meaning for us. When a student is accepted into a psychoanalytic institute they are assigned the status of candidate along with its associated expectations and traditions, including the promise of becoming a skilled psychoanalyst. It is this promise of expertise, which Freud himself both cultivated and rallied against, that is in need of questioning in the title of candidacy. In accepting to become a candidate one also agrees to participate in the power structure of the institute. What is at stake then is the very notion of an institute that offers a guarantee that, after following certain steps and emulating institute rules, you are going to get what you have been promised, i.e., the power to treat and pass judgment on the suffering of a person. This promise of entitlement and power founded on a pre-established skill is symptomatic of an ideology that treats a psychoanalyst as a professional who sustains his competence through his own authority instead of resisting it. Indeed, such a promise runs counter to the very psychoanalytic project of questioning authority, and especially the authority of given truths.

Psychoanalysis gives us the language to wonder about why this is so. Yet, it has not been sufficiently asked, at least not among American training institutes: why do institutes require students to accept a title that implies a political role with access to power? And what are the implications for the analyst-to-be of proceeding from such a place? These assumptions are often taken for granted even by candidates themselves, yet they have serious structural implications for the practice of psychoanalysis and how one approaches one’s clinical practice. There is an expectation that at the end of one’s training one will be offered entrance into a profession that guarantees one a certain kind of expertise. Yet, the knowledge one gains at the end of completing one’s training often has little to do with the kinds of questions one is confronted with in the practice of psychoanalysis. It is true that a psychoanalyst’s claim to expertise, if it can even be called as such, is a knowledge of how the unconscious works. Yet, at the same time, if the unconscious is something that cannot be anticipated, how can one be

an expert in what can only be known in retrospect? At least in so far as Freud envisioned and described it, in accepting to confront the unconscious one also accepts to give up any claims to expertise and authority. How then can psychoanalysts-in-training keep the unknown in the picture in a training system in which they are constrained by a vocabulary that implies and assumes a promise of expertise?

Psychoanalytic practice confronts us with our own terror of not knowing: with our horror at the absence of authority, the recognition of which come from encountering patients whose singularity requires a mode of understanding much wider than a nomination to a role and a certificate of completion can provide. In fact, one of the most difficult things a psychoanalyst has to learn is how not to know what he is doing and yet to go on doing it.

The contributions in this section all address in various ways the question of the authorization of psychoanalysts and ideas around expertise and knowledge. Todd Dean's essay, "The Impossible Formation," revisits the author's training, retracing his relationship to knowledge as a candidate. In a series of "notes to self" that he finds in a long-misplaced notebook, Dean confronts the "horror" of his own previous misunderstanding of psychoanalytic expertise, in which he linked the effects of a "correct" technique to clinical outcome. He writes, "Psychoanalysis, by definition, is a practice based on not knowing, because it is the practice of the unconscious ...What the analyst brings is never the truth, just a way to interrogate truth's possibility. For precisely this reason, psychoanalysis is also wildly out of step with the knowledge economy and the information age. It's crazy, being an analyst these days..." (p. 61). Psychoanalysis, Dean argues, offers us a perspective from which to challenge our ever-increasing reliance on expertise and wanting authorities.

What then does psychoanalytic expertise look like? David Lichtenstein's essay, "The Authorization of the Psychoanalyst," engages the important distinction between the authorization and the certification of psychoanalysts. He describes how psychoanalysts may determine their own becoming through engaging the paradox of authorization as both authority and authorship: "An author causes something to come into being, whereas an authority exercises power or judgment over those things once they are created. The authorization of a psychoanalyst is rooted in this ambiguity of author and authority. Lacan's remark that a psychoanalyst authorizes himself — which does not mean by himself — reflects and plays upon this dialectic" (p. 22). In clinical psychoanalysis, writes Lichtenstein, "...this dialectic of authority is ever present ... The only true answer to the analyst's question: 'What authorizes my intervention' is the unprepared (unauthorized) speech of the analysand. The author in this exchange is indeed not present in either place" (p. 22). Thus Lichtenstein situates analytic expertise in the transference space between patient and analyst structured by the emergence of the unconscious in speech.

Finally, Justine Dühr's essay, "The Making of Meaning in the License Qualifying Candidate: Some Experiential Reflections on Training," discusses the role of analytic inexperience in the training of license qualifying (LQ) psychoanalysts. Her essay grapples with the role of anxiety in the experience of the LQ candidate, arguing that LQ candidates' inexperience is qualitatively different from that of candidates who enter training with previous experience in a mental health-related field, and suggesting that the analytic community has a long way to go in acknowledging these differences. In her view, the LQ candidate is thus the figure closest to the terror involved in doing clinical work: the very terror that prompts the demand for expertise that, we would suggest, must be refused. As Todd Dean remarks in his essay, "...it is almost impossible to get one's bearings in the process of becoming a psychoanalyst" (p. 58).

### The Impossible Position

The impossibility of "getting one's bearings" leads us back to the problematic nature of the candidate as representative of the robe — or, one might say, the veil — a fantastical presence that, as Lacan would have it, fetishistically shields the phallus as signifier of lack. If candidacy is the place of pure desire, an originary moment, it is also the locus of law, love, and refuse. The voice of the candidate or early clinician thus possesses an uncanny aspect and the potential to arouse narcissistic longing, disgust, alienation, and shame.

In the course of his analytic life, Lacan made several attempts to elucidate the birth of the subject, or, in Freudian terms, primal repression and Oedipal resolution. His first and perhaps best-known conceptualization posits that the imaginary register (specular identification) acquires representation through the naming of lack — a naming that enables the metaphoric substitution of the mother's illusory object of desire. In the aftermath of signification, the phallus satisfying the Other becomes exchangeable — something one *acquires* rather than something one *is*. Put another way, prohibition and symbolic castration ensure that the signifier occupies for the subject the place where she is not; being does not coincide with thinking, as saying "I" requires a distance from oneself. Both lack and its designation emerge from a fissure within which the subject vanishes



(Lacan 1957-1958).

In the 1960s Lacan shifted his emphasis from the phallus as signifier of desire/lack to *object a*. A border concept, *object a* is that which falls away and functions as a rem(a)inder of primordial loss. Once again, Lacan gestured toward the non-coincidence of truth and knowledge, the impossibility of saying it all. Not everything is subject to language. The Thing, that which eludes signification, persists and circulates, *out there*. The drives are incarnated in various *objects a*— the breast, feces, the gaze, and the voice — all of which relate to parts of the body associated with liminality, refuse, or separation (Lacan 1960-1961, 1962-1963, 1964).

Finally, in his last seminars, Lacan located subjectivity in the *sinthome*, a neologism denoting the unique way in which each subject knots together the Imaginary (the body ego), the Symbolic (language) and the Real (the primordial, the extra-symbolic). The *sinthome* is a contingent and meaningless fragment of the signifier that partakes in the wild, destructive forces of the drives. It is the stubbornly intruding and mesmerizing element that nevertheless anchors the subject and guarantees the consistency of the symbolic order (1975-1976). In Lacan's late teachings, the end of analysis is the "identification with the *sinthome*," that is, an acceptance of the fact that one's identity — one's very being — is held in place by an arbitrary, undecipherable, and self-created fragment of *jouissance* (Verhaeghe 2002).

During each of these periods in his theorizing, Lacan tried to capture the fleeting operation that simultaneously constitutes and erases the subject — the instant in which void becomes lack, the moment of rupture propelling the search for exquisite and unrecoverable loss. If we consider candidacy as an origin story not unlike the advent of the Lacanian barred subject, it becomes obvious why, whether as robe/veil, the alluring object that both reveals and obscures; as *object a*, the "glowing" cause of desire that drives and enlivens psychoanalysis; or as the *sinthome*, an intimately exterior figure and mode of enjoyment that provides structural support for the institute, "candidate" is a precarious identification and difficult position from which to write and to speak.

The question of the "candidate's voice" is especially vexed as it brings to mind and accentuates the paradoxical duality and in-betweenness of the voice-as-object. Lacan observed that the human voice bears a ventriloquistic quality: it is never simply ours, never a property of us as bodies. Because the voice escapes the mouth and has an independent materiality it is always potentially *object a*, an organ inside oneself that feels like a foreign intruder. When we hear recordings of our own voices we often are struck by their hideous familiarity and strangeness. If vocalized speech is language, the domain of the Other, it is simultaneously a physical entity that exceeds the system of differences governed by the signifier. Utterance as carrier and product of the speaker's singularity — inflection, timbre, grain, and pure resonance — acts as a vanishing mediator destined to be subsumed by meaning.

The subjectivity transferred by the candidate's voice thus is doubly elusive, for the candidate is construed as a placeholder who exists in reference to, and in wait of, the rupture that will eventually produce the analyst. Her statements, evocative of the originary scene, elicit anxiety and shame — an impulse to cover one's ears and reduce her to silence. Indeed, it seems that in the very moment of enunciation, the candidate vanquishes herself and becomes an authority, the wielder of analytic knowledge: in speaking, the candidate as such disappears. Analysts-in-training speak as proper names, they speak as clinicians, but can they speak *as candidates*?

One way to speak (and write) from the place of candidacy, even if one is no longer a candidate, is to declare the unspeakable abject, to tell stories from and about failure. This might mean to write performatively, without theoretical blandishments — to write, as Marcus Silverman does in this issue — about mistakes, embarrassment, and shit. Such creative embrace of abjection is also the *candid* in candidate. Candor is not only the candidate's desire and transference on display but also her embodiment of proximal alienation, a tension-filled presence connoting the emergence of desire itself. Fittingly, Silverman's "On Failure" begins with an epigraph from *Moses and Monotheism*, in which Freud demonstrates through the figure of the Egyptian Moses how a constitutive act of violence — the foundational exclusion and ultimate incorporation of the stranger — unifies and gives shape to collective identity.<sup>1</sup>

Another way, then, to speak about candidacy is to speak about foreignness: the candidate as both the alien and structuring element of the institute, and candidacy as migration and estrangement. Tuba Tokgoz, upon sharing her experience of being a candidate in a foreign land in "Carrying Roots in Mind: On Homeland, Language and Psychoanalysis," ponders the homology between being in analysis and moving to another country. "[B]oth represent a journey to an unfamiliar, foreign landscape (one is mental, the other is physical) ... both involve regression, mourning and separation; and both offer



opportunity for psychic rebirth, growth, and integration” (p. 34). For Tokgoz, analysis in a second language is redolent of early mother-infant dynamics, intensifying emotional exchanges and the inventiveness of transitional space.

Karen Dougherty, in “Splitting: the Candidate and the Institutional Unconscious,” points to the candidate’s lowly yet phallicized status: “[candidates] embody the hopes and competencies of their institute; they keep it alive, financially viable, and in a state of renewal ... But their power is often disavowed and rarely explicitly exercised” (p. 38). Dougherty experienced this power when she switched in her second year of training from the “progressive” to the more “conservative” institute in her home city, Toronto. She explores the personal and social meanings entailed in such a move, the currency she might have gained (or lost) as a candidate — in her own mind and in the judgment of her analytic community.

A third approach is to interrogate the temporality implicit in candidacy and in psychoanalysis. As Lillian Ferrari notes in her paper, “the candidate exists in a time of expectation of future fulfillment,” and “the condition of candidacy itself” is a space of possibility, a “promise to be met — or not” (p. 25). Ferrari draws our attention to the unique predicament of the psychoanalytic candidate, who might take exams and even earn degrees but nonetheless, in becoming an analyst, must let go of the illusion of systemic completeness — the acquisition an all-encompassing worldview. It is only through the vacancy left by well-worn beliefs, in the après-coup of her formation, that the analyst can delineate and realize her dreams.

Within the structure of the institute, candidates are located in the slowed-down process of becoming. While the open-ended temporality of candidacy might at first blush seem hopeful and future-oriented, it also holds the potential for muteness and deadening finitude. Non-chronological, extraordinary time can be idealized or become the abyss, for it is not the native temporality of the speaking subject. The candidate is led by degrees to non-existence but must nevertheless find ways to dialectize desire, to forge a moving suspension within her delay.<sup>2</sup>

In the first article of this issue, “Training and Time,” Jared Russell optimistically relates the elastic time of candidacy to that of analysis. When candidates ask at the beginning of training, “How long will it take” and “How much will it cost?” they follow the logic and temporality of consumer capitalism, which mandates pursuit of immediate gratification. But candidates eventually come to inhabit “the reverberating, ecstatic time of the clinic” because to be in training is “to embody the necessary structural openness that transmits psychoanalysis as a tradition, and that symbolically links the professional generations over time” (p. 14).

Russell’s intervention brings us once again to the difficulties of negative ontology, of identifying with a not-yet, an absence. The candidate as such, marked by what she is not (not an expert, not skilled, and incomplete in knowledge), is often screened off, disavowed, forgotten, even as her position of lack is used to support the fantasy of the graduate’s wholeness. But in knowing and acknowledging her function as an object of transference, the candidate can offer this lack as a gesture of love, a place from which the other may feel her own limits and desire. ■

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This reading draws on Edward W. Said’s treatment of *Moses and Monotheism* in “Freud and the Non-European” (2003).

<sup>2</sup>The ideas put forth here about time and candidacy are inspired by Kathryn Bond Stockton’s insights regarding queer temporality and twentieth-century childhood in the United States (2009).

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## Training and Time

Jared Russell, PhD

**This essay addresses the origins and the catastrophic effects of two questions that have come to govern candidates' experience of training: "How long does it take?" and "How much does it cost?" With reference to a series of important essays by Dana Birksted-Breen that emphasize the temporality of clinical experience, and that bear a striking resemblance to certain aspects of Heidegger's thinking, the author attempts to outline the temporality of analytic candidacy and to describe the ways in which this experience — like that of the psychoanalytic clinic itself — is under siege in the contemporary global marketplace.**

*Whatever you possess possesses you in turn. Everything that makes you into an owner adapts you to the order of things — and makes you old. Time-which-slips-away is what fills the void left by the absent self. The harder you run after time, the faster time goes: this is the law of the consumable.*

Raoul Vaneigem (1967/2012)

In speaking with both current and prospective candidates, two questions concerning analytic training inevitably arise: "How long does it take?" and "How much does it cost?" While these questions are certainly not new, they impose themselves with an increasing desperation today. Anxieties about training terminable or interminable are legitimate, and psychoanalytic institutes are not always adept at handling these anxieties appropriately. But a more general shift is underway, one that potentially undermines the very framework in which analytic training occurs and that threatens to deform the process of clinical formation. This shift reflects more general social trends in our current era of perpetual financial precariousness, and it is a shift that we can easily witness in our patients and in the attitude of the lay public towards an open-ended, ongoing therapeutic approach. The ways in which the pressures of our era exert themselves on analytic candidates will have specific consequences for the professional field and for what it will mean to be an analyst in the generations to come.

Recently, in a different theoretical context, I raised the question concerning the extent to which patients can be thought of as "consumers" of therapeutic care (Russell, 2016). This is a question that far exceeds the boundaries of psychoanalysis and that concerns the industrialization of contemporary medicine and the rise of the "mental health industry." My argument was that to treat the pathologies of industrialization by elaborating new forms of therapeutic industry perfectly encapsulates the irrational logic that drives late capitalism towards collapse. This is a logic of addiction to which psychoanalysis itself is in no way immune. The insurance industry imposes this logic on all contemporary patient populations, enforcing a compulsory biopolitics of "managed care" in a manner that will no doubt lead to a deepening of the crisis that the psychoanalytic clinic continues to face.

The question I wish to address here, which concerns a less perceptible but perhaps more pernicious complement to this crisis, is: To what extent are candidates to be conceived of as "consumers" of analytic training? Or, put slightly differently: What happens to psychoanalysis when candidates in training begin to relate to their formation as analysts primarily (if unconsciously) from the position of the consumer? This is what is being articulated symptomatically today when questions concerning the length and costs of training are posed with such intense and repetitive insistence. Again, these questions in and of themselves are not new, they are not specific to analytic candidacy, and they are grounded in undeniably real, material, socioeconomic conditions. Today, however, the stakes of our failure to respond critically to these questions are tremendous, much more so than psychoanalysis as a discipline could have previously anticipated from the perspective of its own historical development.

### Consumption Time

Analysts are typically comfortable explaining the fact that the time of analytic training — like the time of psychoanalysis itself — cannot be calculated in advance. Yet they often have difficulty explaining exactly why this is the case. Variables such as the experience of the training analysis, the ability to acquire cases at a proper analytic frequency, and other contingencies related to family and to life in general are easy to point to. None of these, however, explain why *in principle* the time of training cannot be predicted. Left intact is the notion that if all goes perfectly as planned, analytic training can be completed swiftly, that one can become an analyst in just a few short years.

Institutes typically promise the potential candidate that this is an accomplishable feat, and then spend the time of the candidate's training encouraging her not to expect this to be the case. If there is a slogan at work in psychoanalytic institutions where candidacy is concerned, it is, "Take *your* time." But what the time specific to the individual candidate comprises remains thematically obscure. As a result, the time it takes to complete the training program is often erroneously regarded as a measure of a candidate's competence as a clinician. To avoid this judgment, many potentially talented clinicians attend poorly structured and undemanding training programs in order to be done with institutional requirements as quickly and as painlessly as possible. In New York, this waste of potential talent has been encouraged by the implementation of state licensure laws, under which analytic training is reduced to "getting the LP."

Underwriting the notion of a swift and easy progression through candidacy is the fantasy that graduating a training program provides the moment at which professional identity as an analyst is bestowed. In my experience, even those who criticize analytic institutions for promoting this fantasy can themselves cling to it quite tenaciously, indicating a point of convergence between institutional culture and its critics. As a result, efforts to work outside the training institute model can appear motivated by a desire to artificially accelerate the time of training, while institutes' modifications of traditional requirements (e.g., efforts to recalibrate what officially constitutes an analysis from four to three or two times per week, etc.) can appear motivated by the demands of marketplace competition. I believe that wherever this pressure to subject the time of training to new forms of calculation manifests itself — within institutional settings and without — our ability to develop the skills necessary for working analytically is severely compromised.

This pressure to accelerate time in order to control the outcomes of one's commitments belongs to the demand for incessant productivity specific to a culture of industrialized consumption. Unlike standardized treatments, the lengths of which can be determined in advance and that, for this reason, are favored by insurance companies, psychoanalysis, in its open, unpredictable temporality, resists the time of consumption. The time of consumption is time figured reductively as focused on the immediacy of the *here-and-now*. Like the addict whose past is lost and whose future feels hopelessly irrelevant, the consumer consciously or unconsciously calculates all efforts and engagements in goal-oriented terms toward the acts of acquiring, using, and devouring. This is a perverse form of internalization in which consumption-time is addiction-time. The question as to what one can expect to receive in return for one's investments valorizes "now"-time over and against any orientation to future possibility: I consume according to a demand that I can grasp in advance what it is that I am going to acquire and to experience in the act of consumption. Knowing in advance what it is I am going to get, and getting it in accordance with my predetermined knowledge, constitutes a circuit of satisfaction that provides me with a sense of having control over myself, my environment, and my future. This is an illusory sense of autonomy that both discourages the desire for change, and that conceals my increasing dependence on repeating the same gestures over and over again. The more accurately I can anticipate the pleasures of consumption, and the more those pleasures mirror my anticipation uninterruptedly (that is, the more I am able to stay afloat financially), the more enclosed I become in this circuit as a system of narcissistic support. As a result, my interest in the past and future degenerates, and I become increasingly oriented towards endless repetition of the same. Consumption in this way consumes not only objects but our experience of the dynamic, durational structure of time itself. It is both addictogenic and chronolytic.

The time of psychoanalysis — with its regularly timed and spaced appointments, engendering an ongoing sense of duration, tradition, and stability in the absence of any predetermined knowledge as to when a termination date can be expected — is intrinsically opposed to the now-time of consuming-addiction. Consumed with and by his symptoms, the patient is invited to invest his time and energy differently, by coming often and by observing the fundamental rule, and by not attempting to "work on himself" or "figure things out." This difference is indicated by the nature of the analytic frame: Insistently repetitive (day after day, year after year, at the same time and place), analysis imitates the framework of consumption-addiction in order to repeat difference rather than identity. This is an effort to open up time towards future possibility, rather than remain stuck in the empty timelessness of the symptom's ruthless "now."

Although the repetition that defines psychoanalysis can appear excessive, taking up too much time without a sense that immediate results are being produced by the end of each session, it is in fact this very feeling and the anxiety it generates that indicate an experience of time as something other than the demanding "now" of enforced consumption and incessant productivity is being restored. When the patient has settled into the routine of his analysis without worrying over how long it will take and how much it will cost, this is the first sign that transformation and eventually a proper termination have become possible. Anxieties about time and money, while always banally legitimate to some extent, are an expression of resistance to the possibility of profound personal change. What is important to recognize is that this resistance — which Freud understood to be essential to our humanity, making psychoanalysis, along with politics and education, one of the three "impossible professions" — has never before been more environmentally reinforced than it is today in the era of massive industrialized

consumerism.

Resisting treatment in order to maintain the unconscious satisfaction provided by the symptom is one thing; symptomatically ruining the conditions of possibility for treatment is quite another. When we debate with ourselves over whether it is worth it to alleviate the suffering in our lives because the time and money it takes to do so interferes with our manic enjoyment of leisure activities and the accumulation of products, we are not just behaving neurotically, we are behaving addictively. And as all addicts will insist, the kind of treatment necessary to create lasting change is also the kind to which it is most difficult to commit because of the sacrifices involved. Psychoanalysis is a form of treatment well suited for those who feel they have “hit rock bottom” in their pursuit of the pervasive miseries of modern living.

The candidate occupies the difficult position of a time divided between the open-endedness of the personal training analysis and the expectation that impersonal, institutional requirements can be reasonably predicted and brought to a close. She is expected to inhabit the impossible position of one whose formation is lifelong in potential, yet who expects eventually to cross a border at which a professional identity is actually granted. This begs the question: Is there a time specific to becoming an analyst, and can this be regulated institutionally? This question is different from the one posed at the outset of all analyses (“How much time will it take?”) and no training analysis can be considered successful without its having transformed the latter question into the former. Attempts to deal with anxieties about time and money by accelerating the time of training will always and inherently leave us at risk of failing properly to effect this transformation.

### Clinical Time

In a series of important essays, Dana Birksted-Breen (2003; 2009; 2012) develops an account of the experience of time specific to the psychoanalytic clinic. She outlines what she calls “reverberation time” as this is intrinsic to the uniquely dynamic “tempo” of analytic work. Unlike most ordinary interactions, psychoanalysis opens up a different experience of time — one that both facilitates psychic integration and that allows the transference relationship to appear exceedingly meaningful. This temporality elaborates itself in the context of the analyst’s practice of reverie, as the complement to the patient’s efforts at free association. Slowing down the accelerated pace of contemporary life, analytic time allows for the “reverberation” of symbolically articulated experiences in such a way that provides language with a therapeutic capacity, making possible a “talking cure” that has nothing to do with suggestion, instruction, or coercion. Birksted-Breen writes:

The transformation we seek in psychoanalysis is double: a transformation into language and a transformation into using language in a way that supports symbolic thinking. Symbolic thinking underpins psychoanalysis, and yet we are confronted repeatedly with how fragile such thinking can be and how easily concrete thinking takes over in ways that are not always immediately evident when it is the analyst who becomes prey to it. Impasse may always have a form of concrete thinking on the part of the analyst, as well as of the patient, as its foundation. (2012, p. 819)

The “double transformation” both of the relation to language and of the way in which language is deployed depends upon an ability to experience time dynamically—to transition fluidly between past and present, memory and perception: “Thinking is what detaches one from the immediate reality into symbolization and brings the possibility of *moving backwards and forward in time*” (Birksted-Breen 2009, p. 39; emphasis in original). “Thinking” here means not being captivated by the “now” of “immediate reality,” but “detaching” as facilitating movement in time or *of* time as an ongoing, temporalizing process.

Although Birksted-Breen writes only of the coordination of past and present, memory and perception, we should add a third dimension: future anticipation. The patient transitions back and forth not only between memories of her past and perceptions of her present, but forward towards anticipations of her future. Moving backwards and forwards in time does not stop at the present but projects toward the future. In this way desire is generated, the interpretation of which drives the clinical relationship. As Birksted-Breen indicates, the cultivation of such a capacity depends upon the repetitively structured space and time of the analytic frame:

The characteristics of the setting with its strict boundaries in time and space demarcate a particular temporality inside the boundaries, not so much atemporality or timelessness it seems to me as a *bi-temporality*. A specific temporality is given by the analytic pair who will speak of past or present. But whether the analyst chooses to interpret now *or* then, the time within the analytic setting is always now *and* then. The essence of psychoanalysis lies in that double register. (2009, p. 43; emphases in original)



The “double register” of the “double transformation” that analysis consists in involves the opening up of what Birksted-Breen elsewhere calls “temporal space.” Temporal space is the prerequisite condition for symbol formation, in which ideas and experiences are both connected and remain distinct, and in the absence of which concrete thinking and symbolic equation predominate. The heart of this temporalizing process that both separates (spaces) and connects ideas in the mind consists in practices of repetition that the analytic setting formalizes (coming to the same place, at the same time, day after day, etc.). By situating repetition at the heart of the “specific temporality” of clinical experience, Birksted-Breen indicates the link between the open-endedness of an analytic approach and the therapeutic action of the “talking cure”: the effort to create the temporal space necessary for symbolization. This is not a matter of merely putting things into words, speaking what has so far gone unspoken. Creating “temporal space” involves spacing time by means of the “strict boundaries” that constitute the analytic setting. The repetitive nature of the frame in this sense constitutes a calendrical function: a pre-linguistic, non-interpersonal background that structures space and time dynamically, and in such a way that allows the specific temporality of the clinic to be opened up and to function therapeutically by facilitating symbolization.

Norbert Freedman elaborated this same concept of “temporal space,” which he also called “symbolizing space,” as a way of accounting for how language can function mutatively as a vehicle of transformation rather than as a merely technical means of communication (Freedman 1998; Freedman and Lavender 2002; Freedman and Russell 2003). To conceive of language as a “tool” one simply “uses” to communicate meaning is to split apart language and time — to think of these as things we have, rather than as integrated dimensions of experience that give rise to the sense of subjectivity or self to begin with. For Freedman, the inability to think symbolically is not a developmental or structural deficiency, but the defensive repudiation of the vulnerability or openness intrinsic to unpredictable, symbolizing processes. *Desymbolization*, in Freedman’s vocabulary, describes active efforts to suppress the establishment of symbolizing connections as a result of the anxiety attendant upon moments of structural integration that express genuine insight and that register difference. Birksted-Breen locates this failure of symbolic thinking in those approaches predominant in the British and American schools that focus insistently on the here-and-now of the interpersonal interaction:

So-called ‘here and now’ interpretations cover a whole range of types of interpretation [...]. I speak of ‘here and now’ technique in a wide sense to cover a way of working that is characterized by frequent interventions aimed at describing the patient’s experience and feelings towards the analyst throughout the session. It is a particular way of conceiving of the ‘transference interpretation’. (2012, p. 820)

In this approach, the analyst’s frequent interventions concerning the immediate reality of the interpersonal interaction can make both participants feel that important work is being done, that each is properly doing his or her job, and that no time is being wasted. But this is complicit with efforts to enforce the economic delusion that time is a resource we have at our disposal to be “used,” as if there were a difference between “me” and “my time.” Here-and-now therapeutic frameworks ultimately constitute a form of arguing with the patient over whose experience of reality is to be accepted and whose is to be disqualified. This can only preclude symbolization and reduce the clinical relationship to an experience of transference as distortion, effectively putting the analyst in a position of authority and knowledge. In this way, here-and-now techniques reflect a form of treatment that bends itself to the demands of the consumer in order to accommodate for the calculated promises of determinable and specifiable goals. In contrast, Birksted-Breen, with reference to Bion, writes:

Paradoxically, being ‘without memory and desire’, which suspends chronological time (past and future), enables a different temporality to predominate, *the non-chronological time of reverie* and one that creates a necessary *temporal space* within the analytic situation. It is opposite to an orientation to goals, which includes the goal of promoting symbolisation. (2012, p. 827; emphases added)

To be “without memory and desire” — to be able to occupy the position of analytic neutrality, the capacity to demonstrate which is central to one’s formation as an analyst — is not to exist purely in the moment, but to inhabit a different temporality or “temporal space” in which the immediacy of the intersubjective encounter is no longer privileged, and in which adaptation to the demands of the Other (that is, symptom reduction) is no longer a therapeutic goal. Contrary to what some authors who have taken up Bion’s description of the analytic stance would have us believe, there is nothing either mystical or formally unattainable about this ideal. It is a thoroughly attainable, rigorously materialist position, yet one altogether at odds with the ways in which we are encouraged to think and to behave as consumers entrenched in the demands of the marketplace. “Ultimately,” writes Antonino Ferro (2011), “Bion’s notorious phrase ‘without memory or desire’ means that each time we can begin anew with what we do not know, *avoiding excessive insistence on what we have already acquired*” (p. 99; emphasis added). Ferro is referring to the knowledge that the analyst acquires about the patient over the course of treatment, as well as the theoretical knowledge acquired while training as an analyst. Like Bion, he is implicitly criticizing an experiential organization of time that idealizes the “now” by prioritizing the possession of objects (answers) at the expense of



development and future possibility (thinking). What Birksted-Breen calls “the non-chronological time of reverie” constitutes a form of resistance to the addictogenic *here-and-now*-time of consumption that insists excessively on acquisition, that wants to be done quickly, and that attempts to calculate all returns on its investments in advance. Training as an analyst involves cultivating this resistance.

Without proceeding too quickly and collapsing the differences between the clinic and the training program, can we speak of a “non-chronological time” of analytic training? Critics of psychoanalytic institutions are right to point out the deficiencies of a model in which candidates are somehow transformed into fully fledged analysts by proceeding through a series of gates, submitting to a structured series of standardized exercises (interviews, courses, exams, reports of control work, and the like). Each year, what it means for candidates to become graduated analysts is ceremoniously ritualized, though left unclear, as if to suggest that suffering through a series of speaking engagements, meetings, and dinners infused with an air of seriousness and judgment were all that is necessary to begin independent practice. Yet perhaps the problem with this model lies not in the nature of these gates and exercises themselves, but in the fantasy that moving through them can be structured as a linear, uniform progression. It is not possible to de-institutionalize this fantasy (training programs cannot cater to the needs of each individual candidate) but it is possible to be more critical about the ways in which this fantasy implicitly encourages us to think about the nature of analytic change, development, and time.

### Ecstatic Temporality

In order to achieve such a critical perspective and to develop further our understanding of the experience of time in analytic training, we would do well to incorporate into our thinking what philosophy has had to say about time. Since doing so in a comprehensive way would far exceed the bounds of a short essay, I will confine my comments to a few brief points concerning the most important thinker of time in the twentieth century: Martin Heidegger.

In *Being and Time* (1927/1996), Heidegger offers a way of thinking about experience that is not grounded in claims about subjectivity and objectivity or any absolute opposition between them. In order to reconceive the nature of subjectivity as the “existential” structure *Da-sein* (literally, “being-there” — there is no way to translate this ordinary German word), he proceeds by cataloguing the ways in which human beings exist “in” the world or “in” time. The German *Da-sein* indicates not just “being-there” in the sense of being objectively present in time and space, but “being-there” in the way that a friend promises always to be there for us, indicating care (*Sorge*) and not possession, and in a way that is simultaneously both active and passive: *Da-sein* relates to its environment intimately in the way that a friend is “there,” ready to act yet without a predetermined agenda, actively waiting in response to need without imposing a preconceived solution. With this, *Being and Time* attempts to think beyond the oppositional logic of subjects and objects that drives modern technological science.

Heidegger’s most general claim is that our experience demonstrates that time cannot be thought of as a series of successive punctual “nows.” Time is not only the medium of development and change; our experience of time itself changes and develops. Time can appear to pass very slowly or very quickly depending on how we comport ourselves and what we are up to. Time understood as a progressive series of identical “nows” began as an abstract philosophical interpretation of time and has since become common sense, so much so that to challenge it would seem unusual and obscure. To the contrary, Heidegger demonstrates that this interpretation is confused, that time cannot be understood as three separate dimensions essentially distinct from one another, each bearing the form of objective presence: the now, the past as a now that is no longer now, and the future as a now that is yet to come but which can be calculated in advance as eventually a now. This “vulgar” understanding of time as a forward march through successive, isolated moments conceals a dynamic sense of time in which the present cannot be assigned priority, in which past, present, and future are dynamically integrated. Heidegger’s name for this is “ecstatic temporality.” Time is “ecstatic” in the sense that it stands perpetually outside itself, always projecting itself forward towards the future that it is in an existential sense. This is the historical time of meaningfully lived human experience.

Unlike subjects and objects, *Da-sein* does not exist in a punctual form modeled on the here-and-now of objective presence, but as a stretching-along that reaches beyond itself towards its future, individuating or “temporalizing” itself by means of its projects and desires. Human beings are unique in that they are beings capable of becoming concerned with their future — “being-there” in such a way that this is experienced as meaningful. Heidegger describes interest in and concern for the future as *Da-sein*’s “being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in-a-world” and as “always-being-together-with others” (p. 179). What this means is that human beings are not first subjects who are then subsequently set loose within an objective world; rather, our ways of being — of existing and acting in an everyday sense that is so easy to take for granted — are determined by an essential openness to our environment. This openness is the condition of possibility of both meaning and desire. Being-in-a-world-with others is not a subjective quality I possess but an existential structure I am: *Da-sein* does

not “have” relationships with others, it is that dynamic relationality that Heidegger calls “ecstatic.” This has nothing to do with notions of intersubjectivity, which consistently fail to think the relational by subordinating it to the interpersonal. We are not, in Heidegger’s example, “in-the-world” like water is in a glass (p. 50); the “thereness” of human existence is intrinsically temporal, open, incalculable, free. This is not a freedom “I have” but a freedom one is prior to any determination of subjective identity. Grasping this, according to Heidegger, constitutes “the most radical individuation” (p. 34; emphasis in original).

In its refusal to think cognitively in terms of a subject that gives meaning to its objects, and in demonstrating how time, thought dynamically, discloses meaning as a function of the environment itself so long as genuinely autonomous (temporalizing, individuating) human beings exist, Heidegger’s project is reflected in Birksted-Breen’s thinking about the experience of time specific to the psychoanalytic clinic. What Birksted-Breen calls the “non-chronological time” of the clinic, which she is careful to distinguish from atemporality or timelessness, begins to open up a clinical account of Heidegger’s “ecstatic temporality.” The dynamic sense of time as ecstatic temporality describes the clinical opening of “temporal space” necessary for cultivating symbolization. Where the patient is freely associating and the analyst is engaged in neutral reverie, there is mutual disclosure of their being-ahead-of-themselves-in-already-being-in-a-world as always-being-together-with others: clinical “reverberation time” is existential “ecstatic temporality”; the “talking cure” is an effort at “radical individuation.”

Characterizing human experience concretely as somehow “in” time supports a hierarchical way of thinking about human experience universally in terms of subjects and objects. The “non-chronological time” specific to every clinical case makes analysis instead radically singular, as a process of individuation that resists universality and that makes psychoanalysis something other than a manualized technique. At the same time, what makes possible this singularity is the patient’s and analyst’s commitment to the temporalizing, repetitive structure of the analytic frame: the “strict boundaries in time and space” that allow for the emergence of the non-chronological time of clinical reverie. The classical frame is, in this way, both spontaneous and mechanical, both active and passive: it spaces and times the patient’s experience in such a way that new, reverential ways of experiencing self and environment and their integration emerge. It is this aspect of the frame as open, incalculable structure (we do not know what will happen, or when exactly) that allows interpretation to function as something other than a pre-programmed, standardized procedure. Modifications of the calendrical function of the frame compromise the emergence of new ways of being and are either the cause or the effect of situations of impasse, both in treatment and in training. In psychoanalysis, as elsewhere, the pressure to move quickly prevents us from ever beginning to move forward.

As abstruse as Heidegger’s thinking might appear at first, what it can help us to clarify — what can seem so obvious but is so easily and often forgotten — is that the patient is not “in” analysis in the way that water is in a glass, and the candidate is not “in” training in the spatial sense of “in,” but temporally as a process of ongoing evolution, development, and change. Where being “in” analysis or “in” training is thought of in a concrete or desymbolized way, hierarchical models of both treatment and candidacy are legitimized. The analyst holds himself up as the superior ego with whom the patient should identify, or the candidate is treated as subordinate to instructors and supervisors who claim to have greater knowledge about her own experiences in clinical practice. In the case of candidacy, this is of course not to deny that senior clinicians have greater perspective from which the candidate can learn, but this is different from an authoritarian engagement in which the instructor or supervisor presents himself as an expert who is more aware of what is going on in the context of a clinical relationship of which he is not a part. This is but one, all too common, example of the kinds of impasses in training that can occur when the radically singular, individuating temporality of clinical processes is disavowed by a thinking that prioritizes the here-and-now of objective presence. Such thinking is celebrated everywhere in contemporary culture, so much so that it has become absolutely blind to its own pathology. Psychoanalysis must not itself succumb to this blindness.

### Tradition

“How long will it take?” and “How much will it cost?” are questions posed by the acquisitive, desymbolizing logic of consumerism. When posed in relation to commercial goods and services, they are perfectly appropriate. When posed in relation to a project like psychoanalysis, their urgency is indicative of how devastatingly symptomatic this logic has become. Failing to register the fact that analysis is transformative, these questions assume that over the course of treatment one’s desires and commitments will not have changed. In this way, treatment is intrinsically regarded as an object of purchase, and training becomes a strategy for obtaining professional licensures and certificates, or a fantasy of entering into an elite network of referrals. The analyst is someone who must not be controlled by the logic of consumption that tries relentlessly to calculate, to predict, and to control for the purpose of guaranteeing that whatever occurs next will be identical to what has been and is happening *now*. This is where the metaphor of addiction imposes itself, and not as a metaphor but as a bleak

reality. Today, not being controlled by this logic is an essential part of what it means to practice analytic neutrality.

Here-and-now therapeutic approaches that focus on regulating the distortions of fantasy for the purpose of adapting to the demands of the Other attempt to accommodate this logic by appealing to the patient as a consumer whose central concern is the management of time and finances (which are increasingly conflated). Where such efforts encroach upon analytic candidacy, the most trivial titles take the place of genuine achievements; the accumulation of patient hours is equated with clinical skill; “getting” subsumes *becoming*; and the atemporal now-time of consumption prevails over and against the non-chronological temporality of open, symbolizing relation. We can prevent this by grasping that psychoanalysis is not just one technique among many that “mental health professionals” might choose in their attempts at “curing mental illness.”

The time of analytic training cannot be calculated because time is not something we “have” but something we are. This is instanced by the clinical practice of neutrality or reverie, about which there is nothing either mysterious or idealistic. To be able to occupy this complex position involves abandoning all pretenses to having mastered an objective knowledge with which one can apply manualized interventions and standardized treatment plans. This requires one’s having become autonomous as a clinician in the context of the professional field and as a thinker with regard to the seductions of theory. In order to safeguard such autonomy today, what needs to be thought more rigorously is the relationship between our autonomy as clinicians and our connection to analytic institutions — and *how this relationship has everything to do with how time is conceived of psychoanalytically*. Social institutions cultivate autonomous individuality and their ability to do so (or lack thereof) is what we generally call “culture.” In analytic culture, candidates do not all acquire the same universally applicable skill. The candidate is not just learning “how to do analysis.” She is becoming capable of inhabiting the reverberating, ecstatic time of the clinic, and she does so by further becoming herself through the process of individuation that is analytic training.

Candidates are not only immersed in this process, they are charged with occupying positions that inscribe themselves institutionally. This is why candidacy is not just a category, a subject position, or a place of speech and enunciation — it is also a course of developing, changing, and becoming. For this reason, candidates *are* the open-relational components that allow analytic institutions to function communally as forms of being-together-with-others, rather than bureaucratically as the managerial administration of relations between subjects and objects. To be in training is not to submit to the hierarchical order of some immutable pyramid. It is to embody the necessary structural openness that transmits psychoanalysis as a tradition, and that symbolically links the professional generations over time. ■

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## Questions Raised by the Report of the Psychoanalytic Consortium on Analytical Training. Letter to Our American Colleagues

Paola Mieli, PhD

### Foreword

I would like to thank the Editorial Board of *The Candidate Journal* for the opportunity to re-issue this old text of mine. I first reacted with some hesitation to the idea of circulating anew observations I had made 14 years ago, conceived in response to a document that I had found problematic: “Progress Report on the Psychoanalytic Consortium,” authored by Laurel Bass Wagner in 2001.

To my surprise, on February 19th of this year, *International Psychoanalysis* posted a link to my text. Dr. Arnold Richards kindly explained to me that the thoughts I had expressed in 2003 were “still pertinent.” In fact, the ratified amendments of the ACPEinc Standards of Psychoanalytic Education (February 2016) reiterate and expand the principles expressed in 2001.

A few things have changed, however, since then. The wider implementation of state laws aimed at regulating the practice of psychoanalysis has modified aspects of the institutional framework of our profession. The coming together of legal normative requirements and psychoanalytic practice has brought to light an incommensurable tension between the law and the formation of the analyst.<sup>1</sup> Some sixty years after a similar event occurred in Europe, the United States has witnessed the emergence within psychoanalysis of a re-consideration of the structure of traditional psychoanalytic institutions and the modalities in which so-called “training” might constitute an obstacle to a genuine analytic formation.

Indeed, the core of the matter has remained the same: the difference and uniqueness of the psychoanalytic experience, which cannot be compared to, and modeled after, other professional types of training, nor molded in a standardized way. Such uniqueness and difference must be protected by a sensible set of principles, short of which the transmission of psychoanalysis is impossible and psychoanalysis is destined for eventual extinction. In this respect it may be useful to revisit past documents and reassert the relevance of basic elements inherent in psychoanalytic practice and its transmission.

It is also worthwhile to remember that associations that respect both the disciplining exigencies of the profession within the social link and the absolute originality of the psychoanalytic formation — associations, that is, that handle psychoanalysis from within the parameters of its own ethics — *do exist in the world* (and, at least one of them, in New York).. These associations have challenged and discarded such words as “training” or “candidate” or “graduation,” which indeed may fit discourses describing other professions but are misleading when applied to psychoanalysis. They are symptomatic of an idea of “profession” that is alien to the very *raison d’être* of psychoanalysis. Accepting this terminology is tantamount to turning a deaf ear to its implications, to the dangers of the ideology filtering through them.

■ ■ ■

In 2001, four major American psychoanalytic associations, grouped together under the umbrella designation of The Psychoanalytic Consortium, formally drafted and ratified a document titled “Standards of Psychoanalytic Education.” These four organizations are: the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Academy of Psychoanalysis, the National Membership Committee on Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work, and Division 39 of the American Psychological Association. In her official presentation of the “Standards of Psychoanalytic Education,” Dr. Laurel Bass Wagner explains that this document is the fruit of compromise among the different opinions of the organizations that ratified it — a process that took roughly two years and, to some extent, left everyone involved dissatisfied.<sup>2</sup> It nevertheless represents, in the words of Dr. Bass Wagner, “an enormous achievement.” In support of this document, the Consortium has established an entity called the Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education (ACPE), which is seeking official recognition as the national accrediting body for psychoanalytic training institutes. The express goal of this body is to gain authorization from the US Department of Education as the accreditation center for psychoanalytic institutes in the United States.

Given the nature of the document and its grave implications for how psychoanalysis is understood and taught, for its very present and future, it appears crucial for us to join in this debate. Let’s do it by approaching the issue over a common point of reference: Freud’s own teaching. In light of the importance of the matter at hand, it is to be hoped that psychoanalytic associations will acquaint themselves with the Consortium’s proposal and voice their opinions regarding its aims and substance.



The impetus behind the “Report to the Psychoanalytic Consortium on Analytical Training” can be understood as an attempt to overcome the discrepancies among the training practices of the four major American psychoanalytic organizations, in order to achieve a high level of professionalism in the field and protect the public from malpractice. The document can also be seen as reflecting an effort on the part of psychoanalysts to assure their legitimate authority by establishing basic regulations for their profession, so as to avoid outside interference in their field from government agencies, such as state or federal courts and legislatures. Finally, the document may be viewed as a strategic step towards the establishment of a coalition calling for recognition as the preeminent or sole authority over questions of accreditation in psychoanalysis, with power of selection and exclusion.

Psychoanalysts are rightfully concerned about the importance of transmitting psychoanalysis in the best possible way, guaranteeing the professional quality of psychoanalytic practice. They have an ethical duty in this regard: first, in relation to the individuals they prepare for the profession; second, in relation to their present and future patients; and third, in relation to the practice and dissemination of the analytic discourse itself. In this respect, psychoanalysts have every reason to claim their authority to establish the regulations of the very profession they practice, since no one outside the profession could fully grasp its complexity and particularity. Indeed, psychoanalysts have a duty to respond to the social reality in which they practice, and must themselves vouch for professional quality and ethical performance.

Over the years, psychoanalytic associations and institutions have fulfilled the task of providing analytic education, functioning from the first as an interface between individual training and social requirements. It is not clear why a single body responsible for the accreditation of training institutes according to the Consortium’s specific standards would now promote better training and provide guarantees of performance. Some colleagues may claim that standards of training in different institutes are too unequal and that certain institutes do not even apply what many consider to be basic requirements. If this preoccupation is truly central to the Consortium’s proposal, it would behoove us to examine the Consortium document more closely and reflect upon the standards it contains, as well as upon how those standards purport to improve the quality of analytic education.



Many comments could, of course, be made regarding the Consortium proposal. We will confine ourselves to just a few basic questions.

Any psychoanalyst belonging to the Freudian tradition cannot help but notice that the very requirement the creator of psychoanalysis considered to be *the* fundamental condition — the *conditio sine qua non* — for any possible approach to the formation of the analyst, is put in a secondary place by the Consortium, which gives priority to such issues as the “selection of candidates” and their “eligibility”<sup>3</sup> and “suitability for psychoanalytic education and training.”<sup>4</sup> Only *after* discussing why and how a candidate is selected for training does the Consortium document mention “psychoanalysis of candidates,” recommending a personal analysis “characterized by depth and intensity.” This order of things may indicate some of the reasons why psychoanalysts are so often dissatisfied with the outcome of the analytic standards they themselves have advocated.

The priority given to the selection of candidates (with all the requirements attached to it) manifests the spirit of the US tradition in professional analytic training. Considered from its inception as one therapy among many in the field of mental health or “mental hygiene,” psychoanalysis continues to be approached as a profession requiring standards of training comparable to those of other professions. The analytic institute has come to represent an establishment devoted to the production and the reproduction of a certain business, just like other professional schools, for instance, those for law, dentistry, accounting and so on. Once a candidate is deemed “fit” for the profession, s/he is already on track, and the experience to come proves predictable for most aspiring psychoanalysts. The candidate will simply have to follow the particular institute’s regulations and duly meet its requirements, which may call for variations in the length of training according to individual “character and disposition.” Within this framework, high standards encourage conformity. Professional quality coincides with business interests.

It is striking that, in the history of North American Psychoanalytic Institutions, this order of things has never been seriously questioned. In fact, as Freud always insisted, psychoanalysis implies by its very nature a training *that is not* comparable to that of any other profession, since it implies the experience of the subjective division between unconscious



and consciousness and, therefore, the confrontation with the unknown (including the unknown of one's own vocation, which may radically *contradict* one's career choices). It is not by chance that Freud considered personal analysis to be *the* condition for becoming an analyst: we cannot know what the outcome of a personal analysis will be. The desire of the analyst can only be the *consequence* of one's personal analysis, *not* its condition. Such a desire cannot be confused with the wish "to become" an analyst, which, as an ideational formation or ideal identification, is nothing more than a *symptom* among others to be analyzed.

To assess "eligibility" prior to analysis on the grounds of involvement and experience in the mental health professions implies the *confirmation of a choice already made*, granting to it the status of a requirement, prior to giving a person the chance to analyze it and question it. As supervision attests, this results all too often in the institutional re-enforcement of symptoms, rather than their resolution.

It is of course to be wished that people who have chosen to work in the field of mental health — social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses and so on — will decide to undertake an analysis. This will certainly be helpful in the choice they have already made. Occasionally their analysis will make them into analysts. But to *require* involvement in a mental health profession as a *main condition* for a candidate to be eligible implies an error of timing, indicating an error of judgment, a problematic misunderstanding of the specificity and uniqueness of the analytic field. There is no way of shortcutting the process of analytic formation. The outcome of an individual's own personal analysis should be the grounds for his/her decision to become an analyst, for the discovery of that vocation; this will then imply the appropriate theoretical studies and clinical experiences, which the analytic institution should provide and supervise, independently of any previously made career choice.

Strikingly, the Consortium's idea of "suitability for psychoanalytic education and training," is, among other things, paradoxical, insofar as it expresses a mistrust in the process of psychoanalysis: if we believe in the effectiveness of analysis, why should a person not become "suitable" as a *result* of his/her own analytic experience? Is analysis not the prime instrument for effecting a subjective ethical change, a transformation that may lead to a new relation to life, to vocation, to creation? To assuming responsibility, as Freud teaches us, for the very causes of which we are the effect? Is it not this experience itself that grounds the coming-into-being of the analyst's position, of his/her capability to handle the transference, to direct a treatment and to transmit the analytic discourse?

The notion of "suitability" proposed by the Consortium necessarily implies an idea of *normativity* and, with it, a preventive pedagogy: not only can someone deemed "unsuitable" be excluded, but it will also be possible, for instance, to "fix" certain symptoms or character traits and make a candidate fit the standards of the institute. This reflects the belief in a deterministic philosophy that presupposes a pre-established knowledge — precisely what the process of psychoanalysis refutes.<sup>5</sup> This determinism implies operating according to a fixed model, a norm that excludes differences, chances, revelations, unknown and unexpected transformations.

It is apparent that the Consortium's notion of "psychoanalysis" has little to do with Freud's idea of psychoanalysis. To begin with, Freud is fundamentally opposed to determinism and deterministic pedagogy, since they contradict the very discovery of the unconscious, the discovery of the contingent and over-determined factors at work in the unfolding of psychic causality. These factors, which define the specificity of each individual history, can only be analyzed in the aftermath. The idea of a fixed model for understanding is in stark contrast with Freud's own notion of science, which is built upon theoretical models as temporary working models subject to being refuted.

■■■

Let us now turn to the Consortium's definition of psychoanalysis:

Psychoanalysis is a specific form of individual psychotherapy that aims to bring unconscious mental elements and processes into awareness in order to expand an individual's self-understanding, enhance adaptation in multiple spheres of functioning, alleviate symptoms of mental disorders, and facilitate character change and emotional growth (p. 8).

We immediately see that psychoanalysis is included within a mental health ideology inspired by a medical discourse driven by the idea of adaptation, symptom relief, and assimilation. It refers to a conception of psychic reality defined according to the

categories of “good” or “bad” functioning. In a case of “inappropriate functioning” of the mental organism, therapy aims at re-establishing a mental balance analogous to the physical balance regained after illness. Considering a symptom to be the sign of a mental “disorder” implies the belief in a “natural” or “neurophysiological order.” This reflects a return to — or the persistence of — a nineteenth-century medical conception that preceded the Freudian discovery of the subjective division. But Freud has shown us that the unconscious is structured and that a symptom, far from being the sign of a disorder, should be understood as the result of a specific order of things, as a compromise formation conveying a subjective truth.

According to its founder, psychoanalysis is to be distinguished from what is generally referred to as therapy. Thanks to the understanding and handling of the transference, psychoanalysis aims not at “suppressing the symptoms,” as Freud puts it, but rather to overcome the subject’s resistances, which are grounded on a specific libidinal economy (1926, p. 225). As every psychoanalyst knows, the disappearance of a symptom or a behavioral “assimilation” does not represent in itself the completion of a treatment; occasionally, it may happen that such occurrences actually represent resistance to the treatment.

To the concept of “therapy,” psychoanalysis opposes the concept of cure, that is, the confrontation with the subject’s division and the truth of one’s unconscious desire. Such a cure involves the modification of a subject’s libidinal economy, which may entail the resolution — not the suppression or alleviation — of specific symptoms or inhibitions. Analysis is a process of discovery and novelty. The logical time that organizes a subject’s structure and history gives to it a rhythm; it is a process that can only unfold within the articulation of the transference and its resolution. Every case is a unique case, an “exception,” that cannot be reduced to the generality of a diagnostic category. It is not by chance that Freud recommended that analysts approach each and every new patient’s analysis as if it were the first they ever handled. To the categories of “general” and “particular” inherent in the notion of norm, psychoanalysis opposes the notions of structure and singularity.

Regarding the notions of “awareness” and “understanding” stressed by the Consortium, let us remember that the process of analysis is specifically characterized by the unfolding of events within the transference generating subjective transformations *independently* from the subject’s awareness; so much so that an analysand is most often incapable of understanding the nature of such transformations. If “understanding” occurs at all, it may only be in the aftermath of the experience. Contrary to intellectual awareness, which is grounded on faith in a rational ego and the belief in a full translatability of unconscious processes into consciousness, psychoanalysis defines itself as the experience of the subjective division. The subjective division cannot be reconciled or undone; it implies awareness and unawareness, revelations and misrecognitions — the confrontation, as Freud puts it, with the irreducible nature of a subject’s “castration.” This process is underlined much more by emotions, affects and surprises than by intellectual realizations. And the transformation of the subjective position brought about by the end of an analysis leads more to a *savoir faire*, a “know how” to handle life, desire and limitations, to a new creativity, than to intellectual understandings.

In opposition to any idea of conformity, psychoanalysis is fundamentally an experience with and towards otherness, a practice of de-identification that enhances the relation to difference. It is the subject’s practice of “exile,” a leaving behind of mystifying individual and group identifications and of the guarantees provided by the already known. It is a journey towards what is unknown and foreign within the subject, as manifested, for example, in the formations of the unconscious. This practice of exile leads towards the progressive “deconstruction of a person’s idolatry (ego narcissism and super-egoic requirements),” towards the “encounter, in the rigor of one’s speech, with one’s singularity, style and difference” (Fuks 2002, p. 20).

For this to occur, it is necessary that transference, the main tool of and obstacle to the treatment, as Freud defines it, must unfold to its end. And this means accepting that the analyst has relinquished the position of the “subject supposed to know.” The Consortium’s proposed requirements seem, instead, to encourage a candidate’s identification with his/her analyst and teachers. This emulation, by fostering devotion to the same ideals, reinforces group identifications and symptoms, while excluding difference, autonomy of style and the possibility of new creations — including research and advances in the field of psychoanalysis. No wonder, then, if the results of such emulation are repetitive and poor psychoanalytic productions, as the landscape of institutional psychoanalytic literature largely shows.

There is no way to shortcut the process of analysis. The making of an analyst — a *formation* (from the Latin *formare*, “to give form to”) more than mere education and training — involves a process much more rigorous, unique and complex than the one outlined by the Consortium’s proposal. The required minimum of 3 analytic sessions per week is in no way a guarantee of “depth and intensity,” as the Consortium naively puts it.<sup>6</sup> More than anything else, such a requirement once again points to a serious misconception about the very nature of psychic time and psychic causality. No required frequency can accelerate a subjective pace or provoke “depth;” much less can it substitute for the appropriate analyst’s listening.

Only this listening and the unfolding of the cure can establish the appropriate analytic frequency for each individual case, establishing the specific direction of a treatment for the formation of an analyst.

Institutions have existed and do exist worldwide that have approached analytic education differently than the Consortium's proposal. Such institutions successfully distinguish psychoanalysis from other professions. They respect the need for the best education while recognizing the uniqueness of analytic formation, making out of it a work in progress, a constant challenge. It would be fruitful for the Consortium to realize that, in the vast universe of psychoanalysis, the standards for training it proposes appear, first and foremost, to be *not* analytical.

It is important, therefore, to reflect upon how the idea of a *monopoly* on the regulation of analytic standards of training could be beneficial and if it would not, in fact, lower the quality of training rather than the contrary. At any rate, does not this idea of a monopoly jeopardize the principles of psychoanalysis (and, for that matter, of democracy), grounded as they are on singularity, differences, pluralism? Should we foresee the establishment of an antitrust regulation to protect quality and variety in the field of psychoanalysis?

I will conclude these remarks recalling Freud's recommendation: analytic education *cannot* be limited to the medical domain but must include several humanistic disciplines. As Freud writes to Ferenczi,<sup>7</sup> the emphasis on medical training can only be viewed as a masque concealing the most dangerous resistance to psychoanalysis. In addition to regular courses, seminars, workshops and working groups in psychoanalysis, an institute should offer — or request and supervise attendance in — courses not only in psychopathology, differential diagnosis, neurology, pharmacology, *but also* in linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, literature, art, epistemology, history of religion, law. And it should make sure that participants develop an active role and engage in forms of intellectual production, rather than merely play the passive part of students learning their teachers' words by rote. This broad field of differentiated disciplines will prepare the ground appropriately for the analyst's listening to the subject's discourse and its cultural diversity and become the base for a psychoanalyst's continuing education. The coming into being of an analyst as the result of an analysis can then be seen as only a first major step into a universe of learning that will accompany him/her throughout life.

In the field of psychoanalysis, theory can only be the outcome of a practice. In turn, theory will inform certain technical approaches that practice may then redefine, producing new theoretical advances, and so on. This loop of experience, of which theory is a consequence, compels the analyst to permanent production, to permanent creation — if s/he really wants to occupy the place s/he claims.

Not an easy choice for a "career." ■

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> I dealt with this topic in my "Analytic Act, Juridical Act: Paradoxes, Aporias, Contradictions, *Psychoanalysis and Law, European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1( 0), January 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Laurel Bass Wagner, "Progress Report on the Psychoanalytic Consortium," *Psychologist Psychoanalyst, Newsletter of Division 39*, Vol. XXI, Fall 2001, Washington, D.C., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Consortium, eligibility for admission to an institute is first determined in terms of a candidate's graduate degrees and his/her involvement in the domain of mental health:

"1. Graduate education. To be eligible to undertake psychoanalytic education, a candidate will possess one of these degrees: Ph.D, Psy.D, D.S.W., M.S.W., M.D., Ed.D., D.O., R.N. (plus a master's degree with Clinical Specialist certification or Ph.D.) or a comparable mental health degree and education/training leading to licensure or certification for independent practice of a core mental health profession at the highest clinical level. [...] 2. The applicant will have the ability to diagnose mental disorders. [...] 3. The applicant will have had psychotherapy practice experience. S/he will have had close supervision of individual cases." "Standards of Psychoanalytic Education, Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, The Psychoanalytic Consortium," *Psychologist Psychoanalyst, Newsletter of Division 39*, Vol. XXI, Fall 2001, Washington, D.C., p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> On this point: "Suitability refers to the personal characteristics of the applicant that are deemed necessary for psychoanalytic education. The applicant will show evidence of integrity of character, maturity of personality, reasonable indication of capacity and motivation for self-reflection, psychological mindedness, clinical aptitude, and appropriate intellectual ability. [...] An ethics violation disclaimer will be part of the admission procedure. If an applicant has been found by a recognized professional or governmental body to have committed an ethical violation the institute shall be responsible for reviewing the finding and

documenting its conclusions and actions. If there is an ethics or malpractice case pending against an applicant the institute may defer its decision on the application until the case is resolved. Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that after defining the selection of candidates for analytic training in terms of “eligibility and suitability,” the Consortium adds the following legally required specification: “Applicants will not be excluded on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexual preference or physical disability. An anti-discrimination clause will be prominently displayed in official publications of the institute.” Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> “Psychoanalytic work is characterized by depth and intensity which are achieved in the context of frequent treatment sessions over a long term. [...] The psychoanalysis of a candidate is expected to be conducted in person at a frequency of three to five sessions per week, for a minimum of forty weeks during a year and for a minimum of three hundred (300) hours. This criterion may be modified to accommodate candidates who are physically handicapped or who live and work at a considerable distance from an appropriate analyst. Such exceptions shall be reviewed by the institute and its decision shall be documented.” Ibid., pp. 1, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Letter, April 27, 1929.

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## The Authorization of the Psychoanalyst

David Lichtenstein, PhD

**How a psychoanalyst is authorized to practice psychoanalysis reflects the historical developments of the profession. Considering the multiplicity of the field and its expansion over the past 50 years, an appeal is made to understand the rigorous core of psychoanalytic theory and practice and to analyze how certain core principles may be related to the process of authorization.**

When we consider the *authorization*, rather than *certification*, of the psychoanalyst, we introduce a significant dialectic. It derives from the relation between the words *author* and *authority*, both linked to *authorize* but from two different sides, as it were. An author causes something to come into being, whereas an authority exercises power or judgment over those things once they are created. The *authorization* of a psychoanalyst is rooted in this ambiguity of author and authority. Lacan's remark that a psychoanalyst authorizes himself — which does not mean *by himself* — reflects and plays upon this dialectic.

The root of these words is the Latin *augere*, which means to become, to grow, or increase, as in augment. It suggests a futurity as in the word *augur*. Clinical psychoanalysis concerns both the authority of the past and the futurity of authorship: *where it was, there I shall become*. The German word Freud used here to convey futurity was *werden*.

In clinical work, this dialectic of authority is ever present. “By what authority do I say this” is a question that each party encounters in analytic work. The only true answer to the analyst's question: “What authorizes my intervention” is the unprepared (unauthorized) speech of the analysand. The author in this exchange is indeed not present in either place.

My intention here is to examine the question of *authorization* on the professional level rather than on the level of personal analysis. However, it is because the question functions uniquely at the root of our professional practice that its function in the governance of our profession is also unique. To the question, why should the authorization of the professional psychoanalyst be different from the authorization of any other professional, the response may be: because we are in the practice of interrogating authorship and authority as part of our clinical work, we must also recognize the problematic in our professional authorization.

My task here is to sketch a history of the present regarding the question of authorization in psychoanalysis. It is, of course, a fool's errand to attempt to write present history. However, I will begin by suggesting that we have witnessed an historical shift in the terms of this question that makes that history important to review.

Recognizing a problem in professional authorization goes back to the beginnings of our field. However, in the 1970s and '80s I think a shift began to occur in the balance of both knowledge and power, a shift that has redefined our field over the past 35 years especially regarding questions of authority and authorization.

Throughout this contemporary period, and while this shift has been taking place, we have continued to witness trenchant critiques (such as those of Ken Eisold [1994], Douglas Kirsner [2009], Immanuel Berman [2010], Kernberg [2000] and, of course, Sandra Buechler's [2012]) of the training analyst system, of the course curriculum at established institutes, and of the deadening intellectual climate that seems to prevail at some of them. These accounts suggest that long-standing problems in designing adequate institutes for the formation of analysts remain unsolved.

On the side of reform, we have seen a shift within psychoanalysis from a medical basis to a more interdisciplinary one, a significant increase in the proportion of women in the field, and a greater sensitivity to feminism and to critical and progressive ideas regarding gender and sexuality, although perhaps less so to questions of social class. While these various critiques and reforms are significant for the history and character of our field, there are conceptual questions about authorization as such that put the whole system as it is currently organized in doubt, and that offer a framework for new possibilities.

The shift that I am thinking about concerns the working principle that there is a central authority regarding psychoanalytic theory and practice and that becoming a psychoanalyst is a submission to and acceptance of that authority. According to this principle, one undergoes an analysis of a certain type and it is insofar as the type of analysis properly



conforms to the authorized type, one is in turn authorized to be an analyst. While this principle still is in force at many institutes, the real multiplicity of the field now makes it impossible for psychoanalysts to agree as to the precise nature of this authorized analysis.

In our contemporary period, which I am dating from the late 1970s to the present, rigor and multiplicity within psychoanalytic theory and practice have come to an impasse. Freud's, and later Lacan's, continual reconfiguration of their models reflected their recognition of the inherent multiplicity within psychoanalytic thought and were indeed efforts to maintain rigor across that multiplicity, as well as to avoid stasis. I would suggest that in historical terms impasse has instead risen to the level of being an organizing feature of the field itself. The question facing us presently is can we articulate new truths from within this impasse and reconfigure our models, or will the impasse instead constitute a dead end?

I would like briefly to discuss three events that marked for me the crisis in rigor and multiplicity that I think characterizes our contemporary period. They are, in the United States, the publication of two books, *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Contemporary Psychology*, by Russell Jacoby, first published in 1975, and *Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession*, by Janet Malcolm, published in 1982. The third event, on a very different level, is the dissolution of Lacan's School in Paris in 1979-80, his subsequent death in 1981, and their effects on the French psychoanalytic scene.

Jacoby's 1975 book claimed that there is a dialectical core in Freud's work that lends a radical authority to psychoanalytic theory. He revisited a debate that had started two decades earlier between Herbert Marcuse and Erich Fromm, former colleagues at the Frankfurt School, over the importance of drive theory to this radical dialectic at the heart of psychoanalytic thought. Jacoby expanded on Marcuse's critique of neo-Freudian ideas, such as those of the interpersonal and humanistic psychotherapies that developed in post-war America — approaches that Fromm was then embracing. Without going into Jacoby's arguments in depth here, the question was posed whether the turn toward interpersonal, relational, and self-realizing theories did not in fact risk a profound loss of the original and radical dialectic in psychoanalysis — the very dialectic that led both Freud and later Lacan to continuously rework their models. My point is not to take sides with or against Jacoby's position here but to point to how he set the terms of a problem regarding rigor and multiplicity, that is, how he asserted that there is a radical core to psychoanalytic thought and questioned how it might or might not function across multiple instantiations. The question I take from this debate is: can the authorization of the analyst be properly rooted in this dialectical core of psychoanalytic theory and practice rather than in the rigid authority of any one instance? Indeed, given the inherently divided subject posited at the dialectical core of psychoanalysis, is the authorizing event of psychoanalytic work akin to a fulfilling experience of self-realization, or is it instead more a coming to terms with its impossibility?

Janet Malcolm's book posed similar questions but from a very different place. As a journalist, she investigated the state of authority at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute in the face of challenges to that authority from within the field. For Malcolm, it was especially the work of Heinz Kohut in the 1970s and his theories of narcissism and the self, and also Otto Kernberg's use of object relations theory, that posed the challenges to the authority of what was then the dominant school of so-called Ego Psychology.

As with Jacoby's book, one comes away from Malcolm's account with the idea that there is a core truth that is threatened by contemporary theoretical reform and that one faces a forced choice of either losing this truth in accepting liberalization or holding it at the cost of submitting to authoritarian excess. In Malcolm's tale, psychoanalysis is trapped between the devils of a diluted reform, on the one hand, based on a woolly optimism of "anything goes," and a soul-crushing orthodoxy, on the other.

In the wake of Lacan's death in 1981 and the dissolution of the school that he had created and directed since 1964, the psychoanalytic community in Paris was in considerable disarray regarding authority and authorization. According to Elisabeth Roudinesco (1990), in the early 1980s no less than 13 and as many as 20 schools, new centers, or study groups emerged out of the community that had been the *École Freudienne de Paris*. They were in many instances quite unfriendly to one another.

This splintering reflected difficulties in tolerating the complex differences not only within the overall field of psychoanalysis but even within the body and history of Lacan's teaching. The inclination to determine what was the right emphasis and to enforce it as the way to think and to work made it impossible for disparate inclinations from within Lacan's school to work together in one organization. The topic of authorization, and what is known in Lacanian circles as the *passé*, was and remains a key point of difference.



One little splinter group in Paris called *Le Cercle Freudien*, created in 1981, became a point of contact for me in the years after Lacan's death. It was a companion group to the small association that would become *Après-Coup* in New York in 1985. As I experienced them in those early years after the death of Lacan, both the *Le Cercle Freudien* and *Après-Coup* were loosely organized study groups for clinicians where one could find colleagues both for supervision and for intellectual exchange and research. The circumstances that had surrounded the last days of the *École Freudienne de Paris*, indeed the violent collapse of Lacan's school, introduced a wariness regarding the powerful forces at work in psychoanalytic societies, a wariness that was combined with a profound respect for the dialectic core of psychoanalytic thought.

The defining conflict of the field in the current period is that between rigor and multiplicity. This is in no way a new conflict. Freud in fact faced it from the start. However, it has greater effects today because of the development of the different schools in the field. It can no longer be contained by asserting the authority of a particular school of thought as the representative of rigor. I think, instead, there must be a return to the dialectical core of psychoanalytic thought in a way that can address the multiple expressions that characterize the field. I do not think this work has yet been accomplished, far from it. To do so is the defining challenge of our time.

It is easy but useless to support multiplicity without rigor. Equally useless are the expressions of rigor that fail to see the possibility of anything new. To become a psychoanalyst today — to be authorized as an analyst — is to traverse this impossible crossroad. ■

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## On Candidacy and Becoming an Analyst

Lillian Ferrari, LCSW

**This paper argues that the condition of candidacy in psychoanalysis should be approached as a time of passage from the position of the analysand to the position of the analyst. The process of becoming an analyst cannot be accomplished by simply fulfilling a number of prescribed requirements, but it implies rather the emergence of the analyst's desire, as the condition for listening to the unconscious in a manner that is devoid of the analyst's own presumptions and prejudices.**

Implicit in the term candidacy is the question of time. The candidate exists in a time of expectation of future fulfillment. For those who find themselves in this situation, the range of sentiments can be wide and varied: from hope and anticipation, to despondency and frustration, and everything in between. There is no doubt that the condition of candidacy itself contains a potential promised to be fulfilled — or not. The stretch of time pertaining to being in a state of candidacy may resemble a trial, a test at the end of which the candidate, having submitted his or her qualifications to the Other, expects recognition.

The situation of having to submit one's credentials and qualifications for examination implies that a candidate is more or less subjected to the verdict of an Other who is in a position of authority, or at least in the position of deciding about the readiness of the candidate. In some cases, in which a candidate earns a degree, this Other may take the form of a set of rules and scholarly criteria that are necessary to accomplish in order to arrive at a destination.

This situation, with its implicit subjection, is not without its perils, especially when one is in the process of becoming an analyst and the resolution of transference-ties is at stake. We know, for instance, that in the case of the obsessional these ties are suffused with ambivalence: the wish to find in the analyst an idealized guarantor coexists with the contrary wish to defeat him or her, to assert autonomy, all the while perpetuating a state of dependency. Because of this ambivalence, exacerbated when the analyst occupies the position of Ideal, the effects of an imaginary rivalry with the other come to the fore in which death — the death of whoever occupies a masterly position — is imagined and fantasied. This "death" that the obsessional imagines in his fantasy and upon which his desire could be realized, is also an imaginary screen that functions as the obstacle that allows him to sustain his desire, indefinitely postponed; it is a fantasy in which the existence of an omnipotent Other is not really put into question. In the last instance, promoting the effects of this imaginary rivalry only allows the obsessional to procrastinate and to guard himself against the real, absolute master, Death itself. More often than not, the staging of a conflictual rivalry is the strategy by which the obsessional subject avoids taking the real risks always at stake in one's own desire.

Psychoanalysis, however, is not exactly a profession or a career one acquires like a terminal degree; it does not refer to a specialization within a particular area, say the area of mental health. Psychoanalysis concerns primarily an ethical praxis that seeks to produce the emergence of the subject of the unconscious, which is not equivalent to the individual. In this regard, Jacques Lacan's teaching radically opposes all aspects of analytic formation grounded in the work of the ego and its defenses. Moreover, Lacanian thought militates against the enthroning of psychoanalytic practice in the psychological notions of the self and its capacity for adjustment and healthy functioning, as this would amount to basing the praxis of psychoanalysis on the ideological and moral grounds that are so dear in today's neoliberal society. As Eric Porge (2008) notes in his book, *Des Fondements de la Clinique Psychanalytique*, Lacan's formula, "l'analyste ne s'autorise que de lui même," makes use of the third person pronoun *lui même* — him/herself — as opposed to *soi même* — myself (p. 22). In doing so, Lacan stresses the relevance of the tertiary place in analysis, the locus of an irreducible alterity that is so crucial to its practice (Lacan 2001, p. 243).

There is no question, in my opinion, of the need to provide some legitimacy to the process of becoming an analyst, but it is difficult to find common criteria among analysts of different schools to define this process — that is, criteria that would allow verification of whether the passage from the position of analysand to the position of analyst has been accomplished, and how. Especially because this passage is not achieved without the advent of the analyst's desire, a desire that is not a subjective desire, reducible to the person of the analyst, to her fantasies, ideals or expectations, but rather a desire that refers to the necessary vacant place from which the analyst listens to the unconscious as the discourse of the Other.

Lacan made the concept of the desire of the analyst the centerpiece of his theorization of the formation of analysts, radically distinguishing it from the place in which the analyst operates as the Ideal, embodying the model of "normative cure" that the analysand should aim to achieve. For him, the end of the cure implies the falling of the ideals and unconscious

fantasies that undergird the subjective position from which we attempt to make sense of the external world and the behavior of others, rendering them coherent and consistent.

The place from which we tend to render things intelligible, understandable, and ultimately “sense-making” — to the point of disregarding all that is odd and perplexing (the hallmarks of unconscious formations) — is grounded in our particular subjective position from which the “stew” that includes our preferences, ideas, and also prejudices emanates, albeit unintentionally. This viewpoint, which has been conditioned mostly in unconscious libidinal impulses that escape our awareness, represents our “blind spot,” and as such can make us deaf to the resonances of unconscious signifiers in the process of the analytic cure. The task of analysis in the formation of the analyst is directed toward the causes of this position in the subject.

Ultimately, that which informs our relationship with the world and with others is fueled by a certain fantasy or unconscious scenario, a libidinal construction through which we attempt to figure out the answers to the questions that emerge from the encounter with the desire and the enjoyment of the Other. These questions, connected to what is most intimate about the subject, namely, his position as a sexual being, his relationship with sexual difference, and ultimately his position vis-à-vis death, point to the limits of the Symbolic. Sexuality and death remain the ultimate mysteries for the being inscribed in language, revealing the limits of the signifying system to answer definitively and conclusively the fundamental questions raised by our relation with the signifier and with language, namely “What do I want?” and “Who am I?” The function of the fantasy that underpins the subject’s psychic reality is to screen out or mask the structural incompleteness and lack in the Other. Indeed, human behavior is strikingly marked by the need to find sense, by the tendency to look for predictability and consistency in our surroundings, and by the psychological inclination to make the behavior of others, especially those to whom we are libidinally attached, proportionate to our own. The teachings of psychoanalysis show that we are naturally predisposed to what is familiar and known, to the detriment of what is unknown, enigmatic and strange. In fact, we tend to suppress the enigmatic and mysterious in our daily encounters, aspects where things and people appear in all their opacity and strangeness, that is, in all their “otherness.”

This predisposition is obviously an impediment for the psychoanalyst, whose main interest is in the emergence of the unconscious, in turn characterized by the tendency to cause surprise and even astonishment both in the patient and in the analyst. As Freud demonstrated in the short and wonderful essay, “The Question of a Weltanschauung,” human beings show a psychological penchant for applying to the workings of the external world the measure of their own libidinal wishes, and a preference to subordinate their intellectual judgments to their own emotional needs (Freud 1933). For him, the human spirit reveals a stark reductionism as it confronts the riddles posed by the world and by its own human existence, a tendency to rely on a consistent and coherent system organized around a single principle — a weltanschauung or world view meant to supply all the answers. Religion and, to a lesser degree, philosophy, are the most obvious examples of such systems. Totality, universality, and completeness seem to characterize the construction of such a weltanschauung, where no question is left “unanswered and in which everything that interests us finds its fixed place” (p. 158).

Moreover, it seems to be precisely the all-encompassing nature and completeness of such systems that account for their emotional appeal. They resemble the fantasy of an idealized and powerful Other that the infant constructs to counteract the traces of an original state of helplessness and lack of resources that mark the beginning of our human condition. It is precisely this initial state of helplessness that makes us dependent on “extraneous help,” as Freud put it; that is, dependent on the Other of language and the signification it introduces by transforming the scream of the child in the state of need (initially mere discharge) into a real appeal (Freud 1895/1950). This intervention of the Other will have momentous consequences in the constitution of the psychical apparatus as it configures the signs that will orient its search for satisfaction, and mobilizes its cathexes through an associative path with the goal of re-establishing the situation of the original satisfaction, initially through the shortest path of hallucination. Because of the intervention of the Other, the mythical apparatus that Freud envisions at the origin of subjectivity has to abandon its initial tendency toward “wishful activation” (p. 319), that is, it has to give up the primary tendency to seek satisfaction by activating the perceptual image of the object of satisfaction to the point of hallucination, and instead furnish the apparatus with a secondary activity, the basis of which seems to come from language.<sup>1</sup> It is in fact language that bars access to the Thing, insofar as speech relies on the loss of the referential object. Freud will reiterate the same idea in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where he argues that the primary functioning of the apparatus that seeks the establishment of an *identity of perception* with the object has to be replaced by the more expedient one, the thought-identity (Freud 1900-1901). The aim of this secondary psychical activity is to discriminate among the signs containing the information coming from the outside world in order to establish an associative path that can lead to finding outside something similar, but never identical, to the searched-for object. Our unconscious signifying chain is thus a memory of desire that aspires to attain the identical but that is condemned to find only differences.

Thence, what Freud called the experience of satisfaction becomes the trace of a memory conditioned upon the loss of the object of satisfaction, the loss of the possibility to attain the identical within language, producing — retroactively — the myth of an incomparable experience against which all other new encounters and object-choices will be measured and judged. What subsists from that mythical experience is a trait, a single and unique feature that, like a basic element of language, organizes the unconscious signifying chain through the mechanism of condensation and displacement, and enables its reading like a decipherable text. In addition, this trait constitutes the basis of the subject's enjoyment, supporting the function of what Lacan called the *objet a* as the object support of desire in the fantasy.

Freud stresses that the reason worldviews such as the religious *weltanschauung* prove so successful and appealing to the human spirit, is that they fulfill a childhood demand for protection originally addressed to the figure of the father against the powers of fate and the danger of the external world. Their purpose is to provide emotional security and certainty about the complex problems related to the existence of the human individual. Such views, he says, are meant not only to protect us from the unknown, but also to secure the horizon, so to speak, to pin down the perspective from which our conduct should emanate: "Believing in it one can feel secure in life, one can know what to strive for, and how one can deal most expediently with one's emotions and interest" (Freud 1933, p. 158). This statement is today more relevant than ever, as our century is witnessing the increasing expansion of fundamentalist and radicalized ideologies, religious and political.

The role of these *weltanschauungen* recalls the function of the fantasy in their ability to provide the framework or perspective from which the subject interacts with its surroundings, securing for the individual the ultimate interpretation and meaning of the reality of the world and his place in it. The construction of the fantasy serves the purpose of linking the subject with an imaginary object that determines his or her position in speech and his relation to enjoyment; it sustains the illusion that an object exists that can fill the lack in the Other. This unconscious fantasy is ultimately the subject's interpretation of what the Other wants from him, a masochistic depiction of the relationship of the subject to an object (being beaten up, eaten, or shit upon) — masochistic because it is linked to the moment at which the subject vanishes, disappearing behind the signifier that represents it. At the level of structure, it refers to a logical moment of destitution that is determined by the subject's entrance into language and into the logic of the signifier, the main effect of which is to divide him, snatching him away from any position of mastery and control, and instituting the subject as unconscious. In the final instance, the function of the fantasy is to fill the void in meaning that the enigma of sexuality and death creates.

The best antidote to the false security provided by *weltanschauung* is the act of "posing the existence of the unconscious," as Lacan says Freud did when he invented the discourse of psychoanalysis. Freud discovered the existence of an unconscious knowledge through the emergence of *parapraxes* or faulty functions: forgetfulness, mistakes, dreams, and so forth. At these places, the subject falls from its commanding position, revealing a knowledge that is articulated through signifiers, where nobody can say "I." Freud informed us that the very structure of these faulty actions are determined by the prefix *ver* in German, which has its English counterpart in *mis* — slips of the tongue (*Versprechen*), misreading (*Verlesen*), mishearing (*Verhoren*), and forgetting (*Vergessen*) — showing that the function of *ver* marks the presence of the unconscious precisely where a subject is *missing* (Freud 1915-1916, p. 26).

Unconscious knowledge, delivering a subjective truth through the structure of the "mistake" and the "mistaken," is a knowledge of which no subject is in command but that nonetheless obeys a logic, the logic of the signifier. When this "truth" emerges momentarily in the cure through an unconscious formation, it suggests the presence of a knowledge already inscribed somewhere, existing in a state of latency. It induces the belief that there exists *someone* who possesses that knowledge in advance and who, being able to vouch for its logic, could provide its ultimate guarantee — similar to God in the philosophies of Descartes and Pascal, whose role was to support the consistency of knowledge by providing its ultimate *raison d'être*. Lacan points out that throughout the history of science the notion of God was often adduced after an initial moment of subjective "astonishment," after a discovery or breakthrough in knowledge gave way to a theoretical construction intended to fill a gap in meaning.

Such was the case with Newton who, when he discovered the formula of gravitational laws, made God the place of the ultimate cause wherein his rationale was grounded; or with Descartes when he turned to God as the ultimate guarantor of the enunciation of his *Cogito*. The belief in God sustains the function of what Lacan called "le sujet supposé savoir." It amounts to a belief in an omnipotent Other through which any theory has the potential to become religious as it shifts from the initial discovery and verification of its effects in the real to the construction of a system that aspires to be whole and exhaustive. Lacan warns us: "*Theoria, serait-ce la place au monde de la théologie*" (Lacan 1967/2001, p. 337)? (Is theory the place where theology subsists today in the world?)

Becoming an analyst means letting go of this belief in the subject-supposed-to know, which in my view means simultaneously letting go of the illusion that psychoanalysis may offer any type of *weltanschauung*. The place left vacant by the fall of this belief allows for the advent of the desire of the analyst, in which the analyst, far from sustaining a position of abstinence, becomes an essential operator in the cure of the patient.

This desire is put at stake, for instance, in the analyst's disposition to maintain what Freud called "evenly suspended attention," a disposition that requires that the analyst listen evenly to the material without any deliberate effort of attention. This particular disposition of the analyst's listening is very different from that which one sustains in daily communication; in an effort to understand the content and the meaning of what is being said, one tends to consciously select and focus on certain aspects of the material, usually those which emphasize mutually shared significations. Instead, Freud says, the analyst suspends such deliberate, purposeful attention because it implies an attention that is selective and biased by subjective inclinations and/or expectations. The suspension of expectations on the part of the analyst when he or she is listening should be so radical as to include suspension of his or her own theoretical ideas and knowledge if the analytic exploration is to yield something new and unexpected: "For as soon as anyone deliberately concentrates his attention to a certain degree he begins to select from the material before him . . . In making this selection, *if he follows his expectations he is in danger of never finding anything but what he already knows*" (Freud 1911-1912, p. 112; my emphasis). Freud invites us to maintain a listening that momentarily suspends attention both to the contents of the speech and to meaning, and instead is open to resonances, word play, equivocations, and repetitions. In addition, this suspension of attention to meaning is also a way to restrict theoretical speculations on the part of the analyst.

Becoming an analyst supposes an act of enunciation through which the entire process of analysis proves to be didactic in the aftermath, in the *après-coup*, with no guarantees in advance. It implies a certain breakthrough where one has the sense of moving beyond some familiar constraints in the accomplishment of one's own desire.

Something of this sort took place, for instance, in Freud's finally fulfilling his enduring wish to visit Rome. For him, it also signified the breakup of his long friendship with Wilhelm Fliess, who was not his analyst but who was nonetheless his privileged interlocutor during the period known as Freud's self-analysis, the one who Freud described as being his "Other, a critic and a reader" (Freud 1887-1904, p. 313). At the end of their long exchange, during which Freud was famously engaged in the analysis and examination of some of his own dreams, he would have a series of theoretical and personal breakthroughs from which he would emerge as the founder of psychoanalysis. One of these breakthroughs concerned finally obtaining the long-awaited and much-deserved title of *Professor Extraordinarius*, for which Freud had been a candidate for several years. As it turns out, the postponement of this nomination — in spite of Freud's brilliant academic career — was political, for reasons that were obviously related to the anti-Semitism of the time.<sup>2</sup> The fulfillment of that candidacy required that Freud overcome his inhibition, disguised as conscientiousness, and finally accept that without his mobilizing some personal influence, this designation would remain unattainable. After this realization, and after taking the appropriate steps to allow him to become "Herr Professor," he described the whole affair to Fliess in what would become the end of their correspondence:

It was my own doing, in fact. When I came back from Rome, my enjoyment of life and work was somewhat heightened and that of martyrdom somewhat diminished . . . If I had taken the few steps three years ago, I would have been appointed three years earlier and been spared all sorts of things. Others are that clever without first having to go to Rome" (Freud 1887-1904, p. 457).

For Freud, it was time to abandon the hope of finding the biological counterpart to his model of the psychical apparatus and to start the adventure of Psychoanalysis. ■

#### ENDNOTES

1 "One shuts one's eyes and hallucinates; one opens them and thinks in words." Freud, S. (1895/1950). Project for a scientific psychology. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume I*, pp. 295-397.

2 For the description of the whole episode concerning Freud's professorship see Gay, P. *Freud, a life of our time*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1998.

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## The Making of Meaning in the License Qualifying Candidate: Some Experiential Reflections on Training

**Justine Duhr, MFA**

**License qualifying (LQ) candidates, a relatively new addition to the field of psychoanalysis, grapple not only with issues inherent in candidacy, but also myriad others specific to individuals without formal education in a mental health-related field. These candidates are tasked with negotiating the various intellectual, emotional, and practical demands of training without the benefit of a foundation in the field or sufficient acknowledgment of the unique challenges they face. This paper explores this unique training issue of LQ candidacy and poses the question: what does it mean to be an LQ candidate in the changing psychoanalytic landscape of today and tomorrow?**

I am a license qualifying (LQ) candidate. As I see it, we as members of the field do not yet know the full scope of meaning attached to this designation for the transmission of psychoanalysis and the successful training of analysts.

I remember vividly the moment my analyst realized and articulated for us both the vast distance between our respective training experiences. I was complaining for the umpteenth time about the multiple and varied difficulties of my training — the frustrations, disappointments, and despairs — when I saw a flash cross her face, an almost imperceptible shift in expression.

“It just hit home for me now,” she said, “how truly steep your learning curve is, just how much a license qualifying candidate has to contend with.”

I felt immense relief, as if a great load had been removed from my arms, one that I hadn’t fully known I was carrying because no one until that moment had acknowledged it was there.

An analyst for thirty years with a degree in social work, immersed in the mental health field for the entirety of her professional life — of course she wouldn’t have had immediate access into my experience as a writer-turned-therapist, with no background or prior training in mental health or a related field, trying desperately to navigate a new training, a new practice, a new field, a new way of looking at myself and the world: in many ways, a new life altogether.

My analyst and I, up until that point, had been laboring under the assumption that my current training experience was just as hers had been, unfolding in an intimately familiar, perhaps even nearly identical way, with all the same feelings evoked, the same predictable struggles of candidacy encountered. And why shouldn’t that be the case? We belong to the same institute, subscribe to the same relational approach, train according to the same tripartite structure — class, supervision, personal analysis — and even study under some of the same teachers and mentors. But in our tacit agreement (collusion?) that our respective trainings were twin experiences, we had overlooked a fundamental difference, *the* fundamental difference. More than that, we had failed to recognize the essence of that difference that hung, unobserved and unacknowledged, between us: that I am an LQ candidate and she was not.

The experience of candidacy is substantively different for LQ candidates than for traditional certificate program candidates. While no candidates are experienced analysts — nor are we expected to be, our training existing largely in service of addressing that lack — many are experienced therapists, or at least identify as individuals who help others professionally. Although contending with inexperience, especially clinical inexperience, and grappling with the uncomfortable feelings it evokes are unavoidable and necessary parts of training, the experience of arriving fresh to a field and cutting a new identity from whole cloth is reserved for one specific kind of candidate, the LQ candidate, who comes to analytic training from a non-mental health-related field. In this sense, training in an LQ program is a unique experience that, while it shares many challenges in common with a traditional training, also comes with its own unique and substantial difficulties that must be treated as such, for the benefit of the candidates and the future of the field they are preparing to enter.

We have come a long way since Freud published his treatise on lay analysis almost a century ago, in which he famously defends Reik’s right to practice and advocates for the inclusion of non-medical professionals in the field. Over the past ten years, since the induction by the state of the controversial licensed psychoanalyst (LP) designation, we have seen an influx of such lay analysts in the form of LQ candidates. Today, with our first LPs five years out of training, and more LQ candidates entering the field with every passing year, the question on our minds is no longer if non-medical professionals

should be allowed to practice (although for some more orthodox practitioners, doubts do linger), but rather, what does it mean that we do? We must now begin to wonder: what is it to be an LQ candidate as separate and distinct from the traditional training experience we have historically known? “The struggle for lay analysis must be fought through sometime or other,” Freud wrote to psychologist Paul Federn in 1926. “Better now than later” (Gay 1988, pp. 490-491). In a way, we are still fighting.

The fundamental difference among LQ candidates and others in experience, background, professional identity, and thus in the tenor and substance of the individual candidate’s training experience, has yet to be adequately acknowledged by the field or by those who practice within it. To be clear, it is not the case that institutes fail to differentiate between the training requirements of these two types of candidates. By and large, such extrinsic aspects of training as additional clinical hours and classes are addressed by each individual institute in the way that it deems most fitting and effective. What is lacking is acknowledgment by our institutes and by the field at large of certain intrinsic aspects of LQ training, a felt experience of the LQ candidate that is conflicted, confusing, and as yet unspoken. We have put the cart before the horse, so to speak, the state policy preceding the meanings we might, and ultimately must, ascribe. Thus, for a decade, we have been unable to sufficiently prepare LQ candidates for the full range of their training experience, important aspects of this experience having been felt — and felt deeply — but not fully articulated or acknowledged, and, therefore, left to the candidate to bear alone.

How are we to make LQ candidates feel less lonely and more validated? How are we to differentiate between the necessary elements of the training experience and the extraneous ones, which are unintentionally damaging and potentially detrimental to a candidate’s education and development as an analyst? How might we distinguish between a steep learning curve and a too-steep learning curve, one which threatens candidates to fall off the precipice? How might the (mis)handling of even one unacknowledged aspect of an LQ candidate’s training impact her ability to build a professional identity, first as a candidate and later as an analyst, upon an existing and not necessarily complementary foundation? How is the LQ candidate to make meaning, in the context of her training, of who she was, who she is, and who she will be?

The question of what constitutes a healthy, desirable, and successful training experience is by no means a new one. In *Still Practicing: The Heartaches and Joys of a Clinical Career* (2012), Sandra Buechler points to a problematic gap in training around the building of candidates’ professional identities:

We don’t adequately help candidates bridge what they learn from practice with what they learn from other walks of life. Candidates may come for training already well-versed as parents, teachers, clinicians, supervisors, readers, dancers, musicians, and so on. Too often what we transmit tells candidates to isolate analysis from everything else. Not only does that cut off potential sources of wisdom, but it also encourages the attitude that they have nothing of value to contribute from their own previous and concurrent experience... I think we encourage candidates to act as though they are blank pages, ready to be filled up. They bring nothing of value (p. 13).

Without citing the LQ candidate explicitly, Buechler seems to be calling for a similar kind of acknowledgment of a candidate’s pre-analytic identity in the work. Our training does not yet and needs to encourage and facilitate a layering of identity and meaning (a message that sounds something like, in my case, “You are a writer and an analyst-candidate both”) rather than a substitution, one for the other (“You were a writer; now you are an analyst-candidate”) — a position that is innately privileging, negating, and ultimately damaging. “I think this outlook can seriously compromise candidates’ self-respect and the development of a sense of integrity or wholeness,” Buechler continues. “We all need to bring everything we have ever learned about life to each analytic hour. Only then do we have any chance of feeling at all prepared” (p. 13). If a candidate is lucky, she might encounter such an inclusive perspective in one or more individuals — supervisors, teachers, and other senior analysts — over the course of her training, but a field-wide attitude, a unified stance on the relationship between who our candidates were and who they are training to be, and a consistent message about that relationship communicated to candidates both implicitly and explicitly, is still a far way off.

Anthropologist-turned-analyst Victoria Malkin, in an issue of *The Candidate Journal* devoted to an exploration of power (2010), writes about her struggles in training both as a newcomer to the field and as one of the first lay analysts at her institute. “At times, I could feel like a traitor, perhaps no longer worthy of this endeavor,” she writes. “I had come from another profession and was an interloper in a protected space.” She, too, received an unspoken message, a condition of inclusion that seemed to dictate what she as an outsider could and could not be: “‘Welcome to training,’ the institution of psychoanalysis seemed to be saying, ‘you too will become one of us (if we let you)’” (p. 86; emphasis in original). Such institutionalized notions about the role of the lay analyst or LQ candidate, and such judgments about the value and relevance of existing knowledge and experience, underlie the problematic training experience of a candidate population that grows

larger every year. Are we blank pages, to borrow Buechler’s metaphor? Or are we texts in progress, living breathing works being drafted, revised, and refined in perpetuity? Our institutes are conflicted about how to see us, and thus we are conflicted about how to see ourselves.

In the days, hours, and minutes leading up to my first-ever analytic session, I was anxious— more anxious than I can ever in recent memory remember being. Waiting for my patient, I paced the room. I felt activated and uncomfortable. My heart was pounding; my palms sweating. Unsure of how to successfully self-soothe in such unfamiliar circumstances, I drew from what I know: my yoga practice and the art of full, deep, conscious breathing. I breathed. I gave myself a series of silent pep talks, working hard to convince myself that whatever happened over the next 45 minutes it would be okay. *But would it really? I wondered. What would I do? What would I say? How should I be? Would she like me? Would I like her? Do such considerations matter? Would she enter into treatment with me? Would she not? And which would be worse?* The list of unanswerable questions and what-ifs seemed endless. But my primary anxiety, the worry that overshadowed all the other myriad worries, was that she would recognize my inexperience. As a writer by trade and identity, only a few short months into training, I was terrified of what that inexperience — my perceived and felt un-analyst-ness — might mean about me as an analyst-candidate, now and in the future.

I had, prior to that first session, raised the issue in supervision.

“What do I do if she asks me how long I’ve been doing this?” I asked tentatively.

“Just tell the truth,” my supervisor answered. “You’re a writing coach, so you can tell her that you’ve been helping people for a long time.”

My supervisor’s response is, in many ways, the practical application of Buechler’s call to integrate identity and experience, and also an implicit recognition of the importance of my non-analytic work and the unique perspective I bring to my training. I felt seen, not just as a person and a candidate, but as a particular kind of candidate: an LQ candidate whose background informs the work in a special way and brings a certain kind of value to the encounter. I felt relief in this moment, however fleeting — my supervisor’s acknowledgment of the entirety of my selfhood and candidacy doing much to contain my anxiety about who I was and who with my patients I might be.

Those difficult moments before my first-ever session stick with me. I think about them often. The experience was intense, confusing, and exhilarating; it was also troubling and hard to bear. At the same time that I was attempting to calm my overactive mind and body, I held in my mind a sharp awareness about those feelings. *Does everyone feel this nervous?* I asked myself. *What does it mean that I do?* I didn’t have the answers, of course, and I was at a loss for how I might find them, reluctant to admit to anyone the full extent of my anxiety for fear of what about me it might reveal. Opening the door to greet my first patient, stepping for the first time into the role of analyst, I might have looked as frazzled and disorganized on the outside as I felt on the inside, an anxious smile pasted to my face — needless to say, a far cry from how I wished to feel or to appear, which of course only added to my suffering.

It did get easier with time and practice as I began to see more patients, ease into my clinical role, and learn to be less self-involved during sessions. This particular patient, though, proved to be a challenge, strangely fitting to the brand of anxiety I brought to the encounter. As it turned out, she did ask about my inexperience; it was among her first inquiries, in fact. She asked about it a lot, in all kinds of ways, some more direct than others. “It must be hard to know what to focus on,” she said. “It’s not easy to learn a new skill.” Over the course of our abbreviated work together (she attended only a dozen sessions before leaving treatment without warning), she was careful not to let me forget my inexperience, no doubt sensing my sensitivity to and discomfort with the topic. I felt in those moments deeply criticized and shamed, yet later, with some distance and perspective, I felt stronger for the experience. I had faced my worst anxiety in the form of my patient’s hypervigilance, and lived through it.

Still, I can’t help but wonder how this experience might have differed had there been more recognition of my unique concerns, anxieties, struggles and challenges as an LQ candidate, not only from my supervisor in one small moment and my analyst in another, but also from all corners of my training experience. Some preparation for the potential impact of my LQ candidacy on my training experience; some recognition of how it might align with and diverge from both fellow LQ candidates’ and traditional certificate candidates’ experiences; some acknowledgment of my particular circumstances as an LQ candidate, would have gone a long way. I would have still been anxious, no doubt, but maybe not to such an extent. Perhaps my internal discomfort would have felt more tolerable, more acceptable, my initiation into clinical practice less

turbulent. I might have been spared the troubling added layer of anxiety about my anxiety, the feeling of being left alone in that unsettling hall of mirrors. With some acknowledgment, I might have felt seen, supported, and understood. Its absence, total or partial, has the potential to unintentionally communicate to the LQ candidate an ambivalence about her status, and perhaps even about her participation in the field.

Despite our progress over the last near-century, is it possible that such gaps in training, certain unattended aspects of LQ candidacy, represent a lingering anxiety about the presence of such candidates in the field? In our collective failure to acknowledge such fundamental differences, what are we trying not to know? What are we afraid of facing? In our eagerness for progress and the introduction of interdisciplinary perspectives, have we perhaps overcorrected, swinging from one extreme to another, from total exclusion to blind inclusion, and in so doing denying the very differences that we claim to value so highly? And have those anxieties disappeared, or have they merely been transferred from the initiators to the initiated, from the institution to the candidates? It has become, in effect, the candidates' burden to bear. Should it be?

Much has been written about psychoanalytic training, but not yet training in an LQ program. I have approached this new subject from the vantage point of my own personal experiences as a candidate entering the field as a writer, simply because that is what I know. I have attempted to put into words a raw, unarticulated inner experience of a training that has been for me alternately troubling and thrilling, but always stimulating. I have found doing so important as an entry into an exploration of the wider LQ candidate experience, far beyond the limited scope of my own small self.

I have not attempted to provide answers, but only to raise questions for consideration and contemplation, and to begin to think through these largely unexplored but prominent aspects of the training experience, as well as what meanings we might attach to them. We do not yet know what the LQ candidate means for training and for the field at large, but perhaps a first step is to acknowledge that there is meaning to be made, separate and distinct from the familiar meanings we have grown accustomed to. Eventually, we might take a cue from the work itself, to use our newfound understanding of the situation to recognize what we have gotten ourselves into and do the best we can, together, to thoughtfully work our way out of it. ■

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## Carrying Roots in Mind: On Homeland, Language and Psychoanalysis

**Tuba Tokgoz, PhD**

**The author writes about the dual journey of being in psychoanalysis and moving to another country.**

When airport customs officers heard my name on the day of my first arrival at New York's JFK airport, they could not suppress their laughter: "Tuba! Like the instrument?" they asked me with astonishment. At that moment, it occurred to me that in this new land the meaning of my name was not only completely lost but also had become very amusing. After a while, I got used to questions like, "Is Tuba your real name?" or "Does it really mean the instrument?" In order to make communication easier, I quickly learned to add the phrase, "like the instrument" after introducing myself to strangers.

Losing the meaning of one's name is one of the first experiences that foreigners encounter in a new land. Tuba's literal meaning in Turkish is a tree in heaven that is upside-down: its roots are at the top and its branches are at the bottom. It is uncanny that this uprooted, upside-down tree has become a metaphor for my experience of displacement. Perhaps, when one's roots are removed from their familiar ground, one is forced to find a way to carry those roots, in the mind.

Being in psychoanalysis and moving to another country have many commonalities.<sup>1</sup> They both represent a journey to an unfamiliar, foreign landscape (one is mental, the other is physical); they both involve regression, mourning and separation; and they both offer opportunity for psychic rebirth, growth, and integration. Because of these striking parallels, going through these life-changing journeys simultaneously brings a dramatic quality to one's experience. Yet, as I discuss in this paper, being in a foreign land became more bearable for me with the concurrent experience of being in psychoanalysis.

I came to New York from Istanbul to continue my clinical psychology doctoral training at The New School, which had been previously interrupted when intense feelings of guilt around separation led me to return to Istanbul. Daring to come to New York the second time was an even more difficult decision than it had been the first time, and one that required me to leave all my loved ones again: my family, my friends and the man who wanted to marry me. I was feeling as if I had committed a crime and yet I did not want to escape from my conflicts this time as I had tried to do before.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that I found the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTAR) at this juncture in my life, when my act of leaving home had caused so much emotional turbulence. I always felt that to initiate my separation process, I had to go oceans away from home, which might have symbolized a deeper longing for a journey within myself.

Like all newcomers to a foreign language, I was threatened not only by the cognitive gap between the mind and the word, but also by the emotional gap between the word and the feeling. In one's native language, words have an emotional anchor that makes communication more tangible and, maybe because of that, more courageous. Although I began learning English when I was 10 years old and was proficient in it when I came to New York, I was still at a loss because I felt that I did not have the poetry and playfulness in English in the way I have when speaking Turkish. I worried that because of these inevitable gaps (including my accent), I would not be able to connect with my analyst and with my patients. How would I free associate when I did not have the tools to express my experience fully? How would I do the talking cure when I did not have the rich vocabulary of native speakers? I was coming from a country that did not even have a psychoanalytic institute. How would I adapt to this new culture?

These gaps and differences, in all their linguistic and cultural dimensions, terrified me as I was beginning my training at IPTAR. Being a "legal alien" on paper poignantly described my ongoing sense of estrangement. I was sure that I would be an outsider in the land of psychoanalysis — a feeling that resonated with the Turkish meaning of my name.

Unsurprisingly, my initial experience as an analytic patient was dominated by preoccupations with self-expression. On the one hand, I was thrilled that I might have a new and perhaps even freer way to express myself in English; on the other hand, I missed the ease of speaking in Turkish. It was disorienting initially to hear my own voice speaking in English about a past that was infused with my mother tongue. Kristeva (1991) describes this in-between experience beautifully when she writes,



Not to speak your own mother tongue. To live with sounds, logics that are cut off from the nocturnal memory of the body, from the bittersweet sleep of childhood. To carry within yourself ... the language of once-upon-a-time that fades without ever leaving you ... You have the impression that the new language is your resurrection: a new skin, a new sex. But the illusion is torn apart when you listen to yourself ... and the melody of your own voice comes back to you in a bizarre way, from nowhere ... Thus, between two languages, your realm is silence (p. 15).

I became acquainted with this silence whenever I could not put into words my own experience. I quickly discovered that some of the Turkish words that I naturally use to represent my experience are missing in English. In Turkish, there is a word for compassionate love (*sevgi*) and another word for passionate love (*aşk*), while in English there is only one word for all kinds of love. Again, in Turkish there are various words for different shades of sadness (*efkâr, hüzn*) and for displacement (*gurbet, yad eller*); words loaded with emotions that I felt were lost in translation. There also are no direct translations for some words that refer to trusted, true friendships (*dost, yaren*) or the more affectionate conversations one engages in with such friends (*dertleşmek, muhabbet etmek*).

Perhaps we can speculate that what is most valued in a given culture ultimately is what is represented in the language. Born of a more individualistic and less relational culture, the English language has more words that highlight independence, individuality, and competition. Words such as *challenge, loser, winner, survivor, survive*, and *assertive* have no exact equivalents in Turkish. In line with this, Turkish has many words that emphasize the relative lack of control humans have over their own destiny. Words such as *tevekkül, alin yazısı, kismet*, and *nasip* are all associated with predestination and the need to surrender to one's fate. None of these words has a one-word English substitution. As I was dealing with my own separation struggles in analysis, English words that do not exist in Turkish became more salient to me — perhaps because it felt as if qualities such as “assertiveness” were absent from my behavioral repertoire. Communicating with my analyst and working with him on these difficulties involved teaching him the Turkish words for “love,” “melancholy,” and “dislocation” (and even some curse words I felt were essential), as well as learning from him new English words, idioms, and expressions.

In the commute between English and Turkish, I increasingly recognized not only the missing words in both languages, but also how different ways of being and relating in the two cultures are manifested in each language. For example, in the beginning of my analysis, when my analyst called attention to me as a subject by adding “you” or “for you” to his statements, I would feel very sad and lonely without knowing why. I remember that I was uncomfortable even speaking to him about how sad I felt when he would address me as “you.” I gradually understood that my sadness stemmed from not having a similar emphasis in my mother tongue. In the Turkish grammar, there are constructions that feature a “hidden subject,” in which the verb indicates the subjective personal pronoun and there is, therefore, no need to emphasize it. I also realized that in Turkish, “you” and “I” are highlighted only when there is a conflict between two people. There is even an expression that describes it: “*sen-ben kavgası*,” which means, “you and I fight,” as if “you” and “I” are detached only when there is a disagreement. Otherwise the assumption is that *we* are one. Perhaps the structure of a Turkish self (one that is more communal and less individualistic) is represented in the way the Turkish language is organized — it seems unnatural or even impossible to express one's subjectivity in communication. Perhaps this example reflects my own struggles around separation; perhaps these issues would have come up even with a Turkish-speaking analyst. Yet, I find it striking that I discovered the distinct emotional resonance of speaking each language only in the commute between the two in my analysis: I longed for the pleasure of togetherness that I felt in my mother tongue but also for the joy of individuality that I felt the English language offered in an exciting way.

Perhaps in an attempt to find a familiar emotional landscape in my analysis, I began listening more to the tone of my analyst's voice than to his words. Although the words and the structure felt somewhat “foreign” to me, the music of his voice felt natural — reminiscent of home. I felt that the song of my mother tongue resonated within his voice. This was perhaps the beginning of my reinternalizing English in a different, more emotional way.

Over time, my second language has attained increasingly more emotional power and has thus started to feel less foreign. This change began to appear to me in unexpected places, like humor and dreams, and I believe that my being in psychoanalysis is what allowed this shift to happen. We learn our mother tongue in the context of lived experience — in the preverbal emotional interaction between mother and baby as they participate in the playful process of transmitting language. Perhaps speaking in a foreign language in one's analysis strongly evokes this earliest time — the time when words have not yet attained full meaning and the emotional and nonverbal interplay is the main channel of communication. From the perspectives of both analysand and analyst, I have come to believe strongly that something more than words is communicated in psychoanalysis, and that nonverbal, emotional exchange is what fuels this highly personal journey.



What gradually saved me from painful feelings of loss and alienation has been the deep connectedness the psychoanalytic process offers, both to analysand and to analyst. This connection in the space between two people has such potential that despite cultural and language barriers, it can allow contact beyond words, through the language of emotions. What we learn about ourselves in this interpersonal space — from both sides of the couch — can take us beyond our selves and transform us. Had I not had the togetherness provided by the analytic process, I would not have been able to bear the longing generated by the separation from my motherland, and by feeling caught between two very different worlds of being and relating. It is as if this space of connection and meaning was the very thing that kept my two homes together internally, despite the impossibility of bringing them together physically. Experiencing this involvement has made me feel that I am at home.

My training at IPTAR has facilitated the very personal journey that I had hoped to take by coming to New York — a journey through which old feelings and experiences found expression as my analytic tongue became English. It is as if I found my childhood on the other side of the world — a time when I lived in a small village by the sea near Istanbul and my extended family and the whole neighborhood took care of me while my mother worked. Similarly, at IPTAR, my analyst, supervisors, teachers, and friends took care of me as I longed for my motherland. IPTAR has gradually become a familiar and new place of belonging. It is as if my analytic training offered me a second chance to reevaluate my life, and to reinvent myself.

As I already mentioned, some of the processes involved in being a candidate resemble the processes of being a foreigner in a new country. First and foremost, candidates are required to learn a new language: the language of psychodynamics. Perhaps that is why Laplanche and Pontalis' dictionary (1973) — one of the classic texts of psychoanalytic literature — is titled "The Language of Psychoanalysis." Every psychoanalytic candidate learns this "foreign language of psychoanalysis" in order to "read" themselves and others, and to experience the world of relationships in a multi-dimensional way. Second, getting acquainted with unconscious processes may initially make one feel as though one is in an unfamiliar, strange land that is equally exciting and terrifying. In this sense, candidates learn to commute between unknown (mental) geographies — states of mind and ways of being — both in their own analyses and in the analyses they conduct. Third, candidacy evokes the sense of being on a journey that occurs in an in-between space where one is an "inside-outsider" in a process of becoming. Like foreigners, candidates possess a unique outsider stance that makes possible genuine understanding, vision, and creativity. I believe that this is the space of psychoanalysis — an open, freeing space that not only embraces otherness, difference, and multiplicity but also fosters them. In this sense, a candidate is like a nomad, an explorer who is willing to dwell within and between multiple worlds and experiences.

As I reflect on this dual journey of being in a foreign land and being in psychoanalysis, I notice that I now have a different sense of the intermediate area between Istanbul and New York, and between Turkish and English. There is less sadness about this in-between space, and less silence there, too. I now find that having traversed this space allows me more freedom and fluidity to commute without feeling extreme guilt or loss — between languages, cultures, cities, and states of mind. This open and accepting space is something that I carry within me no matter where I am or what language I speak. If we can dream in more than one language, then we can also symbolize and do analysis in more than one language — that is, if we trust the creative work of unconscious process, even when the physical or psychic geography of this exploration feels completely foreign at first. ■

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ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I use “being a candidate” and “being an analysand” interchangeably because I consider them to be similar processes containing great potential for growth. One can choose to stay in this space even after graduation.

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## Splitting: The Meaning of Switching Institutes

**Karen Dougherty, MA, RP**

**I live in a city with two psychoanalytic institutes. I trained for two years in the newer, “contemporary” institute before switching to the older, “conservative” one, at which I am now a second-year candidate. In this paper I explain what motivated my decision, the challenges in its execution, and how it has affected me. I also explore the meaning of such a move, how switching institutes might be read and held by the psychoanalytic community, what sibling rivalries may have been stirred up, and whether it might be possible to leverage the experience and my “place” as a subject to help “bridge the divide.”**

Coming to know one’s “place” as a psychoanalytic candidate is a complex journey. Despite being at the bottom of a hierarchical structure, candidates possess power. They embody the hopes and competencies of their institute; they keep it alive, financially viable, and in a state of renewal. They are the conduit through which traditions, orientations, and values are passed on via teaching, training analysis, and supervision. But their power is often disavowed and rarely explicitly exercised. When I left one institute to train at another, I expressed my agency as a candidate in the most blatant manner. There have been many instances during my journey where this has been made clear to me, leading me to think deeply both about the wider meaning of such a move and also its particular effect on me as a psychoanalytic thinker and practitioner. I believe my experience of changing institutes has afforded me a unique vantage point to offer a commentary on broader issues related to candidacy.

I live in a city in which there are two institutes: the “old” (the Toronto Institute of Psychoanalysis or TIP) and the “new” (the Toronto Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis or TICP). When there are multiple psychoanalytic institutes in any city, there is always a *story*. The TICP, for example, was founded following a mass defection a quarter of a century ago. I trained for two years at the Contemporary before switching to the TIP three years ago. Making the decision to start over at the “old” institute was no small matter. Training is expensive, psychically taxing, and time-consuming, it is true, but there were also political and social considerations.

The history of psychoanalytic institutes is notoriously fraught with splits, exiles, “discussions,” scandals, and other persecutions. These splits and anxieties become embedded in the psyches of institutes and societies and are both consciously and unconsciously transmitted to candidates. When a split takes place within a psychoanalytic community, it is always traumatic and not always adequately metabolized by either body, as history shows. A mere seven years after the American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA) first provided for the “recognition and licensure of psychoanalytical institutes” in the U.S. (Freud 1934, p. 363), chaos ensued at the New York Psychoanalytic, as Kenneth Eisold colorfully describes:

American psychoanalysis began to split apart, literally, on 29 April 1941 when Karen Horney, Clara Thompson, and three colleagues stalked out of a meeting of the New York Psychoanalytic Society. Clara Thompson reported that the five rebels sang the spiritual “Go Down, Moses” as they jubilantly walked down the street, expressing the deeply felt — if highly dramatized — interpretation that they were victims escaping an authoritarian power seeking to enslave them. (Eisold 1998, p. 871)

These “rebels” went on to found several important organizations, including the William Alanson White Institute and the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis.

The New York split is just one example among many. Factions, splintering, and simmering tensions always have plagued psychoanalytic institutes and societies. Fractiousness and schisms are perhaps inevitable in organizations that traffic in the unconscious. Eisold theorizes that because “psychoanalysts tend to be scornful of institutional life, given the fact that they practice alone, and that typically their allegiances are to their own analysts and supervisors and the schools they represent, not their institutes. Thus, the schismatic solution seems relatively attractive” (Eisold 1998, p. 873). Further, he acknowledges that “each schism is a response to a particular conflict at a particular moment in history: a vital interest is always at stake” (Eisold 1998, p. 873). That vital interest may be autonomy or respect; it may be of the theoretical persuasion; and it may unconsciously mirror larger political realities. Across the Atlantic, as the New York Society was at war, the so-called “Controversial Discussions” were raging in London against a backdrop of German air raids. Although no new institutes emerged from these fierce debates, the resulting “Groups” — the Kleinian, the Freudian, and the Middle or Independent — fracture the London Institute to this day.

In the early 1990s, psychoanalyst Estelle Shane helped form a new Los Angeles psychoanalytic institute because,

she says, “I was offended by the way psychoanalysis was being taught at the American Psychoanalytic Association affiliated institute where I was trained, and in which I was a training analyst” (Breckenridge 2007). Disappointing experiences, and a growing interest in the theories of Heinz Kohut, led Shane and others to feel that “it was time for a change, time for the creation of an institute independent of an overall governing body, for an institute that was organized by a pluralistic curriculum where no one treatment model trumped all others” (Breckenridge 2007). The resulting Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis relates its origin story on its website:

In 1991, twelve senior training analysts in Los Angeles congregated to discuss their respective concerns about the state of contemporary psychoanalysis. In contrast to the climate of the time, they wanted to create an institute that would be self-regulated and not compelled to look to external figures for permission or approval to operate as it saw fit ... Out of their meetings the twelve founding mothers and fathers created the Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis (<http://icpla.edu/about/>).

Beneath this benign creation story lurks a darker narrative, however. One of the “founding fathers” of the group, David Markel, is more pointed about the reasons for its mutiny: in pushing for more openness and transparency members of the group were subject to “petty, even puerile attacks” by the “old guard” who were “undemocratic ... authoritarian, exclusionary and self-serving” (Markel, “Autobiographical note,” <http://icpla.edu/history/>).

At the same historical moment, a group of Toronto analysts was mounting its own insurrection, inspired in part by Stephen Mitchell and Jay Greenberg’s relational revolution in New York.<sup>1</sup> The TICP founding narrative echoes that of the Los Angeles group: a new guard throwing off the shackles of the old; flexible, pluralistic, and open-minded as opposed to dogmatic and authoritarian. When a new institute splits off, it is a *de facto* repudiation of the old, a persecutory event, a betrayal, a violent act; the perpetration of a narcissistic wound. In my view, it is almost always *splitting*: a declaration of Us (good) vs. Them (bad). To this day in Toronto, there exist caricatures of each institute: the TIP is stuffy, formal, and rigidly Freudian; the TICP is lax, disorganized, and so “relational” as to be non-psychoanalytic. Nevertheless, many instructors teach at both Institutes, leading one to suspect that “narcissism of minor differences” might be at play in exaggerating distinctive identities (Freud 1918, p. 199).

I perceived differences between the two institutes that led me to switch: these included curriculum, teaching, and theoretical underpinnings, as well as training analysis, approach to candidate selection, and supervision. The TIP starts candidates off with a foundational year dedicated to reading the works of Sigmund Freud. By contrast, the first-year TICP syllabus proceeds along “comparative-integrative” lines: a module called “The Freudian Framework,” including an overview of ego psychology and contemporary Freudian practice, is followed by modules on Object Relations Theory and Self Psychology. The final first-year module, Relational Psychoanalysis, is the most heavily emphasized and enthusiastically taught. It colors the teaching of all modules and reflects the fundamental beliefs of those who formed the institute.

The TICP was founded mainly by psychologists and is affiliated with Division 39 of the American Psychological Association. As a non-psychologist with a background in literature, film, and British object relations theory, I was something of an outlier among my fellow candidates. Being an outlier has its challenges but also, in my experience, generates a unique perspective that allows for greater freedom: to ask questions, to disagree, to *not* understand. This was my position and stance at the TICP from the start and is part of the reason, I believe, that I was able to countenance the notion of switching institutes.

When I applied to the TICP, I erroneously thought that relational psychoanalytic theory was the American version of British object relations. Over time, I came to believe that it had more in common with psychology than psychoanalysis. In a way that I could not at first put my finger on, it did not feel truly *psychoanalytic* to me. I could not have known this without spending a period of time nourished, as it were, at the “relational breast.” I found myself frustrated with some of the seminars and assigned papers. I began to identify, with the help of discussions with like-minded classmates, it must be said, the specific issues that were troubling to me. Where was the unconscious in the relational papers? It appeared to be missing, disavowed, and replaced by an emphasis on affect. Why was so much time given to the issue of self-disclosure, in readings, in classroom instruction, in conferences? Why were words like “resistance” and “defense” so resisted and defended against? Why was Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, vociferously maligned, little more than a straw man to be knocked down at every turn? Those of us with serious questions about, for example, our perceived disavowal of the unconscious in the relational papers, or the dangers of gratification in self-disclosure, were often met with impatience or, worse, dismissed out of hand. Increasingly I felt pressure to toe the line and to stifle my epistemophilic tendencies.

Another major difference between the two Toronto institutes is in the approach to training analysis. The TIP has approved training analysts and supervisors. The TICP does not. At the TICP, any psychoanalyst can be considered; there is no

list of approved training analysts. This innovation is presumably meant to address the sense that the traditional institutional approach to training analysts, as one senior analyst once told me, is little more than a “Ponzi scheme.” Free to choose, I happened, accidentally really, to find a training analyst who was TIP-affiliated. Before long, it became clear to me that the reputation of the TIP as stuffy, rigidly Freudian, and hopelessly outdated was undeserved. It might be said that this means that the lack of a training analyst system at the TICP, designed to avoid perpetuating ideological authoritarianism, worked brilliantly. It enabled me to receive classroom instruction at the TICP while receiving a TIP training analysis. This pluralism gave me experience with and insight into both institutes. It inspired me to think for myself.

As I struggled at the TICP, I began to fantasize about the ways in which the TIP might be a better fit. I was being told that the TIP was stuck in drive theory, that members were hopelessly out of touch, abstinent, and authoritarian. This was markedly out of line with my experience on the couch and made me wonder what other false narratives were circulating about the TIP. In my first year at the TICP I attended an information session at the TIP. It was extremely well-organized. There were presentations by senior analysts, recent graduates (including one who had trained at both institutes), and a fourth-year candidate. There was a collegiality and friendliness that was warming. Moreover, I perceived a fundamental respect for the ways in which the unconscious operates in groups. The session was handled in such a way as to diminish any persecutory anxiety. Curiosity was welcome, encouraged. Ultimately, to me, what was on offer felt like psychoanalysis. It felt like *home*. I believe I made the decision to switch institutes at that presentation, although I did not apply for another year.

Another difference between the two institutes that profoundly affected my choice to switch concerns candidate selection. The TICP divides candidates into academic and clinical streams (though candidates attend classes together). Academic candidates are those who either do not have a clinical practice or who do not wish to do control cases. They do not graduate as practicing psychoanalysts. Clinical candidates are *bona fide* psychoanalysts after completing four years of classroom instruction and three control cases. Although I had a background in psychoanalytic theory, I had very limited clinical experience at the time and thus was accepted into the academic stream. I asked for permission to work toward transitioning into the clinical stream and was told it would be possible — once the TICP decided on the necessary requirements. It became evident that the faculty could not agree on those requirements and at the time of my departure they were still not ratified. It was rumored that there were those on the faculty who did not support the transition of the academic candidates into the clinical stream (or, indeed, even the acceptance of academic candidates into the program).<sup>2</sup>

Always these sorts of divisions in the upper ranks are transmitted unconsciously to candidates. If not carefully handled they create fallout. And this is what happened in my class, in which there was an institutionally structured “us” versus “them”: an internal split, as it were. According to some clinical candidates, academics were “too theoretical” and could not contribute adequately to clinical discussions. The clinicians, according to the academics, “fled from theory” into concrete clinical examples. We had our first casualty in the first month when a clinical candidate quit in vocal dismay over being placed in the same class as the academics. The academics, in turn, myself included, felt as though a large red “A” were painted on their foreheads.

This manufactured split was never adequately interpreted or contained and resulted in a great deal of persecutory anxiety in the group. It contributed to my departure because I did not feel particularly valued or held in mind. I wondered whom the split served: was I a cash cow? Was I accepted into the program only because I applied? Were the academic candidates in fact rejects? I was often left with the sense that my ideas and opinions did not carry weight. This became all the more palpable as I wrestled openly with the relational model.<sup>3</sup>

It is true that anxiety and controversy around how candidates are selected and trained is as old as psychoanalysis.<sup>4</sup> Charles Levin suggests there is a climate of paranoia going back to Freud’s “inner circle” in which “the applicant for psychoanalytic training is viewed as a questionable claimant to the grand psychoanalytic legacy” (Levin 2014, p. 179). There is always concern that candidates reflect the values of the institute. The TICP skirted the complexities of candidate selection by accepting candidates they did not feel were suitable with the provision that they not be trained as analysts: an institutional paradox. Interestingly, the TICP was formed, in part, in answer to a prejudice against lay analysts (specifically psychologists) but then moved to devaluing or excluding non-psychological candidates — the lay question in disguise. This approach to academic candidates represents an unconscious recapitulation and reversal of the historic exclusion of psychologists from American psychoanalytic institutes. Where historically the “lay candidate” was a non-physician, at the TICP, the “lay candidate” was a candidate with little or no clinical experience as a psychologist, physician, therapist, or social worker. The academics were not kept out of the institute; but they were separate, distinct, and the *de facto* lesser candidates.

Another dissimilarity in the two institutes’ approaches to candidates is tied to new licensing procedures for



psychotherapists in the province of Ontario. Training institutes in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis now must decide if they will apply for status that would give those of us without a college (that is, those of us who are not psychologists, medical doctors, or social workers) license to practice psychotherapy in Ontario. Psychoanalysts in Ontario are required to belong to a college. All “lay analysts” have had to apply for licensure. Because most of the TICP candidates, at least the “clinical” candidates, already belonged to a college, the institute decided not to apply. Academic candidates, even those who successfully switched into the clinical stream, were on their own, and would have to apply as individuals. In contrast, the TIP took the time to go through a rigorous application process that necessitated updating and filling out the curriculum with additional courses on psychopharmacology, ethics, and jurisprudence, gender and race issues, and so on. Their work paid off and their application was recently approved. This means that all graduates of the TIP will automatically be licensed to practice psychotherapy in Ontario. Through this arduous process, the TIP showed its dedication to *all* candidates. I managed on my own to register as a psychotherapist but it is the principle that stands out for me: the TIP has clearly conveyed its commitment to and valuing of lay, or academic, analysts.

When it comes to splits, the abandoned, “old” institute is the Father whose phallic authority is vanquished and purloined (Freud 1913, p. 132). What I have come to see, however, is that a new institute, while seeking to murder the old, also gives birth to it. The “old” is always reinvigorated. Sometimes that means re-entrenchment, as in the case of the New York split mentioned above, but more often it leads to a period of self-analysis and growth. The formation of the TICP, for example, opened the way to more non-medical candidates at both institutes (Carveth 2006). In addition, the TIP has embraced a wider range of psychoanalytic ideas and orientations. It has become more pluralistic and fertile. Additionally, I believe that leaving the *old* institute for the *new* would have been a less radical move than leaving the *new* for the *old*. My rather public decision most certainly invited introspection and self-analysis at the TICP. Several faculty members reached out to me to ask me about my reasons for leaving and to ascertain whether there was something they could do to improve the program. Some expressed sadness; others, hurt feelings. There are perhaps those who are angry with me and feel abandoned or criticized. Undoubtedly there are many projections, few having to do with me as a person. Some of my classmates and instructors have expressed admiration at my ongoing pursuit of what is right for me, despite the hurdles.

I am, at the very least, the object of ongoing curiosity and interest. People want to know whether I had to “start over from the beginning” (I did: moving through four years of training with my cohort feels essential to my future. My classmates will be my family, peer support, and community going forward). People want to know why I switched. One reason was pure practicality: my current institute is IPA-affiliated and that means something to me. In essence, though, I felt the adherence to tradition in the teaching and supervision more personally and professionally containing. I came to understand that my own learning style requires grounding in the fundamentals. The emphasis on reading Freud so fully in the first year ensures candidates imbibe the *way* Freud thinks, not only *what* he thinks.<sup>5</sup>

There is no doubt that as a candidate I have benefitted from the Toronto split 25 years ago and the ensuing revitalization of the TIP. I also have benefitted from the two years I spent at the TICP, an experience I value deeply, and that introduced me to so many ideas and thinkers. I believe I have avoided becoming a *persona non grata* by continuing to associate professionally and socially with former instructors and classmates and attending TICP conferences and events: we are, after all, committed to the shared project of psychoanalysis, even if we occasionally differ on what constitutes psychoanalysis. I have wondered if it is possible to leverage my experience and “place” as a subject to help “bridge the divide.” This is perhaps merely the wishful thinking of a budding psychoanalyst (or the child of a broken home): to bring together warring factions by understanding the perspective of each.

As to how this switch may have been perceived at each Institute I can only speculate. Was I stolen away or was I a traitor? Did my leaving set off alarm bells, trigger a call to arms? I have many fantasies about this but little direct evidence. The TIP may have seen my application for acceptance as a vindication of sorts. I suspect that my currency as a candidate has been augmented at both institutes. On several occasions, people at both institutes have given my name to prospective psychoanalytic candidates so that I might help them decide to which institute to apply. I am thus seen as having some authority as a result of my personal experience. I suspect, too, that for some I am an object of suspicion or derision: a “fallen woman.” There are a few at the TICP who do not acknowledge me at conferences now, which is painful but sadly not unexpected.

Leaving one institute for another was a risk I believe was worth taking in order to get what I felt was the best training for me. That risk has paid off. I feel more contained, more held in mind. Moreover, my classmates come from many disciplines, from psychiatry, law, philosophy, and theatre. From the start, we each were made to feel that our unique background contributes valuable and unique insight. We learn from each other. We are cohesive and supportive. This



holding environment has doubtless made me a better therapist, one who is better able to hold my patients. My practice, which was in its infancy when I started at the TICP, is now robust. I was accepted at the TIP on the condition that I do two twice-weekly psychotherapy cases in supervision before my first official clinical case. I have completed both and am now pursuing my first four times a week clinical case. The supervision has been excellent and has allowed me to track the gains I have made: in my ability to listen for unconscious communication in the transference; in providing a solid frame for my patients; and in carefully attending to and using my countertransference in the service of the analysis.

I was recently asked if I would “do it again”: did I have any regrets? Not so far. Yes, had I stayed, I would be finished with classes by now, presumably working through my control cases, and nearly done. But it is my feeling that when we make such a consequential choice in life, a part of us continues on the road not taken. There is a part of me that is still with my classmates at the TICP, and they are still with me. This may sound like a fantasy, but it feels real to me. ■

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, Stephen Mitchell and Jay Greenberg’s seminal 1983 textbook, is considered the founding document of American relational psychoanalysis. The supplanting of drive theory with object relations theory led to many institutional splits across North America. Significantly, both writers are clinical psychologists.

<sup>2</sup> This reflects a wider split in psychoanalysis between those who theorize and those who practice, which can be traced to Freud’s “Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis,” in which he states that theory must come from clinical experience (Freud 1912).

<sup>3</sup> In total, four of the academic candidates left the program; two have transitioned successfully into the clinical stream; one completed the academic training only (and cannot practice as a psychoanalyst); the rest are finishing their control cases.

<sup>4</sup> One has only to read Freud’s *A Question of Lay Analysis* (Freud 1926) to engage with one of the earliest disputes.

<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to imagine Cornel West or Gayatri Spivak or Judith Butler being unfamiliar with the philosophical canon of Plato, Descartes, or Hegel. For me, Freud is our Plato and not a footnote or straw man.

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## On Failure

Marcus M. Silverman, MA, LP, NCPsyA

**The experiences and history of the newly licensed, post-training (quote-endquote) analyst are explored in relation to ontological notions of *failure*, particularly as this experience relates to psychoanalysis and the mental health field. The paper moves from an exploration of failure into the “failure” of a consultation and circles back to address the deeply-entwined relationship between loss and the psychoanalyst: the counterintuitive, “therapeutic” nature of the work, where patients fantasize about being protected, or inoculated, against loss, and the more nuanced understanding that analysis is used to process, and in a sense become quite intimate with, loss.**

Thus it may lie hid until the time comes when it may safely venture into the light of day, or until someone else who reaches the same opinions and conclusions can be told: ‘In darker days there lived a man who thought as you did.’

Freud (1939/1955, p. 42)

Desire, a function central to all human experience, is the desire for nothing nameable. And at the same time this desire lies at the origin of every variety of animation. If being were only what it is, there wouldn’t even be room to talk about it. Being comes into existence as an exact function of this lack.

Lacan (1991, p. 224)

I have been thinking about failure a lot, pretty concretely since the day I heard word from the New York Office of Professions that I had received my license to practice psychoanalysis. Like the traversing of all empty spaces between *being* and *becoming*— the pupil and the teacher, the child and the adult, the student and the graduate, and, naturally, the candidate and the (licensed) psychoanalyst — getting a crinkled up form letter (there was a partial boot footprint on the envelope) was somehow the absurd, banal culmination of eight years of expensive, alienating, rewarding, heartbreaking institutional training, somewhat of a letdown.

I have been thinking about failure, and by extension, success, and what they signify within the profession of psychoanalysis, such as it is — and what those same diametric things mean to my patients, and the ways in which those things are the same and the ways in which they are different. For what seems like the entire expanse of my analytic training, these things felt deeply inverted. By that I mean, a patient, experiencing a fragment of themselves as a failure, and thus, seeking out psychoanalysis, and by extension, me, was often perceived by me as a success: “I got a new one,” or the myriad of other ways we put into language our enthusiasm at receiving a new patient. Conversely, the end of a treatment is by all accounts — I’ve become comfortable with this superficial generalization — experienced by the patient as a success at best or with ashamed relief at worst. That is, “I don’t need this anymore,” or “I got a new job so I can no longer attend our sessions,” or “I don’t think you and I are a good fit,” were experienced equally by me as failures. For the patient, not needing the analyst is a success, and for the desperate analyst, a failure, and vice versa.

A relative of mine is a psychiatrist at Bellevue. While visiting him several summers ago at his home in upstate New York — in the midst of concluding my training — a neighbor from down the street, a retired psychoanalyst, dropped in to visit. Sitting across from me in her finery, the way old, well-to-do, intellectual women dress, she said over and over again in so many words that she is not “envious of anyone starting a practice today,” and how “the field may be doomed.” She shook her head at me pityingly. I think now that I will always remember this woman. If I can make it to old age, and work in this field; if I can be confronted with a scenario in which I want to whine ruinously to a young colleague about how dreadful the field is (as if it never before was completely impossible to be a psychoanalyst, spiritually and financially); if I can feel that urge and resist it, and say something meaningful and true and enlivening — I may be able to die without regrets.

My professional life at that point was taken up with around 10 low-fee appointments per week, and a great deal of writing and reading to occupy myself, being a graduate fellow and teaching assistant at the institute where I trained, and otherwise filled with unanswered, or unanswerable phone calls or emails and stilted interactions in broken English with the Cigna credentialing representative assigned to my case. There was a lot of baleful staring at my bank balance as well. My wife had, in an effort to comfort me, developed the framework that I was single again, romantically, back on the dating scene. I was waiting for an object to reach out to me or be reached by me. Someone to desire to be in my presence. To say nothing

of the fact that I was quite miserable when dating, too. It was really pathetic, actually, and not at all in keeping with what I spent 10 years learning and believing: the neutral, unconcerned concern of the psychoanalyst, the mantra -- *why should I want them more than they want me?*— ringing in my ears, amid the rushing of the white noise machine, as I sat in my office alone staring out the window on a rainy, winter morning.

And still, I am working hard at working hard these days. Somehow, still, perfectly so, in that nebulous way psychoanalysts “work.” Recently, I have discovered that no one who is a psychoanalyst “works” — psychoanalysts have the privilege of being psychoanalysts, in lieu of working. I am, right this moment, writing a paper on *failure*, and the absurdity of the whole thing makes me erupt in laughter. The killing joke: me, in my office alone with hours between appointments, writing a paper about failure. Everything to say and nothing to say and more so, the impossibility of wanting to say anything at all. The thing is, I am very much alive these days. I am meeting and listening to tens of people for the first time and yet, simultaneously, it is intuitively, mystically familiar; perhaps a kind of *déjà vu* or fantasy we might associate with dreamwork. That is, over time, I have somehow lived myself into my own life.

I worked for a time before I received my license at several low-fee sliding scale clinics around Manhattan, primarily at my institute’s clinic, The Consultation and Referral Service of the Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies (CMPS). I enjoyed the modesty of training work and more than not found it a relief to disregard the financial aspects of the patient’s treatment — I had a terrible day job doing editorial work to pay my rent. I now realize this simply complemented my own fervent idealizations of the field and the work. At CMPS, I would be doing, I thought, pure psychoanalysis. I made it clear to the graduate fellows assigning cases that I would take any patient, with any economic status. This is a kind of failure of analytic training — or, at least, my own. Charging analysts very low fees — a very real necessity for those patronizing the clinic — provides candidates with plenty of clinical experience but robs us of both self-valuation — that is, the belief that our work is deserving of a reasonable fee, something with which I ontologically continue to struggle — and the transference money brings to treatment. In some respects, it is a kind of Faustian bargain. I traded for knowledge something else of consequential value. When I would later begin private practice, I would remark upon the notion that with the wide array of low-cost therapy options, and the often *very experienced* and *very supervised* clinicians performing it, why would anyone pay a good fee for private psychotherapy in New York City? I do have a nicer, more expensive office now and a comfier couch.

### Consultations

Natalya (her name changed, of course) was the very first private patient who contacted me. The other psychoanalyst with whom I worked at a fee-for-service clinic on the Upper West Side was the husband of Natalya’s close friend. She had gotten my name from him. She was “always interested in trying psychoanalysis,” but never did, “for a multitude of reasons.” I was, memorably, in my undershirt sweeping the floor of my empty office at the time she wrote. I stood, broom in my hand, and read her email on my telephone, my forehead dotted with sweat. I resisted the urge to write her back immediately (see: dating) and waited until that evening. We wrote emails back and forth for several weeks. Natalya took four to five days to respond to each subsequent email. The emails were (I just this moment revisited them) extremely cautious, obtuse, and equivocal. She reminded me time and again that she was speaking to many other clinicians; an audition of sorts was taking place all over Manhattan for Natalya’s favor. Her notes were overwhelmingly and strangely formal — lots of “good evenings” and “sincerely yours” and “may I’s” and hopes that she was finding me “at my most well.” I was constantly being thanked “for my time,” despite, I suspected, our shared awareness that my time was being squandered. I became conscious of how reflexively I reached for the phone in my pocket whenever it buzzed. I resisted the urge to write her a reminder after one particular delayed reply; the phrase, “just checking in,” the blinking cursor, the nausea, the self-recriminations on my walk home from the subway.

I was then, for the first time, beginning to understand the guarded, withholding, disinterested tone one sometimes perceives from experienced clinicians. One must suffer through a great deal of aborted conversations to do this work, at every juncture. I found myself thinking about Natalya a bit, on days when we wouldn’t speak, despite having never met her — always focused on the profound gap in between emails. Perhaps she is truly that busy? Or ambivalent? Or perhaps she is quite torturing — this would prove significant. I began to have, in an absurdly comical fashion, intense, quick bursts of hatred toward my former co-worker: *why would he send this withholding person to me?* What is more, I began to have the idea that there was something both stalwart and pathetic about the analyst as a figure; having never received so much as a dime from Natalya, I was already hard at work imagining her resistances and secrets, as well as paying close attention to her language. Like an itinerant professional in a war-torn country, my services were no longer relevant but there I was, continuing to do my job for free, because it’s all I’ve ever known.

During these strange, early, waning days, I was constantly reminded of my own first analysis, in part because I viewed my first analyst as a profound archetype of psychoanalytic prosperity: spiritually — I adored my first analyst, although she was quite sullen, an elderly Teutonic woman — and also aesthetically. I can recall her office in my mind at will. Everything was clean, expensive, cold, and luxurious. And while I imagine some might find it lacking a kind of warmth (in the Freudian sense: there were no plush couches, rugs, dusty globes, etc.), I always left her office feeling wealthy. That is a word I choose carefully. Somehow, by becoming increasingly familiar with my own interior life, I quite literally felt “worth” — which is ironic given that I was paying her a third of my take-home pay at the time. But even that act, of paying what was for me an inordinate amount of money, at the time, left me feeling richer. I suspect this is the same material euphoria that a person spending their entire paycheck on a purse, or shoes, or a suit, feels as they leave the store. Rich and broke and elevated.

Through working with my first analyst, over the course of several years, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I came to have hundreds of tiny, reconfiguring realizations, not the least of which was that when I allowed myself to have two particular feelings I did not want to have (rage and holy, miserable, beatific, crushing hopelessness), my panic attacks disappeared completely, never to return. This, on the surface, was the “goal,” to use a word I detest, of the treatment. And yet, when I roll these years over in my mind, the memory that contains the most affect is the profound, loving pleasure I would feel in getting my analyst — a staring, crimson-faced, silver-haired old German woman — to subtly, subtly, subtly curve her thin mouth into a marginal smile. And the playful, lilting sentences she would utter, the one line of dialogue in the dream that you remember when you awake, “Truly, there is no one else like you, Marcus.” I will hear her voice in my head for the rest of my life. And, now, much too late, of course, I realize that this was the real work of our analysis.

Several years into treatment, she remarked, apropos of nothing, that she was ill. While saying more words in one sitting than I had ever heard her utter before in totality, she insisted that I “shouldn’t worry” and that she came from “hearty stock.” About 10 weeks later, I arrived at my appointment to find a piece of paper taped to the door, written by the building’s management, notifying her patients that she had passed away. An address for a funeral home was listed, along with her request that donations be made to William Alanson White on her behalf. I will always recall the feeling of blankness I felt walking out into the blinding sun on Central Park West. She and I never discussed her illness again after that initial, unsubstantial conversation. I rode the train out to a completely ordinary place on Long Island for her wake, but I couldn’t bring myself to set foot inside the place. I sat on a park bench by the train station and wept. I would begin analytic training within the year.

This too, to my mind, is evocative of the false dichotomy between success and failure: a thing that still ties her and me together — that in her death, she didn’t die. This is hard to express coherently. *She*, my first psychoanalyst, is dead. And now, *I*, am a psychoanalyst. Somehow our failure to continue the analysis catalyzed me into becoming an analyst, a fragment of who I imagine she was. And in so doing, I succeeded in becoming a syntonic version of both myself and my fantasy of who she might have been. While writing this paper, I have had occasion to ask myself for the first time, “Would I have become a psychoanalyst if she were still alive?” Psychoanalysts might think of “success” as being able to integrate as many different experiences or selves as possible under the tent of the subject, or ego; and “failure” as a kind of retreat into the existing or the restricted self as a defense against unpleasure or intolerable experiences or stimuli. To experience a tragedy like loss in death, and transmute it into an upbuilding choice; to *become* the thing you have lost in an effort to mitigate that loss — this may be an outcome of a positive analysis. One might become so intimate with loss, with unpleasure, with discomfort, that one metabolizes a failure into a kind of success. Analysis itself mirrors this dynamic: by becoming safely and consistently ensconced in one’s interior life, one can temper one’s anxieties, fears, limitations, and losses.

### **Bona Fide Rejection Notes from Psychoanalytic Journals Delivered Without Context**

Reader #1: The paper has much to offer, but the writing style is not nearly as engaging as the ideas and clinical material are. The overall concept is well developed, the clinical material shows depth of understanding, a strong theoretical foundation, and compassion, and the scholarship supports the underlying concept.

Reader #2: This paper is rudimentary in its understanding of psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice. Although I appreciate that a good amount of work went into this paper, and the fact that it is well written, there is no covering over the remarkable lack of any kind of psychoanalytic nuance.

## The Beginning of Treatment

An appointment was finally set with Natalya, five weeks after receiving her first email. Natalya was tall, in her mid-30s, Russian, gorgeous, unblinkingly aloof, and statuesque. What I had originally mistaken for ambivalence now seemed to me to be a simpering, nervous disdain. She arrived at her appointment on time. She worked in interior design for a prestigious design house, wore expensive clothes, and lived on the Upper East Side. I asked her questions about what brought her to analysis, her family history, her social life, her job. She answered all of them economically, in a quiet, unfriendly staccato, foreclosing on any opportunity to associate to my questions, or share anything that wasn't being explicitly asked of her.

About 20 excruciating minutes into the session, I changed tactics. I began to do something we were instructed to do in my fee-for-service work, something that the behaviorists call (unfortunately) psycho-education. I began, despite how perplexed I was at hearing my own voice begin to do this, to attempt to explain to her the purpose of psychotherapy — the implication being, of course, that she was “doing it wrong” already. She said little in response. Finally, exasperated, I met her gaze for a period of time. I asked, “Is this what we should be using this time for?” I felt a disintegration occurring. “I feel as though I’m interrogating you. Is this useful?” She stared back at me and said nothing for a while. “I don’t know,” she eventually volunteered. Somehow, this woman, my first private patient, had, in this moment, completely collapsed my understanding of the entire psychoanalytic endeavor. Is this coming across clearly? “How much does this cost?” she asked. I — this is not an exaggeration — chuckled ruefully aloud. “I have no idea how much *this* costs,” I said, having temporarily lost my mind. “How much should *this* cost?” “Eighty,” was the unsmiling reply. “Eighty sounds right,” I said. She stood up, walked straight over to me, and shot out her hand. I took it. “I liked this,” she said. “Psychoanalysis,” and left the room. I spent the next hour lying motionless on my couch, staring out the window, my mind forming not words, but a strange, dulled panic. *This is really hard work*, I finally thought to myself.

## A Brief Tangent on Defecating in One’s Pants

Something a bit unfortunate began to happen to me — or rather, my bowels — in my first year of private practice. I started having a curious manifestation of anxiety with certain patients wherein I would have the fantasy that I would shit my pants during the session. This became a way to measure time in the sessions. I would become aware of and either troubled by, or gratified by, how much time was left in the sessions. This would happen solely with my morning patients, naturally, after a cup of coffee or two. I would always first have the thought: I have to go to the toilet. And then, reflexively, the awareness of time surfaced. I have 30 minutes left, or 20 minutes left, or 10 minutes left; I will, while not revealing any of this discomfort to the patient, have to physically retain my bowels predicated on this length of time.

I pondered the desire to hold in, or withhold, and more compellingly, the desire to lose control in the room with the patient. I would pass the time, while listening to the patient, and holding in my shit, playing around with the fantasy: what is to be gained and lost from “losing it” with a patient — perhaps a kind of failure? I considered: Was this a desire to be humiliated in front of the patient? Was this new feeling, after years of working in group clinics and treatment services, something to do with striking out on my own? *You know*, I would suggest to myself, *if you want to show these patients that you are a failure, and a fraud, and a child, there are far tidier ways of doing that than shitting your pants*. Perhaps if I shit my pants, these particular patients would take pity on me. At my wildest, most optimistic I considered: perhaps I am inventing, right now, an incredible new intervention. Conceivably, my shitting myself could allow these patients a new thought, a new experience, a new interpersonal configuration. Often it seems that a failure on the analyst’s part is experienced as a narcissistic injury by the patient — that the analyst is an extension of the patient, the idealized, platonically compassionate, knowing other. But I can imagine a scenario in which the catastrophic failure of the analyst, personified by the utter humiliation of going to the toilet in one’s pants, could humanize the analyst in a profoundly useful way, if the analyst and patient could survive the humiliation.

I have long sensed in myself, particularly in my work with patients, a subversive wish to lower myself, to strip bare whatever mythology or idealization or projection that the role of the analyst evokes. I have come to desire to reject the projection of knowing, or having “figured out,” as an affectation designed to protect the analyst from being human — something that seems preternatural and like an enormously useless quality for an analyst to have. This seems also to relate to success and failure. I can imagine wanting to be with an analyst who fails as much as anyone else. Or, again, the notion that what one *does* intrapsychically with failure is far more significant than success, which I’ve begun to understand as suspect, circumstantial, and chaotic. I am, these days, always reminded how secretly and counterintuitively undignified psychoanalysis is. After several months of this bowel discomfort, and having bashfully shared it with colleagues and friends,



writing about it, thinking about it, and trying to have more toilet discipline than previously required in my toilet life, the sensation, like all anxiety formations or bowel movements, left me.

### The End of Treatment

Somehow, Natalya remained a patient, albeit briefly. We would, to our credit, discuss what was gratifying and what was frustrating to her about the sessions, and what withholding in the sessions “gave” her. Very quickly, perhaps too quickly, we began to explore the notion that men in particular always wanted something from her. Certainly this was the case with her current partner, her father, et al. And I wanted something from her, too, we noted.

After about 10 or so sessions, I received another overly formal email from Natalya. “I’m no longer interested in treatment, and I’m uninterested in being convinced otherwise, which I know is a tenet of psychoanalysis. Please kindly submit an invoice to me so we may proceed with final payments. Wishing you all the best, Natalya.”

My memories of Natalya, and indeed of all patients who leave, are bittersweet. I am overwhelmingly left with a feeling of the futility of it all, as well as the suspicion that there was some fundamental thing, concept, idea, association, or formation that I didn’t have the time to understand that predicated the patient leaving. That perhaps if we could have *spoken* it together, Natalya might have stayed. That I didn’t make the space for her to say it. That I couldn’t communicate the importance of saying it to begin with. That this suggests some penetrating lack of my own. After each successive failure, one is left with the knowledge that one knows very, very, very little. And yet somehow, that by pretending otherwise, one is doing a far worse thing. “We can perhaps be sympathetic to those analysts who jump in and claim knowledge about what is ‘really going on’ in an hour,” Christopher Bollas (2008) writes. “After all, it is a hard place to be, the psychoanalytical position. You do not get to know much — and yet you are surrounded by the movement of meaning” (p. 31). I did something middling and feckless and inspired by failure: I responded respectfully and curtly to her email with an invoice, betraying little of my feelings.

It is the destiny of all psychoanalysts to be left. These mythological analyses I remember from training — people working together for 60 years, patients visiting analysts on their death beds, Freud having nightly dinners with his patients... No, I’m sorry, I protest these fables. We are primarily people who are left by other people. I believe I became a psychoanalyst because I have had a lifelong desire to be intimate with others. This evolved, interpersonally, into a desire to seek out withholding people, and to ensconce myself in them — to be the *one who gets to know*. When a person has nothing, when they turn and run from a party, a bad date, a failure, when they find themselves crying and alone on the subway, or a terrace at a bar (these were familiar feeling states to me) — who might this person turn to? I desired, perhaps more than my desire to know, to be *this* person. The person who gets to hear the truth, to ask a hard, substantive question when everyone else winces and looks away.

I find it really, sweetly amusing that patients, even those who seek me out because I am a psychoanalyst, never use the word analysis (and in the culture, as well). The real parlance is, and will always be, “therapy.” A truly deficient, strange word to define the exercise of talking about pain, loss, abandonment, or nothing at all, in between periods of talking about pain, loss and abandonment. I suspect that the fantasy that brings patients to analysis — or therapy, really — is that they have the idea that by entering the threshold of the treatment room, somehow, they will be inoculated against failure; against loss, pain, unpleasure, misunderstanding. I am beginning to have the idea that this particular fantasy is useful in getting a patient into treatment, but little else.

When I think of how I behave toward new patients, particularly those who seem very tender and raw, I am, in this way, succeeding via their expectations. I am giving them, without consciously trying to do this, a reparative experience. By listening to their complaints and not challenging them, I am rectifying a history of misunderstandings; by being kind and gentle, I am liberating them from the notion that objects are only capable of causing pain; and by being steadfast, consistent, available, and interested, I am salving the anxiety that all objects are lost, ambivalent, or capricious. I would hazard a guess that this is in fact a profoundly necessary beginning to treatment, and I find it difficult to imagine alternative modes of behaving with patients that feel as truthful and genuine to me. And in this way, the patient entering treatment experiences the decision to begin as a success. Inversely, this feeling that the patient is left with, this implicit promise, is what in effect I experience as a failure. Because I suspect on some level that I know the truth about psychoanalysis. That it is not a vaccine against unpleasure, or a solution to a problem, but an expression of a deep, strange, exotic intimacy with the things that cause us to suffer. A familiarization with our interior torments through which we liberate ourselves from the phantasm of thought into the reality, such as it is, of language. The old Freud yarn about transforming neurotic misery into ordinary unhappiness.

There is an epistemology called “causal determinism,” the notion that the present is formed irrevocably by decisions made in the past, that we essentially have a destiny, shaped by our intrapsychic selves. In other words, that every decision I have ever made, retroactively, could in fact be the *only* decision I ever could have made, by virtue of the reality that I did in fact make such a decision — as opposed to quantum mechanics wherein there could be multiple universes, selves, decisions. Thus, what makes us psychoanalysts only suits us to be psychoanalysts — or homicide detectives, or academics. We are canine, in this way — we dig up other people’s backyards, and other people (n.b., our “owners”) do not want us to dig up their backyards.

I had a realization recently that I often end emails to patients and prospective patients with, “Let me know your thoughts.”

*Let me know your thoughts.*  
*LET me know your thoughts.*  
*LET. ME. KNOW. your thoughts.*  
*Let me know YOUR thoughts.*  
*Let me know your THOUGHTS.*

There is something in all of this that I have spent the first several years of private practice trying to discern. Something having to do with *being* and *becoming* and its relationship to conventional notions of a fantasy regarding succeeding in one’s life and failing in one’s life, or profession, or interpersonal relationships. The dominant fantasy is that we can surround ourselves with success and reject failure — this is how we might understand the common refrain of needing to “get rid of negativity” or “align ourselves with only positive people.” This is a familiar abstraction in psychoanalytic thought: the desire to orient symbols in a polarizing fashion, as in Freud’s *On Narcissism* (1914/2014), where primary narcissism is understood as an unconscious mechanism in which negative identification is expelled into the exterior and positive identification is exclusively the domain of the subject.

Analysis and by extension analytic training and candidacy aspire to undo this refrain. To endeavor to be able to have and tolerate as many of your feelings, selves, ideas, *and failures* as possible, is an attempt to become a much larger, more plastic, more inclusive, less inhibited person. In analysis, we apply meaning to phenomena and to our interior lives; I worry that success carries with it an immutable fragment that leads to a foreclosure of this symbolization. I find that I am far less likely to have a new idea as a byproduct of a conventional sort of success. This is paradoxical: that we must fail, and be less defended against failing, in order to succeed in some deepening, meaningful way. ■

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## The Institute as Crypt of Psychoanalysis

Richard Brouillette, LCSW

The psychoanalytic institute plays a repressive role for individual members and candidates at both a personal and social level, thereby inhibiting psychoanalysts from operating as public citizens. The author reviews previous critiques of institute structure and attempt to deepen the critique via the work of Jacques Derrida and Maria Torok, contending that institutes establish a falseness among candidates and members, which operates like a psychic crypt. He closes by calling for the rejection of the institute model and suggests alternate paths for individuals to become psychoanalysts.

### The Stakes

“Trump Said ‘Torture Works.’ An Echo Is Feared Worldwide,” reads a January 5th *New York Times* headline. The article was co-authored by James Risén, a journalist instrumental in breaking the news that the American Psychological Association (APA) had been influenced by figures in the George W. Bush administration into becoming a key support for the American torture program and alleged war crimes. With two words, “torture works,” the American president-elect degraded the global state of human rights. If any profession should have something to say about torture, it would be psychoanalysis, as it takes the human soul as its subject. When would it be correct and professional for a psychoanalyst to go against the status quo and denounce a sitting president by name? In the case of the alleged APA involvement in torture and war crimes, it was two psychoanalysts, Steven Reisner and Stephen Soldz, who led the charge for accountability. Dr. Reisner is not institute trained, while Dr. Soldz directs a university-style psychoanalytic degree program that is not a psychoanalytic institute. Would it be fair to argue that these two psychoanalysts took risks because they are not institute affiliated? It is likely not a coincidence.

Institute life exerts a great unconscious pressure on candidates and members to remain enclosed and isolated within a field-specific bubble; this process has already nearly destroyed the profession, as it is increasingly surpassed by media savvy representatives of cognitive therapy and neuroscience. When it comes to human rights abuses, psychoanalysts hold symposia and speak to each other. They create publications by and for psychoanalysts. But by and large, they do not engage the press, other mental health fields or approaches, or write articles for a popular audience; nor do they tend to engage government and elected officials. Only with the rise of Trump has a minority of more socially conscious psychoanalysts begun to enter the public sphere with letters to the editor.

Aside from iconoclast exceptions, psychoanalysts are notoriously apolitical, or as some may say, “neutral.” This neutrality starts within the culture of institutes themselves, but then slips into a general implied prohibition against engaging the social and political spheres outside institutes as well. How does this happen?

We might begin by asking: where is there space for a candidate in a psychoanalytic institute to address issues related to the sociopolitical moment? How does a candidate build the capacity, in terms of theory and technique, to address sociopolitical aspects of the psychoanalytic process? Do institutes prepare candidates to become psychoanalyst-citizens who can bring psychoanalytic discourse into plain discussion among peers in a democracy? In a word, I believe the answer is no. Psychoanalytic institutes, by a design going back to Freud, preclude interaction with the outside world.

This paper is part of a larger piece originally posted on the “Psychoanalytic Activist” blog, which was intended as a plea to psychoanalytic institute members and candidates to consider why institutes close off participation in the outside world and inhibit engagement with the public on sociopolitical issues. In that piece I drew a parallel between psychoanalysts’ ritual of neutrality with the problem of neutrality for journalists who, in the era of Trumpism, are faced with one political party that explicitly promotes lying. The institution of journalism is foundering as it loses credibility in trying to maintain a balanced, “both sides do it” position.

The analytic community, too, must understand that the illusion of neutral separation from the world can no longer stand. If this illusion of separation continues, psychoanalysis will reach near total social invisibility, and those who openly practice it will be considered incompetent, outdated psychotherapists. No one feels more anxiety about these realities than candidates, who (in the current neoliberal environment of “evidence-based” efficiency fantasies, popular neuroscience journalism “listicles,” insurance review boards, and mass prioritizing of economic self-interest) will face the prospect of transitioning a client from weekly psychotherapy to a slow, multi-session per week, years-long analysis. Reverie does not

seem efficient.

For too long, the psychoanalytic community has maintained the illusion that issues of economic class, gender identity, racism, misogyny, social inequality, and the destruction of communities and climate were “subspecialties” one had the privilege to choose to pursue — or not. This is most clearly reflected in training institute curricula. Check off the box that you took the class on prejudice, then get back to studying “psychoanalysis.” The separation of the two in a curriculum has implications both conscious and unconscious. It has become painfully obvious that we cannot solve the problem by making curricula into a jalousy of social issue add-ons. All of these issues bear on the formation of and sociopolitical demands on human subjectivity (which was *presumably* the actual subject of psychoanalysis). It has taken too long for established psychoanalysts to come around to addressing sociopolitical issues, and their response has been anemic in spite of the clear, urgent need. There are engrained, institutional reasons for this hesitant, passive response to the outside world.

The excerpt of the piece reproduced here is my effort to understand and explore how institutes reproduce inhibition across generations, dating back to Freud’s original founding of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA); and further how this closure is reproduced at the level of unconscious fantasy among members, candidates, and institute group process. I survey well-known efforts to understand how psychoanalytic training models establish and reproduce closure among candidates and members. I then build on those efforts by introducing a reading of the work of Maria Torok, in order to discuss incorporation as a means of understanding the personal stakes of closure for candidates in training analysis. My argument is that the closure induced by institute training creeps into a tacit prohibition, aimed at candidates and analysts, against engaging a popular audience on theory or addressing sociopolitical issues; and this at a time when the work of psychoanalysts is most needed to address failing institutions in the outside world.

As the location of transition from one generation to the next, the candidate is the essential pivot in transforming the field of psychoanalysis. Notice I do not say that candidates need to transform *institutes* — rather, they must transform the *field*. As I attempt to argue, psychoanalytic institutes are zombie social entities that are beyond hope.

The core dysfunction permeating institute life is reproduced with(in) the candidate, and it could potentially be stopped by candidates as a group. My conclusion is a call to action that some may find unthinkable: abandon the institute. Reject cross-generation cultish insularity and, in so doing, open a path for actually engaging and resisting neoliberal instrumental reason, rather than hiding from it. If we do this, we will better open ourselves to the conflicts of our patients and be more ably attuned to their reality and needs.

### To Forget Without Ado ...

*Doing the symptom, I will pretend to make a brief, irresponsible, and very illegitimate contribution here to the discussion ...*

Jacques Derrida (2007, p. 324)

This paper is, in large part, a response and paean to Jacques Derrida’s 1981 challenge to the psychoanalytic establishment on the issue of closure, and specifically, to the simple question Derrida raises toward the end of his paper: Why psychoanalytic closure? You could say this is a kind of “fan fiction” as I am identifying with Derrida by taking up the position of “foreign body,” or symptom, in raising the question. You also could say that my identification with the symptom has led to my own personal choice to abandon institutes for the ethical, theoretical, and practical reasons I sketch here.

Derrida presented his “geopsychanalysis” paper to a Franco-Latin American meeting of psychoanalysts in Paris in 1981. This was a meeting dwelling on outsides: held outside the auspices of the IPA, with an outsider giving the keynote. Derrida’s presentation kicked off the meeting with the first morning slot on the first day and he made a show of asking aloud why he was invited to speak; he, not a psychoanalyst, not even in analysis, an outsider. This interrogation led Derrida to treat the meeting’s program brochure as analytic material and the notion of Latin America as outside the geography of psychoanalysis, as well as what it means to be foreign or a foreign body vis-a-vis the institutional gaze of psychoanalysts. Derrida referred to Freud’s *New Introductory Lectures*, nos. 30-31, as well as Freud’s notion of the symptom as “a body foreign to the ego.” “That is what I am doing here,” Derrida says, “I do symptom, I do the symptom, I am the symptom, it’s a role I’m playing, if not for each of you, then at least for a certain ego of the analytic institution” (p. 321).

By “doing the symptom,” Derrida departed from his initial playful tone and rebuked the psychoanalytic establishment for their failure to adequately address and denounce torture and human rights abuses in Argentina and across Latin America.

Derrida read minutes from an IPA meeting as if they were minutes from a clinical encounter, where, in language reminiscent of current Trump-era institutional prevarications and equivocations, the IPA president refers to “rumors of alleged violations of human rights” in Argentina, and claims that “the IPA ... condemns the violation of human rights of citizens in general, of scientists, and our colleagues in particular.” Without going into the subtleties of Derrida’s textual analysis, he understands the IPA reaction to a specific ethical and political situation as precisely unpsychoanalytic in its own neutrality, its unwillingness to name names: to say “torture,” to say “Argentina,” to say “Latin America.” Derrida describes this generalized statement as a “reference to a doctrine of human rights which is itself nonspecific ... one [that] takes shelter in a language that takes no psychoanalytic risks and that ought not to satisfy anyone here.” He went on to say that any organization using such vague language without naming names lends itself to being “more easily integrated and appropriated” by “political and police authorities, for psychoanalytic power to be abused” (p. 330).

Derrida is making a crucial point that is nearly lost today: neutrality can be unpsychoanalytic. In the context of the sociopolitical, neutrality — or the refusal to name names — is a defense, a splitting from reality. He tries to investigate and to comprehend the IPA’s avoidance of the politics of the moment, pointing out that psychoanalysis fails to translate and communicate its own ideas into “politicojuridical and ethical-juridical concepts” and stating that this avoidance is proof of the profession’s failure to establish a “discourse on ethicopolitical action” (p. 334). At the end of the day, however, Derrida remains baffled as to the reasons for this failure and can only ask:

[D]oes the actual state of psychoanalysis include, in its dominant schools (and by “school” I mean both school of thought and the apparatus of training and reproduction), an element that is unanalyzed but in principle analyzable, an occlusion ... that prohibits effective emergence of an ethics and a politics contemporary with psychoanalysis? To make of psychoanalysis one’s own/its own contemporary, is such a thing thinkable (p. 335)?

This stunning passage opened the door for my effort to address the question of this occlusion: that which is unanalyzed in institutes and which forecloses the political, ethical and juridical ... and the rest of the world. Yet as Derrida says in the opening to his morning presentation in 1981, “if you want to understand the foreigner or stranger very quickly, early in the morning, then perhaps it’s also in order to make the symptom disappear, as quickly as possible, to file away this discourse without delay, in other words, to forget it without ado” (p. 321). Since Derrida’s time, psychoanalysis has hardly improved its record with respect to contemporary ethics and politics and in this sense his claim was prescient; yet for this reason we must continue to provoke the symptom’s reappearance, with the hope that this time it will not recede.

### **Institute as Silent Partner: The Fear of Being Un-psychoanalytic Is Anti-psychoanalytic**

When Derrida spoke about doing the symptom, he said that it was “a role I’m playing, if not for each of you, then at least for a certain ego of the analytic institution.” I read this “ego of the analytic institution,” as aligned with the “superego complex” put forth by Jurgen Reeder and explored below. Otto Kernberg has done extensive work articulating the negative impact of the institute structure on creativity in the psychoanalytic field. I would argue that the institute informs the superego complex, which operates at a preconscious level or is disavowed, is seldom actually vocalized, and affects deeply personal aspects of each individual’s professional identity and sense of competency.

Starting with their training and extending throughout their professional lives, psychoanalysts are implicitly and explicitly indoctrinated to believe that acting outside of established convention and authority risks professional shame, or the accusation of being “un-psychoanalytic”— whatever that means. This is the “immanent pedagogy” described by Reeder in *Hate and Love in Psychoanalytical Institutions*. Immanent pedagogy is the non-verbal form of training that is communicated implicitly within the candidate’s experience of the structure, organization, and power dynamics of an institute. As Reeder writes, “a pedagogy that is immanent exists outside the realm of what is openly stated and immediately visible” (p. 167). For Reeder, the immanent forces in institutes form a system. The professional superego of the individual (“I’m afraid of being un-psychoanalytic”) combines with the institutional superego system (institute groups deciding what and who are un-psychoanalytic) to form the “superego complex.” This superego complex establishes a feedback loop of unconscious fear and hate between the individual and the group by using the institute’s rules and organizational chart to its advantage. Most importantly, institutionally-fostered unconscious fear and hate remain silent. I would add: they are expressed with silence.

Like Reeder, Kernberg suggests that training analysts — that is, analyst members of the institute who also treat candidates, teach classes, and serve on committees — are a major factor in the closed, indoctrinating, and immanently repressive nature of institutes. Citing institutional authoritarianism and conventionality, Kernberg warns that the profession’s



future is in danger if current structures remain unchanged. The primary argument against the role of the training analyst is that such clinicians occupy a position that inherently compromises confidentiality, as they represent both the institute's interests and the candidate-analysand's need for a neutral analyst. Such a conflict of interest renders all involved vulnerable to, as Kernberg says, "displaced, repressed or dissociated sadistic and narcissistic needs" (p. 214).

I would add, synthesizing both Reeder and Kernberg, that such conflicts of interest promote and propel the superego complex. The core logic of the superego complex is profoundly unpsychoanalytic in its disavowal of the unconscious among candidates and members. The institute expects that a candidate will repress conflicts of interest without falling into falseness and that their unconscious will not proceed to forge associations; it expects candidates to believe that their analysts can remain neutral while also representing the institute and that criticism of their performance in a class or training is not a rejection of them personally due to the material in their analysis.

Reeder and Kernberg each lay out suggestions for how to improve the situation. Reeder suggests separating training analysis entirely from training, along the lines of the French model, where analysis is finished prior to training. Kernberg suggests keeping training analysts away from any institutional contact with their candidate-analysands to remove pressure. Both authors advocate for more openness regarding how institute members are selected, for more transparency in how decisions are made, and for strengthening the supervisory function. It is my contention that these solutions do not address the issue at the level of unconscious association, to the extent that regardless of these reforms, a candidate still knows at a symbolic level that his or her analyst is a member of the institute.

In a 2010 paper, Howard Levine also argues that narcissism and sadistic defenses are circulated in a whirlpool of institute structure, generated by the wellspring of candidates identifying with their training analysts (their techniques and theoretical loyalties) as well as by the "epistemic anxiety of the inherently subjective nature of the enterprise" (p. 48). Such defenses are deployed by those in leadership roles who carry the institutional power "to decide what is to be considered psychoanalysis and what is not" (p. 44). He links the current state of institutional power dynamics to those originally instituted by Freud, who was driven by his "narcissistic investment in defining the field of psychoanalysis and determining the directions of its development ... [as well as] his attitudes toward dissent" (p. 45).

Reeder, Kernberg, and Levine lay out detailed studies based on their broad experience, and ultimately they call for responses that this essay cannot address in detail. They all leave room for further exploration of how institute structure — dating back to Freud's founding of the IPA — establishes a set of fundamental incorporations, identifications, and unconscious fantasies that are instilled at the individual level and quell psychoanalysts' motivation to extend themselves beyond what has already been established by their authorities. This defensive, conservative posture — along with attendant unconscious paranoid fantasies — is an open secret in institutes and is responsible for their blank avoidance of the political, both within themselves and in the ethico-political world outside. I believe this is the unanalyzed occlusion Derrida addresses that "prohibits effective emergence of an ethics and a politics contemporary with psychoanalysis" (p. 335).

### Silence as Symptom and Quiet Entombing of the Social

*Father, thundering, his voice full of bracken and leaves,  
leaves that in the autumn clogged the gutters. "Who goes over the bridge?  
Who goes there?" the billy goats stammering, pawing the air. But I am  
the goat and the troll and so cannot pass nor grant passage.*

Cynthia Zarin, "Sunday"

The silence and insularity of institute life first raises the question of inhibition and falseness among psychoanalysts as individuals. While it is certainly possible to argue that this falseness implies an underlying "analytic true self," we must first ask, what is the cause of this inhibition? It may be due to the preservation of an internal object that analysts protect from the external world. In institute experience, this preserved, hidden internal object would be some combination of idealizations: an idealizing of one's training analyst or supervisor, or of a certain subset of psychoanalytic thought and its founder, and of course of Freud himself. But there is a pattern and coherence to these idealizations.

It is no coincidence that the training model established by the IPA reproduces the power dynamics of Freud and his original "Secret Committee" of followers: a group of practitioners operating as scientists by day ... and by night, bearers of the "Secret Ring" disseminating the true form of psychoanalysis as defined by Freud alone, complete with the threat of



excommunication for those who were un-psychoanalytic. Indeed, the founding of the IPA was a *Totem and Taboo* tale of the murder of the primal father in reverse: a closed society was established by the self-castration of followers in the presence of the primal founder. Ever afterward, candidates would enter the same inhibition in preservation of the father, always hoping to find the proper (read, fetishized) interpretation of Freud at the expense of some thinker or school that misses the point or fatally diverges. Thus the Primal Freud as the original and only psychoanalyst is preserved to this day as an inhibiting object within individual psychoanalysts, while his ghost is summoned in every institute committee meeting: each one a séance informing the tribe what and who remains psychoanalytic. (While I am focusing specifically on the rituals of IPA institutes because they specifically carry the supposed torch of Freud's original wishes and therefore transmit the Primal Freud in name, I would suggest the phenomena of Primal Freud and the super-ego complex are not confined to these places. Otherwise, the field itself would not be so isolated and at risk of extinction.)

For institute psychoanalysts, what elements of self or practice are actually sacrificed at the altar of the Primal Freud? First, one might consider what qualities the Primal Freud retains. As founder, Freud naturally held a professional going-on-being: the authority to experiment, to try new ideas without the fear that they would be deemed un-psychoanalytic, and to engage with the world in a dialogue on the ethico-political elements of his new theories. And he did so in language and arguments that were not burdened with jargon that any interested layperson could not engage.

This lively analyst, free and untrammelled by the superego burden of having thinking approved by an authority, is preserved internally with a vitality forever present but forever inaccessible. The institute-trained psychoanalyst learns to preserve a silence and passivity that guards the Primal Freud, thereby foreclosing the analytic true self's access to the world.

Maria Torok's approach to what she calls the "illness of mourning" is very helpful here, if we apply the logic of her clinical and developmental concept to a candidate's experience in training. What I am calling the Primal Freud, retained as introject in each institute candidate and member, is the inhibiting object protected and entombed, or, to use Torok's language, preserved in a psychic crypt. How does this "encryption" occur? Initially people are drawn to become psychoanalysts in response to their own particular symptom, their own need, pain, and loss. (For example, Sheldon Bach observes that a "frequent motif in our own profession," that is, what draws people to become psychoanalysts, "is when a mother is endangered, sick or unhappy and the child dedicates his life to curing or rescuing her" (p. 189). This need/pain/loss is unspoken and becomes the desire to be a psychoanalyst. For a psychoanalytic candidate, while the effects or symptoms of this dynamic are addressed by an analysis, the cure is hijacked by the incorporation of the super ego complex and Primal Freud as an imposed object. Torok's language captures this process: "The abrupt loss of a narcissistically indispensable object of love has occurred, yet the loss is of a type that prohibits its being communicated. If this were not so, incorporation would have no reason for being ... Incorporation results from those losses that for some reason cannot be acknowledged as such" (p. 129).

That is, my contention is that institute structure solders the Primal Freud onto each candidate's original unmourned loss via (to use Torok's language) incorporation, thereby leaving original symptoms only partially analyzed, and the candidate dependent on Primal Freud (and the institute) as chronic symptoms. The fear and anxiety of being un-psychoanalytic is not just about training; it also feels like the loss of a very personal object, as yet unrecognized and unspoken. The Primal Freud is a prosthetic, IPA-endorsed, ready-made object, incorporated by the candidate and reinforced by the institute's rituals.

Can we deny that people are drawn to be analysts out of the need for talking, the need for silence and listening, for a repetition of frustrated transference gratification and the rupture of resurgent meaning that is the unconscious? In short, we are drawn to what Torok calls "mouth-work." She writes:

The crucial move away from introjection (clearly rendered impossible) to incorporation is made when words fail to fill the subject's void and hence an imaginary thing is inserted into the mouth and their place. The desperate ploy of filling the mouth with illusory nourishment has the equally illusory effect of eradicating the idea of a void to be filled with words. We may conclude that, in the face of both the urgency and the impossibility of performing one type of mouth-work — speaking to someone about what we have lost — another type of mouth-work is utilized, one that is imaginary and equipped to deny the very existence of the entire problem (p. 128).

It is my contention that the Primal Freud provides for the candidate the imaginary nourishment of an incorporated ideal, on the condition that the candidate remains silent about it. To leave behind this incorporated ideal would feel not only like a betrayal of the Primal Freud but also of psychoanalysis itself. The daily threat of being unprofessional or unpsychoanalytic is assuaged by the presence of the Primal Freud as object. It is high time psychoanalysts feasted on the Primal Freud in a totem meal, so we can move on with our lives. This would also mean relinquishing mass nostalgia in exchange for a lively interaction with the world.

## The Sense of Endings: Revolutionary Mourning as Cure for Primal Freud

Concerns about the state and fate of institute training must be lodged in a socio-political context. This is the pivot where personal experience in training and institute politics fuses with the socio-political sphere itself. Falseness, reserve, guardedness, and lifelessness become associated with psychoanalytic neutrality in line with the super-ego complex, and any step outside of neutrality becomes cause for the group to question one's analysis or Oedipal motives. Candidates learn to be guarded in order to survive in training. Members learn to be guarded in order to survive in administration and supervision. You could say they learn to be apolitical. But these forms of falseness are also a powerful cynicism about the function of administration and genuine politics. The closest an analyst gets to being part of the social is when she is in a group composed of other analysts.

I define the political as conflict over ideas about what drives people in their relations with each other — as a struggle over the definitions of justice, security, respect, and care. Were psychoanalysts to engage those outside of institutes and associations in conversations on political questions, they would naturally be forced to revisit the founding principles of psychoanalysis. They would have to be open to rethinking and revitalizing everything in order to make psychoanalysis genuinely contemporary — or as Derrida says, “to make of psychoanalysis one's own/its own contemporary.”

Because of this pivotal moment in history, each of us must consider the ways that our various (and not only psychoanalytic) institutional attachments keep us paralyzed as social entities, and we must contemplate real separation from those institutions. This separation will require mourning the daily life that was and opening ourselves to the daily life to come: that is, it will require revolutionary mourning.

I would like to suggest that mourning becomes revolutionary when one accepts social objects such as institutions or established authorities as unhelpful, non-nurturing, or toxic — that is, as essentially absent and in need of replacement. In *The Ability to Mourn*, Peter Homans charts an expansion of Freud's original concept of mourning in the notion of progressive de-idealization. He states that mourning is in part a de-idealization, but one that is “progressive in its outcome, leading as it does to new values and new psychological structure, whereas mourning as Freud conceived it was essentially conservative, only consolidating, repairing, and rescuing lost parts of the ego from the wreckage inflicted upon it by the demands of reality” (p. 26).

Sally Weintrobe captures this experience in her discussion of the 2009 Copenhagen climate talks, when participating world leaders acknowledged the reality of the catastrophe facing the planet, yet still took no decisive action against climate change. As she writes, “the message — and I suggest we do hear it — is that we are not cared for at the very level of our survival” (p. 43). Once we do the difficult work of recognizing our denial regarding the failure of a fundamental institution — in this case, the combined authority of world governmental leaders — we can begin the mourning process by letting go of old institutions and opening up our innate capacity to build new ones.

As psychoanalysts, we need to understand this (as I am calling it) revolutionary mourning in order to introject it into our practice. And we need to start in our own house, with how our own values are influenced by an authority both consciously and unconsciously felt. This call to question the institutions of the status quo is a global one, operating at registers of the political and the unconscious, and the field of psychoanalysis cannot avoid it, especially since the inhibitions instilled by institute life carry through beyond the politics of institutes into the broad socio-political sphere.

### Taking Psychoanalytic Risks

We are witnessing an era in which norms are being both threatened and challenged. Institutions can no longer maintain the symbolic authority that has previously supported them. This is a time to respond to Derrida's call to name names. In a period in which the American federal government, presidency, congress, political parties, and financial system have lost credibility, in which there has been a system-wide failure to address catastrophic climate change, in which the social safety net is collapsing due to inequality, and in which millions of people on every continent are rejecting the new status quo in marches and activism, how will psychoanalysts contemplate social change, and how will the field open itself to change?

To the candidate reader, I suggest you contemplate leaving your institute and forging new ways. For example, if you are a candidate with a mental health license, you are probably already licensed to use the psychoanalytic method. Join a psychoanalytic membership organization that does not train or dictate your analyst. If you do not have a mental health

license, consider forgoing psychoanalytic institute training and become a social worker. Find an analyst based on your own desire, not a list provided by an institute. Find supervisors you like and feel a rapport with. Read and study with them. If you are already an institute member, contemplate publicly announcing your departure, and offer supervision outside the institute.

In this way, psychoanalysts will attain the position of “outsider” as sketched by Derrida, thereby becoming better able to engage with the outside, sociopolitical world as unrestrained citizens, with a critical perspective on psychoanalysis as a field and practice that can only evolve by recognizing its deep entwinement in the socio-political sphere. Most important, the profession of psychoanalysis must address the ongoing assault on people’s ability to act politically and collectively with real results. Our patients are struggling with this affliction and it is looking like the fight of the century.

One of the main elements of neoliberalism, as so thoroughly charted by Foucault, is the notion that our own minds are silencing us and inhibiting — disavowing, even — transgressive action. Equally insidious is Neil Postman’s question as to whether we are in Huxley’s *Brave New World*, willingly sacrificing autonomy for pleasure, with freedom more defined by “pulling the plug” from our cable TV provider than by taking collective action to reduce ever-extending working hours. Neoliberalism is, if anything, a condition of the mind, a socially shaped inhibition intertwined with one’s personal psychology, which is reinforced through our experiences of the workplace, healthcare, education, the political system, social media, and in so many unconscious ways, the experience of being part of an institution.

As Jodi Dean writes, “capitalism strives to separate and individuate us, to instill in us the conviction that self-interest matters above all else . . . It blocks from view the systemic determination of choices and outcomes, not to mention the power of collectives in rupturing these systems” (p. 260). Neoliberalism is spiraling into glaring, brutal inequality. It has caused the growth of authoritarian Trumpist governments across the globe. And as the catastrophic effects of climate change become more frequently evident, the draw of fascism will become more powerful. The antidote is collective action grounded by a new popular understanding that everything is *not* going to be okay, that “normal” is a concept that is now historical. Psychoanalysis, ironically, is uniquely capable of addressing the disavowal of reality that happens amidst a pathological status quo. But psychoanalysis also has a long history of reinforcing passive normality. Amitav Ghosh offers a powerful critique of the history of normalcy in the popular imagination, claiming that while “human beings are intrinsically unable to prepare for rare events,” unremarkable, stable normalcy is “rather an aspect of the unconscious patterns of thought — or ‘common sense’ — that gained ascendancy with a growing faith in the ‘regularity of bourgeois life’” (p. 25). Capitalist atomizing and individualism, combined with the tendency to normalize, are two major factors at play in the ongoing survival of liberal democracies and civilization itself — and both are states of experience psychoanalysis must engage head-on.

Ironically, psychoanalysts are also facing this exact crisis within our field: our institutes have failed us and any sense of normalcy in them is toxic. In order for psychoanalysis to survive we must reinvent it via an ending and via revolutionary mourning. We must pass through the mourning of lost institutes knowing we will be treating patients as they pass through the mourning of a lost sense of normalcy. We must grieve the loss of failed institutions and accept the responsibility of ushering psychoanalysis into its living present and future. ■

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## The Impossible Formation

Todd Dean, MD

**The incompatibility of psychoanalysis and the knowledge economy is elucidated in this personal essay.**

*So what is left to do? That is how the song  
Begins.*

Amiri Baraka (2015, p. 520)

Looking for something else, I came on a notebook I had started almost 20 years ago, early in my second year of formal training at the local American psychoanalytic institute. I immediately wished it had stayed lost.

The first entry: “I am convinced that the biggest job of psychotherapy, at least for the first few years, is making sure everything proceeds reasonably: plans for missed sessions, how payment will be arranged, etc. — all are clearly understood. Not figuring things out, especially at a ‘deep’ level, but observing details, is what has to be done.” Next: “What I most fear — an ‘as-if’ analysis — the reason technique, not theory or development, is the central concern of classes.”

I was horrified when I saw these. To privilege technique over theory is something I would never do today, implying as it does that there is a way to do the work that is beyond theoretical elaboration — “atheoretical” actually, just like the DSM-III — the first version of the DSM to claim to be purely objective — was supposed to be. And to think that following that technique would spare me an “as-if” analysis? Please. Even worse is the first entry, the idea that “proceeding reasonably” — which apparently is a matter of working out rules for payment, mostly — will result in a more genuine analysis? Oh my.

What I do think — and what makes it feel not quite like rank exhibitionism to share these notes, what I hope these notes testify to — is that becoming an analyst is a wildly peculiar thing to do these days. In clinical psychoanalysis, at least as I conceive it, the work goes more and more to the specifics of *this* analyst and working with *this* analyst. In such a situation, the notion of perfecting a technique or “proceeding reasonably” has to be suspect. The analogy that I cannot get away from, imperfect as it is, is with the writing of a poem. Every poem that is any good is somehow unique: one does not just apply the technique of a successful poem to come up with another successful poem, never mind “proceed reasonably.” Technique will be merely a test of the analyst’s — as it is of the poet’s — sincerity. In both composing a poem and in doing an analysis, all the different influences on the process — historical, political, unconscious, social — come together to make this one, unique act.

For these reasons, it is almost impossible to get one’s bearings in the process of becoming an analyst. Consider, as an example, the impact of the internet on analytic work. I am fairly certain that the ubiquitous presence of the internet has altered the relationship of the people I see to knowledge in profound ways since I jotted down the notes in that notebook. The internet gives knowledge, instantly. Consequently, everybody has answers. Rarely now, as opposed to when I started working, do patients present with a question, e.g., “Why do I react the way I do?” Instead, patients tell me what their problem is. Of course, they have also done research about me on the internet, and are now submitting the problem they know to my expertise. This is psychoanalysis in a knowledge economy.

“Knowledge” is the key point, here. By “knowledge” I mean the belief that all one needs to effect change is to know the correct information, something that can be readily communicated and acted upon by the newly enlightened. To suppose that imparting knowledge will be enough to resolve difficulties is an honest enough mistake: Freud admits to having made it early on, when he told his patient Irma, “if you are still having pain, it is really only your own fault” (Freud 1999, p. 86). “I was then of the opinion” he explains, “that my task did not go beyond informing my patients of the hidden meaning of their symptoms; whether or not they accepted this solution ... was no longer my responsibility.” Today, however, the idea that knowledge is the source of change is ubiquitous in the world of mental health care, as almost everywhere else.

Contrast this with the situation when Freud began working. It was newly discovered that neuropathology followed specific patterns, patterns that did not match the findings in conversion hysteria. Thus, when Freud started out, there was a real question: why did Anna O. act that way? But that question, so central at the beginning of the work, is now almost never asked. People who have done enough “research” on the internet know more than the analyst every time — patients just need someone to tell them what to do about the problem they have already figured out. And the irony usually escapes them.



Today it may be years before someone asks, “Why do I react the way I do?” This is just one example of what I mean by “the impossible formation”: how does one deal with *that*? Perhaps, then, I did find one positive note in that first entry of my stupid notebook, my suspicion of figuring things out, especially at a “deep” level. At least, the sophomore who wrote this was suspicious of the quagmire that is knowledge. I decided to keep reading.

I came by my skepticism of knowledge about mental health honestly, having begun my psychiatric training a mere six months before the commercial release of Prozac, at an institution that prided itself on its scientific bona fides, contributing both to the emphasis on biology in psychiatry and to the development of the DSM-III. Far from being atheoretical, this training was predicated on the belief that mental illness comprises a group of biological disturbances of mind — whatever that is (nobody having clarified exactly how mind and biology are connected, either then or now) — that could be meaningfully categorized by an enumeration of symptoms. When I started my training, everybody knew that academic psychiatry did not have all the answers, at least not yet, but we knew they would be coming soon. In fact, however, those answers never showed up. Instead, there arose an ever more sophisticated literature of conjectures in the field, all predicated on the assumption that, eventually, *we would know*. As an example of what I am describing, consider a recently published account of the developing understanding of mental illness and its treatment by a former president of the American Psychiatric Association, Jeffrey Lieberman, in his very readable story *Shrinks: The Untold Story of Psychiatry* (Lieberman 2015). This book was widely reviewed when first published, most favorably in the *New York Times Book Review* (Angier 2015), more skeptically in *The Guardian* (Appignanesi 2015) and *The Wall Street Journal* (Tavris 2015). To illustrate my point, I will focus on Lieberman’s discussion of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Lieberman addresses the phenomenon of PTSD in a narrative arc that he uses throughout his book. He starts by describing how horribly people were treated before the condition discussed was properly defined, DSM-III style, by scientists, then how poorly it was treated by early psychoanalysts, then how a statistically informed approach to diagnosis led to a more uniform picture of the problem, and finally how neuroscience allowed us to see the pathophysiological basis of the condition. At this point, per Lieberman, there is nothing more to say. This kind of knowledge is the final destination because it goes without saying that it will lead us to the only viable goal: symptom eradication and a return to a previous state of health, or symptomlessness — “health” and a lack of symptoms being synonymous. The important points for Lieberman are the factors viewed as “objective”: the symptoms, their relation to a particular traumatic event, and the brain mechanisms involved in the expression of those symptoms, all as understood by the scientists who choose what is important to study. But when it comes to particulars, here as throughout his book, nothing Lieberman says fits with his larger thesis. Thus, he does not address the question of whether a classical analytic treatment was effective: in his description it sounds ridiculous, some Freudian interrogating a soldier about his Oedipal conflicts. In the two clinical examples he gives — his own case and that of a patient — he has nothing to say about the fact that his symptoms appear to have been so mild as to have required no treatment at all, while his patient, after what appears to have been very extensive treatment, ended up as a severe alcoholic, completely isolated and unable to function. He likens his experience of dropping an air conditioner to his patient’s experience of losing his son in an accident, because both engaged “the dynamics of the amygdala-prefrontal cortex-hippocampus circuit” and consequently both he and his patient felt a lack of “cognitive control” (Lieberman, p. 269). There is no question, here, that the untimely death of one’s child and an accident while moving a window unit would be experienced in exactly the same way — after all, it’s the amygdala-prefrontal cortex-hippocampus circuit we are talking about, not personal experience! But an additional anecdote concerning Lieberman being robbed in his apartment at gunpoint raises a question, because he did not develop PTSD as a result of that experience. How did he feel in “cognitive control” when two strangers broke into his apartment and threatened to kill him if he did not give them money, but did not experience such control when he dropped the air conditioner? The explanation he gives — that he did not want the thugs to find his grandfather’s Patek Philippe watch (p. 241) and so was able to override his fear enough to at least act as though he were in control of the situation — implies a capacity to master his reaction to a traumatic event in a way that allows him to maintain self-control (or, to override the dynamics of the amygdala-prefrontal cortex-hippocampus circuit). It seems to me that, if Lieberman’s description of overcoming a sense of powerlessness were valid, then there would be no reason for PTSD to happen at all: we would all just need to feel some sense of control in difficult situations. Reading his account, what occurred to me was that, in the story of the robbery, he was not personally responsible for the thugs breaking in, but, in the story of dropping the air conditioner, he did feel responsible for potentially harming anyone who might be in its path on the sidewalk. This suggests that his anxiety in the latter situation was the result of guilt rather than overwhelming trauma. But this would be bad for Lieberman’s argument, because PTSD as described in his book is a group of symptoms that is always produced in response to traumatic experience, without the influence of such factors as guilt or one’s feelings about losing a child, but simply a sense of a “loss of cognitive control”.

And that is precisely the problem. In his book, Lieberman completely ignores the fact that each traumatized person

brings to her trauma ways of experiencing the world that were first learned in her childhood and that continue to influence the way she deals with every experience, including, unsurprisingly, the experience of massive trauma. In my own work with victims of genocide, I do not think I have ever encouraged anyone to talk about her childhood; however, every patient I have had, of whatever level of sophistication, at some point does just that. Childhood is where we learned a way of communicating with ourselves and others about the world as we experience it. There is no question that, in trying to wrap one's mind around trauma, one would fall back on those formative experiences.

Bringing up the academic account of "PTSD" is not parenthetical; indeed, it gets to the heart of the problem I am describing. While the would-be analyst is floundering about trying to figure out what to do, the larger world of mental health care is completely dismissive of and oblivious to the problem. The mental health establishment theorizes pathology as it does for a reason: to view the psyche as a function of brain processes that are irrelevant to the world outside the brain, the "amygdala-prefrontal cortex-hippocampus circuit" and such, maximizes the use of medical technology while limiting psychological therapies to an advisory role, imparting knowledge, all based on the premise that restoring a state of symptomlessness is the goal. To even call this a *medical* model is, I would argue, wildly inaccurate: an emergency room that was devoted exclusively to eliminating symptoms would have an unacceptably high mortality rate in no time. Rather, this is a *neoliberal* model of psychopathology: it is completely focused on getting people back to the work force, with minimal complaining. A significant part of the impossibility of becoming an analyst is that this dynamic is insufficiently addressed in analytic formation programs; consequently, what we are trying to do in psychoanalysis is conflated with what one is trying to do in pharmacotherapy or behavioral treatment, that is, to get rid of symptoms and return patients to a (hypothetical) state of normality.<sup>1</sup> My point is not to dismiss those modalities — it is not that there is no role for symptom removal in psychological health care, as in emergency rooms — it is simply to note that, when we do analysis, we are doing something very different from these so-called "evidence-based" treatments.

This "something different" starts with a radically different understanding of what a psychological symptom is. To be anxious or depressed or delusional (whatever else it is) is not simply a brain malfunction; rather, it is a way of engaging one's world, unlike, say, a brain tumor or a coronary occlusion. This became empirically obvious to me when, working in low-fee clinics as a resident, I encountered women in abusive relationships who wanted to take antidepressants precisely in order to tolerate life with their abusive partners. They were fully aware that they were depressed, and why, but they could not afford to leave. Similarly, I was always struck by the ways in which many patients acted to maintain the very symptoms they were seeing a psychiatrist to get rid of, as when a war refugee who has horrible nightmares of bloody violence takes a job at a butcher shop, or a chronically suicidal person volunteers to work on a suicide hotline — both of which I have seen, among many other examples. In these cases, it is hard not to argue that there is something beyond the symptom as symptom that the sufferer is engaged with, a kind of "surplus value" of her pain, such that it cannot be treated as a straightforward problem, even if she never exhibits an awareness of the fact. It took me years to figure out that analysis and what gets called "evidence-based" treatments (an insult, really: am I not basing my argument on evidence?) are really doing completely different things.

To conclude, I would like to look at the impossibility of my title from a different angle. Yes, becoming an analyst is a never-ending, impossible task, a fact recognized by Freud and Ferenczi, Reik, Lacan, Laplanche, Bion, Loewald and Lawrence Friedman, even in JAPA, in a recent series of articles on the "Ethical Implications of the Analyst-as-Person" (*JAPA* 2016, 1153-1224). But then, so what? Speaking only for myself, the very reason I decided to study psychiatry rather than any other field in medical school was that it was the only field I felt certain I could never figure out — it was the one kind of medicine that, no matter what, I could never be bored by. It is not my fault that the psychiatric establishment chose to suppress that fact, so that the only honorable option available was psychoanalytic training — that is just what happened. This "impossibility" — really, just the impossibility of ever creating a mechanically reproducible analysis — is the ground on which we as analysts walk. In a world where such mastery is always expected, analysts stick out like a sore thumb, because such mastery is irrelevant to what they do. There's no other way it could be.

At the end of my brief journal are two entries: "[A guest speaker] phrases the problem wrong: not 'whose reality?' but 'what use is an expert when subjectivity is so important?'" Again, I wish I had had a clearer sense of where I would go with this. It would be a few years before I would come across Lacan's concept of the *sujet supposé savoir*, the subject presumed to know/presumed subject of knowledge, where he addressed the problem of "whose reality" (Lacan 1973/1978, pp. 230-243), but at least I was dubious about experts. This note ends with a quote from the philosophy professor Louis Mackey: "Truth and reality are never more than the imagined terms of the nostalgia for a truth and reality never possessed. The greater art is the art that embraces this paradox" (Mackey 1997, p. 37). It is the greater psychological formulation of psychoanalysis as opposed to the DSM that embraces this paradox, too.

Psychoanalysis, by definition, is a practice based on not knowing, because it is the practice of the unconscious. What the analyst brings is never the truth, just a way to interrogate truth's possibility. For precisely this reason, psychoanalysis is also wildly out of step with the knowledge economy and the information age. It's crazy, being an analyst these days, but I'm OK with that.

Last entry: "Today with [my analyst], after two weeks of wondering what is going on, I said to myself, 'I'm scared to figure these things out for myself.' Immediately I thought this was imprecise, then realized that, after all, maybe it was true; in fact, maybe it is *the* fact, central to everything else going on."

Again, I winced: did I really think I could "figure things out for myself"? What exactly would that mean, anyway? At the time I was writing this, I was almost 40! When do you finally accept that you just have to go on your gut? Becoming an analyst really is impossible. So what is left to do? ■

#### ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup>Why American psychoanalytic training programs do not, ever, engage in a critique of the nosology, therapeutics, and research methods of academic psychiatry and psychology is a question I very much wish that organized psychoanalysis would address.

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