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OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IN ANALYSIS: IS IT POSSIBLE TO RELINQUISH OMNIPOTENCE AND ACCEPT RECEPTIVE FEMININITY?

BY JOHN STEINER

In his discussion of obstacles to progress in analysis, Freud gave emphasis to two factors, the operation of the death instinct and the repudiation of femininity. In this paper, I argue that it is more appropriate to think of the death instinct as an antilife instinct expressed as envy, which leads to destructive attacks against creative links. The prototype of these links is the early oral relationship between the infant and mother, which later is expressed as the genital relationship between adults in a couple. Such mutually interdependent relationships come to represent creativity and maternal care and are particularly likely to provoke envious attacks. The vulnerability of the receptive feminine position to such attacks may lead to a preference for a masculine identity based on omnipotent identifications with powerful phallic objects. Inevitably, such defensive masculinity inflicts further damage so that progress in analysis requires, first, a relinquishment of the omnipotent phallic identification and, second, an acceptance and valuing of femininity. Some of the difficulties in this area are illustrated in a patient who feared to use her intelligence because she saw it as a cruel masculine weapon.

Keywords: Femininity, masculinity, treatment, resistance, transference.

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It is not uncommon to find that patients in analysis make significant progress and then become stuck in an atmosphere that feels repetitive and stultifying. Sometimes it seems as if the treatment has come up against a barrier beyond which it is impossible to proceed, and this presents a difficult situation for both the patient and the analyst. Should they tolerate the frustration to see if something new can develop, or should they accept the limitations and allow the analysis to end? On a larger scale, the same dilemma faces our theoretical approach to obstacles in analysis. Sometimes obstacles can act as a stimulus to a theoretical advance, which may lead to a better understanding and enable progress to be resumed. At other times, a better theoretical understanding can help us to accept limitations on what analysis can achieve.

FREUD'S PESSIMISM: "THUS OUR ACTIVITIES ARE AT AN END"

Freud took a pessimistic view particularly in his late work, epitomized in "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (1937), in which he described a bedrock beyond which progress seemed impossible. Having concluded that ultimately, "our activities are at an end," he attributed the limitation to two factors, namely, the operation of the *death instinct* and the *repudiation of femininity*.

Freud's views with respect to both of these factors are controversial, and our contemporary approach to them differs significantly from that held eighty years ago when his book was published. In this paper, I am going to attempt to modify rather than to dismiss his views to see if a contemporary Kleinian approach can rescue some of his basic ideas and even perhaps enable new ones to be applied to the problem of resistance.

AN ANTILIFE INSTINCT EXPRESSED AS ENVY

Freud was clearly concerned to link the ultimate cause of resistance in analysis to the operation of a destructive force.

> No stronger impression arises from the resistances during the work of analysis than of there being a force that is defending itself

> by every possible means against recovery and which is absolutely resolved to hold on to illness and suffering. . . . These phenomena are unmistakable indications of the presence of a power in mental life which we call the instinct of aggression or of destruction according to its aims, and which we trace back to the original death instinct of living matter. [Freud 1937, pp. 242-243]

Klein supported Freud in his view of the primary conflict of the life and death instincts, but through her descriptions of the critical role played by envy as a destructive force, she set the scene to enable us to reconsider the nature and motive for destructive attacks. Klein (1957, p. 176) did not specifically link envy to the death instinct, but she did describe it as "an oral-sadistic and anal-sadistic expression of destructive impulses, operative from the beginning of life, and that it has a constitutional basis."

While there may be disagreement about the importance and nature of the death instinct, there does seem to be abundant evidence for a deeply ingrained resistance to change, supporting Freud's contention that something in all of us "is defending itself by every possible means against recovery." If we modify the views of both Klein and Freud and replace the idea of a death instinct with that of an antilife instinct expressed as envy, we can postpone an examination of the deeper meaning of these processes and concentrate on the situations that provoke and sustain envy. We can also explore the mechanisms and phantasies through which destructive attacks are mounted, and examine the aftermath of destructive attacks and their effect on the individual and his or her relationships.

WHAT PROVOKES ENVY?

It seems to me possible that the persistent and habitual denigration of femininity that we see both culturally and in analysis is in fact based on an earlier and perhaps deeper appreciation of femininity that is valued and indeed temporarily overvalued and idealized. Klein (1957) argued that a good relation with the breast as a symbol of maternal value was vital if the infant was to establish good internal object relationships in order to provide the foundation for future development. She wrote:

> We find in the analysis of our patients that the breast in its good aspect is the prototype of maternal goodness, inexhaustible patience and generosity, as well as of creativeness. It is these phantasies and instinctual needs that so enrich the primal object that it remains the foundation for hope, trust and belief in goodness. [p. 180]

However, she also recognized that envy led to a hatred, initially focused on the mother and her breast, but subsequently directed against any relationship made by the mother that threatens to intrude and disturb the perfection of the primal couple. What seemed especially likely to provoke envy were images of the mother's rich potential to relate both to external figures in the family and to her internal world. For example, "the mother receiving the father's penis, having babies inside her, giving birth to them, and being able to feed them" (p. 183).

Envy is, then, often experienced in response to signs of the mother being an independent person, engaged with others or even with her own thoughts—her mind seemingly turned away from her infant to her internal objects, including her husband and her unborn babies. These images represent the mother as a participant in a generative couple, with her baby in the early oral relationship and with her husband in a primal scene, and they all provoke envy. Especially when we feel excluded, we envy what we most value, and here what is attacked are all those activities that symbolize growth, development, liveliness, and creativity, both in the creation of new life and in caring for it, sustaining it, and protecting it.

At a part object level, the creative symbol may involve the link between nipple and mouth, and between penis and vagina, but these symbols can be extended to areas beyond the concrete level to include mental functions such as feeling and thinking. Hence in his description of "attacks on linking," Bion (1959, p. 308) suggested that envious attacks are directed toward "anything which is felt to have the function of linking one object with another."

Here Bion includes the link between the analyst's verbal thought offered to the mind of the patient, where both the receptive capacity of the patient's mind and the ideas offered by the analyst can become the focus of envious attacks on the link between them. Feldman (2000) has

argued that all such life-affirming activities become the focus of antilife attacks closely related to envy and that there is no need to go beyond this to postulate a death-seeking instinct.

ENVY AND THE REPUDIATION OF FEMININITY

Envious attacks can succeed in destroying the creative link by a focus on either the male or the female component of the couple, but it does seem that images that involve the feminine receptive component of the link are particularly valued and particularly provocative of hatred. It is not clear why this should be so or even if it only appears to be so because envy of true creative masculinity may be hidden beneath a desire for phallic omnipotence, which is perhaps itself an envious attack. Nevertheless, with her capacity for fecundity, for her role in the care and feeding of the infant, and perhaps in part because of her vulnerability, it is the woman, particularly her breast and her genital, who so often seems to bear the brunt of attacks, and in my view it is this that leads to the repudiation of femininity in favor of a phallic masculinity. These considerations allow us to look at section VIII of "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" from a new point of view and to see Freud's observations as arising from his patients' unconscious phantasies rather than as describing normal female development.

Freud introduces the repudiation of femininity as a novel theme quite unconnected with the rest of the book, and I have found it remarkably easy for the reader, including myself, to overlook it. Thompson (1991, p. 175), in his detailed analysis of the paper, heads his discussion of section VIII as "The Surprising Turn" and states, "It seems curious that this factor, after the careful arguments about the limitations on psychoanalytic treatment that precede its introduction, is declared to be the 'bedrock' of resistance to progress."

Freud's (1937, p. 250) critical paragraphs read as follows:

> Both in therapeutic and in character-analyses we notice that two themes come into especial prominence and give the analyst an unusual amount of trouble. It soon becomes evident that a general principle is at work here. . . . The two corresponding themes are,

> in the female, an envy for the penis—a positive striving to possess a male genital—and, in the male, a struggle against his passive or feminine attitude to another male. What is common to the two themes was singled out at an early date by psycho-analytic nomenclature as an attitude towards the castration complex.

Freud believed that both these factors led to an unyielding resistance.

> The decisive thing remains that the resistance prevents any change from taking place—that everything stays as it was. We often have the impression that with the wish for a penis and the masculine protest we have penetrated through all the psychological strata and have reached bedrock, and that thus our activities are at an end. This is probably true, since for the psychic field the biological field does play the part of the underlying bedrock. The repudiation of femininity can be nothing else than a biological fact, a part of the great riddle of sex. It would be hard to say whether and when we have succeeded in mastering this factor in an analytic treatment. [pp. 252-253]

These two paragraphs, and the male superiority that they imply, today seem anachronistic and prejudiced. The idea of the woman as inferior, passive, and characterized by lack has been vigorously challenged, early on by Horney (1924, 1926), Riviere (1934), and Deutsch (1925), and more recently by a large number of writers including Chasseguet-Smirgel (1976) and Birksted-Breen (1993, 1996). These together with an extensive feminist literature (Person and Ovesey 1983; Dimen 1997; Goldner 2000; Balsam 2013) means that we no longer think of feminine inferiority as a fact. Britton (2003) suggested that Freud's picture of a woman who lacks everything is a defense to counter an image of the mother as the woman who has everything. In this respect, Klein's work has been a major impetus to revisions of Freud's picture of feminine inferiority, common in his time and still common in the form of sexist prejudice.

REDEFINING THE CREATIVE LINK

Both the male and the female components of the creative link are misrepresented in Freud's claim that the problem arises because of, "in the

female, an envy for the penis—a positive striving to possess a male genital—and, in the male, a struggle against his passive or feminine attitude to another male."

First, I will argue that the "positive striving to possess a male genital" in this situation is more appropriately thought of as a wish to possess omnipotent phallic superiority and is a desire prevalent in both men and women as a defense against dependency and need. Second, I will suggest that there is nothing passive or inferior about femininity and that Freud's view of a "struggle against a passive or feminine attitude" is in fact a struggle against the adoption of a receptive position, which, although feminine in its imagery, is equally important for both men and women to accept. Both men and women have to be able to adopt a receptive stance, not only in relation to the breast in infancy, but also in order to be receptive to the thoughts and feelings of others through a capacity to receive and contain projections. However, this should not be taken to mean that there are no differences between the way men and women react. It is rather that in the area of obstacles to progress they have many issues in common, and all of us have to be able to accept the existence of both male and female phantasies and to tolerate the link between them.

The resistance to progress delineated by Freud can thus be thought to arise from the predilection to phallic omnipotence, on the one hand, and from the reluctance to adopt a receptive position, on the other. Here the nipple, the penis, and the analyst's thoughts can be viewed as "entering," "inserting," or "giving," while the mouth, vagina, and the patient's mind are "receiving." However, the traffic goes both ways, and just as the mother must be open to the projections of her baby, it is essential for the analyst to be receptive to the projections of the patient if a creative relationship is to be established.

It seems to me that receptivity is a capacity that leads to some of the most important and valued qualities that we associate with femininity in both men and women. These include creativity and the capacity to engage with an internal world associated with images of pregnancy and care for others. It is an essential stance for us to be able to adopt if we wish to give and receive from others and thereby to grow and to develop both in life and in analysis.

For progress in analysis to be resumed following a setback, both the male and the female elements need to be restored to their true value so that a receptive femininity can join with a benign masculinity in a functional creative link—namely, a link in which omnipotence is relinquished and feminine receptiveness is valued and accepted. We can surely agree with Freud that this task is difficult, but the redefinition I have attempted allows us to explore each of these elements in turn and to examine if further understanding can restore progress or if it forces us, at least temporarily, to accept a bedrock.

PHALLIC OMNIPOTENCE AND NARCISSISTIC ORGANIZATIONS

The idea that the *penis envy* referred to by Freud may more appropriately be thought of as *phallus envy* or even perhaps as *omnipotence envy* is in keeping with the views of Birksted-Breen (1996), who proposed that "penis envy is often phallus envy, the wish to have or be the phallus which, it is believed, will keep at bay feelings of inadequacy, lack, and vulnerability."

She contrasted phallic masculinity, which is based on omnipotence and a desire to control and dominate objects, with a masculinity that recognizes relationships and values femininity, which she called "penis as link." It is the omnipotent version of masculinity that is turned to as a defense and which is often also the vehicle for destructive envious attacks against creative links.

Of course, the imagery of the phallus is masculine, but the desire for omnipotence arises in both male and female patients, and both commonly turn to such phantasies to magically solve the pains of reality. Indeed, creative links are often envied and hated precisely because they involve the capacity to tolerate the lack of omnipotence.

The most common manifestation of omnipotent phallic phantasies takes the form of narcissistic idealizations based on pathological organizations that create a powerful image of phallic superiority as a defense against dependence, vulnerability, and need (Rosenfeld 1971; Steiner 1993). They commonly create illusions of idealized states based on omnipotent control of ideal objects, which are sometimes believed to have existed in reality rather than in phantasy, often in the form of a

blissful paradise at the breast or sometimes even in the womb. These Garden of Eden illusions underpin the omnipotent phantasies described by Akhtar (1996) that "someday" the bliss will be magically restored or that they might still exist "if only" the disaster had been avoided.

When the idealization collapses, the patient may respond with a terrible sense of disillusionment sometimes felt as a catastrophe and often associated with feelings of having been robbed or even castrated. It was perhaps such phantasies that led Freud to his image of woman as a castrated man, even though it seems to me to be clear that such fears are based on the collapse of defensive phantasies and of course affect both male and female patients.

THE RELINQUISHMENT OF OMNIPOTENCE

It might be thought that giving up of omnipotence and accepting receptive femininity would yield its own rewards, but the benefits tend to be delayed and uncertain. By contrast, omnipotence works instantly and with a magical certainty and often seems to have such a hold on the personality that its relinquishment is problematic. Freud (1908, p. 145) claimed that it is never possible to fully give up a source of instinctual satisfaction, and it is probably never possible to fully relinquish the pleasures of omnipotence. Perhaps as Freud suggests, the best we can do is to acknowledge its existence, to recognize the damage it can do, and to watch if its hold on the personality can weaken. To do this, we must admit the pleasure that omnipotent destructive phantasies provide, so that the omnipotence can be properly missed and mourned (Segal 1994). However, even when phallic omnipotence is to some extent replaced by the idea of a "penis as link," a second task confronts the patient that may be equally difficult, and this involves the acceptance of a receptive femininity in order to permit the restoration of a creative couple.

PHANTASIES OF FEMININE MUTILATION

We then have to consider why it is that femininity is so difficult to value and accept, and it is here that unconscious phantasies of female

mutilation may play a part. These phantasies lead to receptivity being associated with images of the female genital that is not only vulnerable but felt to be inferior, repellent, and even disgusting. To understand how these images arise, I believe it is necessary to recognize that some of the primitive unconscious phantasies that make up the aftermath of destructive attacks may be extremely disturbing and provoke aversion.

Klein, for example, described how violent some of the unconscious phantasies can be.

> In his destructive phantasies he bites and tears up the breast, devours it, annihilates it; and he feels that the breast will attack him in the same way. As urethral and anal-sadistic impulses gain in strength, the infant in his mind attacks the breast with poisonous urine and explosive faeces, and therefore expects it to be poisonous and explosive towards him. [Klein 1957, p. 63]

Sometimes the nipple is the focus of hatred when it is associated with a masculine aspect of the mother, which is seen as hostile to the infant and protecting the mother by limiting access to the breast. Biting off the nipple may give rise to an image of the breast as damaged, bleeding, and mutilated and may form the basis for phantasies of the female genital as castrated, damaged, and vulnerable to hostile intrusions.

Riviere described how the sadism comes to be directed toward the mother's body.

> The desire to bite off the nipple shifts, and desires to destroy, penetrate and disembowel the mother and devour her and the contents of her body, succeed it. These contents include the father's penis, her faeces and her children—all her possessions and love-objects, imagined as within her body. The desire to bite off the nipple is also shifted, as we know, onto the desire to castrate the father by biting off his penis. Both parents are rivals in this stage, both possess desired objects; the sadism is directed against both and the revenge of both is feared. [Riviere 1929, p. 309]

Klein describes further details of how violent, disturbing, and primitive the phantasies may become.

> The phantasied onslaughts on the mother follow two main lines: one is the predominantly oral impulse to suck dry, bite up, scoop out and rob the mother's body of its good contents. . . . The other line of attack derives from the anal and urethral impulses and implies expelling dangerous substances (excrements) out of the self and into the mother. . . . These excrements and bad parts of the self are meant not only to injure but also to control and to take possession of the object. [Klein 1957, p. 63]

Sometimes a vertical split may appear in which feelings of repulsion are directed toward the lower half of the body and especially to the female genital. We see this in Shakespeare's Lear, whose hatred for his daughters is expressed through his disgust.

> But to the girdle do the gods inherit; beneath is all the fiends'. There's hell, there's darkness, there's the sulfurous pit—burning, scalding, stench, consumption! Fie, fie, fie, pah, pah!—Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination. There's money for thee. [act 4, scene 6]

Freud (1930) pursued this theme when he linked the development of feelings of disgust to the time in prehistory when man assumed an erect posture. Standing upright led to an enormous expansion in the role of vision and the development of disgust evolved in relation to smell, touch, and taste especially toward ano-genital functions. When the female genital becomes the focus of envious anal and urethral attacks, it leaves behind a kind of battle scene of mutilated and defiled body parts, so that being feminine and receptive became associate with feelings of vulnerability to phallic attacks combined with repellent images of mutilation and contamination with feces and urine.

It seems to me that these images associated with sadistic attacks directed at receptive femininity give rise to the preference for the excitements of phallic triumph as well as to feelings of revulsion toward feminine receptivity. The images are frightening and sometimes repulsive and make the task of restoring femininity to its true value a difficult one. Since they are deeply rooted in our unconscious, they can only be partially altered by education and social change. We can, however, hope that a psychoanalytic approach might be more effective and that the

analysis of the damage done through envious attacks can set a more benevolent reparative process in motion. If feelings of guilt, regret, and remorse can be tolerated, mourning the loss of omnipotence may lead to a less destructive view of masculinity and a less-damaged view of receptive femininity.

RECEPTIVITY AND THINKING

Receptive femininity is also vital in the field of ideas where both giving and receiving are necessary in order to think creatively, and sometimes patients seem especially to repudiate female types of thinking and in particular fail to allow the feminine to interact with masculine thinking in a productive way. This is true of the patient I am going to discuss, whose analysis became stuck and unproductive because she seemed unable to use her considerable intelligence.

A similar problem in thinking associated with receptive femininity was described by Riviere (1929) in the analysis of a woman of ability and competence who had problems deploying her intelligence. She hid her considerable knowledge and showed deference to men by giving an impression that she was stupid while seeing through them in an apparently innocent and artless manner. She used a flirtatiousness to conceal an intense rivalry with men and could not accept a deeper view of femininity as receptive, creative, and valuable. Britton also illustrates this theme in a patient who had idealized her analyst as a source of magical power without which she was unable to think. An omnipotent phallus was felt to be a shared possession as long as the phantasy of a mutual idealization was sustained and exchanges between the analyst and his patient were viewed as a symbolic intercourse. However, neither his patient nor the one described by Riviere was able to sustain the illusion, and its collapse resulted in what appeared as a kind of stupidity.

> When this illusion collapses there is not a sense of loss but the phantasy of having been literally or symbolically "castrated." If the phallus is symbolically equated with the intellect the consequent feeling of castration is experienced as losing all mental potency, of being stupid. [Britton 2003, p. 66]

Britton described how the loss of the belief in a secret phallic supremacy exposed his patient to the most intense experiences of envy and despair, and made her feel that she had become mentally defective.

Clinical Fragment

I will present a fragment from the analysis of a patient, Mrs A, who felt blocked in her life and also in her analysis. She complained of feeling trapped and disadvantaged because she was a single mother. She admired those people, especially men, who were free to exercise their power and also those women who could live a life of luxury under the protection of powerful men. She seemed to view intelligence as something masculine and powerful but dangerous and damaging both to women and to other men. This led her to repudiate her own intelligence, using it mostly to protect herself from intrusive exploitation, and in particular she felt that she needed to avoid a receptive thoughtfulness in relation to my work.

She emphasized her dissatisfactions, stressing the things she lacked, such as a professional career, a husband, and the wealth and comfort that only men could provide. It was striking that she was unable to get pleasure from the good things she did have, like her friends, her work, her children, and especially her capacity to think. She described her work as a futile place with no prospects and no future, and she saw herself as plagued by bad luck and by repeated misfortunes and betrayals. She had no serious relationship, and she used her women friends to complain about men and her analysis to reiterate her unhappiness because of the unfair hardships she had to endure.

She described similar resentments toward her father, a lay preacher who had introduced a strict and arbitrary morality into the home, which her mother and her considerably older sister accepted without protest but which she suspected was corrupt and hypocritical. The parents slept in separate rooms, and she shared her mother's bed until she was given her own room when she was eight years old. She linked many of the feelings of unfairness to this expulsion, and she seems never again to have felt loved and valued.

Unlike her sister, who did not go to university but married a successful businessman, she did well at school and earned a place at the

university, where she surprised everyone when she was the top student of her year in math and physics. However, in her second year, she had a breakdown and was sent home in an acute anxiety state with depersonalization and some persecutory thoughts. She gradually improved but could not return to college, and after two years she took a secretarial course and worked in a large firm of solicitors, eventually rising to a senior and highly responsible position in her office.

When she began analysis, she spent many sessions in a rambling, dreamy state, describing her failures and seeming to expect them to be put right for her. She adopted a little-girl quality in her relationships, which were highly erotized and accompanied by a naïveté and apparent innocence. She dressed seductively and encouraged men to make advances in a way that tended to put them in the wrong. For example, she held hands under the table with one of the senior lawyers at an office party but expressed outrage when he offered to see her home. In the sessions, she was seductive but also easily felt misused and became indignant if I interpreted the erotized atmosphere that she created. It seemed to me that she went into a kind of dream state in which she felt close to me in a vaguely erotized way, but that if this was interpreted, the spell was broken and she felt expelled from this intimacy, as she had been from her mother's bed.

In spite of her intelligence, a striking aspect of Mrs A's behavior was her inability to make full use of her intelligence. As with the patients of Riviere (1929) and Britton (2003) mentioned above, she seemed to display a pseudo-imbecility, as if thinking and curiosity had become erotized and inhibited (Mahler-Schoenberger 1942; Hellman 1954). She would adopt a kind of thoughtless whining and moan, "Why don't you tell me what to do?" or "You didn't tell me I should free-associate. I have been coming all these years and I never knew what I was supposed to do." It was difficult to believe that this same person could have excelled in science at the university, and it was only as I got glimpses of a quite superior intelligence, for example, when she mastered complex and subtle problems at work, or when she pointed out errors of thinking on my part, that I began to realize that she was not properly utilizing her capacity to think. In part, she seemed to split it off and project it onto me so that she came to depend on me for the most elementary thought while watching me carefully and used her intelligence to point out my errors both factual

and ethical. She seemed to view thinking as a masculine activity of a dangerous kind that could be used to exploit and misuse the vulnerability of women. Feminine desire was also dangerous because, in her view, the link between a man and a woman was damaging and exploitative.

A Fragment of a Session

Here is a fragment of a session in which she began, five minutes late, by explaining that she had been delayed because she had to struggle to get away from a friend who wanted to chat. She then described a dream in which she was descending in the underground but at the foot of the steps found herself having to make a choice between the left-hand passage leading to town and the right-hand one leading to her home. She stood there unable to choose, feeling terribly heavy, and found that she had a gardening sickle in her hand. Her indecision made her late, and she was relieved, since this meant that she did not have time to go into town and could go home and do the work that needed to be done in her garden, which was terribly overgrown and untidy. She recalled that often when she felt she had too much work to do, she would leave it in a mess and go to town and wander round the shops. A neighbor had loaned the sickle to her some two years previously, and she discovered it a few days before while clearing out her garden-shed. She felt guilty, not only because she had not returned it but also because she had never used it. She described it as a horrible sharp thing and wondered why the neighbor had not asked for it back. Perhaps he had forgotten that he had lent it to her.

I interpreted that perhaps the choice that was so heavy in her dream represented the conflict she was in, between doing difficult analytic work and fleeing from it. I suggested that she saw her mind as overgrown and untidy like her garden and that there was a lot of work for us to do. Perhaps on her way to the session she had to choose between embarking on this work and chatting with her friend.

In response to these interpretations, she said that she felt heavy now, and she complained that my interpretations made her feel bad. If there was a lot of work to be done, she must still be very ill, and that is a horrible thing to say to a patient. As the session continued, she expressed further resentments, even though I thought that she had shown a fleeting interest in the dream and my interpretation of it.

Discussion

Mrs A seemed to me to have made some use of the analysis but then became stuck in a situation that, like her work, had become "a futile place." My own disappointment in my work with her led to periods of self-doubt and eventually to the idea that perhaps no further progress was possible and that we might have gone as far as we could go. Gradually, I became interested in the question of why we were so stuck, and this led me to return to Freud's formulations on the repudiation of femininity as a way of thinking about our situation. I wondered if part of the patient's failure to develop further was connected with the low opinion she had of her femininity, on the one hand, together with a fear of using her intelligence, on the other. Like Riviere's patient, she used her femininity to evoke desire in men, which she then felt obliged to resist because she could not value or feel safe with a receptive femininity.

In her dream she did feel guilty that she had not used the sickle, which she had borrowed, and I thought that this might point to a capacity to work and to think, which she was aware that she kept unused. It seemed to me that she did have some idea of a creative femininity but felt obliged to repudiate it, as she did not want to be seen working with me in a cooperative way. If she used her intelligence, she would be wielding a sharp and dangerous weapon, an ugly thing. This is how she described my work, which she said made her feel bad, and she seemed to visualize her own intelligence as having the same destructive dangerous quality.

However, in her first year at the university she had been able to think and perhaps had allowed herself the freedom to be curious, to reason, and to enjoy her capacities. However, this freedom did not last, and after her breakdown, she was obliged to settle for a secretarial post that she saw as feminine and inferior. Perhaps at that time her freedom to question established assumptions was felt to be dangerous if it led her to see through the righteousness of her father's morality. Certainly in the analysis she was quick to see through my own intellectual and ethical shortcomings and then seemed to draw back as if to protect me from a more forceful expression of her views. Sometimes she seemed to be pretending to be stupid so that she

could use her intelligence to catch me out and then argue that she could not protect herself because she was a vulnerable woman at the mercy of powerful men. Phantasies of violent mutilation may well have made her expect horrible attacks with sharp sickle-like weapons and made the idea of a receptive femininity repellent and dangerous.

It seemed to me that while feminine receptivity was repudiated, so too was a loving and productive masculinity. This meant that she felt that she was at the mercy of a phallic superiority and had to protect herself by refusing to let me in. A creative couple in which a receptive feminine side of her could allow a caring side of me to enter became impossible to realize. She claimed that she admired successful men and envied women who did not need to work, but I think she recognized that this view was based on phantasies of phallic superiority and devalued a true feminine creativity, which remained only as a potential within her. Her intense rivalry and jealousy made her fear that if she were to allow a creative intercourse within her mind as well as within the analysis, she would become the object of violent envious attacks from others.

CONCLUSION

As we proceed to study obstacles to progress in development, we come up against a variety of factors, and in this paper I have singled out two that are derived from Freud's original observations but are also a significant departure from them. While I have supported the idea that a critical aim is to relinquish idealization and omnipotence, I have argued that both the patient and the analyst have in addition to overcome their reluctance to value femininity and that difficulties arise from either or both of these factors. Omnipotent phallic organizations create idealized retreats that protect the subject from both shame and guilt, and emergence from these states involves both seeing and being seen (Steiner 2011). When the attacks are motivated by envy and directed against creative links, the damage to good objects and good relationships may give rise to unbearable feelings of shame and guilt, particularly when these are directed at receptive femininity, seen as the weaker and most damaged element of the link.

The analysis, then, has to provide a supportive structure in which shame and guilt can be examined and the question of whether they are bearable can be explored. Sometimes the patient seems able to accept the loss of phallic superiority and face the guilt of the damage it has done. Moves in this direction are possible if guilt is bearable, and when this does prove possible, reparative wishes can be mobilized to initiate a benevolent cycle in which objects become less damaged, and less persecutory so that the severity of the superego is moderated (Klein 1957).

However, even when moves toward facing these difficult aspects of reality are embarked on, a further difficulty remains if a receptive femininity cannot be accepted and valued. This further step requires the value and importance of receptivity to be acknowledged both within ourselves and in others. The vulnerability associated with opening ourselves to masculine entry requires a vigilance because we can never be sure that the masculinity is not concealing a phallic damaging and exploitative force. Feminine receptivity has to be protected by the creation of a setting in which it is valued and the dangers associated with it are appreciated.

I have described these tasks as if they were problems the patient has to face and as if the analyst functions as a helpful benign influence. It is obvious, however, that the analyst faces precisely the same problems to do with his own omnipotence and precisely the same reluctance to accept his receptive femininity. It is clearly important that the analyst is able to examine his own contribution to the deadlock in the analysis, and it is only possible to help the patient with his omnipotence if the analyst has been able to address his own.

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Response to John Steiner's "Overcoming Obstacles in Analysis: Is it Possible to Relinquish Omnipotence and Accept Receptive Femininity?"

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RESPONSE TO JOHN STEINER'S "OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IN ANALYSIS: IS IT POSSIBLE TO RELINQUISH OMNIPOTENCE AND ACCEPT RECEPTIVE FEMININITY?"

BY ROSEMARY H. BALSAM

While the author agrees that issues of sex and gender are frequently involved in impasses and often remain clinically unexplored, she highlights how Dr. Steiner's thinking and (contemporary) Kleinian theory approach, in spite of seeming to recommend gender balance, suffer from the underlying severe sexed-gender polarities that were accentuated in the old Freudian and early twentieth-century schemata. Instead of setting up either/or propositions between abstract generalized (phantasized) masculine–feminine conflicts (as implied here by "feminine" receptivity, and "masculine" omnipotence as phallic), this commentary argues as an alternative and as apt to this impasse, the forward thinking of proposed varied gender integrations that emerged from work in the transference—such as has been described in clinical work enriched by contemporary theoretical development in the United States. This has been much more influenced by the human's internalized social and historical environs, academic postmodern thinking, feminism, relational thinking, and contemporary Freudian ego psychological developments.

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Keywords: Therapeutic impasse, femininity, biological essentialism, gender polarities, gender integration, comparative psychoanalytic theory critique.

Papers that can expand our thinking about the difficult moments of therapeutic impasse are very welcome. This one is from a contemporary Kleinian perspective. I applaud Dr. Steiner for focusing here on some basic psychoanalytic aspects of sex and gender that show how intricately interwoven they actually can become in stalled treatments. I agree wholeheartedly. Following Freud, such psychic issues for all individuals are central in any event. But these days, sex and the interior portraits of gender are more than likely to be avoided unless they are the major topic, and certainly they are rarely addressed with such thoroughness as Steiner does here.

This treatment stall works the following way. Envy is the main engine of destruction for Steiner. He substitutes it for Freud's "death instinct" (simply as "more appropriate"—although, after Rapaport, I for one had always understood this concept as on a higher level of metatheoretical abstraction than a clinically observable affect constellation like envy). No matter. Even for most, envy is a form of aggression that certainly can become malignant. The psychic phenomena constituting a life-affirming "creativity," together with its precarious vulnerability to this envious destruction, Steiner elaborates within the struggle to grasp the repudiation of "femininity"; ph/fantasies of female mutilation consequent upon idealization of "phallic omnipotence." Newer connections are added here from Bion, about interference with the capacity to "think." Steiner emerges finally with a strong assertion, which unfortunately comes across here as *necessary* to gauge gendered analytic success with any female (or perhaps male, too) mired in the archaic inner sex and gender wars that he just delineated. He asserts, "For progress in analysis to be resumed following a setback, both the male and the female elements need to be restored to their *true* value so that a receptive femininity can join with a benign masculinity in a functional creative link—namely, a link in which omnipotence is relinquished and feminine receptiveness is valued and accepted" (italics added).

Right away, I will say that I found the paper interesting as a nimble theoretical exercise. I had hoped, though, for a contemporary

contemplation that I could be fully enthusiastic about. I was disappointed by the old-fashioned quality of many issues and the unself-conscious terminology, including Steiner's declarative tone that belied his inviting question in the title. The "Is it possible to relinquish . . . ?" at the beginning was exchanged for the contention that the "true value" of male and female "*needs* to be restored" by the end. The theory of sex and gender development seems already set here in terms of Kleinian phantasies of early infancy and their fate, and little is apparently to be discovered. Nothing is added of developmental or cultural interest in the patient's *own* ideas about her conflicted femaleness, say, concerning her sleeping for eight years with her mother (apparently in lieu of the woman's husband); the patient's latency, puberty, adolescence, and her "breakdown" in college; her experiences with her own husband; her birthing babies and looking after them; or her experience of the adult loss of the husband, which left her as a single mother with four children. There is no concern or care that the imagery offered as *the* situation shaping sexuality is an exclusively heterosexual model, presented implicitly as a "true" value. The Kleinian theory offered is what the 1950s sociologist C. Wright Mills called "a grand theory," and as such, it does announce sweeping truths for all, with unself-conscious confidence. (This style of theory making is no different from all the early psychoanalysts, but since the 1970s, in postmodern academic times in the West—particularly regarding theory building in gender and sex—it has become rather passé.) The gender dilemmas are engaged here mostly in symbolic fashion—as befits the described theory—and female mental life, perhaps mostly unconscious, is thus engaged as a set of colorful, impersonal unfolding images and metaphors (links and broken links, receptive/receptacles, phallic bastions, milk-laden or empty breasts, body parts, or female gory genital messes). The theory comes across as a series of surreal, abstracted shapes, if beautifully rendered, suggestive of much passion, but not committed to or much interested in either live sexed anatomy or a lived life. I will say more about this later. A review of his own Kleinian theory is where Dr. Steiner is turning to for help with the notion of clinical impasse.

The clinical material shared indeed demonstrates the patient's rage at men and her place at a crossroads in her life and in the analysis. She exudes a (pseudo?) helpless, seductive-seeming overdeference to her

male analyst (a "pseudo-imbecility" that at times he observes), and a dreaminess as if pleasurably in bed with her mother, that gives way to more straightforward anger at him as the session progresses. My own fantasy response is that she may be fleeing the homoerotic elements of her psychic life by looking in the office for a "husband" (for example, her expressed envy of wives of rich husbands), trying to please him and indulge male rule by being "dumb" (as is the ironic cultural wont of many females who condescendingly entertain myths of a male's delicate ego, rather than his phallic power!). She may be disappointed and angry that Dr. Steiner is certainly not noticing any "romance" in these wishes, but woundingly viewing their alliance as just the "hard work" of analysis. I read the dream of her reluctance to give back the nasty sickle as her transferentially parallel, highly conflicted desire to interact with / seduce the male neighbor from whom she borrowed it. She wants perhaps his protection, like an early parent. Perhaps a man cleaning her garden is her version of "marriage"? But she is afraid of his sexual arousal that her own flirtation is aimed to inspire, because she is repelled by the "horrible sharp thing" that (may be) her perception of his penis. She is likely, I agree, also involved more deeply in an erotic maternal transference.

In other words, I think I am on the same wavelength as Dr. Steiner. I too see in the vignette her seductiveness toward males, and yet her horror of their sharp hurtful penises. This likely is in association with her fear of / overworship of men, and possible reluctance to be "penetrated" in psychically symbolic and bodily ways. (I might wonder here about how her father's affairs had become known to her, or had been represented by the mother, thus deeply influencing this daughter's female views of males.) Steiner's interpretation of this constellation is more a global lack of "feminine receptivity," and consequently her reluctance for a "penis-link" (otherwise welcomed, friendly sexual intercourse or her male analyst's words to her). In this session, the patient seems to be functioning like an old-fashioned hysteric or a "so-called good hysteric" (Zetzel 1968), a classic paper that early, similarly brought to the fore the vital pre-oedipal underpinnings of surface oedipal dynamics. Dr. Steiner reveals to the reader that the patient needs to relinquish her devotion to phallic omnipotence (shown by her rage at him and the attempted destruction of the good thoughts that he tries to pass into her) and be more "femininely"

receptive to (I suppose) his good "masculine" interpretations. This solution, put this way, seems close to Freud's frustration with Dora (who was also longing for a mother). If only she would have stopped her anger at him and men (albeit Dora had been first at fourteen years old seriously sexually harassed by the middle-aged father-figure Herr K and was the product of an unhappy marriage with a philandering father who had been treated for syphilis), give up her penis envy and be more "feminine"—for Freud, become passive and accepting; for Steiner, become receptive and accepting—only *then* she would be able to progress developmentally. The rebellious Dora just dropped out of treatment. Dr. Steiner's patient, on the other hand, is angry but a work in progress in this treatment. The patient seems (to me) still to have much to explore, also in the transference, about her female-to-female issues—not just concerning those of early nurturance about her mother, but those of her shared-bed, mother-to-daughter consciously and unconsciously communicated "pillow talk" of bodily sexed and gendered issues, as they responded to the charismatic, problematic father.

WHAT OVERLAPS FREUD HERE, AND WHAT IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM FREUD

Dr. Steiner goes back first to Freud, as do most of us. By declaring Klein's theory of envy an "antilife instinct" superseding Freud's death instinct, he can provide phantasy motivations for a female's devotion to and desire for phallic omnipotence, that he, 1937 Freud, and others say are in relation to "castration anxiety" (for Freud); an image of a male and female battleground of defiled or elevated genital and body parts and female denigration (for Steiner); a phallocratic cultural internalization that compounds shapes and refuels interior gender conflicts related to fleeing inherent fears of her own female body (for Horney 1926). The latter view has been further developed in the direction of female body functional anxieties by psychoanalytic theorists like Bernstein (1990) and many others since about the 1970s. Steiner connects the ph/fantasy interior war over genital body-parts to a widely agreed-on denigration/dread of "femininity." The primitive phantasies encoding envy, rage, ferocious possessiveness, and destructiveness, after Klein, are vividly described here by

Dr. Steiner, compellingly and with great passion. Freud's description of female "castration anxiety" was too specifically involved with a "missing penis" as if it had existed—which incidentally gave it the exact flavor that Horney captured derisively when she said that Freud's was a little boy's version of the sight of a woman. Dr. Steiner's description of "genital mutilation" is more descriptively apt to some female experience than Freud's "missing penis" and his accompanying notion of women as male castrati. Steiner's images of body destruction seem close to Julia Kristeva's "abject" imagery, and I believe that they capture well the sense of "mutilation" conveyed by women who really hate their genitals. Appreciation of female organs and desire as separate and worthy in their own right seems nonexistent, and for such women their genitals are utterly repellent. For Freud, this is normal female development; for Steiner, though, his adaptation of early Klein suggests that this imagery is particularly vivid in order to characterize *this* woman whom he perceives has become stuck in her envy of male power, and thus uninterested in "linking" with men through any benign, creative "penis-link." Freud would have agreed with this as his own portrait of penis envy and not made any subtle distinction between "castration" and "female genital mutilation." And for Freud and Steiner, this "mutilation" fantasy is indeed the result of penis envy.

But I could see Steiner's ideas about "genital mutilation fantasy" as potentially connecting with more modern views, which hold that penis envy is but one fantasy path that a female may take in gender development. Wider issues of "female genital mutilation" fantasies can also focus on the destructive and competitive genital and reproductive female power of her mother and other females, or her own birth, or devastating fantasies about giving birth herself. Every time destructive efforts are mounted against the internal creative maternal matrix, added in Steiner's Kleinian take, they potentially also can disrupt the links between the subject's thoughts and ultimately deprive her of the thinking function of "her own mind" in a self-sabotage. Steiner stereotypically sees "the mind" itself as male gendered—like Freud and early analysts—but this can be questioned as universal. This unconscious imagery deeply concerns familial culture, may well apply to this patient, but not to "*the female*" generically, as if this could then be generally called a reliable feature of "femininity." The path to resumed analytic movement and improvement

for "*the*" female's psychic life that is offered by Steiner is for her to give up her "defensive masculinity . . . [that] . . . inflicts further damage so that progress in analysis requires first a *relinquishment* of the omnipotent phallic identification and second an acceptance and valuing of femininity" (italics added). This "either/or" suggested sexed gender solution emphasizes *relinquishing* one in favor of the other. This model is identical to Freud's picture of normal female development. But it creates an unfortunate sexist caricature. The female analysand should stop protesting and take in what the male analyst says more diligently, thus proving herself as receptively truly "feminine." It is what Freud wanted of Dora in 1905, and of what Freud ultimately despaired by 1937. I and many post-1970s North American analysts would disagree with these binary gender "solutions" offered by both Steiner and Freud.

Instead of a binary gender concept like Steiner's, other contemporary psychoanalytic gender theoretical thinking has offered paths to gender *integration* of both sexed elements of gender. Instead of clinging to the either/or sensibility about "femininity" and "masculinity," an emphasis on psychic processes of transformation and integration allows individually normative behavioral and attitudinal ranges of possibility within the mix. Such clinical theory sticks more closely to an individual patient's inner story than Steiner's more theory-driven approach (see, for example, Chodorow 2011 for a good account of these sea changes in psychoanalytic approach). Integration is achievable by *analyzing* the either/or as the *pathology* associated with lingering childlike views of sex and gender. The either/or is theorized as part of the problem and not part of the mature solution.

CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYTIC PROBLEMS WITH THE CONCEPT OF FEMININITY AND OLD-STYLE BIOLOGICAL ESSENTIALISM

Freud, naturally, and Steiner do not use ironic inverted commas around "femininity." These days, when the concept itself is unexamined in context as here, it risks being a biologically essential shorthand for what is right for all women. The biological essentialism in Steiner's

theory is betrayed by his reification and animation of an image of "receptivity" as a *female* characteristic as if it were synonymous with what *is* specifically female, which is based on the anatomy and physiology of the uterus itself, the vulva, or the vagina. I do not think it makes the thesis less "biologically essentialist" simply to include men in these dynamics, as does Steiner. This strategy requires him and others who employ it (such as Lacan or, say, Chasseguet-Smirgel) to deny the import of the value-laden sexed gender imagery while just *declaring* that men too need this "female receptivity" and that it is a "feminine" property. Why not just use the concept of receptivity? One could then allow straightforwardly that there is an inner path to "male receptivity" that might involve cavities like the mouth, anus, testicular sac, or inner-body spaces—see writers like Fogel (1998) and Reis, Reis, and Grossmark (2009) on male interior space—and also to "female receptivity" that may involve the mouth, vagina, etc. as here? In brief, the word *femininity* by 2017 has been exposed as socially value-laden by many academic and postmodern psychoanalytic thinkers who are interested in sex and gender, to name only a few, Elise 1997 (specifically for "femininity"); Moss 2012 (for "masculinity"); and Corbett et al. 2014 (for an overview). *Femininity,* unless used specifically, has become pretty much useless for modern theory building. As Dr. Steiner points out, we hope to have changed in these eighty and more years—not the least in our awareness of how different is ours from the sociopolitical and religious culture of nineteenth-century Austria, Germany, and middle Europe in which both Klein and Freud were surrounded long before they launched their theories.

What about the processes of internalization as people grow up and develop further complexity than nursery life? It seems to me not possible for me to learn from Klein about the internal power of such psychic processes of taking in and giving out, as projection, projective identification, or internalization, *without* taking an interest in the psychic interpersonal climate of the social and familial surround of an individual patient that affects his or her developing mind and brain. I miss these animations in Dr. Steiner's account and other contemporary Kleinian work.

Returning to Bodies as Male and Female

Rather than getting caught in theoretical backwaters and traps about trying to question and explain what different writers mean by "femininity" (see, for example, Kulish 2000, on the varieties in use and many meanings of "primary femininity"), it could be less obfuscating for psychoanalytic theory to relate to the body parts intended and see what meanings the owner assigns to them secondarily (Balsam 2012). Steiner in many places of his explication does this, too. We *may* read here for "femininity" (a phenomenon as theoretically and culturally changeable as in the eye of the beholder and the affected inner voice or superego of the subject) that Steiner means how an individual relates either positively or negatively to her sexed female body. He says that the analytically stuck female patient's envy of the penis (if we pause for a moment before granting it meaning and symbolizing and generalizing it into "the phallus") destroys her body connection to her own "femininity," i.e., her relation to her reproductive organs and their meanings in terms of her own gendered fantasy life. She becomes stuck in envy of males and thus open to the many possible psychic consequences, including (but not always, I would add) defensiveness about "linking" with them.

The Missing Imagery of the Mature Pregnant Female Body

I appreciated Dr. Steiner's modern desire to be inclusive of both sexed genders by not exclusively considering phallic power as a symbol of body maturity. He says: "Envious attacks can succeed in destroying the creative link by a focus on either the male or the female component of the couple, but it does seem that images that involve the feminine receptive component of the link are particularly valued and particularly provocative of hatred. It is not clear why this should be so." This is the best sentence in the paper for me because it is much more inquiring of subjects on which there is no closure. Why indeed is the denigration and attack *not* more directed at the penis? In fact, could it be more directed at the penis than we care to imagine? What about war, and the new interest in male-against-male aggression too in lateral (sibling) as different from vertical (parental) family dynamics in Juliet Mitchell's (2003) psychoanalytic ideas on murderous rage and envy among siblings? These raise interesting questions indeed, which are little addressed in the literature. More

has been inferred about aggression against male homosexuals in the older literature, where I believe we over-rushed to say that attacks are "because" these men are more so-called feminine. Perhaps there is much more to be learned about these Kleinian internal ph/fantasy body attacks on both sexed bodies?

Of course, all these corporeally loaded images hold grave and important clues to *some* female children turning away from that mother, in fear and nameless dread for their own inchoately projected tasks of "receptivity" (and also expulsion) of a baby to be held *inside* their bodies, matching the all-powerful man that they "know" participates. The "grand theories" tried to sweep all humans under one umbrella. Many, many psychoanalysts have rejected as reductionistic such universalizations about sex and gender as "women are this way" and "men are that way" (see, for example, Chodorow's "Individualization of Gender" [2011]).

GENDERED OUTCOMES

Creativity, Dr. Steiner says, can be achieved when the "traffic goes both ways." He thus builds a case for contemplating an *absence* of creativity in a patient who is "stuck" in analysis. I find this part of his argument the most interesting and newest addition to the treatment of the "stuck" patient. He associates creativity with important features of imaginative *pro*creativity here: "the capacity to engage with an internal world associated with images of pregnancy and care for others. It is an essential stance for us to be able to adopt if we wish to give and receive from others and thereby to grow and to develop both in life and in analysis." I think that this suggests an awareness of female body potential and possibly pregnancy and birthing power (Balsam 2017). Further, this suggests that the imagery of female fecundity and its mentally associative richness stands side by side with the storied (erect) phallic power—interchangeably, yielding in its "going both ways," in connection (desired and friendly, or not as the case may be). Considering these on equal footing theoretically yields an integratable richness, rather than a polarized expansion of the creatively body-based theory of mind that Freud initiated, and that Klein too began to develop.

I thank Dr. Steiner and Dr. Greenberg for giving me and *PQ* readers of this paper the opportunity to revisit these crucial images and fundaments of psychic functioning, related to how our minds gender themselves and function within our sexed frames. I am so glad to be able to participate and to engage the theory of this struggle with these first principles of the generations of life and of living.

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John Steiner

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OVERCOMING OBSTACLES: RESPONSE TO ROSEMARY H. BALSAM

BY JOHN STEINER

Keywords: Femininity, masculinity, treatment, resistance, transference.

I would like to thank Rosemary H. Balsam for her detailed response to my paper, which gave me the impression that we each had interesting things to say but were focusing on different issues. I am concerned to understand obstacles to progress in analysis, while Dr. Balsam, it seems to me, chiefly wishes to correct erroneous views on femininity that have arisen partly as a result of Freud's influence, and which she feels creep into my formulations. I hope this discussion will allow us to integrate complementary views even though the different vantage points do at times find us to be at cross-purposes.

Perhaps a brief summary of my earlier work on impasse could clarify my present approach. Initially I was concerned with the problem many patients seem to have of relinquishing the omnipotence that is frequently turned to as an instant remedy for anxiety and pain. Influenced by the work of Rosenfeld on narcissism (1971), I formulated the idea that pathological organizations based on phantasies of phallic omnipotence create psychic retreats to which patients defensively withdraw and where they sometimes become stuck (Steiner 1993). Being stuck in these retreats creates an impasse in analysis, but sometimes progress is resumed when either with the help of analysis or through their own endeavours patients make moves to emerge and to face the reality they have been evading. I described how, as they come out from the protection of the retreat, patients come to fear both seeing and being seen (Steiner 2011). Once they have moved outside the retreat, they are able to observe their objects and hence to see the damage that omnipotence had done. At the same

time they find themselves exposed to the experience of being observed and have to endure feelings of shame and humiliation. This means that both shame of being seen and guilt of seeing have to be endured, and sometimes through the support of the analyst this becomes more possible, and further moves to relinquish omnipotence can be observed. However, I noticed that sooner or later patients came up against another problem. Without their omnipotence, both male and female patients are confronted with a vulnerability and a sense of loss of self-esteem accompanied by phantasies of having been robbed or castrated, and left without protection from potential abuse.

It is as if the patients see themselves as feminine and believe themselves to be subject to the very same prejudices against femininity that Freud had described. They find it difficult to be in touch with a view of femininity having a value in its own right and moreover to have qualities that are more important than those contained in the phantasies of excited phallic power. The appreciation of primary femininity stemming from a woman's relationship with her own and with her mother's physical and mental qualities, which has been firmly established through the work of analysts such as Horney, Klein, and Dr. Balsam herself, was nowhere to be seen. My experience was that such appreciation could emerge only after further difficult analytic work and that such work was required for progress in the analysis to be resumed.

Here of course I have been influenced by Klein's writings on envy, which involve not just envy of the breast as she had earlier described but envy of a receptive femininity leading to a valuation of an interior world. Sometimes patients seem especially to fear their vulnerability when deprived of the protection they need to avoid humiliation and persecution. I am reminded of George Eliot's description of women in chapter 11 of *Daniel Deronda* as "delicate vessels [in whom] is borne onward through the ages the treasure of human affection."

We no longer think of women as excessively delicate, and we recognize a feminine toughness that enables women to fight for themselves and also to protect feminine values. Nevertheless, recognizing the vulnerability of the feminine to envious attacks helps us to understand some of the reluctance to accept a feminine position.

As Dr. Balsam points out, the death instinct is usually thought of as a more theoretical high-level abstraction, and I was trying to focus on a clinical situation where it seemed to me that envy was the chief means through which the death instinct comes to be expressed. If we do speculate at a more abstract level, I think Freud might have considered femininity to be an important ingredient of the life instinct and that "the great riddle of sex" involved the conflict between the life and death instincts in this area.

In the paper I argued that it was the receptive quality that was essential to femininity and that provokes envy. However, as Dr. Balsam points out, femininity is much more than just receptivity. Receptivity is essential, for example, in relation to food and later in relation to sex in a genital intercourse. It is necessary for a creative relationship to be initiated and a symbolic infant to be conceived. However, a great deal more than receptivity is required for the infant to survive and to be nursed and nourished into maturity. Dr. Balsam recognizes that the experience of pregnancy and the nursing care that follows birth give femininity a special role in sustaining life and hence come to symbolize loving relationships, "the treasure of human affection." These developments take time, and the difficulty we have of tolerating the passage of time makes it difficult to resist the immediate fix that omnipotent male power can promise.

My emphasis on receptivity may also have misled Dr. Balsam to imagine that, in my work, being feminine involves an uncritical acceptance and compliance that she implies is what Freud wanted from Dora. I tried to suggest that to be receptive and feminine is dangerous precisely because among the good objects in the world, harmful, threatening figures also exist, and that it is particularly the valued and vulnerable woman and her child who are likely to be attacked. Receptivity hence requires vigilance and selectivity in what you take in, and there are certainly situations when it is important to be able to say no and refuse to accept what is being offered. For progress to be well grounded, a critical approach must accompany the reception of new ideas, both those offered to the patient by the analyst and to the analyst by the patient.

Dr. Balsam picked up the fact that my thoughts about creativity are based on a heterosexual model. I am not referring to the actual creativity of an individual man or woman, whether homosexual or heterosexual. We know that homosexual individuals are in no way less creative than heterosexuals and the model of creative heterosexuality depends on the recognition that bisexuality is a universal feature and that male and female elements exist in all individuals. Freud certainly thought that we can understand the actual sexuality of men and women only if we take their bisexuality into account. He even described how he thought of every sexual act as an event between four individuals. Certainly, I agree that the actual behavior and sexual attitude of any individual involves an act of integration between the masculine and feminine elements in the personality as well as in the area of object choice. However, it seems to me that, if confusion is to be avoided, the concepts of male and female must remain separate. Individuals differ in the balance between male and female elements within and also in their preference for predominantly male or female partners, and through the mixture of the male and female components an infinite variety of gender orientations may result. My approach does, however, suggest that to be creative, within each of us, elements that are experienced as masculine and feminine have to be allowed to engage in an intercourse that involves complementary mental traits symbolized by complementary body parts.

I hope that I have presented these ideas as hypotheses and not as "sweeping truths for all, with unself-conscious confidence," such as those Dr. Balsam finds can emerge from Kleinian papers.[1] It is easy for pomposity and for prejudice to creep into our work, especially if we become defensive rather than exploratory. In "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" I believe that Freud saw penis envy and the refusal to accept a dependence on others as obstacles that need to be overcome if progress is to be resumed. However, it is one thing to describe a preference for phallic male power as a very common feature in both men and women, and quite another to suggest that a woman has to accept an inferior place

[1] This is a common accusation made against Kleinian analysts and often against Klein herself. Recently I have edited some lectures on technique that Klein gave in 1936 (Klein 2017), and I was pleased to see that she emerged in a very different way.

in the world. If we are to combat prejudice against women and against people whose race, religion, or gender identity differ from our own, it is important to accept that prejudice exists within each of us.

Dr. Balsam raises another interesting and important issue. She rightly sees me as turning to the older models based on Freud and Klein, which seem passé to her postmodern point of view. I am pleased to be old-fashioned, but I do think it raises a question of why I tend to turn backward to my ancestors rather than forward to the new ideas that are currently being promulgated. We do have to allow creative intercourse between our parents in our phantasy life, but we also have to be ready to rebel and overthrow the old to make way for the new. I suppose it requires us to open our minds to the creativity of our children and our siblings as well as of our parents and to allow time to judge if a movement or thought is creative or not.

Today enormous strides have been made to free women from institutional prejudice, and yet women continue to be mistreated and devalued throughout the world. It seems to me that the wish to denigrate and repudiate the feminine lies deep within all of us, and that it is important to support educative and political advances by deepening our understanding of the feminine. I have tried to do this through a psychoanalytic exploration of the phantasies and mechanisms that prevent psychic change.

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AGAINST FORGIVING: THE ENCOUNTER THAT CANNOT HAPPEN BETWEEN HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND PERPETRATORS

BY NANETTE C. AUERHAHN AND DORI LAUB

For Holocaust survivors, barriers to forgiveness include empathic and imaginative failure; investment in memory, memorial, and justice; and humanity's complicity in genocide that undermines trust in relationships. On the part of perpetrators, barriers to reconciliation include the absence of true repentance, avoidance of a factual accounting of crimes, and the use of screens, personal myths, and ambiguous confessions that elide victims' perspectives and suffering as well as one's responsibility to victims. Relationships are renewed for survivors not by forgiveness but by undoing the hierarchical victim–victimizer relationship through testimony that allows survivors to regain agency, transform anger and hate, and reestablish a shared subjectivity that makes the empty, traumatic world feel three dimensional and full again.

Keywords: Holocaust, trauma, forgiveness, reconciliation, poetry, victimization, Nazi perpetrators, survivors.

> [There is] no atonement, no forgiveness, no forgetting.
> —Statement by the chief prosecutor, Israeli Attorney General Gideon Hausner, at the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961

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INTRODUCTION

We begin with Adrienne Rich's poem "Natural Resources":

> My heart is moved by all I cannot save:
> so much has been destroyed
>
> I have to cast my lot with those
> who age after age, perversely,
>
> with no extraordinary power
> reconstitute the world.

We defensively begin this paper with the above poem to frame our stance against forgiveness not as the bitter vengeance of a Shylock from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* or the wrathful God of the Old Testament—stand-ins for anti-Semitic stereotypes—but as a positive allegiance with survivors of the Holocaust who, in standing against forgetting, stand for justice; as Milan Kundera (1978) has noted, "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" (p. 4). Is it our own neuroses that in writing this paper we feel so defensive and accused, experiencing dread and anxiety with no sense of play, acutely sensitive to misattunements and to others not seeing things our way? Is it due to our own shortcomings that we recoil at the suggestion of some psychoanalysts (e.g., NA's analyst) that interest in the topic suggests that there is something for which we cannot forgive ourselves? One reviewer of this paper viewed our argument against forgiving as demonstrating our "inability to move from dissociation and enactment to true reflective functioning," noting that, "ironically, while wishing to distinguish their stance from the bitter vengeance of a Shylock, in saying they stand for justice, the authors echo Shylock's words, 'I stand for judgment.'" We do not distinguish our lament from that of Shylock (and welcome a reinterpretation of his character, which is beyond the scope of this paper); rather, we take issue with the negative way in which his pain and rage have traditionally been viewed. If we echo Shylock unintentionally, we echo the historian Yosef Yerushalmi intentionally. In his canonical book on Jewish history titled *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1982), he suggests that the antonym of forgetting is not remembering but justice. Noting that

forgetting in the Bible is always negative, he argues that the injunction to remember is pivotal and unconditional in Jewish history ("Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." "Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt.") and involves not just reception but also transmission that successively propels itself toward the future, linking generations through collective memory. Furthermore, we insist, with Fromm (2011), that individuals are only as mad as others are deaf, that is, our anger is not a mark of individual neuroses but a response to societal failure.

Nevertheless, as psychoanalysts, we recognize that forgiving requires a distance from the experience that we cannot achieve. For us, attempts to master the Shoah, work it through, invariably fail. They hit an inner barrier, remaining stunted, awkward moves that can only implode. When trying to create the experience in imagination, we can go just so far. Imaginatively entering a gas chamber can last only a few seconds. We freeze and withdraw in terror. The path that remains open is to know it dissociatively—without movement and without affect: a still photograph from which we feel detached.

Writing about the Nazi perpetrator was difficult for us (NA is a child of survivors, DL a child survivor) and was something we could only do together, as it required empathically imagining ourselves into his experience while he committed atrocities and persisted in inflicting unbearable terror. The perpetrator proceeds with traumatization fully aware of the victim's pain, yet knowledge does not stop him from persisting. We required self-discipline and self-restraint to stay present long enough to pursue and describe the experience without fleeing or turning it off and thinking about something else. We did not want to enter and remain exposed to the experience of either victim or perpetrator, especially if they tuned into each other's feelings. Continuing exposure was driven by sadistic or masochistic impulses that came to be relentless and out of control. Such urges created discomfort that we were afraid to let ourselves feel. Shutting everything off inevitably landed us in a void that we desperately tried to fill but could not. Flat redundancies came to mind. Under no circumstances could we see our way into forgiveness.

This is a paper we did not want to write but which was spurred by recent work (see, e.g., Almond 2015; Gobodo-Madikizela 2015; Gottlieb 2015; Neugebauer 2015; Siassi 2007; Simon 2015; Solms 2015; Summers

2015) that seems to valorize forgiveness as the path to healing. We believe that exposition of forgiveness as it relates to Holocaust survivors is warranted and that the path to healing lies not in forgiveness but in letting go. Forgiving does not hold an essential psychological position in the perpetrator–victim interaction in the context of genocide and atrocity, but may be a graft imported from a religious–redemptive context because of its spiritual appeal.

We begin, then, by acknowledging our prejudices, points of view, limitations, and values. We think of Ogden's (1996) paper on the analyst of perversions who must describe his own experience of the perverse transference–countertransference lest he present a false picture of the analysis.

When talking about forgiveness, we ask: Who is speaking? When perpetrators covet forgiveness, they usually have in mind forgetting, letting go, not taking revenge, and renouncing violence. They view accountability as associated with vengeance, punishment, guilt, and a loss of power, status, and face. When perpetrators ask for forgiveness, they want to be released from the burden of guilt, so that they can be done with this chapter of their lives and move on, as if the Holocaust can be purified. When victims discuss forgiveness, they try to integrate it with ideas of morality and rehumanization. They talk about memory as memorial and as a way to honor victims, and justice and political change as vindication and restitution. Holocaust survivors live with memory of the dead who live on, imbuing life with a commitment to righteousness. It is to his credit that the neo-Nazi in the 2016 film *Facing Fear* remains engaged in remembering and in using that memory to prevent future hatred. For him, acknowledgment of wrongdoing was a beginning. His actions entailed the opposite of forgetting.

Holocaust survivors remember because so much has been destroyed. They remember so that genocide on the scale of the Shoah never happens again. They remember because of the need to fight against the unique mechanized, dehumanized killing that introduced an unprecedented level of evil that was not the work of individuals solely but a deliberate, systematized, industrialized mass genocide encoded in German law and involving the collaboration of governments, churches, scientific communities, transportation systems, etc. A model of forgiveness that arises

from the actions of one individual against another is not applicable to actions of a society against a people—to actions that included millions of legislators, doctors, soldiers, train conductors, and ordinary people who passed laws and took systematic action to eliminate a people from the earth in a manner both barbaric and modern. Half a million Germans were to a degree complicit in the Jewish genocide.

Reconciliation would entail three components—acknowledgment, remorse, and reparation—on a societal as well as on an individual level, with a true accounting that included detailed confessions of what was done. While being preconditions for forgiveness that have never been met, they paradoxically chain survivors to their victimizers. The only way that forgiving can be considered a genuine psychological concept is as freestanding, that is, without a precondition of prior repentance and an aftermath of conclusive reconciliation. This would define it as an internal emotional process that counteracts the helpless hierarchical state of victimhood and thus abolishes the victim–perpetrator inner dichotomy. The survivor steps away from the past, helpless position of the victim and exercises agency to forgive and let go, thereby reducing the hierarchical distance between him and the perpetrator. The survivor neither excuses nor accuses the perpetrator but simply removes him as a person from the offensive deed, which in itself remains unexcused and unforgotten. Disqualifying the condition of prior repentance establishes the survivor's independence from the perpetrator. The survivor is free to choose whether he forgives or doesn't forgive, separate from the latter's choice to express repentance.

There are scholars who believe that Holocaust survivors unconsciously have such a wish to forgive. Langer (1991) detects a desire to narrow the gap between victims and victimizers in the deep memory of survivors' testimony. Such yearning is implied in Dan Pagis's poem "Written in pencil in the sealed railway car":

Here in this carload
I am Eve
With Abel my son
If you see my other son
Cain, son of man
Tell him that I

The German historian Katharina von Kellenbach (2013), in her groundbreaking book on guilt and denial in the postwar lives of Nazi perpetrators, uses the poem and image of Cain as a prototype of the appropriate treatment of the perpetrator, who is marked with a sign for the rest of his life that forces memory and testimony to guide all future relationships. She does not comment on what to us is Pagis's shocking use of the metaphor of Eve and Abel to represent murdered Jews, for Eve, after all, is the mother of both Abel (victim) and Cain (perpetrator). Hence it is a gesture at the connection and brotherhood of killer and victim, Nazi and Jew. In this paper, we grapple with the question of what to do about their shared humanity in the face of unbridgeable evil action by one and with the role of memory in this interpersonal theater. We also note the fact that in the poem, Eve is cut off midsentence—the dialogue between victim and executioner never occurs.

NONENCOUNTERS BETWEEN SURVIVORS AND NAZIS

History demonstrates that true repentance is rare. The publicized case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in which amnesty was offered in exchange for full disclosure of criminal acts, resulted in no more than 293 state security agents coming forward to confess. Two hundred and twenty-nine were from the security police, and only 31 were from the military. Even fewer apologized. The period covered was thirty-four years during which thousands of atrocities and incidents of torture were perpetrated (Foster, Haupt, and De Beer 2005). The scarcity of repentance among Nazi perpetrators is greater. Von Kellenbach reviews the last statements made by the 285 Germans executed in the War Crimes Prison complex of Landsberg between 1945 and 1951. One hundred thirty-three of them issued last statements right before their executions. Only three of this group expressed regret for the killings that led to their convictions. None of the three had been convicted of crimes against humanity. Their crimes were killing downed pilots or American soldiers. The others insisted on their innocence and ignorance of brutalities, repudiating their guilty verdicts and claiming that they had only followed orders received as soldiers and civil servants. There was widespread

sympathy and support for these convicted Nazis and for their families in German society, with multiple appeals for clemency to spare their lives.

Whereas South Africa orchestrated encounters between victims and perpetrators, making them the cornerstone in the process of societal reconciliation through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, such encounters between Holocaust survivors and Nazi perpetrators have not happened. Although Germany as a country, German society, and a large number of German individuals accepted responsibility for the atrocities that had been perpetrated, publicly expressed regrets, and made restitution and financial reparations, individual Nazis did not abandon their ideology after the fall of the Third Reich. They continued to abdicate personal responsibility and remorse, living out their lives in denial, without conflict or emotional pain. How would an encounter with a survivor be imaginable under such circumstances? Soon there will be nobody alive to participate in such an encounter. And if such an encounter is not a possibility, how can reconciliation occur?

In Simon Wiesenthal's 1969 book *Sunflower*, a story is recounted about a rabbi who was refused refuge by a man who later learned that the bedraggled man to whom he had refused entry the night of a terrible storm was in fact a renowned rabbi. The man came to the rabbi to beg for forgiveness. "Go find that beggar that you had turned away and apologize to him," the rabbi advised. The story is relevant to our criteria for forgiveness—that the person experience true remorse, apologize to the victim, and not commit the offense again when given the chance. The rabbi understood that the man was apologizing to a renowned rabbi and not necessarily to the individual the man had thought he was shunning. True remorse would have involved shame and regret over having slighted just such a lowly person as the man thought was before him. Thus, while forgiveness can be granted only if the perpetrator demonstrates he is not now the person he was when the harm occurred, paradoxically the victim must be seen as precisely the same as the person who was hurt and whom one now wishes desperately to treat respectfully. The victim must be seen as who he was and not as a new person undeserving of the mistreatment handed down to the lowly victim. The victim must no longer be lesser than. It is only an encounter between these two individuals—the changed perpetrator and the unchanged victim, that includes remorse on the

perpetrator's part expressed to the victim—that constitutes part of the ground for forgiveness. Since (1) most of the targets of the Nazi genocidal system were murdered and thus are unavailable for reconciliation, (2) most of the former Nazis were in fact unrepentant, and (3) most of the world stood by and did nothing, no forgiveness is possible. How do survivors heal nevertheless?

THE CASE OF OSKAR GRÖNING

One of the last trials of a Nazi took place in 2015. Oskar Gröning was called "the bookkeeper from Auschwitz" by the German press because he was tasked with sorting through Jews' possessions and collecting and counting the money found in suitcases and clothing. For two years, Gröning served in the Auschwitz concentration camp, counting the money of dead Jews and standing guard as incoming freight trains unloaded their doomed human cargo. In an interview with *Der Spiegel* in May 2005, he told the journalist Matthias Geyer that when he returned from a British POW camp in 1948, he said to his wife, "Girl, do both of us a favor: Don't ask." She never did, and indeed, she left the house where the 2005 interview took place so as not to be present. "She prefers not to listen," Gröning told Geyer. He never spoke to his sons about it either, and neither read nor watched anything about the Holocaust. "It didn't matter to us," he explained. The only one with whom Gröning discussed the truth over the years was God, wanting to free himself from something he couldn't name. Nevertheless, at some point Gröning began to talk about his experience publicly and to testify against perpetrators. He admitted his role in the Nazi killing machinery but said that he did not commit any crimes, had never killed anyone, and had served on a selection ramp only a handful of times—the rest of the time he had been in an office counting prisoners' money. He sought to exonerate himself.

> Guilt . . . has to do with actions, and because I believe that I was not an active perpetrator, I don't believe that I am guilty. . . . Accomplice would almost be too much for me. I would describe my role as a "small cog in the gears." If you can describe that as guilt, then I am guilty, but not voluntarily. Legally speaking, I am innocent. . . . From the Christian standpoint, from the

> standpoint of the Ten Commandments, the commandment that says "Thou shalt not kill," being an accomplice is already a violation. But this raises another question: Did the things I did make me an accomplice to murder? . . . I feel guilty toward the Jewish people, guilty for being part of a group that committed these crimes, even without having been one of the perpetrators myself. I ask for forgiveness from the Jewish people. And I ask God for forgiveness. (quoted in Geyer 2005)

Gröning claimed to have tried to get transferred to the front several times. "In 1943 . . . my fiancée and I wanted to get married. We also planned to have children, but it seemed to me incompatible to plan a family and to continue working in Auschwitz, so I reminded my superiors of my wish to transfer" (quoted in Geyer 2005). He believed that his application was never processed. He alleged that his first request for a transfer was precipitated by a traumatic incident that he calmly recounted:

> A new shipment had arrived. I had been assigned to ramp duty, and it was my job to guard the luggage. The Jews had already been taken away. The ground in front of me was littered with junk, left-over belongings. Suddenly I heard a baby crying. The child was lying on the ramp, wrapped in rags. A mother had left it behind, perhaps because she knew that women with infants were sent to the gas chambers immediately. I saw another SS soldier grab the baby by the legs. The crying had bothered him. He smashed the baby's head against the iron side of a truck until it was silent. (quoted in Geyer 2005)

Gröning was upset by what he regarded as an individual excess, but remained committed to the murder of Jewish men, women, and children, and continued his job of counting what he called "money without owners." When pressed by the *Der Spiegel* reporter for his thoughts about the systematic murder of Jews, Gröning explained, "If you are convinced that the destruction of Judaism is necessary, then it no longer matters how the killing takes place" (quoted in Geyer 2005).

Gröning showed the reporter a picture of himself in uniform. "What did the uniform mean to you?" Geyer asked. "It fascinated me" was the reply. "Even today, when I hear military music . . . it's such an experience for me, so uplifting, even today." Gröning explained his wife's

continuing anti-Semitism: "For us, the Jews were the pig merchants, the lawyers who always had a shady reputation when it came to money. People used to say: The Jews are taking the Christians for a ride. It's just their way." He sat up straight and began to sing, quietly at first, then louder: "And when Jewish blood begins to drip from our knives, things will be good again." Geyer noted, "The distinctions between the man of today and the man of the past blur for a moment."

The article ended with a coda about Gröning's discovery that a bird nesting in his mailbox had been shot dead by someone with an air gun. "I could have wept," he admitted.

In 2015, in Lüneburg, northern Germany, Gröning, ninety-four, was tried for complicity in the murder of 300,000 Hungarian Jews. He admitted his role in the Nazi killing machinery, but repeated his assertion that he did not commit any crimes. He told a court: "I've consciously not asked for forgiveness for my guilt. Regarding the scale of what took place in Auschwitz and the crimes committed elsewhere, as far as I'm concerned, I'm not entitled to such a request. I can only ask the Lord God for forgiveness."

Gröning's case is not extreme, yet it illustrates the obstacles to any true encounter between Nazis and survivors. We deliberately did not choose, for example, one of the many Nazis prosecuted and in some cases executed after the war, who provide clear examples of a lack of remorse and of any of the basic requirements for forgiveness. What is confounding, painful, and confusing about Gröning's case is its elusiveness—his apparent repentance, openness about what happened, resultant suffering and compunction. Indeed, through his lawyer, Gröning revealed to the court in Lüneburg the profound emotional impact the testimonies of Auschwitz survivors and their relatives had on him:

> The events of Auschwitz, the mass murders, were known to me. But many of the details that have been told here were not known to me. . . . What happened in Auschwitz has been brought before my eyes once again. The suffering of the deportees in the trains, the selection process and the subsequent extermination of the majority of the people has been brought home to me again in the clearest possible way . . . as well as the terrible living

> conditions of those who were not murdered immediately. (quoted in Connolly 2015)

Do we sympathize with the 94-year-old Gröning, who was shaken by hearing of survivors' despair, of how painful their experiences were, as if his youthful self had not been there at the time witnessing and orchestrating it, as if he only learned about it now? Do we empathize with the elder Gröning, whose youthful self, in the words of the chief prosecutor Thomas Walther (2015), "did not think of the suffering of others through to the end"? Is he truly horrified, and if so and if we sympathize with him now, are we compromising ourselves, entrapped in a normalization of atrocity? If we don't sympathize now, have we shamelessly foresworn empathy? Whose shame is being bandied about?

In reading through Gröning's conflicting and contradictory statements on forgiveness and guilt, we have felt confused and ashamed for not forgiving: "It is with regret and humility that I stand before the victims," he stated at his trial. Has he confessed or not? Does he feel guilty or not? Is he asking for forgiveness, and if yes, does that mean that he is admitting guilt? Moral responsibility? In later statements, Gröning appears to come to grips with what he did (e.g., "I know now . . . "), implying a distinction between his past and present selves. But upon a close reading of his statements (e.g., "I only know now"), we hear his faithless denial of knowing while in Auschwitz (which was not the case at the time) as well as his continuing maintenance of the lie of his past innocence.

Haviland (2016), writing about the narrative viewpoint in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Demons*, argues that the listener's role is not to absolve the perpetrator but to bear witness to his shame. In the absence of true repentance, Haviland notes, that is, in the presence of ambiguous and insincere confessions, the ethical value of a confession is compromised and the witness is contaminated by the shame. We acknowledge our entrapment in Gröning's penitent stance and arm ourselves with von Kellenbach's moral clarity that a true confession must be personal, historically precise, and factually specific. It is a beacon that guides us in the deconstruction of Gröning's screens, post hoc alibis, and rationalizations while we laboriously go through the details of his story to

make sense of it, hindered by trauma-induced cognitive confusion, myopia, and diminished capacity for mentalization that our critical but insightful reviewer detects. We have been aware that at times our thoughts have gone directly to paper, bypassing our tongues, as if they could not be fully tasted, digested, and articulated, only quickly spat out lest we choke.

We find ourselves initially sympathetic to Gröning, who, compared with most Nazis, attempted after the war to engage critically with his participation in atrocity. Encountering Holocaust deniers, on his own, without being part of a criminal procedure, he brought his participation in the Holocaust to public attention, served as a witness against others, and decried their excesses. Upon reflection, however, we recognize his screen-—that what was wrong about the systematic slaughter of a people was not precisely that but, rather, a few extreme acts of particular individuals. Gröning eschewed not only personal involvement in specific acts of atrocity but also personal knowledge of such. When he encountered atrocities, they were regarded as the rare actions of a few and he was but a passive witness.

Nevertheless, it was precisely Gröning's public statements that raised the hopes of survivors testifying at his trial that there might be a dialogue with him. Jean Amery (1980, p. 70), who was tortured by the Nazis, wrote:

> SS-man Wajs from Antwerp, a repeated murderer and an especially adroit torturer, paid with his life. What more can my foul thirst for revenge demand? But if I have searched my mind properly, it is not a matter of revenge, nor one of atonement. The experience of persecution was, at the very bottom, that of an extreme loneliness. At stake for me is the release from the abandonment that has persisted from that time until today. When SS-man Wajs stood before the firing squad, he experienced the moral truth of his crimes. At that moment, he was with me—and I was no longer alone with the shovel handle. I would like to believe that at the instant of his execution, he wanted exactly as much as I to turn back time, to undo what had been done. When they led him to the place of execution, the anti-man had once again become a fellow man.

While denying guilt, Gröning asked for forgiveness for the passive, unchosen experience of being a member of a people who committed

crimes against Jews. It was a general request without specificity regarding not only actions but also individuals who were harmed and who deserved reparation. He requested forgiveness from the Jewish people in general and then from God, as if forgiveness from people ultimately was not crucial, as he rested assured in God's forgiveness for his sinless sin that had gone unnamed, unatoned, and unrepented. It never occurred to Gröning that God's love is not divorced from his justice and that Gröning must consider what his own, true obligation is to the victims who survived. Indeed, there were no specific victims in his world, as his request for forgiveness from the Jewish people included no specific individuals and hence nobody in particular. It never occurred to him that the only people who could proffer forgiveness would have been precisely the individuals harmed, but in his account, no such individuals were conceived of. (Even if a particular survivor could forgive, all he or she could forgive is what was done to him or her personally. There is no one who can pardon the murder of millions.)

At the very least, Gröning could have spoken in detail about what had happened and what he himself had done. We return to the *Der Spiegel* interview in which, at one point, he described being awakened at night by whistles.

> Jews have broken out. He runs through the dark until he reaches a farm, where he sees corpses littering the ground. He watches as naked people are herded into the farmhouse and sees a senior officer shut the door, pull a gas mask over his head, open a can and pour the contents into a hatch. Then he hears screams. The screams turn into a thundering noise, the thundering becomes humming, and then it is quiet. He returns to his barrack with another man . . . [who] tells Groning what happens when corpses are burned on grates. Their bodies straighten and the men's penises become erect, he says. . . . the two men [go] past a pyre where corpses are just being cremated. Groning moves closer to see what happens when human beings burn. (Geyer 2005)

We do not hear what Gröning did while Jews were being rounded up and burned to death. We do not even hear a clear statement that people were burned alive. We just hear about one senior officer, as if the atrocity were the act of an individual—one who was an authority, at that, so how

could one protest? And we hear about gas and a can being emptied and the screaming of individuals—all the ingredients of atrocity without the clear admission that people were burned alive. Gröning describes a gas mask, which is highly unlikely to have been available or used in the middle of night at a farmhouse to burn Jews and instead points to the fabricated nature of this screen. Additionally, we hear about the gas having been put into a hatch—a hatch!—as if a farmhouse, rather than a gas chamber, had such hatches for gas. Instead, the image of gas in a hatch is borrowed from the gas chambers, whose functioning Gröning was clearly aware of, and whose details, in this confabulated story, cover over the likely scenario that officers, including Gröning, lit the farmhouse on fire with live Jews inside. Yet we are led to believe that Gröning was just a curious, passive observer. It is the other man who is perversely interested in penises, not Gröning, the other man who wants to watch corpses, not live people, burn, as if for a school science experiment. A statement of regret that does not include the actions that are regretted is an attempt to get credit for humility while maintaining deniability for actual guilt. It is an attempt to have it both ways.

NA, upon meeting a bereft child of Nazis, had the thought that she had finally met someone for whom the Holocaust was as central to his identity as it was to her own, and there was a sense of no longer being alone with that engagement. She was disappointed that this man had no interest in the particulars of her family history but rather searched for a representative Jew to whom to apologize. His search for reconciliation and transformation, like that of many perpetrators, was a search for a narcissistic relationship rather than an object relationship and felt too reminiscent of the Nazis' treatment of the Jew as a symbol rather than a unique individual.

Survivors attending Gröning's trial hoped to hear an apology. True repentance would have included a sense of responsibility for the ongoing suffering of one's victims. Gröning was inattentive to the survivors, oblivious to their ongoing compromised state of being, as they learn to survive survival. Oblivious to suffering at the time, he continued to not see the survivors as people who still suffered and whose suffering he could alleviate somewhat by an apology and explanation. By refusing to give a full accounting of his actions, he continued to make them suffer, by

withholding from them answers to their questions. Atonement requires recognition of the responsibility one has to those one has hurt. One masters guilt not by repression or punishment but by integration of different aspects of the self (Loewald 1979), i.e., one must bear the burden of guilt and acknowledge that one's actions are a part of one's self, as were the accompanying impulses, instincts, and affects that fueled one's actions. (His wife's refusal to hear and know and the failure to speak to his sons are indications that his crimes remained mostly unspoken and unintegrated in the family and his postwar life and identity.)

Let us return to the one image that haunts Gröning—not the killing of millions of people, not the burning alive of some that he witnesses and describes unemotionally, but that of an infant supposedly left behind by a Jewish mother to save herself and subsequently smashed against a truck. Gröning speculated that the mother deliberately abandoned the baby to save herself, "because she knew that women with infants were sent to the gas chambers immediately" (quoted in Geyer 2005), thereby imputing guilt to the mother and implying her complicity in her child's death. An infant abandoned by a mother cannot survive on its own, and so it is but one small step to kill it; i.e., once abandoned by the Jewish mother, it was already doomed. Of course, the mother could not have known that mothers with babies were killed immediately. Only Gröning knew that, but he evacuated himself of this knowledge and projected it onto the mother, who was made culpable for the baby's death. It never occurred to Gröning that perhaps the baby's mother was already dead, having died during the airless transport, as had so many of the arrivals, many of whom died from suffocation, dehydration, or overheating. Instead, he conveniently mourned the death of one specific child—not really regretting its death, only the manner of its killing—thereby reassuring himself of his humanity while being unable to feel for the thousands more he saw murdered. In the *Der Spiegel* interview, the only tears shed are for a bird.

Both bird and baby are screens hiding the starved, injured, and frightened human beings who arrived in the transports and who were quickly and ruthlessly wrenched from family members, beaten, shot, and sent to their deaths amid screams, vicious dogs, and barking soldiers. Gröning's talk about "taking care" of arriving transports as if it were a mere mechanical organizational task involving the moving around of inanimate objects

was likewise a screen obscuring his reaction, never mentioned, when the train doors were opened and he encountered the stench of the dead and dying who had been holed up in airless containers for days. Instead, at his trial, he claimed that he had had no idea of the horrendous conditions in the transports and that hearing testimony about them "was a great shock to me."

For all of Gröning's professed disapproval of what happened at Auschwitz, he refused to use the word *murder* to describe the actions there and refused to accept any personal responsibility for events. As the chief prosecutor Thomas Walther (2015) pointed out at the trial, Gröning hid behind the SS command structure to focus on his role as a mere contributor to the camp's efficient operation. The one cruel death that allegedly was the trigger for a transfer request appears to be a construction after the war to justify himself as a humane person to his family and community. Investment in this one child covers over the absence of protest at the deaths of thousands that he admittedly agreed with at the time, even the death of children. Indeed, Gröning never acknowledged that "it was a common practice to grab the small bodies of babies . . . by the feet and smash them to death against a wall, a tree, or a truck's bumper" (Walther), so that the one death he decried was but one of many that he had witnessed. The constructed memory of this one particular infant is used as a trigger for a request for a transfer to the front line that was never made: no records of such requests are to be found, which in any case defy the logic of self-preservation, as being sent to the front would have likely meant death, while being at Auschwitz was a safe haven that allowed Gröning time not only to marry but to conceive his first child. Rather than accept moral responsibility for this choice, Gröning claimed to have been forced to stay at Auschwitz and attempted to present himself as a decent man who courageously wanted to fight in the real war but was prevented from doing so. The story of this one infant is thus a screen that tells a partial truth as a buffer to conflict and an attempt to discourage further inquiry. It screens out a fuller, more authentic truth that would recognize and endure victims' pain and acknowledge that throughout the war Gröning remained committed to the goal of mass murder as a legitimate tool for waging war with advanced methods.

A striking moment in the film *Facing Fear* was when the neo-Nazi recognized his coworker as the person he thought he had killed and the latter recognized the former as the neo-Nazi who had tried to kill him. Gröning never recognized that he had violated anyone. The absence of specific victims characterizes the so-called confessions of perpetrators who ask for forgiveness without first bearing the suffering of their real and specific victims. Such requests are shallow and self-serving. "Release from guilt can be measured by a person's ability to bear the reality of victims' suffering" (von Kellenbach 2013, p. 27). The perpetrator, in this case Gröning, offers nothing—no empathic knowledge of the victims' pain, no atonement. He appealed his conviction and four-year sentence, which were upheld.

SCREENS

In its admission of a partial truth, Gröning's story of the infant is relatively benign compared with the more typical screens of Nazis in which Jews are described as choosing and deserving their deaths, at the very least doing nothing to avoid it, and, in any case, afterward are healed and forgiving, never avenging or inconsolable. The atrocity is usually one without a murder and without a murderer. It is a story that replaces another story to deflect guilt from perpetrators onto victims.

A variation on the defense of screens is the widely used creation of a personal myth, i.e., a scripted, contrived confession with the elements of a confession but one not experienced by the subjective "I." It is a story that one would have wanted to live presented as autobiography. In a video testimony (shown in 1998 in Cologne, Germany, at the Study Group for Trauma, Violence, and Genocide sponsored by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research and attended by DL), the narrator revealed his use of this strategy in his opening remark: "In fairy tales, even dwarves are heroes." Unconsciously, he knew that he was creating a hero myth about himself and described himself with wonderment and disbelief as an inspired, enthusiastic member of the Hitler Youth. "We practiced war," he said.

> It was romantic and beautiful. German families returned to their homeland. The Poles, the Slavs, were there to work. We were

> there to reign, to govern. We could not lose the war. The underlings, the lower people, could never win a victory over us. It was an adventure story. After the first dead corpses became routine, I never went on an attack. I was spared.

He then talked about the unnecessary execution of six Russian prisoners of war who should have been accompanied by a German guard to a POW camp six hours away on foot. But the guard returned alone after less than an hour. "He probably thought that it was too long a walk." The story was constructed so carefully that everything fit together nicely, creating the impression in the listeners that the narrator himself had been the executioner, committing an execution that is elided. He then proceeded to talk about the defeat, about shame, about the breakdown of his worldview of invincibility, and about emerging questions: What was the sacrifice for? Why did so many give their young lives away? He was taken prisoner when wounded and expected to be tortured by the Russians. Instead, he woke up in a hospital where a woman physician took care of him. He was sent to a POW camp in Moscow and worked on rebuilding what the German Army had destroyed in its scorched-earth policy. It was only right that he do so, he said. A Russian woman whose son was on the front befriended him and daily gave him a bowl of soup. The Nazi looked repentant, with affect and color, but it all fit together too glibly, as if he flawlessly scripted the story of his penance, of his conversion from bad to good through the rescue of his soul and body by generous, motherly Russian women who are necessary to complete the story. If the victim forgives, the atrocity could not have been so bad. If there is an opportunity for rebuilding, what need is there for further confrontation with what one has done?

Not all screens that employ the figure of the forgiving victim are as complicated, but they all protect the perpetrator from real responsibility. In a German film called *I Was a Nazi*, there is no acknowledgment of the victims' perspective. The label of forgiveness is pasted over any real understanding. The filmmaker interviews his mother, who describes her joyful embrace of Nazi ideology. She had spent a year working in Africa. When the elections came, German citizens boarded a ship to enter international waters and with exhilaration cast their ballots for Adolf Hitler.

She laughs with pleasure as she calls it a "ship of fools," her remarks having no emotional validity. The measuring rod by which she judges their actions seems to be some external standard of propriety, of what would be condemned, without any empathy for victims on whom wrongs are inflicted. At another point, she describes exhilaration at a Nuremberg rally in the mid-1930s during which anti-Jewish racial laws are publicly declared. A thunderstorm strikes, causing her and a friend to joke that "Jehovah is raging." Her laughter as she narrates the episode does not differ from laughter at the joke itself. She displays no sense of the human pain these laws wrought, no sense that these laws concern human beings. She describes a visit to Israel during which she encounters survivors. The mother of a Jewish family feels so much forgiveness that, despite having lost her entire family in the Holocaust, she is eager to host a German and to forgive everything. The filmmaker's mother says, "We Christians ought to take a slice of that forgiveness, appropriate it to us, and learn from Jewish forgiveness."

Another example of detachment as screen is found in the documentary *I Was a Perpetrator*, in which soldiers describe with great feeling the deaths of other soldiers during combat, as well as the execution of a German soldier who refuses to shoot. The entire battalion marches on his grave so that no recognizable trace is left. Four Russian prisoners who are executed out of sight are mentioned, but there is no allusion to the millions of Jews or Soviet soldiers and civilians who meet their deaths. In a macabre way, the execution of a herd of cows is described in detail. The entire film is a confession contrived to avoid feelings of implication and guilt of a different order.

POSSIBLE VICTIM–PERPETRATOR ENCOUNTERS

Difficulties are not limited to the individual unrepentant Nazi, the "bad apple" in the barrel. Nonencounters have ripple effects in ever-widening layers of society. A true encounter between Jews and Germans rarely takes place because of the unbearable truth that both sides would have to face directly and in each other's presence. That truth involves the brutal atrocities that one side inflicted on the other, which come to feel more like

real, present experiences when they are part of the perpetrator–victim dialogue. Neither side wants to really know them, and the nonencounters come to be disguised by a chain of misleading pseudo-encounters. Such pseudo-encounters will be illustrated in case material.

Encounters between second-generation individuals on either side are possible but not equivalent to first-generation encounters. They involve different sets of feelings from first-generation encounters. On the German side, there is an inevitable, smothering feeling of shame as well as tormenting ambivalence toward one's parents. Little space is left for other affects. For the children of survivors, there is a sense of dread and noncomprehension. They too feel awed and conflicted about their own parents.

When the encounter is diagonal—between survivors and children of perpetrators, the latter are seen as separate from their parents. Survivors usually welcome such encounters and claim to take pleasure in reconnecting with the German past, the German language, etc., a pleasure that remains untainted because it does not emanate from an encounter with the perpetrator. On closer examination, these survivor statements sound like partial truths as well as defensive rationalizations. Why would survivors put themselves in the precarious position of facing the perpetrators or their descendants, being at least unconsciously aware of the inevitable emotional storm such encounters will trigger?

UNMET NEEDS IN THE SURVIVOR THAT ONLY THE PERPETRATOR CAN FULFILL

Consciously, survivors seek dialogue to know what happened, to understand the why and the how, to seek recognition of their humanity, and to grasp the humanity of the perpetrator—to reestablish an I–thou relationship in the midst of the traumatic moment. They try to make an empathic leap into the perpetrator's mind. Rehumanizing both victim and victimizer contributes to healing by establishing a shared subjectivity that makes the empty, traumatic world feel three dimensional and full again.

Holocaust trauma—the dehumanization of victims, the murder of loved ones, the destruction of community, family, and home—was an experience that had no end and that remains ongoing in its

consequences. The dead continue to be acutely and painfully absent. Homelessness and utter aloneness continue to haunt the survivor, even if he or she was able to rebuild a family, a community, and a home. The traumatic experience remains unfinished business between the survivor and the perpetrator. There may be an unconscious wish to find the latter with the expectation that in his omnipotent grandiosity, he can make things whole again, bring the dead back to life, restore the home that had been lost. It is as though the perpetrator, who acted with omnipotent grandiosity, is the only one who can undo his deed, reverse the murder and destruction. It is as if only he can bring back the good old, nurturing Germany that had so completely vanished in the Holocaust.

Simultaneous with such an unconscious redemptive wish is an opposing need to get the business finished. Survivors always have a sense of uncertainty as to the veracity of their experience and the accuracy of their memory. They doubt whether it really happened and whether they are not making it all up. After the war, many have searched books, archives, albums, and even train schedules to establish a chronological, external, and historical scaffolding for their memories. (See Auerhahn 2013.) Acknowledgment by the perpetrator can address such internal doubt and reestablish the reality of the traumatic event. That is probably one of the most urgent conscious needs that motivates survivors to reestablish contact with the perpetrator: to put an end to their inner doubt and provide closure to their questioning of themselves by getting the perpetrator to acknowledge and testify to his deed.

The more important, not always fully articulated, need underlying the search for genuine encounters with perpetrators is to reverse, undo, or repair the experience of dehumanization that resulted from not existing as human in the eyes of beholders. It is this abandonment, isolation, and objectification that made the self feel unreal, lending all experience an as-if quality and giving rise to parapraxes and ambiguities in memory. Thus it is not the perpetrator as historian who is desperately needed but the perpetrator as one who takes stock of the victim's humanity. Constitutional judge Albie Sachs, a South African activist and member of the African National Congress, was car bombed in 1988 by agents of South Africa's security forces. He sought to meet with his would-be assassin,

> out of an immense curiosity to see him and confront him with my presence and procure some kind of human response from him. I didn't feel . . . anger . . . , just the wish to let him see me and to personalize the relationship, take away the terrible feeling that to him I was just an object to be eliminated as scientifically and coldly as possible. (Sachs 1990, p. 198)

Otherwise, encounters entail retraumatization and revictimization. In the trial of Gröning, a Holocaust survivor and witness named Irene Weiss (cousin of NA) described her encounter with him:

> He has said that he does not consider himself a perpetrator but merely a small cog in the machine. But if he were sitting here today wearing his SS uniform, I would tremble, and all the horror that I experienced as a 13-year old would return to me. To that 13-year old, any person who wore that uniform in that place represented terror and the depths to which humanity can sink, regardless of what function they performed. And today, at the age of 84, I still feel the same way. (quoted in Connolly 2015)

As Weiss spoke, Gröning looked on passively, occasionally gazing at the ceiling or sipping water. Weiss grasped that his continuing lack of acknowledgment retriggered her trauma of being an object to be eliminated.

Finally, for an event to feel real, it must exist in the subjectivity of another. When it is acknowledged by another, it ceases to exist merely in the imagined omnipotent world of the survivor and exists in the external world as something beyond his or her control. Guilt-inducing fantasies are limited by externalization, by confronting actual, responsible perpetrators.

Louis Micheels (1989), a psychoanalyst and Holocaust survivor, has written on the topic of the "Geheimnistrager" (Bearer of the Secret). This was a label attached to those Auschwitz inmates who knew of and witnessed the torture and murders by Nazis. This label was feared as a designation for death in a short time by gas or bullet. Actually, most prisoners who survived for a few months knew about the "secret" and therefore were subjects of surveillance by the "Politische Abteilung," which would do anything to prevent the "secret" being leaked to the outside world. The notion that spreading the knowledge of SS crimes would result in

imminent death was a persistent threat and injunction that did not disappear after liberation. It held a spell over survivors and others involved, including people in top government levels, contributing to the scarcity of accounts of the Holocaust until many years after the end of World War II. Acknowledgment from others can break the sense of isolation, while others' unreliability can renew a terrible sense of abandonment.

A poignant example of the need for acknowledgment by the perpetrator is found in Ariel Dorfman's 1990 play *Death and the Maiden*, made into a movie by Roman Polanski in 1994. After the transition to democracy in Chile, the husband, a high official in the new government, brings home a man who helped him with a flat tire. The wife recognizes in the guest's voice and mannerisms the doctor who, fifteen years earlier, had repeatedly tortured and raped her while she was blindfolded after having been abducted by the secret police for antidictatorship activities. The doctor insists on his innocence, but she is able to extract a false confession from him at gunpoint. She is not satisfied because she doesn't believe that he truly regrets his actions; after she convinces her husband, they take the doctor to be executed. In his last moments before he is to be pushed off a cliff into the ocean, the guest admits his deed and the pleasure of raping her. At that moment, she sets him free. He had fulfilled her need of establishing the reality of her traumatic experience. He had testified to his crime so that she no longer needed anything from him.

Finally, trauma is often experienced as punishment from a parental figure. By re-externalizing it, by accusing the perpetrator and the perpetrator taking responsibility for events, the survivor may be able to modify and mitigate punitive parental imagos and forgive not only parental figures but also himself or herself, whom hitherto he or she had experienced as unlovable because of traumatic "punishment" and guilt. It is less important that the survivor forgive the perpetrator and more vital that he or she find a way back to prewar lost love objects (who now can be identified with) and to re-experience himself or herself as someone who can be loved. In this formulation, we are close to Siassi's (2007) depiction of the unconscious internal life of a victim and of the need for the mitigation of aggressive and revengeful wishes as well as detachment from the painful feelings and self-punishments that accompany negative affect and ideation (cf. Smith 2008). However, Siassi, whose work was honed with

patients suffering noncatastrophic failures between parent and child, valorizes the role of forgiveness in self-regulation and reparation. We argue that genocidal crimes are unforgiveable and block the way through forgiveness to repair. Indeed, Siassi (2009, p. 642) admits, "One cannot forgive unimaginable crimes," while Smith (2008, p. 919) posits that "in the unconscious, there is no such thing as forgiveness." How do Holocaust survivors heal?

While the scale of the external evil precludes forgiveness, the dynamics of survivors' internal affects create a yearning and impetus to refind and repair good internal objects so as to reconstitute parts of the self. The resentments that arise from prolonged mortification, the terror that remains from memories of real fear, the disgust, shame, and rage that result from dehumanization give rise to grievances that mitigate against complete metabolization and dictate an ongoing vacillation between enactments and reflective mental functioning, between acting and thinking. In massive psychic trauma, enactment is not a debased activity but a procedural memory that is not lesser than mentalization but a form thereof. One does not truly know something until one acts on it, which suggests a dynamic (as opposed to antagonistic) relationship between action and thought, external and internal worlds. (See Auerhahn and Laub 1998.) Healing after massive psychic trauma does not go through forgiveness but through active engagement with the external world via protest, confrontation, accountability, rectification, agency, memorial, testimony, witnessing, reinstatement of values, and justice, evolving internally into mourning, resignation, integration, letting go, reconciliation, and acceptance.

FORGIVING AS A PROCESS

Many writings on forgiving create the impression of an event that happens instantaneously: an internal shift occurs, a decision is made, and the transition to forgiving follows promptly, inevitably leading to relief, to unburdening, and to an enhanced inner space. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission encounters emphasize such spectacular single-step forgiving. The perpetrator confesses to his crimes while imploring surviving relatives to forgive him, often turning to them as if they were his parents,

calling them Father or Mother. They emotionally respond in kind by calling him "my child" and henceforth include him in their family in a cathartic moment. But all we know is the parties' public behavior; we have no way of knowing what goes on inside them or what their feelings are the day after. We know nothing about the internal struggle they went through, the price they paid to reach renunciation and forgiveness, or what aspect of the confession moved them. Perhaps their actions were patriotic attempts to comply with expectations of their revered national leaders and to prevent civil war. What is missing is what one knows about mental processes, that they do not happen instantaneously but require time and working through. Even when a conscious decision has been made to acknowledge and accept responsibility for, and enter into a dialogue about, atrocities, it remains a tedious struggle for perpetrators to carry out such endeavors. Forgiveness, especially of genocide, cannot consist of one moment of grace. The film *Facing Fear* depicts a process of atonement that transpires over years, as a neo-Nazi renounces his hateful ideology, volunteers to prevent future hateful actions by others, engages in dialogue with his victim, testifies to his own personal culpability in workshops and on film, and then stands by his former victim who experiences a loss, this time not inflicting but healing pain by his presence.

Albie Sachs's right arm was blown off, and he lost sight in one eye in the assassination attempt against him. All his energy was dedicated to nurturing his physical and emotional healing with rare bursts of anger without a trace of forgiveness (Sachs 1990, p. 157): "You bloodied shits, who planted the bomb and tried to kill me; we'll get you one day. Don't think you can escape, you bloody rats, you cockroaches, you scum." Vengeance was his means of fighting back, not by killing but by projecting a vision of survival, triumph, and humanity. His was a "soft sweet vengeance":

> If ever the person responsible for putting the bomb were caught, my most fervent wish was that he . . . be tried by due process of law in the ordinary civil courts and if the evidence was not strong enough . . . he be acquitted. It gave me great secret happiness to say that. The risk of acquittal is fundamental, since the creation of a strong system of justice . . . , one in which the people had confidence, which operated according to internationally accepted principles, would validate all our years of effort. . . .

> it would be a personal triumph over the bomber. It would show the total superiority of our values over theirs. It will be the ultimate in my soft sweet vengeance. [p. 199]

These statements lack the melodrama of forgiveness and lofty statements about reconciliation and inclusion in the family, and are replete, instead, with idealism, the victory of one's values, and the renewal of relationships not by forgiving but by historical transparency and moral repair.

THE CASE OF GERMAN PAIN: THE MEN WHO CRIED

The following description of a German–Jewish encounter attended by DL (in 2000, in Westport, Connecticut) reflects the obstacles faced and the defensive maneuvers adopted when attempting to know and share the Holocaust. The context was a retreat of mostly married couples, American Jews and Germans, who met to explore the emotional and relational aftermath of the Holocaust on the mutual relationships between individuals in the group. The Germans experienced echoes of what their parents felt when committing murders, including their self-deceptive maneuvers like self-absorption, self-pity, righteousness, and pleas for compassion for their predicament and for their grievances about the injustices done to Germany. All the German men had spells of restrained, sometimes even silent, crying. Inquiry into the crying resulted in repeated observations that the men were crying for themselves, for their anguish over being Germans. They repeatedly emphasized the difficulty of their situation. They knew nothing, were told nothing, but felt obligated to belong to a heritage that deprived them of a blameless moral identity so that they could not have their own pain and losses; even their nightmares were not allowed them. The reason one man gave for their crying was their anger at being shamed for being Germans. These proved to be in part defensive postures that detracted attention from the purpose of the meeting and screened out the bewilderment and terror of witnesses and victims.

A German social scientist recounted a pied piper dream that he remembered from decades ago. It was both a dream and a hypnagogic phenomenon in which he could experience himself staging his dream:

> A man with a moustache was making a speech. The dreamer could not hear the sounds but could see the gesticulations. Crowds were listening to this piper who played the flute, attracting rats from all over town so that he could lead them away and rid the town of its rats. The piper was angry because his fee had not been paid, so he played the flute to the children of the town who excitedly followed him in a serpentine line to a bridge over a river. He stopped there as the children's excitement grew and grew. They danced and jumped up and down until the bridge collapsed and all the children fell into the river and drowned. There was one child who had wanted to join their lines but was prevented from doing so by his old grandfather. This child did not drown because of the presence of history and tradition, symbolized by the grandfather. This child noticed a tear descending the cheek of the pied piper. It came down halfway and when nobody saw, the pied piper shoved it back under the lid. It was not a real tear but fake—a reusable tear for public consumption. (personal recollection, DL)

Tears of the German men were not shed for victims, masses killed in the war and Holocaust, their own losses, or robbed childhoods. They were tears of protest, anger, and indignant self-absorption. They were tears of angry internal shame, as though the men had been caught red-handed in a forbidden act. In their search for reconciliation and forgiveness from the good Jew, these men wanted to begin again; they wanted to reconstitute child–parent relations in the internal scene of action. This transmutation, involving destruction and restitution, is a transformation of object cathexis into narcissistic cathexis (Loewald 1979). It omits the victim, who can never begin again and who instead is erased, again, in this process.

Women did not cry, but it was they who made the real discoveries. One woman discovered an ever-present, though not tangibly experienced, beast. DL pursued one of the men with questions, stating that he wanted to meet the beast and know its hiding places. The man almost blurted back that the questioner should look for the beast in himself. It is difficult to fixate one's gaze on the beast and its shadow. The tears of the German men were distractions, a hiding place. The men's preoccupations with self-hurt and self-burden did not allow a genuine mourning of

their losses and their own childhoods spent in war, flight, and burning cities. The artifice of creating victimhood served the dual purpose of protecting themselves from the awareness and responsibility of the perpetrator and from the despair of the victim.

Could facing reality have led to different outcomes? History provides examples in which some Nazis saved Jewish lives. The commander of the labor camp associated with the Vilna Ghetto was a Major Karl Plage, who functioned as the guardian angel of his 800 Jewish employees, protecting them, their wives, and two of their children from deportation and certain death. He was in a continuous power struggle with the SS, even as 19,000 residents of the ghetto were killed in the nearby forest of Ponar. During his two-week home leave, the Vilna SS instructed the workers to bring their children to a newly created day care center. All the children brought to the center were murdered. The beast masked itself not only from the Jewish parents but from the Nazis themselves, who never spoke among themselves or to themselves about murder but about relocation. The trick of the center, like the trick of the pied piper, cut off the connection to truth and was reenacted in the group that spoke about the Allies' prolongation of the war and not about their own feelings of murdering and being murdered. The beast was invisible even to itself, appearing only in disguise as it erased truth. In the provisional government the Nazis had set up in Flensburg on the border with Denmark, Albert Speer and Admiral Karl Doenitz, Hitler's successor, and other senior Nazis awaited the Allies' presentation of conditions for surrender, not recognizing that the Allies had no intention of negotiating with them because they were recognized not as leaders of a new Germany but as criminals (Shirer 1960).

One of the German men in the encounter group stated that to this day, he felt deprived of the right to have any feelings of his own. He proceeded to ask what would be "enough," what would be satisfying for the Jewish questioning, so that he could begin to feel what was his own. When a Jewish participant said that in order to befriend a German, the German had to acknowledge the Holocaust, the man questioned if that would be enough. This question is not limited to the dialogue between Jews and Germans but pertains to the one that exists between Germans and themselves and between Germans and other Germans.

How can we understand the distorted thinking framed by screens, which is inimical to reality testing and self-reflection in otherwise well-functioning, clear-minded people? Does it point to a particular strain that they were under? Von Kellenbach contributes a plausible explanation: shortly after the war, perpetrators could count on unequivocal societal support and present themselves as unwitting peons who carried out orders. In the 1960s, however, a new set of trials began that for the first time focused on the persecution of Jews, individual agency, and brutality. German society no longer condoned such actions and demanded justice. Defendants could no longer claim the status of national heroes or national victims but only that of lonely, abandoned, and betrayed scapegoats—that everybody was guilty, but it was only they who had been singled out for punishment. More recently, conviction has no longer required proof that a particular defendant committed a specific heinous act; rather, participation in and facilitation of the killing machine was sufficient for conviction. The German men we have described unconsciously identified with their fathers, the perpetrators, which led to their sense of being forced and shamed into being first and foremost German. They had no choice in this matter. Having unconsciously assumed the guilt of their fathers, they frantically embarked on a search for alibis that would mitigate their guilt—hence the endless maneuvering and repeated distorting screens.

FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION—FOR WHOSE BENEFIT?

For verbalized remorse, expressed penance, forgiveness, and reconciliation to occur, there needs to be an unmediated encounter between perpetrator and victim that confronts the reality of the atrocities. A large effort and persistent, difficult emotional work are required, especially on the part of the perpetrator. In whose interest is such a process? The perpetrator must relinquish his shame, which is ubiquitous in Germans of the current generation and which places the conflict between the perpetrator and the uninformed. Shame typically leads to retreat and the externalization of blame. The deed is considered a secret that if kept would make it less real—indeed, perhaps its reality would not exist. What makes

it real is its becoming known by another. Then it can be judged. The critique that is feared is the one coming from outside. All available resources are spent to keep it hidden, and every bit of free mental space is occupied by shame and the maneuvering shame dictates. No space remains available for self-reflection, soul-searching, doubt, insight, or feelings of responsibility and guilt that could inspire remorse and reparation. Encountering the survivor entails meeting the witness who knows and therefore has to be avoided. A real dialogue, with such a witness, that relinquishes the protective shield of shame and secrecy and incorporates responsibility and acknowledgment could be disastrous. Forgiveness and reconciliation can only be a hazardous process for the perpetrator and is not to his benefit.

When it comes to the survivor, the answer is not so categorical. As already noted, he or she needs the perpetrator's testimony to squelch doubts about the veracity of his or her traumatic experience. While survivors abhor forgiving atrocities and reconciling with perpetrators, they also wish to lighten the burdens that they have no choice in carrying. A decision to forgive, however, may not bring the desired relief, because survivors may not feel that they have the right to reduce the weight that oppresses them. Furthermore, in many cases, survivors do not know the circumstances of family members' deaths. They do not know who was responsible. For them, there is only an abyss—not even a particular perpetrator to blame, in part, too, because, of the over half million Germans who participated in the destruction of European Jewry, most not only have not been called to account but also have not even been identified or named. Third, the punishment of individual perpetrators does not cancel out the enormity of genocidal crime. No retribution or reparation is commensurate with the losses and destruction. And finally, it is questionable whether forgiveness is the best way to rehumanize a hardened perpetrator. Aren't repentance and atonement the traditional means?

For survivors who testified at the trial of Oskar Gröning, their death imprint was mitigated not by him but by their encounter with a new German society, government, and generation that wished to know and that sought to set the record straight. Others' sharing the protest at their violation renewed social contracts that genocide had violated on dyadic, neighborly, communal, societal, governmental, and national levels. Those who

testified expressed satisfaction over connecting with young people of the next generation who were eager to know, townspeople who were eager to listen, prosecutors who sought justice, a press that delved into details, and a new Germany, rethreading interpersonal webs that had been rent for decades. Encountering positive attention from the German public and media, one survivor who testified expressed her recapture of a sense of aliveness: "I am surprised and I am happy . . . to be alive," she said. The abilities to seek justice in court and testify can be reparative as well. It is a mistake to think that healing lies in forgiveness only. Sometimes a survivor needs to be given permission not to forgive. A story is told of an Orthodox Jewish man who approached a rabbi with a dilemma that tormented him. His father, who had abused him throughout his childhood, had just died. "Must I sit shiva for him?" the man asked. The rabbi replied that not only should he not, but that he was forbidden to do so, thereby absolving him of the guilt that would otherwise have plagued him about not following an important commandment.

Survivors who testified in Nazis' trials were transformed in part by the ability to accuse, regaining the basic right to say no and withhold consent from what was done to them, thereby stepping out of their frozen, debased state of helpless victim and reclaiming power and agency. The shame of hating is transformed into the power of accusing and affirming their right to protection, status as human, and dignity, which were validated by the legal process.

The function of a trial may be understood as a return of victim and perpetrator to the scene of the crime, but this time without the hierarchy of power wherein one had total control and the other was completely helpless. The courtroom, with the protection that it provides, allows for a restaging with both victim and perpetrator present but neither being free to carry out a mutual verdict of crime and revenge. An inequality is thereby redressed and another one prevented, and an opportunity is created for a beginning dialogue between equals (Robert Burt, pers. comm.). In this idealized view of the justice system, hate and rage are borne when shared, validated, and channeled/transformed into justice. A trial establishes boundaries and rights power dynamics.

Irene Weiss, an Auschwitz survivor quoted earlier, who testified in Gröning's trial, noted the retriggering of her helplessness and terror,

thereby alluding to the dangers inherent in a trial's return to the crime scene—its ability to revive the victim–victimizer relationship in the survivor's psyche, especially if justice is not served. Musing on her experience, she described (pers. comm.) being deeply affected by Stanley Kramer's 1961 movie *Judgment at Nuremberg*, especially by the discussion of a judge who worried that if the defendants did not confess and learn from what happened, Germany wouldn't be allowed to be a country with respect for 100 years. She realized her agreement with the idea that Germans should have accepted a collective punishment for collaboration such that Germany should not have been allowed to be a country for a century, and had their criminality been so enshrined, perhaps subsequent genocides such as that in Cambodia would not have occurred. She felt that the failure of a real reckoning was a second genocide for bereaved Jews who were left wondering what had happened, why Germany was rebuilt and its scientists enlisted by the United States, and why survivors were ignored. She felt that forgiveness was not appropriate for genocide, which is neither an individual nor a national crime but a global one against and of humanity that betrays the fragility and impermanence of the veneer of civilization as well as the underlying barbarism of human nature that renders trust and faith in human beings untenable. To be treated with contempt as subhuman and to be targeted for elimination without recourse to law created at the time depression and terror that precluded anger. From her current distance, she is furious at a world that allowed the Shoah to happen. "I can't regain trust in humans after Auschwitz," she says. "I have to live with that and hide it because people don't want to hear. There is no place to go for validation. People say enough already. Move on."

Cynthia Ozick (1988) explained Primo Levi's suicide thus: he finally got angry.

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Winnicott's *Subjective Object*: Merging experiences as preconditions of being

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WINNICOTT'S *SUBJECTIVE OBJECT*: MERGING EXPERIENCES AS PRECONDITIONS OF BEING

BY PAOLO FABOZZI

The author explores the clinical meaning of D. W. Winnicott's concept of subjective object. He describes an adult patient marked by the failure of her primary nurturing environment because of unworked-through grief and severely traumatic experiences that predated her birth. This failure forced the patient into a sort of "impossibility of being." The author describes how an erotic transference represented an impulse for development and transformation for her because it took the shape of "holding" her embryonic capacity to experience illusion within the analytic relation. Last, the author illustrates how the gradual construction of the analyst as a subjective object allowed the patient to begin to work through both the traumas inherited from her primary environment and the unthinkable anxieties connected to them.

Keywords: Subjective object, Winnicott, erotic transference, illusion, trauma, collaboration between unconsciouses, primary environmental failures.

> The alternative to being is reacting, and reacting interrupts being and annihilates.
> —Winnicott 1960a

> It must be conceded however, that there are very roughly speaking two kinds of human being, those who do not carry around with them a significant experience of mental breakdown in earliest infancy and those who do carry around

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Translation by Adriano Bompani.

> with them such an experience and who must therefore flee from it, flirt with it, fear it, and *to some extent be always preoccupied with the threat of it.* It could be said, and with truth, that this is not fair.
>
> —Winnicott 1965a, italics added

INTRODUCTION

> There are three kinds of soccer players. Those who see the free spaces, the same spaces that any fool could see from the stands: you see them and you're happy and you feel satisfied when the ball lands where it should land. Then there are those who suddenly let you see a free space, a space that you and maybe the others could have seen if you had observed carefully. These are the ones who will surprise you. And then there are those who create a new space where no space should have been. These are the prophets. The poets of the game. [Soriano 1997, p. 202]

The "new space" where there was supposed to be no space, created by that poet of playing who was D. W. Winnicott, is found in a new paradigm that he conceived and that integrates and transcends the paradigm of unconscious object relations. As I have shown in a previous paper (Fabozzi 2012), the epistemological revolution that he brought about was placing at the center of human events the effects and the ways in which the object's unconscious acts and transforms the mind and the unconscious of the subject, and vice versa. This is the space that we are painstakingly trying to define and describe today. Fumbling around in the dark, at times, because we dare to say something about our patients' unconscious, paradoxically it is even harder to say something about our own unconscious when it is "working" with our patient's unconscious.

Being and feeling real are, according to Winnicott, specific features of mental health:

> No doubt the vast majority of people take feeling real for granted, but at what cost? To what extent are they denying a fact, namely, that there could be a danger for them of feeling unreal, of feeling possessed, of feeling they are not themselves, of falling forever, of having no orientation, of being detached from their bodies, of being

> annihilated, of being nothing, nowhere? Health is not associated with *denial* of anything. [1967b, p. 37]

In fact, his work "*Sum:* I am" (1968b) represented a complete reversal of Cartesian rationality: tracing the individual's being back through the unconscious awareness of existing, an "unselfconscious state of being."[1] What does this phrase call to our mind?

It is something that I try to imagine thinking about what we might experience losing ourselves in the act of playing, when space, time, and reality gradually blur and vanish in the background, when boundaries become distorted. I imagine it in the capacity to fuse regressively with the other in a sexual act, or in the possibility to feel like you're part of the fourth movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 5 or of a Bruce Springsteen song. I imagine it in the willingness to mentally ebb and flow in time, rediscovering the "feeling" of infancy by letting it permeate the present in order to bring it back with the gaze of another age. Likewise, I imagine it in the willingness to dare to perform an act born of a remote, often hidden, and isolated place of our being. I imagine it in the capacity to accommodate an emotion that might upset our bodily experience and our worlds; or to give life to a formless area, born of the relation with the other, by letting the space remain uncertain; or to open up to the unexpected, even though we risk upsetting what is already established, what we want and imagine as established once and for all.

The "unselfconscious state of being" is something that the child cannot build solipsistically. It is not something that we can take for granted, nor is it established once and for all; on the contrary, it is something that is endlessly looking for an opportunity to exist, subject to ordinary fluctuations.

[1] "(*Cogito, ergo sum* is different: *sum* here means I have a *sense* of existing as a person, that in my mind I feel my existence has been proved. But we are concerned here with an unselfconscious state of being, apart from intellectual exercises in self-awareness.) Does not this name (I AM) given to God reflect the danger that the individual feels he or she is in on reaching the state of individual being? If I am, then I have gathered together this and that and have claimed it as me, and I have repudiated everything else; in repudiating the not-me I have, so to speak, insulted the world, and I must expect to be attacked" (Winnicott 1968b, p. 57).

What we often encounter in our clinical practice reveals the absence or distortion of this unselfconscious state of being. How can you live when you don't have this unselfconscious state of being? When it is shaky and chaotic, unstable and artificial, how is our way of being in the world imprisoned and maimed? Isn't our very sense of being real in relationship with ourselves, with others, with our own body, and with external reality damaged, too?

Soriano's words evoke the concept of potential space. Beside this impressive and powerful concept, others might, when seen through clinical practice, help us explore the space that can open up and accommodate what happens between the patient's unconscious and the analyst's unconscious. I am talking about the concepts of *subjective object, transitional object,* and *use of the object*;[2] apart from being three different ways of entering a relation with external reality at three different stages of emotional development, these concepts also constitute in my opinion three different ways to try to tame, and to negotiate with, that potentially traumatic something that is always inherent in the encounter with the other, to prevent that traumatic potential from taking place.

Each instant in our clinical practice puts us in contact with the distortions of these three modes. Patients are driven to neutralize the object, to keep it under control, grab it, immobilize it; to revitalize it or to keep it paralyzed in a limbo, neither fully inside nor fully outside. They are driven to crystallize it in its concreteness, to de-humanize it and to treat it tyrannically because it was originally alienating. Thus, we find fusional omnipotence in place of the capacity to foster creative illusion. Thus, we clash with the concreteness of thought and its counterpart, that is, fantasying, corresponding to an intermediate area whose function to promote the exchange between oneiric potential and external reality is atrophied. Thus, we glimpse the unreality of the object and of the sense of being real, marking the impossibility to embark on the discovery of the object's

[2] In this work, I will not refer to the concept of "use of the object" (Winnicott 1968a)—a concept I dedicated a paper to (Fabozzi 2016)—because the processes that I intend to highlight precede that "sophisticated idea, an achievement of healthy emotional growth, not attained except in health and in the course of time" (Winnicott 1965b, p. 231).

survival. Thus, we notice the struggle to idealize the object in order to protect it or to heal it.

These ways of relating and negotiating are thus, so to speak, forced to distort themselves and to become invasive and all-consuming, losing every drive for development, in direct response to an unconscious sense of self that is continuously being threatened by the unthinkability of inadequate primary experiences that had to be split.

In the following pages, I will provide some clinical sequences of an adult patient marked by the failure of her primary nurturing environment because of unworked-through grief and of severely traumatic experiences that predated her birth. This failure forced the patient into a sort of "impossibility of being." I will describe how an erotic transference that characterized the first two years of analysis represented an impulse for development and transformation for her because it took the shape of "holding" her embryonic capacity to experience illusion within the analytic relation. Moreover, in this transference, several coincidences happened that constituted not so much a communication between unconsciouses but rather a sort of collaboration between unconsciouses. Finally, I will illustrate how the gradual construction of the analyst as a subjective object, made possible by her budding capacity for illusion and by the collaboration between our unconsciouses, allowed the patient to begin to work through both the traumas inherited from her primary environment and the unthinkable anxieties connected to them.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF BEING

Elena, 40 years old, has a reasonably loving husband, and she does her best for her children. She has friends and spends time with them. She reads novels and watches movies. Yet, her life has been marked by not-being. She had a less than turbulent adolescence, albeit with a few episodes of promiscuity and some incidents that put her safety at stake. Finally, she had a biting and painful crisis, apparently marked by jealousy, with feelings of being abandoned and of vanishing. It was probably then, around the age of 22, that she perceived the first signs of a breakdown: "I must have frozen, I must have stopped feeling emotions." At that time,

she chose to embrace her parents' faith and started fervently attending a Christian community.

Psychic paralysis dominated Elena's relations in the external world and her internal world alike. Her objects were forced to live all of their life in suspended animation (Winnicott 1935), within a limbo in which they were neither alive nor dead. "I am a zombie," she says, lucidly and painfully understanding and knowing her way of life. Maybe it would be more accurate to say *unlife*.

In this world of unlife, she does not allow herself to express any criticism toward the other, not even in her thoughts. During the analysis, she is careful, as she is speaking, not to make me think or assume that the person she is speaking of is less than upstanding. In her world, the law of concern is in full force, or rather the law of pseudo-responsibility toward the object, which obviously prevents her from having a living relationship with the other.[3] Often, Elena manages to describe to me how she feels like she's dissolving, breaking up in a thousand pieces, vanishing.

"I let my life happen to me. Now I don't want to die a dead person," said Elena's mother a few days before she died. What is the nature and the quality of the environment that housed the child of a mother who let life happen to her and who died as a dead person? What scents did she smell, what colors was her visual cortex exposed to, what rhythms did she encounter, in what silences did she feel immersed? From a very early age—that is, at first with her body, then with nucleuses of the bodily Ego, and later still with her mind—Elena registered and absorbed the psychic death of her mother and organized a sophisticated defense system in order to protect herself from this state of death. What was the fate of her mother's death state in Elena's psyche?

Concrete deaths marked her father's life: his birth, since he carries the name of a brother who died shortly before he was born; his infancy,

[3] Challenging the object is, to her, unthinkable. Her extreme concern for tainting or hurting the other is based on, but cannot be reduced to, her denial of her own anger. This concern exemplifies her powerlessness to trust the object's capacity for survival and to hope that it can perform its spontaneous vital movements.

since he witnessed the tragic death of two sisters; and his youth, since he then lost another brother.

Shortly before her birth, Elena's parents were forced to flee their country of origin because of a military coup, thus losing everything they had. They never had a chance to work through the grief over everything they lost: grief not so much for material possessions but for their world and their roots.

Two dreams that she had in the first months of analysis provide us with precious hints about her workings and her life.

> I dreamed that I was walking up to a bed; my mother was sleeping there. I was searching under the mattress; as a child, I knew my mother kept some money there. Then I tried to wake her up, but I could not, and then I walked away alone.

She tells me sometime later:

> I dreamed that I was going to some kind of a rehab center, and I asked whether I could have a smaller dose, so someone took the active ingredient out of the pill and left but the capsule. I am reminded now that a doctor told my friend that the anti-craving pill she takes might kill her if she takes too much alcohol.

The latter dream might remind us of "Nothing at the centre" (Winnicott 1959) and of Winnicott's interpretation: "if nothing was happening for [the patient] to react to, then she came to the centre of herself where she knows that there is nothing" (p. 50). And it reminds us of Mark, the boy who, in the game he played with Winnicott (1969), had to put the steam engine on the dead track to let the express train pass, thus re-creating in the transference-countertransference both a chaotic world, an insanity, and the defense he organized to counter this insanity: if he became a nothing, his mother's madness would spare him.

Among the possible lines of meaning, these two dreams of Elena evoke the emotional death of the mother and the daughter's attempt to find something alive, albeit under the guise of a concrete object: the experience of an object that is sought but not found. It was impossible to reach, a dead object. An attempt to reanimate it was to no avail. Dismay, disappointment, dejection linger around. However, there is the effort to search, too, for something valuable, the potential for traces of life.

Her response in front of environmental failure is intense and dramatic: nullifying the active ingredient, emptying the nucleus to leave but a shell.

How can we, through the analytic experience, contribute to the construction of an unconscious sense of the self and hold the patient as he is defining it? I mean an unconscious sense of the self, assuming things work out well enough, that has its roots in the experience of the continuity of self, an essential dimension of a healthy emotional development, according to Winnicott (1960a).

Elena did not have a transitional object, since we know that the object and the phenomena become transitional when the internal object is alive and good enough. However, this internal object depends on the existence, the vitality, and the actions of the breast, of the mother, of the nurturing that comes from the environment (Winnicott 1951, p. 237): a psychically alive mother. On the contrary, Elena had to make do with a little doll that she often brought to her mouth and that she kept rubbing on her lips. She was trying to rebuild, I would say, not quite a bond but a mouth-nipple continuity, an adherence that would give her a sense of inclusion and of artificial proximity to the object. She sought a sensual stimulation that one might imagine also sparked sexual sensations, soothing and comforting at the same time. Her self-stimulation arose, I speculate, from the failure of the "sensuous co-existence" between mother and child (Winnicott 1963a, p. 76). The latter is one of the sources of that "environment-individual set-up" (Winnicott 1952, p. 221) from which, if things go well, the processes of differentiation and individuation will begin to take shape and substance.

EROTIC TRANSFERENCE AS A WAY TO EXPERIENCE ILLUSION

The little doll on Elena's lips occupied the area of transference-countertransference from the beginning of the analysis, and it took the form of intense erotic fantasies focused on me, which absorbed Elena's thoughts, mind, and maybe her body. The point of view I'm interested in examining in this work is not the defensive and potentially destructive meaning of erotic transference, nor its function in revitalizing the Self and prompting

its integration. The transference-countertransference scenario characterized and occupied by the patient's erotic thoughts constituted a remarkable *via regia* to the unconscious. Not to Elena's unconscious, though: it was a *via regia* that enabled the creation of a sort of collaboration between our unconsciouses and of an atmosphere that made it possible to keep the bond between me and the patient alive throughout the moments of mistrust, anger, desperation.

My psyche and my body had to deal with my unease, embarrassment, worry, uncertainty, and excitement, as well as the concern that I could narcissistically take advantage of her. It would be extremely reductive to think that this transference scenario simply had a stimulant, antidepressant, or manipulative function. My gaze placed the defensive, destructive, and psychotic meaning of these fantasies, even though it existed, in the background. Instead, it glimpsed the whole potential for development of the patient's fantasies. If the reader will forgive me using an oxymoron, in this transference, I became a "fantastically concrete" object. I was, that is, an object that Elena could, in her fantasies, hold, grasp, manipulate, and bring to her lips. I gradually became an object that she herself makes appear in those days when she is in session and that she herself makes concretely exist in her fantasy in those days on which there is no session.

Elena's sexual fantasying over the men she met in her daily life doubtlessly also had, up to that point, an antidepressant function. Within the analytic process, though, these fantasies took on wholly different functions. Elena needed to experience a father who would not be scared by an infant and adolescent daughter's excitement and who could acknowledge, recognize, and value her femininity. She needed a father, moreover, who could escape a functioning based on concreteness alone: when Elena relates that the first thing her father did when he came home was to check the stock market and that the only thing that mattered to him was financial security, that is to say, physical survival and nothing else, she is trying to contact me and to convey the utter absence of a psychic and emotional dimension in the father and in the relationship that the father built with his daughters.

On the mother's side, Elena had a desperate need to instate me as a "living" mother, and she did this through that sensory-sexual short-circuit I mentioned above, such as when as a girl she stroked her lips with her

doll. Moreover, the sexual fantasies in Elena's mind reproduced on a concrete and primitive level her precocious attempts to heal and revitalize her primary environment, to mend not just her parents' depressive state but to restore the losses and deprivations they suffered and that they never managed to work through and to transform within themselves.

During our sessions, she never described her fantasies in detail, thus proving that she was not trying to manipulate me by getting me excited. Rather, she implemented, in a primitive way, the idea that we could exchange something that could activate our vitality. She did this in the only, awkward way she felt was at her disposal. The discovery that I could survive her sexual fantasies—that is, that I was neither trying to act them out nor allying with her sadistic Super-ego or with a more or less distorted idealization of psychoanalysis (in which one could read those fantasies as resistances)—made it possible for this transference form to become a space within which Elena could experience something that was completely new to her. This was not merely a new object, but rather a new and unprecedented object relation (Loewald 1960).

Through my interpretations, I was not only suggesting her need to give some kind of exciting vitality to herself with her fantasizing, but also acknowledging how strong her suffering, nonetheless stemming from these fantasies, was. Moreover, I was aware of the fact that through her fantasies, she was trying to fill the intolerable space and emptiness between one session and the other, some kind of unbridgeable abyss. For example, here is an exchange during one session:

Elena: It was better to feel the emptiness of London [she had been abroad for a week], than to resume my life here, because I replaced that emptiness with fantasies and thoughts about you.

I: Perhaps you're telling me that you were unable to think that emptiness and that you're feeling like a child that uses her body and her sensations in order to feel less empty and less scared.

Elena: Today I was thinking that I'd like to stay home with you and abandon myself to you.

I: Perhaps you feel that I abandoned you in the last few days, that I left you alone with these thoughts and fantasies about me.

Elena: I remember that, when I was a child, as I walked down the stairs I used to have some thoughts, and it was like being outside my own body; as I was lying in bed, too, I heard voices that seemed to come from another planet.

I: Perhaps your desire to stay home with me on one hand has something to do with the sexual follies we might do together, on the other hand it has to do with your need to make me understand how burdensome those thoughts you had as a child were."[4]

By announcing her fantasies when she returned to the consulting room, she was asking me to accept being used as a concrete object, and then, later in the session, she discovered that I existed as a person able to survive being used by her in that way. In other words, she discovered that I did not get excited, did not get angry, nor did I become a marble statue, but rather I continued to breathe, to live, and to think, even analytically. Elena talked about desire, that is to say she used an adult language, but she was actually getting close to the dimension of primary needs connected to the state of dependence on an object that could take care of them.

We could say, playfully, that with her fantasies outside the session, Elena was a bit of a Freudian patient (a patient who hallucinates the motherly breast) and a bit of a Kleinian patient (a patient who cancels the separation by fantasizing on something that originates from a nipple at the mouth). However, in my presence, by telling me that in the meantime between one session and the next she had experienced fantasies about me, she gradually became a bit of a Winnicottian patient because she was creating me and at the same time finding me as an analyst after experiencing my reaction to her fantasies and finding out my existence.

Since the first instant, I trusted the fact that Elena needed to use me exactly in that way and that this mode would constitute an impulse for

[4] Finally, during a later session she tells me: "I'm having sexual fantasies about you when I'm at a junction, not when I'm doing something. For example when I'm falling asleep. At the junction from one time to the other. . . . I recall that my father used to leave the toilet door open, and that while we were boating I saw something once; I closed his door, it embarrassed me." I tell her: "Perhaps on one hand you feel that you can create my presence next to you, and on the other hand this is something that scares you and causes excitement, embarrassment and confusion."

development and transformation for her. This trust took the form of "holding" Elena's embryonic capacity to experience illusion.[5]

THE SUBJECTIVE OBJECT

Illusion, subjective object, transitional phenomena, and potential space are conquests of emotional development made possible by the presence of a good-enough environment. However, we cannot use them as metaphors of everything that happens in our analytic work. What transpires between the analyst and the patient is not, by default, something that happens in a potential space; likewise, the analyst is not a transitional object per se. And surely the analytic experience is not automatically an experience founded on the dimension of illusion.

On the other hand, in a way, the transitional object does not exist. It does not exist as a thing in itself, that is, as a purely concrete object, and it does not exist as a symbolic object. It can exist only as a function of the observer's gaze.[6] I am including several aspects in the word *gaze*: imagination, thought, tolerance, helpfulness, sharing, and above all our acceptance of the foolish character of what the child is potentially experiencing.[7] And the patient too, of course, when he is able to experience it. In other words, a piece of cloth can become a transitional object for the child if the parent holds the paradox of its simultaneously subjective and objective nature.[8] That is, if the parent creates within himself or herself a mental state inside which to believe in the possibility that the child, and the patient, can create the found object.

[5] I knew that I had to keep in mind the possibility of an unconscious hatred whenever the patient felt I was "leaving" her area of omnipotence.

[6] "That is to say, an essential feature of transitional phenomena and objects is a quality in our attitude when we observe them" (Winnicott 1971, p. 96).

[7] "There is a madness here which is permissible because it belongs to this stage of the infant's emotional development. The madness is that this object is created by the infant and *also* it was there in the environment for the infant's use." So claims Winnicott (1954), in a preface to an article by O. Stevenson, "The first treasured possession," published in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child.*

[8] I am intentionally using the word *holds* because the verb that is most often used, *tolerate,* in my opinion hampers our understanding of this process. We do not merely have a duty to tolerate countertransference: we do much more than that with countertransference.

It is reductive to see in the transitional object only the function of (almost) standing for the mother and of establishing a bridge between the me and the not-me, between the internal and the external. We know that it represents "the root of symbolism in time" (Winnicott 1951, p. 234), and that the child uses it to tolerate separation from the mother. However, its use is more than an experience and much more than a way to soothe anxiety: it is one of the ways to begin to "think" absence and also a way to "rediscover" the object's presence and make it possible. The bridging function thus constitutes the establishing of a connection between presence and absence: between presence and absence of the mother in the external reality, which would be a lifeless thing if it was not matched to a connection (under construction) between presence and absence of the mother in the child's mind. This connection bestows hope, makes absence tolerable, and inscribes presence in a dialectic movement immersed in the flow of time. On the contrary, our patients come to analysis without being able to employ and practice these abilities and need our work to allow them to build and master them.

However, the creation of the transitional object has to be preceded by something that can be found in the experience of a newborn being held to the breast:

> [. . .] the baby has instinctual urges and predatory ideas. The mother has a breast and the power to produce milk, and the idea that she would like to be attacked by a hungry baby. These two phenomena do not come into relation with each other till the mother and child *live an experience together.* [Winnicott 1945, p. 152][9]

With the image of a mother and a child who "*live an experience together,*" Winnicott "builds" a wholly original and at the time unheard-of corner of psychoanalytic theory: the mother needs the capacity, by presenting the actual breast to the baby, to provide from a psychic point of view a scenario in which the baby can experience the sensation that the breast was his creation:

[9] Thus continues the passage above: "The mother being mature and physically able has to be the one with tolerance and understanding, so that it is she who produces a situation that may with luck result in the first tie the infant makes with an external object, an object that is external to the self from the infant's point of view" (Winnicott 1945, p. 152).

> I think of the process as if two lines came from opposite directions, liable to come near each other. If they overlap there is a moment of *illusion*—a bit of experience which the infant can take as *either* his hallucination *or* a thing belonging to external reality. [Winnicott 1945, p. 152]

The origin of that psychic function that is fundamental to human life, that is, the capacity to engage in a relation with external reality and, specifically, *the first encounter with the object*, acquires meaning for the individual and makes it possible that he or she begins to exist, if and only if an *overlap* between something that comes from the mother's psyche and something that comes from the inchoate psyche of the child is created.

We are talking about the *subjective object*, that is, the situation in which the baby *finds* an object that he himself *creates*. And, at the same time, he creates an object that the mother offers him. I would like to highlight how this concept is different and distant from the Freudian concept of primary identification;[10] or of indistinctness between the Self and the object created by massive projective identifications; or of empathic functionings governed by identification. And thinking about this situation through the lens of the concept of self-object would miss the essence of the question.

I will limit myself to touch upon the main difference between the concept of illusion in the Freudian model and in the Winnicottian model. The first, fundamental, is based on the function of self-deception of thought; the latter is based on the vital function of creation of reality. That is, we are talking about a scenario characterized by an *experience* of omnipotence, not by omnipotence of thought. It is an experience, if things work well enough, of effortless fusion. There is no effort the child needs to make, least of all a reaction to a trauma. The creation of a subjective object is indeed natural, but it is made possible by *a particular stance of the mother*: it is the mother who permits that the breast and the care she bestows are experienced by the child as if they were under his magic control. This is the cornerstone of the capacity

[10] "'Having' and 'being' in children. Children like expressing an object-relation by an identification: 'I am the object.' 'Having' is the later of the two; after loss of the object it relapses into 'being'. Example: the breast. 'The breast is a part of me, I am the breast.' Only later: 'I have it'–that is 'I am not it'" (Freud 1938, p. 299).

for illusion. And this is Winnicott's peculiar way of talking from the point of view of the baby's subjectivity.[11]

What does this mean from the point of view of clinical practice and technique? What meaning can we give in clinical practice to the concept of subjective object, and how can we use it? Is it simply a dimension that reveals the lack of separation and the pathological fusion that are reproduced in the analytic relation?

It is a fact that patients often come to analysis unable to feel separate and with feeble, uncertain boundaries of the Self, perceived as easily violable. However, what we describe with the expression *subjective object* represents a different psychic mode. It denotes the normal aspect of the baby's emotional development and not its pathological distortion. We would not be able to understand the Winnicottian point of view if we believed that the analyst merely needed to tolerate the fusional functioning of the patient.

What is at stake is, rather, the necessity for the analyst to make the patient able to experience a condition of illusion in relation to the analytic process. This is a stance in the patient-analyst relation that needs carefulness, or even better it needs a "facilitating environment," and it does not spring spontaneously as a product of the analytic relation's advance. This facilitation is anything but simple or linear, and it is not based on technicalities or manipulation: it can be achieved gradually, by finding clues, hints, prompts here and there, to collect and integrate. Facilitation and in a certain way construction can happen only if the relation between analyst and patient enables it.[12]

THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNCONSCIOUSES

To Elena, exploring the omnipotent experience of "creating" me at the time she "finds" me produces an atmosphere that harbors several levels

[11] He highlights not so much the baby's predatory ideas, though they come into play in his description, as the nature of the relation between the newborn and the breast, from the point of view of the baby and of his experience.

[12] It is reductive to limit this question to excessively simplistic dichotomies, to interpret versus not to interpret, transference interpretation versus extra-transference interpretation, and so on.

of experience and several forms of functioning. It promotes the emergence and the exploration of ancient fractures, unhealed wounds, and precocious disasters: her mother's tale about the decision whether or not to abort her; the anxieties of her parents' flight, with the risk of being killed during the coup; the losses suffered by her father.

Moreover, in this atmosphere several experiences of intimate communication took place that, in turn, contributed, in a kind of virtuous spiral of processes, to feed and nourish Elena's dimension of illusion.

During a session, I offered her the image of Cinderella, and she, halfway between surprise and fear, explained to me that just that morning she had told exactly that tale to her 3-year-old son. In another instance, before a week-long absence of hers, I tried to give her an image of the deep anxiety that she was feeling because of her separation from me, caused by the concrete feeling of losing me, by telling her: "You're afraid you could get lost in space." Again, with a mixture of emotions, Elena replied that the day before she had listened to a program about the construction of a spacecraft in the United States and about the discovery by the engineers of a flaw in the project, since in zero gravity the astronaut would have no handholds to re-enter the craft.

During another session, she told me of a dream in which she called me on the telephone, adding that there was no picture of me on her cell phone, but my *sagoma*[13] appeared, something more than an outline. I said: "Something anonymous?" Elena said, "No, there was your jacket, your necktie." I told her: "Maybe your mother used that word, *sagoma*." Elena, in a surprised tone, said: "How did you know? She told me that all the time, as if to say I was funny. But how did you know? Did you meet my mother?"

Finally, some time later, she told me that during the weekend, she had listened to a famous singer, hailing from her parents' country, and she had the feeling that he had my exact same voice. This feeling that I have exactly that voice timbre is more than simple fantasying: Elena constructed me as a familiar object, belonging to her very family, something

[13] [*Sagoma* (It.): silhouette or outline. Colloquially, a character, a funny person. Translator's note.]

that is outside her and inside her, and above all as something that she found and at the same time she created.

I decipher these experiences not as telepathic phenomena or communication between unconsciouses. Rather I consider them in terms of collaboration between unconsciouses. And I also think of them as "overlaps,"[14] experiences that random chance could have scattered in the absence of meaning and that instead become meaningful and generate psychic movements because they express coincidence, that is the correspondence and superimposition of two lines coming from opposite directions. "If they overlap"—we were saying with Winnicott a while ago—"there is a moment of illusion" (1945, p. 152).

Creating me, when I let myself be found, Elena begins to develop the feeling that she has some kind of "hold" over me and progressively approaches being able to think of me as something like a transitional object, such as when she tells me: "Now you're more real, and I can feel annoyance for the fact that you see other patients. Now you are my *possession*." This word reminds us of the fact that Winnicott, shortly after introducing his famous work of 1951, changed the definition of transitional object from "first object" to "first 'not-me' possession." In this moment of Elena's analysis, the emphasis is not on the dimension of control but on its developmental side, since there is no destruction or denial of separation. There is, on the contrary, the possibility to begin to place me within an "area of omnipotence" (Winnicott 1960a). Elena is swinging between being in relation with a subjective object and being in relation with a transitional object, which carries with it some traces of reality, as well as the function to facilitate the moments of passage between internal and external and between being alone and being in relation.

A CLINICAL SEQUENCE: TRAUMA IN THE TRANSFERENCE

Here is an excerpt from an exchange I had with Elena during her third year of analysis:

[14] The word that the author uses here, *coincidenza*, implies both the superimposition of two objects or phenomena (overlap) and the concurrence of apparently unrelated events (coincidence). Translator's note.

Elena: My 10-year-old daughter made the Sign of the Cross with her left hand. It's very serious! You don't understand how shocked I was, you think I'm exaggerating when I tell you this! . . . My friend Giorgio doesn't understand the oddities of psychoanalysis, he can't accept that a session won't last a single minute more.

I: Maybe I have trouble understanding what you feel if your daughter signs with the left hand, and you wonder whether I'm able to understand your other oddities, not just the religious ones. But above all you feel that it's not fair that I ask you to accept and adapt to my analyst's oddities and that I won't do the same.

Elena: Not just that. Because I come here, in this room, where there's this desk made this way, or that chair that looks like that, and there's this couch, or there's the telephone over there. But you don't come to my house, maybe in a room reserved for psychoanalysis, where nobody would disturb us.

I: I think you're trying to tell me that you had to be exactly in that uterus, and that you didn't get to choose, or exactly in that clinic where you were born, and that you were not allowed to choose the house in which you lived as a baby, nor could you choose your parents.

Elena: Could you repeat that? You know, when you said uterus, that hit a chord. Earlier, as I was climbing up the stairs, I was on the phone with my friend Maria, and the last word that she said was uterus.

Like the false Self—which acts as a guardian angel and, when things go well in analysis, fades to the background (Winnicott 1960b)—Elena no longer needs erotic transference, which we managed to transform.

The closest thing to her that exists, her daughter, suddenly becomes something extraneous. It is as if that gesture had dramatically realized Shakespeare's "I am not what I am" and, at the same time, had forcefully dragged Elena to her personal prehistory, making her feel the sense of estrangement experienced by her mother toward her and also her mother's inability to access a state of primary maternal preoccupation. With the projective reference to Giorgio and in particular to the "oddities of psychoanalysis," there is a first move toward the possibility to experience, in the thick of the session, the difficult encounter between Elena and her primary environment.

Elena is pointing out the impact caused not only by my otherness as an individual person but also by what as an analyst I can offer her. And when I offer a frame constituted by who has to adapt to whom, Elena is able to move the question unconsciously to a more primitive level of the relation between subject and object: what primary environment accommodated me, and what environment could adapt to me?

Here Elena is exploring her beginnings through the relation with me and with the environment that I am offering her: it is I who does not understand and respect her arising sense of Self; it is I who does not understand the deep meaning of her being. It is I who becomes the traumatic other: doubly traumatic, as other than herself and hostile (she thinks I'm not religious) and as a person who forces her to accommodate to his environment. This further overlap that transpires between me and the patient (she came to the session having just heard the word *uterus* on the phone, and I interpret her environment in terms of uterus) enables her, during the first two sessions of the following week, to keep on exploring and searching for the origins of the Self.

Elena: I was sick tonight, it was terrible, nothing could calm me down, neither my husband nor my medication. I felt that everything was crumbling down, and that I was feeling that way because you were bringing all of my weak spots to the light. I thought that I should no longer come here. I felt like I was splintering in a thousand pieces. . . . I dreamed that I lost my bag, with my ID card, the keys to the house, the keys to the bike, the cell phone. Then in my dream I thought that I would get a new ID card, new keys, and that I could buy a new phone: but then the dream started all over, time and again, repeatedly. Saturday morning I heard about the Paris attacks. A terrible night, I was so sick, but it can't just be the massacre because my husband did not feel like I was feeling, and he told me that since the accident he had, he's been feeling more uncertain, but that it's a condition of the human being. . . . I thought that maybe now people can understand what my parents felt when they had to flee into the night from the barbarians that were chasing after them.

I: Tonight you felt, and you're still feeling now, under siege.

Elena: Right, under siege, continuously: I'm feeling better now, but they achieved their goal, I'm terrified. I don't want to live here any longer. I thought that now at any rate I'm a number.

I: Maybe you're trying to convey to me a dramatic position in which you feel either under siege and the target of an attack, or you feel just a number.

Elena: True, feeling you're a number isn't nice. . . .

I: In your dream you lost everything, your identity, the means to move, to feel at home, to communicate: on the other hand, you tried to tell yourself, in the dream itself, that there must be a way to gain or regain all of that.

Elena talks about Paris some more. As I am listening to her, I think that I know those places well and that the patient knows them, too. I think of the losses suffered by her parents, of their flight in the night, the dread of not being able to save themselves. And I think last about everything that Elena did not get in the first moments of her life.

I just tell her: "I was thinking that you know those places and lived there."

Elena replies, "I did not look them up on a map."

The following session she begins by telling me of a dream she had:

Elena: I dreamed about two sisters who had an appointment at the park, and they tell me, "No, we have no appointment": they leave me out. . . . Coming here I was thinking that you feel hatred or bored indifference toward me. Either I seduce you sexually or intellectually, or I think that we're just working.

I: Two sisters that kill you.

Elena: Same old, same old! My older sister didn't want anybody else to touch me: I called her "mom" first. They quarreled about who got to hold me in their arms. However, with my mother's things that I and my sister fought over a few months ago, something new surfaced. And my mother wanted to kill me with an abortion. Apparently, I still haven't forgiven her. I remember my sister as she was leaning out of the window and she was keeping a grip just with her hands, and all of her body was leaning out. I remember it well, she was 12 and I was 7. It must have disturbed me, it's a terrible image. . . . John Kerry and Hollande can't do it. It's too dire a situation.

I: You can't trust me. The other night you were feeling like I couldn't help you.
Elena: I felt like I was melting. It's true, my trust collapsed.
I: I can't hold you.
Elena: I can't burden you with this responsibility. I felt like I was hanging, then yesterday things went better. I felt hanging like that woman at the window in Paris.
I: They saved her.
Elena: Yes.
I: She was pregnant.
Elena: Wow!
I: Talking about children who fall down or might fall down.
Elena: And about mothers who save children.
I: There is a father too in this case.

A collapse and a thousand fragments. A dream repeats and repeats and repeats during the same night, highlighting the loss of her relation with herself and of her relation with space and time: likewise, she realizes that she never had a place to return to or the capacity to perform psychic movements. In the dream, she stages an impossible task: she was forced to think that, alone, she could build something psychic that can instead only be born thanks to a relation. Then there is the abortion, not the one merely "mentioned," but the one experienced in the weekend, by night, in some way in relation with me and later relived in the session when she identifies with the sister leaning out of the window and with the woman hanging from the window. In these three sessions, I become, in transference, the person who makes her fall down. When I choose to communicate to her that the woman was pregnant, I had in my mind Elena's double identification: with her mother, who was "hanging," too, and with herself in her mother's womb, under danger of a concrete abortion, undoubtedly the object of a psychic abortion.

PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL FAILURES AND THEIR TRANSFORMATIONS

Reacting to these two impossible tasks, being born and achieving a psyche, Elena alternately walked two paths. She laid herself "under siege" in

order to be integrated. That is, faced with repeated traumatic impacts through which the environment forces a person out of the quiet state of going on being, impacts that force one to build defensive organizations to protect one's most intimate nucleus—that will survive only and exclusively in a potential state—the infant, or Elena in this case, will be able to feel integrated only in response to aggressions and impacts coming from outside. It is as if, in a dissociate state of the individual, some kind of suspended wait for better times was created, times in which the most intimate nucleus of the person will be able to take or retake life (Winnicott 1952).

The other path is no less dramatic: that of reducing oneself to a number, like assembly line workers in some places or prisoners in a concentration camp. It is the path that leads one to keep immobilized and frozen in one's own internal world. It's the path of lacking personalization and of the loss of relation with what could be called the Self or potential Self.

It is, above all, what prods her to perform an extreme act: to cancel herself, thinking what she thinks the other thinks and acting accordingly. There is a constant assumption of thoughts that do not belong to her and that do not arise authentically from her and from the experience of her psyche-soma, a continuous vanishing of the self.

In conclusion, I will just touch upon some of the forms that a not-good-enough primary environment might take.

The environment might be lacking in the functions of holding, handling, and object presenting, turning out to be unpredictable, fickle, full of misunderstanding, and enacting rejections.[15] According to Winnicott, this is a precocious trauma: a pressure or an impact that forces the child to activate a reaction and to organize a complex and sophisticated system of defenses to face the primitive anxieties,

[15] Integration is a slow and strenuous conquest, involving the mother's psyche and body. The child's body requires the encounter with a mature psyche-soma, able to perform the tasks of holding, handling, and object-presenting (Winnicott 1960a). Discovering external reality requires an object that can tolerate not being seen, that can tolerate being squeezed and discarded like "orange peel" (Winnicott 1947, p. 201). From the failure and the "impossibility" of these complex functions do unthinkable anxieties become actually experienced realities (Winnicott 1960a, 1962).

chaos, and the threat of annihilation.[16] The baby builds a false Self to protect his true Self and effects a sort of self-holding, acting in lieu of the primary environment.

The latter not only can prevent the construction of psychic functions but also can transmit its powerlessness to connect, to bond, to transform, to facilitate transitions, to create spaces: it will thus perpetuate its inability to feel and to work through and, above all, a "tendency" to destroy and to attack the bond, instead of generating meaningful psychic experiences for the Self.

Finally, the primary environment can overflow and invade, that is, it can overwrite, the mind of the child, implanting ego-alien factors (Winnicott 1969). The point here is not simply the contact of the child with a depressed mother. The impossible task that the environment imposes on the child, the impacts that can prevent or seriously hinder the evolution of the human being, is caused by the exploitation and the unconscious demand that the child (with his psychic nucleuses that should become a psyche and that are in an unintegrated state) perform a psychic effort of working through and of transformation that the mind of the parent was unable to perform. The right of the child to develop according to his rhythm, to his needs, and later to his desires is thus usurped.

"Cannot-be" and "should-not-be" are two distinct and convergent psychic functionings. The state of "cannot-be" is the consequence of the catastrophes that originated from the encounter of the child with the traumatic primary environment. We were not present when the catastrophe happened, again and again over time (Khan 1963), but we can see the rubble that was left and that has been used to build new, inevitably shaky, and unstable buildings. The individual can manage to organize a sophisticated defense system of false Self and/or can be successful in functioning like a mental prosthesis for a parent, kind of like an external hard drive. And the individual can be very good at this task. But he is living a life that does not

[16] "[. . .] what we see very clearly is an *organisation towards invulnerability*. . . . What is common to all cases is this, that the baby, child, adolescent or adult *must never again experience* the unthinkable anxiety that is at the root of schizoid illness. This unthinkable anxiety was experienced initially in a moment of failure of reliability on the part of the environmental provision when the immature personality was at the stage of absolute dependence" (Winnicott 1967a, p. 198).

belong to him, that leaves the individual empty and two-dimensional, submerged in the concreteness of living and in the impossibility to perform a psychic movement. What we see is a shadow more than a human being.

The places of the mind are never lost. For this reason, in these instances, the risk of sinking again in unthinkable anxieties is ever present (Winnicott 1963c): the person remains "*always preoccupied with the threat of it* [the mental breakdown]", as Winnicott writes in the epigraph. It is here that the person, in my opinion, moves under the force of the "should-not-be." Being, then, is not just impossible because of psychic functions that the primary relation did not allow to develop. Being, in certain instances, implies a risk for one's own life. The person moving from the shell toward the center risks reactivating the unthinkable anxieties from which the primary environment was unable to protect him, anxieties that were registered and not experienced because of the immaturity of the Ego.

Can we afford, from a technical point of view, not to approach or to touch the threat of these unthinkable anxieties? Can we afford to believe that strengthening the Ego of the patient will be enough to prevent a further collapse? We make do, and we respect our limits and those of our patients. Nevertheless, I think that it is necessary to accommodate within our mind the annoying and upsetting idea that the patient and the analytic couple can find the strength to explore, soothe, and heal that constant threat. Knowing fully well that the point is not just "to talk about it" but to start from a common experience, analyst and patient must "live an experience together" (Winnicott 1945, p. 152).[17]

There is an apparently puzzling—but in my opinion striking—quote from Winnicott, who claims that "changes come in an analysis when the traumatic factors enter the psycho-analytic material in the patient's own way, and within the patient's omnipotence" (1960a, p. 37). This can happen following a mistake of the analyst, such as when, for instance, the analyst falls asleep for a few minutes. Winnicott's idea is that at that time, the patient can thaw the anger that in the first months of life, he or she could not feel toward the traumatic environment.

[17] "[. . .] the patient's unconscious leads and is alone to be pursued. In dealing with a regressive tendency the analyst must be prepared to follow the patient's unconscious process if he is not to issue a directive and so step outside the analyst's role" (Winnicott 1955, p. 297).

I think that the developmental potential of the patient's reaction to the analyst's mistake is crucial, but in my opinion, it is more than a simple question of anger, because more complex dynamics are involved.

I think that besides the need to place the trauma in the area of one's omnipotence, another fundamental process has to happen. That is, *the analyst has to let himself be placed in the patient's area of omnipotence*, gradually becoming a subjective object for the patient. Here, of course, not necessarily in the presence of erotic transference, a virtuous circle can be started in which the analyst contributes to enable the patient to "create" and to experience him as a subjective object, an experience that is the foundation for being and for creative being, and that will in turn begin to feed the capacity for illusion.

This paradox can come as a bit of a surprise: the spontaneous gesture of the real Self is what arises from the most private potential nucleus of the human being, the most "*isolate, permanently non-communicating, permanently unknown, in fact unfound*" (Winnicott 1963b, p. 187). Yet that gesture becomes creative if and only if there is an analyst to make it so.

Elena allowed herself, in the days immediately after my interpretation on her environment, to slip into short episodes of regression, exposing herself to anxieties that quietly and covertly threatened her whole life.[18] This was her way and our way to approach, explore, begin to create a shared experience, and at the same time to portray those primitive anxieties that Winnicott finds in the sensation of splintering and falling forever.

The alternative is spending one's whole life trying to avoid the alienating feeling of not being, of being something other than oneself, or of being something that belongs to others. Alternatively, one can spend a whole life trying not to be.

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[18] "The reason why relief is not obtained by the patient is that the patient has a stake in remembering the madness which has been experienced. . . . In other words madness that has to be remembered can only be remembered in the reliving of it" (Winnicott 1965a, 125).

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METAPSYCHOLOGY AND CLINICAL ASPECTS OF TRANSFERENCE-FRIENDSHIP

BY LUIS KANCYPER

In this text, the author points out that the notion of friendship plays an important role in the analytic process. It introduces another type of transference in the intersubjective, dynamic field—transference-friendship—as a counterpoint to the idea of transference-love (Freud 1915).

Transference-friendship is positive, sublimated transference that fosters the therapeutic alliance. It is expressed in the dynamics of the analytic field within a comfortable, tender, relaxed, and, at the same time, profound affective atmosphere in which both analyst and analysand are immersed in frank intimacy while at the same time preserving the functional asymmetry of the analytic process.

Keywords: Transference, transference-friendship, transference-love, analytic field, narcissistic self-images, exogamy, analytic process.

In times such as these, characterized, on the one hand, by speed, immediacy, technology, and disappointment and, on the other, by the escape from intimacy and affects, we should ask ourselves about the efficacy of our theoretical models and reconsider whether the metapsychology we currently employ can account for the impact of the social determinants and the changes in the ideals present in the new forms of subjectivity.

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"Metapsychology," a term created by Freud in order to describe the psychology that he had founded, represents—when considered in its theoretical dimension—the most fertile realm in which clinical problems can be considered. It feeds on theoretical elements as well as on clinical practice.

Therefore, how can we reconsider and rework the new manifestations of clinical practice and the new occurrences in the interior of the theoretical corpus? The "witch metapsychology" needs to be permanently re-created because it essentially constitutes the after-writing (*Nacherzählung*) of phenomena observed in clinical practice. Metapsychology and clinical work are essential and, at the same time, different and complementary because clinical practice "fumbles around," as it were, without metapsychology, whereas metapsychology without clinical work becomes shallow.

In the clinical case I'll now present, I went deep into the mazes of Agustín's psyche in order to reach his anxiety, his symptoms, and his inhibitions, trying to approach them from the two dimensions that inevitably coexist within the human soul—the intrapsychic and the intersubjective—while I pointed out their respective differences, tensions, articulations, and overlapping.

I was greatly amazed by this analysand's discourse, which awoke in me the need to create new clinical and metapsychological terms that, by way of conceptual scaffoldings, might allow me to explain the direction of the cure.

As a consequence of all that was unprecedented and unusual in the therapeutic process with Agustín, the following subjects sprang up:

a) "Transference-friendship" in order to discriminate it from transference-love as well as from the oedipal, narcissistic, and fraternal transferences that generally appear during an analytic process.
b) "Narcissistic self-images": their manifestations and transformations that command the psychic construction of intimacy.
c) The importance of "friendship, a chosen brotherhood" (Kancyper 2014), a scarcely studied issue in psychoanalysis that constitutes another significant clinical instrument with which to examine the effects of a nonintimidating intimacy in the intrapsychic and intersubjective dimensions: "You shall love your friend-neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).

In the analytic process, friendship plays an important role in exploring and understanding profound psychic changes. By means of *après coup* (resignification), it allows the analyst innovative forms of analytic listening and gives new retroactive meaning to the construction of the pair enemy–friend and the dynamics of the narcissistic, oedipal, and fraternal structures that underlie the psychic reality of all subjects throughout the stages of their lives.

Before presenting Agustín, I would like to stress that I fully agree with the Freudian conception of the Oedipus complex as the essential, genuine complex of neurosis that plays a crucial role in the structuring of personality and the orientation of human desire. However, we should not put the crucial and genuine on the same level as the exclusive and unique. Indeed, we should not disregard the presence of other psychic mechanisms that have their own logic and establish boundaries between other psychic dynamics connected to the mythical structures of Narcissus-Echo, Cain-Abel, and Gilgamesh-Enkidú.

Of course, boundaries are needed to infer the existence of these different psychic mechanisms that should not be reduced to Narcissus and Oedipus; in addition, they dynamically interact with, and complement, each other in the different strata of mental life. From the negative perspective, boundaries are limitations, but from the positive viewpoint, they suggest that there is something more intimate, intricate, multiple, and multiplying that generates new meanings that, in turn, contribute to the elucidation of the psychic complexity that commands the fascinating mystery of man.

In other words, the interrelated effects of these coexistent boundaries between oedipal, narcissistic, fraternal, and "amicable" dynamics not only appear in psychoanalytic practice but also have an enduring influence—both structuring and destructuring—on mass psychology, which in turn becomes exteriorized in the alternation of sadomasochistic and caring relationships between religions and between nations.

AGUSTÍN

How complicated psychic changes are! They make progress through hesitant steps, like those of a baby. Agustín, forty-three at the time of consultation, made

this remark. He had come to see me due to intense anxiety, expressed in a depressive state that had been unchained (at a manifest level) by a very stormy relationship with his wife, in addition to constant difficulties at work, which he was unable to work out.

He began treatment five years ago with a frequency of three sessions per week. From the very beginning, he put me in the place of his parents, with regard to whom he had always felt he wasn't "up to their standards." Agustín had unconsciously transferred this situation to his wife, Paula, who was forty and the mother of his three daughters.

At times, I played the role of a cruel, querulous father and at others that of a dissatisfied, controlling mother.

Being "up to a standard" operated in the analysand as such a disproportionate and unattainable ideal that he remained trapped in a compulsive mesh of intrasubjective and intersubjective pathological comparisons.

However, during the second year of his analytic process, a new kind of transference gradually began to appear—one that was different from oedipal, fraternal, and narcissistic transferences—characterized by a comfortable, relaxed, and intimate affective atmosphere. Slowly, the oedipal figures were being replaced by other figures, his friends, with whom he had developed loyal and happy relationships since childhood. Agustín painfully expressed the splitting between his two mental aspects: with his friends he shared a pleasurable world, while with his wife the relationship was as strained and stormy as the one he had suffered at home with his parents. With regard to his wife, whom he invested with authoritarian traits, he placed himself as a devaluated object, constantly put to the test. Always threatened by the anxiety of abandonment, he felt that with his wife he needed to ratify his identity as a man. In contrast, with his friends he recovered human shape.

I will now quote four different fragments of our sessions, where, as will be seen, transference-friendship and oedipal transferences were recreated in his relationship with others.

RECOVERING SHAPE

P.: *I live in two different worlds: in one I live with my parents, in the other with my friends. With my parents I feel I am being judged, but not with my friends. I admit*

that I've always had trouble with hierarchy. I remember that at school, if the teacher was kind I was the best student, but if the teacher was harsh I found it more difficult to study, but I worked very hard until I made it to the top of the class. I have always overexerted myself. I could not forgive myself if I wasn't "up to the standards." I think that forgiveness is a relief. When we forgive the steam gets out from the pressure cooker, and pressure falls. But I have always found it hard to ask for forgiveness. I think it was pride, because it would mean that I was wrong about something, and, for me, that means that I'm not up to the standard, that I'm not the best. Like a kind of fall from the place of a god, because when you can forgive yourself you understand that you are not ideal, you are not divine. The thing is I can't forgive myself. I can't accept my own weaknesses and the fact that I am a coward in many respects.

If I could forgive myself, I wouldn't tell myself, "You're a moron," and I wouldn't start looking for the reason. But I get very easily offended. I get tense and then I end up blaming others. I think that this is connected to my mother's harsh words and look of hatred, which bore into my mind. I still collapse when she begins with her cataracts of complaints and reproaches. By collapse I mean that she is so severe and insists so much that suddenly I'm bewildered and frightened. I feel that I melt down.

I tell him that if she leaves him like that, then he feels that he is losing his own consistence and, therefore, his shape.

P.: *Yes, there's no doubt about that. Perhaps that's why I'm tense and on the defensive before I see her, but when I see my friends I relax, I recover my shape with them. I remember my mum used to call my dad "deadbeat," and when I'm with Paula I melt. With her I'm as soft as butter. On the outside I pretend, but inside I lose my consistence. I feel hollow like a chocolate pie with meringue, and I hate meringue; it makes me retch.*

A CONSTANT TEST

P.: *With friends things are like an open book. There is no need to pretend or to hide. With a friend, there is no need to be someone else and one doesn't need to be "up to" anything. There is no fear of disappointing. I'm not interested in knowing how my friends see me. Each has his own history and his own life. I feel that a friend is there to help me at difficult times, which is precisely what I lack in the relationship with my wife and my parents. When I'm with my wife, I tend to wipe out some of my*

aspects. I'm less spontaneous. I feel that she is like a permanent test for me. Being with her is like a constant test, and I feel I must always be "up to her expectations." She asks a lot of herself and of others; she doesn't allow herself any weaknesses. But with a friend your own weaknesses can even be taken with humor, and at other times, they can even redeem you. With friends no one imposes any expectations; no one puts others under pressure. A friend doesn't put pressure on: he shares; he's there for you. With my friends we share a good time; the things we discuss turn up naturally, and the way of treating them is nice and amusing. Being with them is to look at things with a sense of humor.

In another session he remarks:

P.: *My friends take away the pressure of my "internal critic." Friends make things less dramatic; they give you a reality bath but with humor. But my wife is possessive; she only wants me to take care of her problems, and she tries to isolate me from them. When I'm with my friends and not with her, I feel guilty. She is always comparing herself in exaggerated terms; for example, she doesn't say, "I like strawberries," but "I adore," "brilliant," "extraordinary." And if I want to be loved by her, I also have to be extraordinary, brilliant, and fantastic. With her I live in a constant exam situation but not with my friends. With them it's just the reverse. I share values with them, a sense of humor, and if things aren't so good, it doesn't matter. With them the good thing is to be human, but with my wife being a human being is not enough, what I am is never enough. I have to be a Superman.*

VALIDATING MY IDENTITY

P.: *For me, being with a friend is relaxed; there is no prejudice, no pressure. I remember when I was a teenager I felt my mother was so controlling I found her oppressive. It felt as if I was in a gold cage. Inside there was a bit of everything and too much. I remember I "froze" when she started abusing my father. I got cut off from her, but in the inside I was tense, losing my own shape. That's how I put distance from what she was telling me. I only seemed to be listening, because within I was cold and distant. I couldn't confront her because I was scared that her look full of pure hatred and her threatening words would strike me down.*

The other way I found of avoiding my mother was to study hard and be very nice. When I wouldn't reply to her, I was sort of under anesthesia because I was afraid I might explode. I feel like a coward because I have never confronted her.

Instead of exploding I implode and I'm frequently ill. When I'm with her I feel inadequate and as if I'm being judged. And with my wife almost the same things happen to me. Also with her, I feel I need to validate my identity. I am sick of being always in the same situation. It seems that I have spent my entire life stuck to a magnet, and then I just move on to the next magnet, which is almost the same.

In these clinical fragments we can appreciate that between Agustín and his friends there exists what Goethe (2000) has termed *Wahlverwandtschaft*, a reciprocal elective affinity in which a multitude of factors converge, a complementary group of affects and representations: nonpossessive compassion, tenderness, admiration, happiness, humor, generosity, trust, tolerance, loyalty, bonhomie, and respect for otherness; but all this does not mean that the affective ambivalence between love and hate and the element of power that inevitably appear in all human relationships are disregarded.

To put it in the words of the poet Arturo Serrano Plaja: "By friendship I mean rest, welcoming shelter, hostelry, *burladero*." In bullfighting, the *burladero* is a screen placed in front of the *barrera* (wooden barrier or fence surrounding the bullring), providing matadors (killer of bulls) a shelter from the bull. In the same sense, friendship acts as shelter and provides rest when the external and internal realities charge at the individual. In addition, friendship represents a powerful antidote to fanaticism.

The splitting between the psychic functioning that prevailed in the relationship between Agustín and his friends, and the other, so contrasting, that characterized his relationship with his wife and his parents, in which his unconscious fixation points became compulsively resignified, are eloquent in the clinical fragments seen above. Although these traumatic situations, characterized by endogamy, became rearranged in the transference, it became increasingly evident that he had invested me with the role of a friend, thus configuring an analytic situation that I have termed "transference-friendship."

TRANSFERENCE-FRIENDSHIP

We should bear in mind that Freud (1914b) suggests:

> The main instrument, however, for curbing the patient's compulsion to repeat and for turning it into a motive for remembering

> lies in the handling of the transference. We render the compulsion harmless, and indeed useful, by giving it the right to assert itself in a definite field. We admit it into the transference as a playground in which it is allowed to expand in almost complete freedom and in which it is expected to display to us everything in the way of pathogenic instincts that is hidden in the patient's mind.
>
> . . .
>
> From the repetitive reactions which are exhibited in the transference we are led along the familiar paths to the awakening of the memories, which appear without difficulty, as it were, after the resistance has been overcome. [pp. 153-154]

Agustín happily comes into the office and, before lying down on the couch, he surprises me with an unusual question: "How old are you, Doctor?" and without waiting for my reply he heads for the couch and, on making himself comfortable, says:

P.: *I have always found it hard to find the courage to do things. I thought that the gaze of the other would put me down. Today when I came in, I looked at you and it came quite spontaneously to ask you about your age. At another time I would have beaten about the bush, to avoid hurting you, because I wouldn't want you to think that I was being indiscreet. I always used to justify my questions. Before coming to my sessions, I used to feel anxious about being surprised by you with something unexpected.*

I ask him if his anxiety about the unexpected might have some connection with the issue of shame, which had appeared at the end of the previous session.

P.: *Yes, I have always been bashful and shy. I was very susceptible to mockery at school. In general I got on well with my friends, but when I was ten years old they sent me to England by myself to study. That was very hard for me. There were a few French students, and the English students used to make fun of us saying we were frogs, because the French eat frogs. I felt that I was alone and that I couldn't stand up to them. I didn't master the English language and they made fun of me.*

I'm lucky I escaped harsh treatment; otherwise, it would have been very difficult to bear. And the truth is that this issue surprises me because I have always kept shame well hidden, and I don't know where it comes from. I don't know what the mechanism of shame is. Probably, the image one has of oneself; I think that feeling

ashamed is connected to the fact that I've been my mother's favorite. And then shame makes me shy when I am around girls, because when I was with my friends I wasn't so shy. I think that shame is also connected with fears. Fear takes up a massive amount of my energy, and part of my energy is there because I was my mother's unmerited favorite.

I ask him why he says "unmerited."

P.: *I say that because my father should have been my mother's favorite, but he wasn't. I remember when someone said I was my mother's favorite I blushed, I felt so ashamed.*

I point out to him that shame operated to prevent the revelation of the secret and the pact that had been established between him and his mother.

P.: *Although every child wishes to be his mother's favorite, I was deeply affected by all that. I was ashamed when I was with my father, with my brother, and in life in general. I think that is why I thought I had an ideal in everything, and I thought that everything would be favorable to me, that everything would come easily to me and that's why I suffered so much when things didn't turn out the way I wanted.*

I think that this is also the drama of my eldest daughter, who is afraid of letting her mother down. That's why I was always afraid of saying "no."

I ask him what would then be the danger of saying "no."

P.: *Because people could be disappointed in me. Saying "no" is breaking up a sort of bond of seduction, or an ideal. The worst shame was the one I was feeling inside, because it didn't show when I was with others; I could conceal it well.*

I ask him, going back to the beginning of the session, why he wants to know my age now.

P.: *I don't know. I asked because in a way I feel more and more close to you, more open. Something similar to what happens to me with my friends.*

I ask him to tell me how old he thinks I am.

P.: *I think that you are . . . between forty-five and forty-eight years old.*

This reply surprised me and left me greatly perplexed. After a brief pause I asked him his own age.

P.: *I turned forty-three not long ago. I wouldn't have liked to have analysis with an older person.*

I then ask him what he means by older, older than what?

P.: *Well . . . from sixty upward.*

I ask him why.

P.: *I don't know. I think that it would be putting myself in an uncomfortable situation of inferiority to talk about my stuff with an older person.*

Then I reply in a convincing tone that he cannot continue his analysis with me, that we would have to interrupt.

Startled, he asks me in an imperative, albeit frightened, tone of voice:

P.: *Why are you telling me this?*

I reply that I have long since turned sixty.

P.: *No, it can't be.*

And we both loudly burst with laughter. He turns his head to look at me, and he blushes down to the neck. He stops looking at me, covers his face with both hands, and reflects full of surprise:

> *The truth is, I was very surprised by the fact that you told me something intimate, but in addition (he starts laughing again) I realize I am lousy at guessing at people's age. I'm impressed by the difference between your real age and the one I had imagined.*

He puts his hand over his forehead, as if he wanted to protect his eyes from too strong a light (pause).

I say that he seems to give me a more horizontal age: I'm forty-six or forty-eight and he is forty-three, as if we were friends from the same generation . . . (he interrupts).

P.: *But I don't dare ask my dad any intimate questions. When I ask him something, it's always superficial, and he isn't clear in his replies either. My father has this mystique with the family history. You can't ask him anything. You can't talk with him about sex or his forefathers. He never spoke to me about his childhood and his youth, as if he'd never been a child. He sort of rubbed out his family, but his brother is the exact opposite. My uncle is looking into the genealogy of the family, and I have recently started looking up the origins of my name on the Internet.*

NARCISSISTIC SELF-IMAGES

> Every man is a disciple of his own narcissistic self-images.
> *L. K.*

Narcissistic self-images figuratively represent the individual's sense of his own dignity (*Selbstgefühl*). They operate as starting points from which the

subject establishes relationships with himself, with others, and with external reality. They are constant references that play a role, a posteriori, in the structuring and destructuring of the subject's singularity.

These images linger way beyond the individual's will; paradoxically, the subject remains spinning round his own self-images as if he were attached to a big wheel, because narcissistic self-images are unknown, essential, and singular for each subject. Unknown, because they are formed by a multiplicity of unconscious processes, the dynamic aspects of which remain unknown. Essential, because they structure the psychic apparatus. Singular, because they include the particular history of each subject, who then assimilates self-images and transforms himself, fully or in part, based on their model. In other words, the subject identifies with these images; he *becomes* these images.

Narcissistic self-images are representations-crossroads that satisfy the Ego's need to find and organize coherent, convergent representability and that reveal the profound structure of the unconscious psyche underlying the destiny of the individual and the nations.

In 1909, Freud quotes Goethe's *Faust*, part 1, scene 5: "For in the bloated rat he sees a living likeness of himself." And then he describes the rat man in these terms:

> The notion of a rat is inseparably bound up with the fact that it has sharp teeth with which it gnaws and bites. But rats cannot be sharp-toothed, greedy and dirty with impunity: they are cruelly persecuted and mercilessly put to death by man, as the patient had observed with horror. He had often pitied the poor creatures. But he himself had been just such a nasty, dirty little wretch, who was apt to bite people when he was in a rage, and had been fearfully punished for doing so. He could truly be said to find a living likeness of himself in the rat. [p. 216]

Therefore, in every analytic treatment the analysand's narcissistic self-images, and their fluctuations, should be disclosed and worked through. In other words, the unconscious processes that have played a part in their construction, as well as their core of historic truth, must be revealed. They have an overwhelming etiological significance for the mental life of all individuals, but when they hold a negative connotation, they "may attack the nutritional conditions of the mental apparatus and compel it

to reduce its functioning and to bring to a halt its more delicate workings, one of which is the maintenance of the ego organization" (Freud 1926, p. 241). However, when positive narcissistic self-perceptions predominate over the negative ones, the individual's sense of dignity increases, which has positive effects on his life.

These are key images because they allow us to work out some of the mental processes that command the psychic life of individuals. Due to their high psychic significance, they constitute the most important imaginary sceneries that identify each human being. In addition, they are images-detail because they reveal the individual's style, his deepest intimacy: the width of his structure, his substance and self-worth.

W. Benjamin practiced a passion for details. The originality of his work lies in his grasp of the truly significant in little and trivial matters. And in this sense, the analyst is ready to grasp the fleeting aspects of narcissistic self-images, which might appear banal, but which condense all that characterizes an individual, or even a certain group, in their intimate aspects.

These images are like an aura that irradiates luminosity all around. They are endowed with the capacity to gaze and to gaze into themselves. We might quote W. Benjamin here: "The one who is looked at or thinks that he is looked at opens his gaze. To experience the aura of a phenomenon means to invest the phenomenon with the faculty to open its gaze" (1936, p. 6).[1] Thus, when we notice the aura of narcissistic self-images, we shed light on what is underlying in the gloom of the unconscious, which exercises structuring and destructuring effects in the individual and in social psychology.

When the subject regards the wealth treasured in the narcissistic self-images' details, he is able to discover a silent universe that contains and expresses the most cryptic intimacy of his internal world. It is in this sense that, on being registered, narcissistic self-images name a multiplicity of unconscious psychic contents that organize scripts of wish fulfillment: traumas, identifications, fantasies, psychic beliefs, and repressed and split-off affects.

Narcissistic self-images also have a performative aspect. Words have material strength; they create things. By the mere fact of saying

[1]All translations are mine.

something, the action is performed. What is said will be done; what is said to have been done, is considered done. Exactly when "I say" is pronounced, it is the same as "I do." Agustín doesn't say, "I'm as soft as butter" or "I'm as hollow as a chocolate pie with meringue, and I hate meringue; it makes me retch," but rather he punishes himself with those figurative representations. Agustín unconsciously regards himself in that way, and his actions are performed with unlimited faith in those words, the material force of which immediately unchains facts or replaces them.

This is how the performative condition of speech is produced: the fact of doing things with words before referring to things in themselves.

By means of the transformation of the narcissistic self-images, when they are understood and interpreted, psychic change takes place in the subject, from which we are able to deduce the elements operating in his own unconscious, which in turn determines his psychic functioning and his destiny.

Narcissistic self-images start to exist in a psychoanalytic treatment when the analyst acknowledges them as such; when the previously unnamed, undated, unexplained self-image gains a determining etiological role in subsequent series of events and disorders. Therefore, narcissistic self-images are inseparable from the process of historicization because they are mute until they are given a voice:

"*nachträglich.*"

I feel that psychoanalysis can help individuals be freed from the bounds that stem from the enigmatic repetitive power of the logic of the unconscious. The reorganization of narcissistic self-images that this logic commands "behind the back" of the individual's will and reason allows him to give up the role of a mournful, passive observer, of a prisoner of a prefixated and repetitive destiny, in order to become the active and responsible author of his own biography in a process of interminable rewriting.

In the words of Miguel de Unamuno: "We should try to be the parents of our future rather than the offspring of our past" (2015, p. 2).

BUTTER

P.: *I was embittered by my wife's comparisons. I was too susceptible to her opinion, to the way she regarded me. I reacted in a bad way. I couldn't stand aloof, as I can now.*

I ask him if this situation reminds him of something else experienced at home with his parents.

P.: *Yes, I think this has always been a stigma for me. Except for the last years, when Dad did better in his business dealings. Before that my mum used to compare him to a deadbeat, someone who melts very easily. "You are like butter," she used to tell him. And she passed on to us her opinion that Dad was too soft, and this made my brother and me insecure. I've always feared to be made fun of, to be like butter. My wife continues to compare me with the ideal in her mind about how a man should be. For her, that man is a macho; he can handle things with calm authority. Besides, he must be unfriendly and intelligent, successful at work and at sports, one who crushes and snubs others. But she considers kindness as a failing, a weakness, as lack of personality. And now that I'm saying this I realize that I don't care so much what my wife says. I was very sensitive, and I also experienced that as being like butter. Soft is a word that always hurt when my mum said it to Dad. She also told him: "You are like a violet," like the one that doesn't know how to defend himself even if he is clever.*

I ask him if soft could also be connected to the hardness of the penis.

P.: *Yes, that as well, but it's not precisely my case. But I've always worried if others might think I was soft at an intellectual level. I guess that's why I've always excelled in my studies and in sports, and I even chose to do the military service, to convince myself and my wife that I wasn't soft at all.*

My mother has never expressed any admiration for my father, and I felt this was unfair on him; I felt all those expectations my mother and my father had about me. I was filled with all the responsibility of being the one who would bring honor to our family. I've always been very competitive. I wanted to show them that I was the best of all the cousins, the most successful at school and at sports. I've always felt that I had to give more, and more. I couldn't rest. The worst part is that I didn't find it very hard to be the best.

I think that I used my talents merely to show others that I was the cleverest, and in the end there was nothing left for me. Do you remember when in the first session I said that I was a CV but I didn't know what was inside, if there was anything at all? I envy, in the good sense, people who really enjoy what they do! A painter, a teacher, a psychoanalyst who enjoys his commitment to his profession.

I've always had this complex that I did a bit of everything but nothing was done in depth. I've always been afraid of being unmasked. I've always felt like a

hollow tree, afraid that my jelly-like interior might show. That's why I looked after my bark, so that my softness, my insecurity would go unnoticed.

And now that I'm talking about all this I feel better, more solid on the inside. The fears that led me to seduce women so as to feel accepted are also getting better. I think I disappointed my parents when I married a woman that wasn't up to their expectations.

I point out that he wasn't pleased with himself and that "butter" was like a meridian, like a soft Greenwich.

(He laughs)

P.: *I think that my meridian went through me and sliced me into two. The word "butter" was grade cero of my reference. Everything I did was with regard to the butter-Greenwich.*

I feel that *butter* is one of the figurative representations that reveal Agustín's sense of self. It constitutes one of his most significant narcissistic self-images, with which he secretly induces others to treat him. Thus Agustín encourages others to act as models, auxiliaries, or objects. In contrast, he induces his wife to act as a humiliating rival, and between them a persecutory field is created. This field is also commanded by his wife's own identifications and traumas, which haven't been adequately worked through and which are given new meaning when she compares him to others.

CHOCOLATE AND MERINGUE PIE

P.: *I have made an analogy between myself and a pie that my Belgian grandmother used to bake at home and which she called* tête du noir. *This is a pejorative term; it's like saying "little negro," and that's how I felt about myself. What I wanted to find inside that pie was solid chocolate with lots of butter, black chocolate, but what I found instead was white meringue. I find meringue disagreeable, intolerable, the noise it makes grates my nerves, like chalk on the blackboard. I was always looking for something solid inside me, but couldn't find it. Meringue is brittle; it breaks and nothing's left; it's dust.* Tête du noir *appears to be tasty, good; my CV is very good too: I have many university degrees, but deep down I despise myself.*

I feel that I had failures in my inner solidity. Apart from despising myself I didn't know where I was going; I didn't know who I was and what I liked. I've always had that doubt.

I say that I've noticed that he is using the verbs in the past.

P.: *Yes, I feel that this disdain belongs to the past. But now there are consequences. I see myself as another person. It's not that I've completely shed the other stuff; it's there but not so near. I no longer have the same fears, the same shame. Despising myself was something I imposed upon myself, but other things were imposed on me by others.*

I ask him what things.

P.: *That I'm obsessive, that I'm bossy. Also I'm very clever and very efficient. I'm the best of grandchildren, the best of children. I was the first grandchild for both of my grandfathers and the notion of being the heir, the first, was always there. Being compared with others was a burden; I always felt the pressure of having to be at the highest level.*

SEXUALITY AND MASTERY RELATIONSHIP IN THE ANALYTIC FIELD: TRANSFERENCE-FRIENDSHIP

> We refused most emphatically to turn a patient who puts himself into our hands in search of help into our private property, to decide his fate for him, to force our own ideals upon him, and with the pride of a Creator to form him in our own image and see that it is good. [Freud 1919, p. 164]

Green (1996) finds it remarkable that the clinical practice of the last few years is characterized by the absence of the sexual drive in clinical cases, where a change in paradigm appears to have taken place: it seems that object relations theory is preferred and that the tender and sensual aspects of the sexual drive, and the mastery relationships that appear as a rule in the analytic field with children, adolescents, and adults, are set aside and even ignored.

> Two reasons might explain this state of things. On the one hand, analysis is offered to more regressive patients than those neurotic, that is, non-neurotic structures (borderline cases, narcissistic personalities, pathological characters, depressions, psychosomatic disorders, and so on), where the aetiological role of sexuality has become less evident.
>
> In contrast, the disorders that can be referred to the Ego are a lot more manifest and have been fully studied. On the other hand,

> sexuality is less obvious because analysts, more or less unconsciously, take care to make its role less clear. In other words, even if sexuality is present in the clinical material, in fantasies, in dreams or in transference, the analyst plays down, and even ignores, these manifestations considering them as contingent or defensive. [pp. 672-673]

In consequence a "distracted" bulwark is created; sexuality and the power coming from the collusion of the analysand's resistances and the analyst's counter-resistances is ignored, as if both had agreed to disregard what's going on deep down, in the most intimate layers of mental life: the potentially traumatic character of human sexuality and the mastery relationships within the dynamics of transference-countertransference.

The categories we usually use to discriminate the different kinds of transference in the analytic situation (positive transference, negative transference, and erotic transference) are in fact only descriptive and are based on the nuances of love and hate. In contrast, the category I would like to describe is based on the intervening structures, where the narcissistic transference and countertransference become discriminated from fraternal transference and countertransference. In addition, I would also like to include friendship-transference-countertransference.

Friendship-transference, as a counterpoint to the notion of transference-love (Freud 1915), constitutes a sublimated kind of positive transference that encourages the therapeutic alliance. It manifests itself in the dynamics of the analytic field within a comfortable, tender, relaxed, and intense affective atmosphere (*Stimmung*). In fact, friendship-transference means that both the analyst and the analysand engage in a frank and profound relationship while at the same time maintaining the functional asymmetry of the analytic process.

In contrast, the affective bond characterizing transference-love has a compulsive, tense, and defiant nature, with fully sensual and hostile aspects that are incompatible with the analytic task, as they may lead the treatment to a dead end.

When transference-love predominates, the analysand experiences an unconscious relationship from his intimate history with a strong sensation of immediacy, instead of remembering it.

> The patient's love is not satisfied with being obedient; it grows exacting, calls for affectionate and sensual satisfactions, it demands exclusiveness, it develops jealousy, and it shows more and more clearly its reverse side, its readiness to become hostile and revengeful if it cannot obtain its ends. At the same time, like all falling in love, it drives away all other mental material; it extinguishes interest in the treatment and in recovery—in short, there can be no doubt that it has taken the place of the neurosis and that our work has had the result of driving out one form of illness with another. [Freud 1926, pp. 224-225]

While in general the analysand has experienced the archetype of transference-love during childhood with one of his parents, in friendship-transference what becomes reestablished are old exogamic relationships with friends and companions from childhood and adolescence, with positive and negative connotations, which pave the way for the historicization of the analysand's childish and adolescent aspects connected to friendship (affects and representations).

Brun (2003) emphasizes the passionate nature of childhood friendships and their effects, which have gained new meaning, in intersubjective relationships throughout life, including the individual's relationship with the analyst.

The search, and need, for a friend, transferred onto the figure of the analyst, is based on the encounter with an exogamic other, a dependable and complementary "stranger" in a relationship in which both members are committed. The friend plays the role of an allied double, which is in stark contrast to the tragic logic commanded, in turn, by an uncanny double underlying the dynamics of the narcissistic, fraternal, and oedipal struggle, in which the other is considered to be an enemy, and hence fratricides, filicides, and parricides are committed. These crimes have all been described since the dawn of humanity.

The friend, in conscious and unconscious contrast with the sibling, with regard to whom infantile rivalries live on, does not want to homologate the other based on his own self-image, but rather confidently welcomes him as a "stranger." The presence of a friend reveals, all things considered, the irreducibility of otherness and, paraphrasing Freud, we could say that the friend succeeds where the paranoid fails.

We should also point out that in the analytic situation the analyst invested in as a friend will become, in the successive phases of treatment, a reliable and loyal presence, who can survive the imaginary destruction to which love and hate and the mastery drive subject him within the dynamics of transference-countertransference in the analytic field.

Therefore, we shouldn't neglect the heuristic value of the concept of friendship-transference in the analysis, which is characterized by "the active task, carried out by the analysand, of cooperating with the analyst: the effort of being as sincere as possible, of listening to the analyst and telling him yes and no, of letting himself move on and move back" (Baranger, Baranger & Mom 1982).

Indeed, transference-friendship is a particular clinical sign evidenced by an atmosphere of deep intimacy, trust, and frankness in the dynamic field. As a result, certain desires that had been repressed or split off because they caused pain, guilt, or shame are now made conscious.

The fluctuating dynamics of transference-friendship usually signals the adventure of accessing the most intimate roots of certain aspects of the patient that allow him to become involved with the responsibility of telling the truth. This is a specific moment when parrhesia appears with courage and frankness.

Foucault (2010) traced back this term, *parrhesia*, to Greek–Roman literature and philosophy, also the position of a subject, the *Parrhesiastes*, the speaker who has a specific relation to truth through frankness, the effect of which is criticism and self-criticism, and the cost of some personal risk. This term comes from the Greek *pan rhema*, and literally means "to say it all," by extension, to speak freely, to speak boldly and with frankness without reckoning the danger.[2]

[2] Foucault's (2010) concept of parrhesia is based on the individual's confrontation with telling the truth in the intrasubjective and the intersubjective dimensions and could be summarized as follows:

> More precisely, parrhesia is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In parrhesia, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy. [pp. 19-20]

Parrhesia (translated into Romance languages as "speaking frankly" and into the Latin as *libertas*) is the exact opposite of flattery, in the sense that the one who talks freely and boldly to another can also establish a relationship with himself that is independent and satisfactory.

The game of parrhesia is closely linked to courage: "So, in two words, parrhêsia is the courage of the truth in the person who speaks and who, regardless of everything, takes the risk of telling the whole truth that he thinks, but it is also the interlocutor's courage in agreeing to accept the hurtful truth that he hears" (Foucault 2010, pp. 32-33). The practice of parrhesia runs contrary to the art of rhetoric.

I believe that transference-friendship, with its oscillations, reveals that the intricate interplay between the analysand's resistances and the analyst's counter-resistances, which hinder the free, committed, and brave search for self-knowledge, has come to an end, encouraging an increased psychoanalytic empathy (Bolognini 2004).

We should bear in mind what Freud pointed out with regard to the power of resistances in the dynamics of the analytic situation, as well as the importance of their thorough analysis and working through. In his well-known text "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through" (1914b), he points out:

> One must allow the patient time to become more conversant with this resistance with which he has now become acquainted to work through it, to overcome it, by continuing, in defiance of it, the analytic work according to the fundamental rule of analysis. Only when the resistance is at its height can the analyst, working in common with his patient, discover the repressed instinctual impulses which are feeding the resistance; and it is this kind of experience which convinces the patient of the existence and power of such impulses. [p. 154]

Freud emphasizes that "the working-through of the resistances is a part of the work which effects the greatest changes in the patient and which distinguishes analytic treatment from any kind of treatment suggestion" (p. 155). However, if the analysand's resistances are to be thoroughly, patiently, and profoundly worked through in the analytic situation, the analyst himself, with help from a second glance (Baranger

1992), needs to embark on a mental task that involves noticing, accepting, and solving his own counter-resistances.

In a subsequent text, *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926), Freud goes back to the power of resistances and the need to work them through if the analysand is to access the most profound layers of his psyche. He emphasizes that psychoanalysis, the "depth-psychology," a theory of the mental unconscious" (Freud 1926, pp. 247, 248), paves the way for the analysand to face his most cryptic intimacies: "We have to seek out the repressions which have been set up and to urge the ego to correct them with our help and to deal with conflicts better than by an attempt at flight" (Freud 1926, p. 204).

> Everyone is aware that there are some things in himself that he would be very unwilling to tell other people or that he considers it altogether out of the question to tell. These are his "intimacies." He has a notion too—and this represents a great advance in psychological self-knowledge—that there are other things that one would not care to admit to oneself: things that one likes to conceal from oneself and which for that reason one breaks off short and one drives out of one's thoughts if, in spite of everything, they turn up. Perhaps he may himself notice that a very remarkable psychological problem begins to appear in this situation—of a thought of his own being kept secret from his own self. It looks as though his own self were no longer the unity which he had always considered it to be, as though there were something else as well in him that could confront that self. He may become obscurely aware of a contrast between a self and a mental life in the wider self. If he now accepts the demand made by analysis that he shall say everything, he will easily become accessible to an expectation that to have relations and exchanges of thought with someone under such unusual conditions might also lead to peculiar results. [1926, p. 187]

In this detailed description of someone's "intimacies," we grasp the value of the "intrasubjective parrhesia" that will enable the analysand to examine the deepest layers of his psyche to confront the darkest, most alien aspects of his own self.

When the analysand confronts a limit, the inability to exercise *Bewältigung*, that is, a complete knowledge of, and control over, his own

intimacy, he is embarking on one of the most painful, albeit essential, operations of human development, in which ambivalence must be faced in order to overcome feelings of shyness, shame, guilt, and anxiety as well as all the inevitable frustrations that emerge as a consequence of losing narcissistic perfection, which at the beginning included all: "The development of the ego consists in a departure from primary narcissism and gives rise to a vigorous attempt to recover that state" (Freud 1914a, p. 100). These ever-present frustrations in intrasubjective mastery relationships can usually be revealed within the intersubjective field when there is an easy *Stimmung* between the members of the analytic couple, a singular affective atmosphere: free-flowing, transparent, frank, profound, all the traits inherent to the presence of friendship-transference in the analytic process.

THE ANALYTIC FIELD AND THE AFFECTIVE ATMOSPHERE WITHIN THE ANALYTIC SITUATION

Transference-friendship is a type of sublimated positive transference, a particular moment when the subject is able to plunge "downwards, inwards, into deeper and deeper depths," to say it in Nietzsche's (2011, p. 59) words. This is an eloquent expression of the dynamic field of intersubjectivity, which is presided over by a basic unconscious fantasy that determines, in turn, a singular affective atmosphere within the analytic situation.

This basic unconscious fantasy of shared and dependable complementariness and loyalty that is present in transference-friendship is an autonomous intersubjective structure that originates quite unconsciously and independently from the will of the participants in the field. In addition, it produces its own unpredictable effects on each of the participants, a situation that awakens hard to define feelings of restlessness and astonishment in the Ego and his illusory autocratic power.

The structuring and destructuring effects of this unconscious basic fantasy that operates as a third object in the dynamics of intersubjectivity burst into "the dwelling of the spirit where reason, as the master, resides,

when astonishment turns reason into a guest" (Derrida 2008, p. 40) and rule the lives and the future of the subjects.

This fantasy emerges within the analytic process created by the field situation and events follow through it (Baranger 1992). It is not the consequence of unconscious communication, nor of a mechanical interweaving of projective and introjective identifications; rather, it is the condition of these identifications. The basic unconscious fantasy—and the affective atmosphere of the transference-friendship, characterized by the profound search of the cryptic strata of mental life—is an original production; it originates in the field and its dynamics are structured through it. It includes important aspects of each of the members' personal history, and each assumes a stereotyped imaginary role.

This fantasy does not have clear existence out of the field situation, although it is rooted in each of the members' unconscious.

Starting from this field of unconscious fantasy, the psychical functioning and the intrasubjective history of each of the members can begin to be unraveled. "From intersubjectivity to intrasubjectivity. From *hic et nunc* to the past and the future. From this apparently atemporal precipitate to the temporality of resignification" (Kancyper 1999, p. 13).

The presence of the transference-friendship in the fluctuating dynamics of the analytic situation works, in the analyst's mind, as a powerful magnifying glass that helps to make visible a function within the analytic process that is difficult to grasp: the ontological function exercised by the power of friendship in psychoanalysis with children, adolescents, and adults.

In fact,

> Friendship has an ontological function, affording the subject the very sense of being and existing. To some extent, it puts a stop to the regressions determined by the fixation points connected, in turn, to the narcissistic, oedipal and fraternal dynamics that inevitably become reactivated throughout all the stages in life. It reopens the prospective dimension of time and contributes to the expansion of the successive phases in the adventure of creativity. The friend encourages the appearance of a productive intersubjective field, where new ideas flow in the dynamics with the other. [Kancyper 2014, pp. 274-275]

According to Agambén:

> Friendship also has an ontological dimension. . . . Inherent in this perception of existing is another perception, specifically human, which takes the form of a concurrent perception of the friend's existence. *Friendship is* the instance of this concurrent perception of the friend's existence in the awareness of one's own existence. The perception of existing is, in fact, always already divided up and shared or con-divided. Friendship names this sharing or con-division. The friend is, for this reason, another self, a *heteros autos*.
>
> In that case, he needs to be concurrently perceiving his friend—that he exists, too—and this will come about in their living together, conversing and sharing their talk and thoughts. [2004, p. 6]

Máscolo does not consider "friendship as a positive element, that is as value, but rather as a state, an identification, a miraculously more neutral spot from where the unknown, the difference and the multiplication of questions can be perceived and felt" (2005, p. 78). The analyst needs to perceive the affective atmosphere of the session and, with the help of a kind of keen "musician's ear," as it were, he is able to grasp the nuances in the tones and sounds of the different affects and bodily sensations that circulate within the analytic field.

Although the *Stimmung*, the affective atmosphere, never has a "meaning" in itself, it nevertheless says it all, all that cannot be put into words. The *Stimmung* unveils the essence of the dynamic field.

And the analyst—on being able to assess with certain precision the significance of affects and of the unconscious basic fantasy, and their nuances, that prevail at the time—manages to make an instrumental use of the *Stimmung* and of the affects as if they were a compass helping us find our way in the mazes of the human soul.

In addition, I think it is important to stress that in these situations the analyst does not yield to the analysand's demands of friendship. Indeed, if the boundaries of the functional asymmetry between the analyst and his patient become blurred, and the analyst becomes a "mate," then the ends of psychoanalysis are subverted. In cases such as these, transference-

friendship becomes an obstacle, rather than a stimulus encouraging the development of a deeper and more committed intimacy within the field of positive transference-countertransference.

It is for this reason that transference-friendship should not be confused with a flattering and idealized, friendly transference, where the importance of sexuality and its relationship with mastery relationships is split off.

Indeed, the dangers of this transference becoming fixated and, therefore, of it acquiring a defensive trait should be taken into account because there is the risk that the dynamics of the other kinds of transference—narcissistic, oedipal, and fraternal, which never cease to appear in the different phases of an analytic process—might be concealed.

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Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing

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FANTASY, MEMORY, AND REALITY TESTING

BY JACOB A. ARLOW

Reality testing, one of the most important of the functions of the ego, is relatively easy to define but quite difficult to comprehend. It is part of a conglomerate of ego functions which include such activities as perception, memory, object relations, sense of reality, superego, and the more recently discussed concept of realityconstancy (Frosch 1966).

As used in psychoanalysis, reality testing refers to the ability to distinguish between perceptions and ideas. It is quite different from the philosopher's concept of the nature of reality. As defined in analytic terms, emphasis is placed upon the differentiation between representations of what is external—of the object world—from representations of what is internal—of the self or of mental life. The feeling of reality is not necessarily a part of perceptual experience. It does not have the sense of immediacy that characterizes consciousness. There is nothing in the quality of the perceptual experience which makes it apparent at once whether a mental representation is external or internal, real or unreal. An additional mental function, perhaps a set of mental functions, have to be called upon in order to make this decision. This operation has to be applied to all data registered at that station of mental experience that we call awareness.

A great deal has already been learned concerning how the function of reality testing develops but much still remains to be understood. Reality

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testing develops gradually. The early stages of this process are particularly difficult to study. In addition to the maturation of the essential ego apparatuses, the vicissitudes of development are very important. All workers in the field see the development of reality testing as a gradual evolution in the child from an attitude toward the world which is self-centered, pleasure seeking, animistic, and magical, to a later capacity to differentiate between inner fantasy and objective reality (Beres 1956; Freud 1952; Piaget 1951).

There is yet another dimension to reality testing. According to Hartmann (1956) it consists of the ability to discern subjective and objective elements in our judgment of reality. Learning to do this is an unending process. Essentially this is the principal task which the analyst poses to his patient. He helps the patient to delineate in his assessment of and response to reality the contribution made by inner, subjective pressures from the past. In this paper I hope to demonstrate that how reality is experienced depends for the most part on the interaction between the perceptions of the external world and the concomitant effect of unconscious fantasy activity.

The perceptions of reality are sensed against the background of individual experience. Memory, recording conflicts, traumata, vicissitudes of the drives and of development are organized in terms of the pleasure-unpleasure principle into groups of schemata centering around childhood wishes. These make up the contents of a continuous stream of fantasy thinking, which is a persistent concomitant of all mental activity and which exerts an unending influence on how reality is perceived and responded to.

How can one describe in functional terms the interplay of these forces? It is as if the perceptual apparatus of the ego were operating at the same time in two different directions. One part of it looks outward, responding to the sensory stimuli of the external world of objects. The other part looks inward, reacting to a constant stream of inner stimulation. The organized mental representations of this stream of inner stimulation is what I call fantasy thinking. It includes fantasies and the memory schemata related to the significant conflicts and traumatic events of the individual's life. Fantasy thinking may be conscious or unconscious. It is a

constant feature of mental life. It persists all the time that we are awake and most of the time we are asleep.

The data or contents of our fantasy thinking become known to us through the process of introspection. There is no direct antonym to the word introspection which we could conveniently juxtapose to it and then apply to the process of perception of stimuli from the external world. Etymologically exterospection would be correct but it seems an awkward term. Traditional usage refers metaphorically to the functional separation of these two concomitant orientations of perception in terms of the inner eye and the outer eye.

How does the external perceptual apparatus of the mind function? According to Freud ([1924] 1925) so long as there is consciousness all external sensory stimuli are passively and indiscriminately received. He states: "cathectic innervations are sent out and withdrawn in rapid periodic impulses from within into the completely pervious system *Pcpt.-Cs.* So long as that system is cathected in this manner, it receives perceptions (which are accompanied by consciousness) and passes the excitation on to the unconscious mnemic systems; but as soon as the cathexis is withdrawn, consciousness is extinguished and the functioning of the system comes to a standstill. It is as though the unconscious stretches out feelers, through the medium of the system *Pcpt.-Cs.*, towards the external world and hastily withdraws them as soon as they have sampled the excitations coming from it" (p. 231).[1]

The data of perception are not experienced in isolation. They are experienced against the background of the individual's past development and are checked against earlier perceptions and the memory traces which they have left. Stimuli are selectively perceived in terms of the mental set operative in the individual at the time. The mental set is determined both consciously and unconsciously, consciously by the nature of the task

[1] In another publication written in the same year as the one just quoted, Freud (1925) returns to the subject but this time he states that the cathectic energy innervating the perceptual system originates in the ego. From the context of the two different quotations it would appear that in the former he was concerned with the utilization of the perceptual apparatus in the service of the pleasure-dominated unconscious wishes; in the latter he was concerned with the ego function of judgment achieving mastery over repression and at the same time achieving independence from the rule of the pleasure principle.

before the individual, unconsciously by the cathectic level of the dominant unconscious fantasy system. Percepts become meaningful almost immediately as they are perceived because they are compared with other data and integrated into memory schemata.

Certain aspects of the development of this process were carefully studied by Freud (1925). He wrote that at the beginning the essential task of judgment, as far as reality testing is concerned, is to determine whether something which is present in the ego as an image can be rediscovered in perception (reality) as well. The process of reality testing develops this way, he says, because "all presentations originate from perceptions and are repetitions of them. Thus originally the mere existence of a presentation was a guarantee of the reality of what was presented. The antithesis between subjective and objective does not exist from the first. It only comes into being from the fact that thinking possesses the capacity to bring before the mind once more something that has once been perceived, by reproducing it as a presentation without the external object having still to be there. The first and immediate aim, therefore, of reality testing is, not to *find* an object in real perception which corresponds to the one presented, but to *refind* such an object, to convince oneself that it is still there" (pp. 237-238).

It would seem that this would be a simple enough task for the mind; but this is far from the fact. As Freud noted, the reproduction of a perception as an image—in other words, how we recall parts of our experience—is not always a faithful one; it can be modified by omissions or by the fusion of a number of elements. The process of testing a thing's reality must then investigate the extent of these distortions. If one cannot be sure that the image (or set of images) that he is trying to rediscover in the form of a perception (of reality) actually corresponds to the earlier perceptions which the image supposedly reflects, reality testing becomes difficult indeed.

The most powerful influence distorting the image of the past and contributing to the misperception of the present is the intrusion of unconscious fantasy thinking. During our busy wakeful life, dominated by the reality principle, we are only intermittently aware of the persistent intrusion into our conscious experience of elements of fantasy thinking. Nevertheless the stream of perceptual data from the external world which

passes before the outer eye is paralleled by a stream of perceptual data from the inner world which passes before the inner eye. Although Freud wrote often about the process of exteroception (*Pctp.Cs.*) he said little about the so-called endopsychic observer. Perhaps he took it for granted that psychoanalysts, so fully involved in their own and in their patients' introspection, required little instruction in this area. His description of the process of free association as given in the Introductory Lectures is probably his most definitive statement on the subject. What the patient does while associating freely on the couch is compared to a train traveler looking out of the window and reporting as much as he is able to of the scenes flashing by his view. There is much more that he notices than he reports but he does the best he can. Free association in the analytic situation, it should be emphasized, corresponds to the reporting aspect of the experience. The really significant part of the analytic situation is the concentration of attention on the process of introspection, that is, the creation of a set of conditions that minimize the contribution of the external world and enhance the emergence of derivatives of the inner world—the world of fantasy thinking (Arlow 1961; Arlow and Brenner 1966).

Because dreams are perhaps the richest and clearest expression of fantasy thinking and because dreams are part of the experience of sleep, several authors have linked the emergence of daydreams, fantasies, and other regressive, visually experienced phenomena with alterations in the state of consciousness resembling sleep. Lewin (in press) says: "Psychoanalysts are now aware that subtle signs of the sleeping state may be intermingled with thinking, particularly in free association, but in general and in 'nature' also, so as to say, even when there is no conscious somnolence." He supports his statement with a quotation from Kubie (1948): "We are never really totally awake or totally asleep. These are relative and not absolute terms. Parts of us are asleep in our waking moments and parts of us are awake in our sleeping moments, and in between lie all the gradations of states of activity and inactivity."

One can hardly take issue with Kubie's statement; however, Lewin's formulation seems to beg the question, inasmuch as from the outset his statement defines sleep in terms of dreaming. It does not follow that because when we are asleep, we dream, that when we dream (or daydream or have other similar, related experiences), we are asleep. I

emphasize this point because clinical experience demonstrates how daydreaming may intrude upon the conscious experience of the individual at all levels of wakefulness and somnolence. In a previous contribution (Arlow 1969) I dealt with the ubiquitous intrusion of daydreaming activity into conscious experience, under circumstances which Lewin would say corresponded to the state of "nature." Several clinical experiences were cited from the daily lives of patients. In some of these experiences while the patients were alert and vigorously involved in reality oriented activity, their judgment of reality and their response to it was completely distorted by the intrusion of an unconscious fantasy. Actually this kind of distortion is one of the essential features of the neurotic process and of the transference. Aphoristically we may describe the state of mind in such patients by stating that while the outer eye was perceiving quite accurately the sensory stimuli from reality, the inner eye was focused on a fantasy. The response of the patient was appropriate enough, not in terms of reality, but in terms of the inner, unconscious fantasy.

This is the approach we use all the time in connection with neurotic symptoms. We understand our patients' anxiety not in terms of the realistic situation, but as a misperception of reality in terms which are appropriate for the contents of the unconscious fantasy. It would seem difficult to maintain that every time a neurotic patient experiences a symptom he is undergoing an alteration in the state of consciousness. In some instances alterations in the state of consciousness do occur, but they represent the effect of and not the cause for the emergence of an unconscious fantasy. I have presented material previously describing how in certain distortions of the sense of time (Arlow n.d.b), in the *déjà vu* experience (Arlow 1959), and in states of depersonalization (Arlow 1966), the state of consciousness and/or the experiencing of reality were altered in consequence of the defensive needs of the ego resulting from the pressure of an emerging fantasy. To return to Lewin's statement, it would seem that it is not the subtle signs of sleep that we perceive intermingled in our thinking, but the subtle evidence of the intrusion of fantasy thinking.

These considerations are pertinent to the initiation of the anxiety signal. When the ego becomes aware of the threatening development of the danger situation associated with the emergence of an instinctual demand, it institutes the signal of anxiety to stimulate the function of defense. How

does the ego become aware of the threatening danger? What data does it use to reach such a conclusion? My answer would be: from the data of introspection, from the perception, mostly outside of consciousness, of the contents of the stream of fantasy thinking. Introspection of fantasy thinking provides the data leading to the conclusion that a danger may develop and the individual then begins to feel anxious. In this last instance, the endopsychic observer (Descartes's *res cogitans* which Lewin [1958] has so brilliantly and wittily elucidated for us) acts like an internal psychoanalyst, observing the stream of fantasy thinking and making an interpretation for himself before the disturbing material appears in undisguised, panic-provoking form. The interrelation of the successive contents in the stream of unconscious fantasies under those circumstances would resemble that of certain sequences of dreams with which we are familiar. I refer to those series of dreams where each one conveys the same instinctual wish, one dream following another, the manifest content of each dream progressively less disguised and less distorted than the previous one, until the final dream appears—a dream with manifest content so distressingly close to the dangerous unconscious wish that panic develops, sleep is broken off, and the patient awakens as from a nightmare.

Free association in the psychoanalytic situation represents an artificial method for tapping samples of the constantly flowing stream of fantasy activity. There are, however, natural, spontaneous sources of information concerning what is contained in fantasy thought. Children daydream frequently, vividly, and often report them openly. Many retain this capacity into adult life. Freud (1908) called the primitive, self-centered world of daydreams the individual's secret rebellion against reality and against the need to renounce pleasurable instinctual gratification. Masturbation fantasies are a particularly striking example of vividly experienced daydreaming associated with instinctual gratification. Creative people are particularly perceptive of their fantasy thinking. Many retain a capacity for vivid visual daydreaming to a remarkable degree.

Young children regularly intermingle their perceptions of reality with wishful fantasy thinking and sometimes find it hard to distinguish in recollection between what was real and what was imagined—between what constituted fantasy and what constituted accurate memory. The intensely visual nature of children's fantasies endows them with a quality of

verisimilitude. As the individual grows older and reality increases its domain at the expense of the pleasure principle, visual daydreams and visual memories become fewer. There are notable exceptions, some of which have been referred to above.

Most adults probably have explicit, conscious fantasies many times during the day only to forget them as promptly as they do night dreams—and for the same reasons. The experience of being an analysand provides the conditions, the training, and the motivation to take note of the fleeting fantasy thoughts and to hold them fast, long enough to examine them. The constant inner stream of fantasy thinking nevertheless produces many derivatives which present themselves, often unexpectedly, to the inner eye of introspection. In fleeting thoughts, misperceptions, illusions, metaphors of speech and action, the analyst can detect the influence of unconscious fantasy. As I have suggested, the æsthetic effectiveness of metaphor in literature is derived in large measure from the ability of metaphorical expression to stimulate affects associated with widely entertained, communally shared, unconscious fantasies (Arlow 1969). Rheim (1950) said that the mythology of a people is an indicator of their dominant psychological conflicts. Mythology thus is a culturally organized, institutional form of communal daydreaming (Arlow 1961). The same is clearly true of many aspects of religious and artistic experience. A person's favorite joke or the kind of humor he generally prefers usually leads directly to the nature of his fantasy thinking inasmuch as every instinctual fixation is represented at some level of mental life in the form of a group of associated unconscious fantasies (cf. Zwerling 1955).

Evidence of the subtle intermingling of fantasy thinking with the perception of everyday reality may take the most subtle of forms and may be overlooked if one is not alert to its operation. Two examples will illustrate what I mean. In a session during which he was working through certain memories and fantasies connected with the primal scene, a patient mentioned quite in passing—or at least so it seemed—that he had seen a former professor of his, a respected and friendly father-figure. He had wanted to approach this man and greet him but, for reasons which he could not understand, felt extremely inhibited and failed to do so. The patient went on to say: "Perhaps it was because Professor X was busy at the time putting on his galoshes. It would be an awkward time to disturb

him." Or another patient, a woman, one of a set of identical twins whose fantasy thinking was dominated by impulses of hostility and competition toward her sibling, impulses which were fought out in the inner vision of her mind on the intrauterine battlefield. She reported: "While I was cleaning out the closet and getting rid of a lot of junk, I remembered a dream I had the night before." The patient went on to relate the dream which concerned an underwater struggle in a diving bell with a shark which threatened to devour her. In both patients, reality was metaphorically perceived in terms of fantasy thinking. In other words, disturbing a man putting on his galoshes was like interfering with a person having intercourse; emptying junk out of a closet in reality was in fantasy killing a rival in a claustrum.

The adventitious words describing the realistic setting in which introspective data are perceived exemplify this process in daily analytic work. Like the comments which a patient makes about the form or structure of a dream, these adventitious comments may be considered part of the inner fantasy. Thus if a patient says: "As I stepped into the elevator, or as I entered the door of the building, I had the following thought," the analyst should be alerted to the possible intrusion of some fantasy about penetration of the body or incorporation into it. Similarly if the patient introduces some idea with a statement: "While I was in the bus," he may be introducing thereby a fragment of a fantasy of pregnancy or of being within a claustrum.

This constant intermingling of fantasy and perception helps make it clear why memory is so unreliable, especially memories from childhood, because in childhood the process of intermingling perception and fantasy proceeds to a very high degree. Klein (1966) and Joseph (n.d.) in recent contributions have called attention to the many problems concerning the function of memory which remain to be solved. What is forgotten and what is remembered? What can and what cannot be recalled? Just where in the therapeutic process do we place the recollection or retrieval of the memory of a childhood experience? How does a patient come to have a sense of conviction, a feeling about the reality of a childhood experience which is reconstituted by way of reconstruction, reconstruction which utilizes primarily the data available from screen memories? Both Klein and Joseph, following Hartmann (1956), call attention to the need to redefine

some of these problems in terms of the structural theory. Joseph in particular stresses the importance of approaching these problems from the point of view of the defense function of the ego.

In reviewing the early literature of the subject, I was struck by the fact that there were many more references to forgetting than to remembering. Sometimes the only reference to be found under memory was "See Amnesia." The juxtaposition of memory to amnesia was of course a major element in the topographic theory based, as it was, on the essential dichotomy of mental contents into what could and could not be remembered. This led to some interesting formulations which, superficially viewed, seem like amusing paradoxes. For example, the hysteric whose problem is amnesia suffers mainly from reminiscences. He cannot recall the important events which shaped his life, yet his recollections are characterized by a "wonderful freshness of memory."

The resolution of this paradox is contained, of course, in Freud's early paper on screen memories (1899). Like so many of Freud's ideas, the ideas contained in that paper have to be rediscovered periodically. If we review that classic paper in the light of our present knowledge we can understand screen memories as an exquisite example of the mingling of fantasy with perception and memory, the raw material for the construction of the screen memories originating from many periods of the individual's life disguised and rearranged in keeping with the defensive needs of the ego. The same principles we understand today operate in the construction of dreams, fantasies, and in what Kris (1956) has called the "personal myth." We can thus amend Freud's original statement to read that the recognition of *how the ego operates in the service of defense* tends to diminish the distinction between memory and fantasy. Freud goes on to say: "It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all *from* our childhood: memories *relating* to our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal . . . memories did not . . . *emerge*; they were *formed* at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in the selection of the memories themselves" (1899, p. 322).

In the context of intrapsychic conflict, the ego integrates drives, defense, memory, fantasy, and superego in keeping with the principle of multiple function (Waelder 1936). What we think was real, or what we think really happened, is a combination or intermingling of fantasy with perception of reality. When memory and perception offer material which is in consonance with fantasy thinking, the data are selectively perceived and the memories are selectively recalled and used as material to serve as a vehicle for the unconscious fantasy. When we are able to undo the defensive distortion which the ego has imposed upon the material, we can see that the fantasy contains the kernel of what really happened. This is not the objective reality which can be observed by outsiders and validated consensually. This is almost impossible to recollect because what the child experiences is at the very moment of experience a complex intermingling of perception and fantasy. This complex intermingling is what "really" happened as far as the individual is concerned. Only through the process of inference can the analyst sometimes elucidate from the material that part of the individual's recollection which belongs to objective history, as it were, as opposed to the patient's personal "mythological" past.

I would like to illustrate my point by citing a reconstruction of the past based upon the interpretation of a fantasy. There is nothing particularly unusual or striking about this example. Every experienced analyst will recall many similar instances from his own practice. For purposes of discretion certain details have been changed and displaced, but the essential features of the material, namely, the relationship of the interpretation to the data, has not been altered in any significant way.

This material is taken from the case of a male adult who spent several years of his early childhood, perhaps as many as three, possibly four, in his parents' bedroom. Except for some few peripheral or tangential memories like the sounds of neighbors quarreling, the patient could remember nothing of the events in the bedroom. However, his life story, his character formation, the symptoms which he developed, the nature of the transference, and how he behaved toward his children during their Oedipal phase all bore more than ample testimony of how deeply he had been affected by this early experience.

He developed into a pseudo-imbecilic "detective." He noticed nothing but knew everything. He was constantly looking but never seeing. What he could not remember, he kept repeating. In all sorts of "innocent" ways he managed to stumble upon and interfere with couples engaged in private activities. A constant trend which appeared in dreams, fantasies, and sometimes in real life behavior contained the elements of disturbing a performance or a spectacle in which a father image was figuring in a prominent and successful role. His favorite joke was about a famous Shakespearean actor whose successful performance was ruined by absurd and obscene requests originating from some obscure member of the audience sitting in the back stalls of the balcony.

The privacy of the analytic twosome accordingly was highly consonant, one could say congruent, with elements in his fantasy life. As analysts we understand that external, realistic elements which are consonant with fantasy elements are selectively perceived and seem to have the capacity to intensify the cathectic pressure of unconscious fantasy. Under these circumstances the fantasies tend to come to the fore in the sense that they produce more and clearer mental derivatives or propel the individual toward some form of action. In this respect their dynamic thrust resembles the role of the day residue in dream formation. Day residues are selected for inclusion in dreams not so much because of their neutral, inconspicuous nature as for the fact that they are congruent with or reminiscent of certain important fantasies or memory schemata. There is, accordingly, a reciprocal interplay between reality and fantasy, selective perception on one side, cathectic intensification on the other. For our pseudo-imbecilic detective therefore the analytic situation, one could say, was made to order.

During the period when we were working on the problem of Oedipal rivalry as it came up in the transference and in connection with his son, the patient reported the following fantasy:

> I had a fantasy that I came for my session and headed toward the couch. You were annoyed with my behavior in the analysis and decided to terminate treatment. I wanted to go to the couch but you waved me to the chair and told me that the treatment was over. I objected violently. I became very angry. I rushed to the couch, laid down and said I would not budge. You decided that if

> I did not move you would call the police to remove me. Your next patient was around. You told her to wait. You would go on with her as soon as you got rid of me. In the fantasy you were also frightened. You thought that I could get away from the police and come back to get you.

The key to the understanding of the fantasy came in the first associations which dealt with the theme of reversal of roles, the patient taking the analyst's role, the analyst becoming the patient. Other associations concerned the sexualization of the analytic situation, the couch as a bed, the attractive woman patient as an object of our competitive rivalry, three people in a room where only two should be, biding one's time until one gets rid of a rival, how weak and helpless people need the police in situations where their own physical force is insufficient.

By invoking the principle of dream interpretation concerning opposites, the fantasy could be explored as a reversal. With the knowledge of the previous material, of the transference situation, and of the associations, this fantasy could be interpreted first in terms of the transference and then much more meaningfully as a reconstruction concerning the past. At the level of transference the patient is angry and jealous. He wishes to get rid of me but I cling to my possessions. He will use greater force, throw me out, and claim my position, my office, and the attractive woman patient as a special prize. As a reconstruction of the past, the interpretation could be quite precise because of the unusually rich material. The patient in his parents' bedroom had awakened from sleep and tried in various ways, or perhaps many times, to get his father to abandon the bed, hopefully for good. But the father persisted in returning to his bed and there was very little that the weak and small Oedipus could do. If only he could call the police or perhaps some criminals. They are stronger, they would get rid of father, take him away, and the little boy could enjoy mother for himself. Of course father is strong. He could get away. He would be very angry. He could return and punish the little boy. (The patient's childhood neurosis consisted of a fear of criminals who might intrude during the night and kidnap or injure him.) The interpretation was confirmed at the next session in a dream which recapitulated all the events mentioned above and carried the reconstruction further by introducing the element of relations with the mother and giving her a child.

What can we say about this fantasy and the reconstruction built on it? What was real in the sense that it actually happened and what was unreal in the sense that it was only imagined? Distracting the father, calling him from his bed, a temper tantrum, perhaps, and the father returning and persisting in possession of his bed and his mate—these are all events which possibly could have happened and presumably did happen. The calling of the police (or the robbers) assuredly did not happen. The appreciation of the role of police or the significance of kidnaping may even date from a later period. Whether at any time the patient overtly expressed to his mother the classical Oedipal wishes is hard to say. Probably he did. Yet in the fantasy, all elements are given equal weight in a well-integrated story that seems consistent, logical, and realistic, if not probable. The point is that the intermingling of real events, real perceptions with the elements of fantasy and wishful thinking must correspond quite closely to what the patient actually experienced as a child at the time. External perception and internal fantasy were intermingled at the time of the experience and together they formed the reality which to the patient was the record of his past. It was upon this confused fantasy thinking, which was dynamically effective in influencing so many aspects of his life, that the inner eye of the patient remained consistently focused.

This is what I think is the proper understanding of the concept "psychic reality." It is not a fantasy that is taken for the real truth, for an actual event, but the "real" recollection of a psychic event with its mixture of fact and fantasy. This becomes the dynamic reality for the patient under the influence of the traumatic events which live on in his inner fantasy. Subsequent events and perceptions of reality are selectively organized into memory schema consonant with inner fantasy thinking.

To recapitulate, in keeping with the synthetic function of the ego and the principle of multiple function, the traumatic events in the individual's life and the pathogenic conflicts that grow out of them are worked over defensively by the ego and incorporated into a scheme of memories and patterns of fantasy. In one part of the mind the inner eye, as it were, remains focused on an inner stream of fantasy thought in which the traumatic memories are retained in a disguised form. Freud conjectured that the delusion owes its convincing power to the element of historical truth which it contains and which it inserts in place of the rejected reality. It

would follow, he added, that what pertains to hysteria would also apply to delusions; namely, that those who are subject to them are suffering from their own recollections. What I have tried to demonstrate in this paper is that this is a general principle of mental life. The traumatic events of the past become part of fantasy thinking and as such exert a never-ending dynamic effect, occasionally striking, sometimes less so, on our responses to and appreciation of reality.

One of the measures of the involvement of a person in the neurotic process and his traumatic past can be taken from the extent to which his mental functioning is pulled toward concentrating on the inner stream of fantasy thinking in competition with realistic daytime preoccupations. This can be clearly seen in fetishists and in some former fetishists who develop unusual responses to the perception of reality. The fetishist suffers from the memory of a traumatic perception, a confrontation with the sight of the penisless female genital at a time when he was particularly vulnerable to castration anxiety. He seems unable to get over it. Around the traumatic events he weaves a wish-fulfilling, reality-denying fantasy, the illusion of the woman with a phallus. But it does not seem to help. Before his mind's eye, even through the compensating fantasy, he continues to see, however dimly, the original perceptions of the female genital proclaiming the danger of castration. Looking at reality becomes a hazard, for at any moment he fears he may encounter a set of perceptions identical with those that precipitated the original panic.

In some individuals this leads to a peculiar relationship to reality in general (Arlow n.d.b.) because they make an unconscious equation of reality with the female genital (Lewin 1948) and they treat the former the way the fetishist treats the latter. They refuse to face it. They cannot take a really good look at anything. This tendency influences them in the direction of impracticality and propels them into unrealistic behavior in many areas of their lives. During analytic sessions it is hard for them to look at their productions or at the analyst's interpretations. At best they give them only a fleeting glance. In presenting a problem such patients tend to seize upon some insignificant, minor detail, tangential and peripheral to the heart of the matter. Although at one level they clearly perceive the true nature, the real nature of the problem, at another level they persist in "beating around the bush." During the analysis they have a

set of mannerisms involving their eyes. Either they keep them closed, shield them with their hands, rub them, or blink continually throughout the session. In speaking, they express themselves in the conditional voice, for example—It seems, I suppose, Perhaps, Maybe, Could it be that?, etc. Nothing is definitely asserted. The central reality has to be obscured and denied, but in the manner of the fetishist, these patients have to fasten their attention on some distracting, peripheral, reassuring perception that corresponds to the female phallus as envisaged in their inner fantasy. A variation of these trends may be seen in individuals who are petty liars, who have a compulsive need to embellish, adorn, and obscure reality.

From a study of these unusual character traits one can see how painful events are woven into fantasy thinking and how persistent focusing on these elements in the stream of fantasy thought leads the individual to scan the data of perception of reality to discover reassuring evidence of the validity of the solution which he arrived at in fantasy. Under the pressure of unconscious wishes and in keeping with the need to fend off anxiety, the perceptual apparatus of the ego is oriented and alerted to incorporate, integrate, correlate, deny, or misinterpret the data of perception.

The interplay between unconscious wishes, defense, and perception may serve as a transition to the next point concerning the psychology of moods. Growing as they do out of the vicissitudes of individual experience, the memory schemata of each person are typical and idiosyncratic. The memory patterns which are important in psychoanalytic treatment are grouped together according to the pleasure-unpleasure principle and are reactivated in the context of emerging conflicts over instinctual wishes. I referred earlier to the capacity of external perceptions to intensify the cathectic pressure of fantasy. Thus it is easy to see how moods may be evoked by perceptions of reality in the sense that real experience stimulates the emergence of specific memories and systems of fantasy. Most often, but not always, the patient is aware of which event it was that precipitated or provoked his mood. For the duration of the mood the thoughts that come to mind are in consonance with the fantasy that gave rise to it. No other thoughts seem to present themselves to awareness. Opposing thoughts are brushed aside and the perceptions of the external world are selectively attended to and interpreted in terms of the mood.

During analytic treatment, we are in a position to correlate the mood with the fantasy whose content is appropriate to the affects, thoughts, and perceptions characteristic of that specific mood. It is the pervasive quality of the fantasy which establishes the nature of the mood and its cathectic potential perpetuates its existence. I have illustrated this point with the material from a patient who was in a depressed mood (Arlow 1969). His realistic perceptions—breakfast, birthday, and oranges—intensified the cathexis of a latent cannibalistic fantasy. The mood, thoughts, and activities and the response to reality were in keeping with the contents of the stream of fantasy thoughts.

But what can we say about moods whose appearance cannot be traced to any specific event or external perception? The evocation of such moods I would suggest might still be related to some perception of external reality, to some sensory stimulus which found registration *outside* of consciousness. Clinical experience and experimental studies offer abundant proof of Freud's idea that while the perceptual system is functioning it is completely pervious to external stimuli. Pötzl (1960), Fisher (1954, 1956), and others have demonstrated conclusively that even stimuli which are subliminal in intensity may find registration outside of consciousness. It seems highly plausible that, like the day residue of a dream, percepts registered outside of awareness may dynamically affect fantasy thinking to the end that a fantasy is cathected, stimulating emergence of the mood.

Finally, another question must be raised. What is the form of fantasy thinking? How highly structured is it? Some authors, for example, have rejected the suggestion that unconscious fantasies may have a complicated organization or contain elements of imagery that are visually representable. My own experience and thinking have led me to the conclusion that for the most part fantasy thinking has a quasi-visual nature. It is easily transformed and transformable into visual representations. At first I thought of this relationship in terms that were uncomfortably static. In connection with an attempt to demonstrate how reality is experienced in terms of inner fantasy needs, I wrote:

> There is a hierarchy in the fantasy life of each individual, a hierarchy which reflects the vicissitudes of individual experience as well

> as the influence of psychic differentiation and ego development.[2] To use a very static analogy for a highly dynamic state of affairs, we may say that unconscious fantasies have a systematic relation to each other. Fantasies are grouped around certain basic instinctual wishes, and such a group is composed of different versions or different editions of attempts to resolve the intrapsychic conflict over these wishes. Each version corresponds to a different "psychic moment" in the history of the individual's development. It expresses the forces at play at a particular time in the person's life when the ego integrated the demands of the instinctual wishes in keeping with its growing adaptive and defensive responsibilities. To continue with a static analogy, we may conceive of the interrelationship between unconscious fantasies in terms of a series of superimposed photographic transparencies in which at different times and under different psychic conditions one or more of these organized images may be projected and brought into focus (Arlow 1961, p. 377).

A few years later it occurred to me that the interaction between fantasy thinking and reality could be expressed illustratively through the use of a visual model. I compared this aspect of the operation of the mind to the effect that could be obtained if two motion picture projectors were to flash a continuous series of images simultaneously but from opposite sides onto a translucent screen. Here I have altered the analogy in order to carry it further. There are two centers of perceptual input, introspection and exterospection, supplying data from the inner eye and data from the outer eye. It is the function of a third agency of the ego, however, to integrate, correlate, judge, and discard the competing data of perceptual experience. All of these factors influence the final judgment as to what is real and what is unreal. In addition I have tried to make room in my conceptualization for the infinite complexity of the relationship between the outer world of perceptionand the inner world of thought.

[2] The expression "hierarchy of fantasies" is meant to convey the idea that instinctual derivations operate throughout life in the form of fantasies, usually unconscious. The organization of these fantasies takes shape early in life and persists in this form with only minor variations throughout life. To borrow an analogy from literature, one could say the plot line of the fantasy remains the same although the characters and the situation may vary.

The predominant role of vision in the totality of human perception can hardly be overstressed. Supposedly eighty percent of learning is affected through vision. There is a vast literature of psychological studies of visual perception. In those areas which are of particular interest to psychoanalysts, namely, the development and alteration of mental functions under the impact of intrapsychic conflict, the study of visual experience has always been considered to be of special importance. Many, perhaps most, of the models of the psychic apparatus which Freud devised to illustrate his concepts of the functioning of the mind were either visually representable or based on analogies either to optical instruments or to contraptions which could somehow record experience in visual form. In most of these models he discussed perception in terms that were primarily, if not exclusively, applicable to visual perception, although it is always clear that he had no intention of treating the two as if they were identical. It is possible that this resulted from the fact that his earlier models were devised to integrate the data derived mostly from the study of the psychology of dreams and of the neuroses. In the case of the former, he was concerned with the problem of why the sleep-time hallucinations which we call dreams are almost exclusively visual in nature. In the case of the neuroses, he was impressed by the etiological significance of memories and fantasies and of the vivid visual form in which they are recalled. According to Freud, the closer a thought or fantasy is to the pleasure-dominated unconscious instinctual tendencies, the greater the possibility that it will be represented mentally in a visual form (1923).

The element of visual representability of fantasy thinking has an important bearing on psychoanalytic technique. In his 1966 Nunberg lecture (Lewin, in press), and in a number of as yet unpublished works which I have been privileged to read, Lewin refers to the pictorial nature of the individual's store of memories. In connection with the patient's response to a construction he says: "It is as if the analysand was trying to match the construction with a picture of his own." Each analyst has a different capacity for visual memory or fantasy representation. But following Lewin, I think it is correct to say that some form of visual thinking occurs in the analyst's mind as he thinks along with his patient's free associations. The joint search by patient and analyst for the picture of the patent's past is a reciprocal process. In a sense, we dream along with our patients,

supplying at first data from our own store of images in order to objectify the patient's memory into some sort of picture. We then furnish this picture to the analysand who responds with further memories, associations, and fantasies; that is, we stimulate him to respond with a picture of his own. In this way the analyst's reconstruction comes to be composed more and more out of the materials presented by the patient until we finally get a picture that is trustworthy and in all essentials complete.

The successfully analyzed patient stands in contrast to the hero of Antonioni's poetic motion picture, Blow Up. The photographer hero has witnessed and recorded a traumatic event, a sadistic conceptualization of the primal scene. His life has been altered thereby but out of the vast storehouse of his (memory) pictures he can no longer retrieve the one that contains the record of the trauma. Not being able to produce the photograph is the analogue of being unable to recall the traumatic event. Thus the hero in Blow Up becomes a kind of twentieth century Everyman traumatized in childhood. He has lost his connection with his past and has, in his hand, only the fragment of the experience, a fragment out of context, enlarged to the point of unreality. Is it memory or fantasy? Without confirmatory evidence he begins to doubt his own reality. Only through psychoanalysis can the picture be restored and the individual be reintegrated with his past. In this way he comes to appreciate the connection between fantasy, memory, and reality.

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“Blowing Up” the Frame: Revisiting Arlow's “Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing”

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"BLOWING UP" THE FRAME: REVISITING ARLOW'S "FANTASY, MEMORY, AND REALITY TESTING"

BY DARIA COLOMBO

Keywords: Arlow, ego psychology, psychoanalytic theory, analytic frame, fantasy, memory, reality testing, *Blow Up*.

This paper means a great deal to us, as a field and as individuals. It is almost, as Arlow writes in it of a patient's fantasies, part of our field's "mythological past" (1969, p. 38). Indeed, Abend wrote of Arlow in 2006: "He happens to be one of the shining stars in my own pantheon of psychoanalytic heroes, going back to my first encounter with him" (p. 376).

Any revisiting, indeed, requires an original encounter; I first read this paper in analytic training and have returned to it multiple times since, each time finding something different in a paper that appears to expand in its implications and prescience with each rereading. Inevitably, every encounter involves an altered reader, who is visiting for new reasons and finding different aspects of the text compelling; like Heraclitus, one must acknowledge the impossibility of stepping twice into the same river or, to echo Arlow himself on fantasy, of twice tapping the same stream.

Revisiting this classic paper of ego psychology requires the reader to reconsider his or her relationship to the field and to its heroes, to recall what ego psychology was in Arlow's time and to ask what it is today—to think about how we practice in an increasingly eclectic but also divided psychoanalytic world. Arlow's work here is remarkably broad ranging and

All quotes from Arlow's "Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing" paper take their pagination from the original 1969 publication.

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has been recognized as connecting to many, if not most, developments in current psychoanalytic thinking, including field theory. It is well known that this paper introduced into the ego psychological approach of the time the seeds of a revolutionary transformation of analytic thinking. Again, Abend:

> Not long ago, as I talked over my recognition of the radical implications of Jack's work with my colleague Arnold Rothstein, he helped me realize that the postmodern epistemological revolution in psychoanalysis, which has elevated subjectivity to its current prominence, along with the consequent devaluation of the analyst's supposed objectivity, were clearly foreshadowed by Jack's conclusions. This is all the more remarkable since Jack himself never took the logical next step of applying the cautionary acknowledgment of "irreducible subjectivity" (Renik 1993) to his own propensity for relying on his capacity to be objective in reaching clinical judgments! Perhaps he had confidence that his habitual analytic self-scrutiny was sufficiently reliable to render him capable of arriving at objective assessments in the clinical situation; we can only speculate, since to my knowledge he never addressed this conundrum. [2006, p. 376]

This paper, a touchstone in our developmental history as psychoanalysts, particularly for those of us trained in an ego psychological framework, is also, as Abend's words suggest, an unsettling and peculiar touchstone. Veined with exciting and valuable implications or, alternately, shot through with unsettling fault lines, this paper contains the nodal points of controversy that have been gradually elaborated into significantly different, perhaps even irreconcilable, modes of contemporary psychoanalytic theory and practice. Arlow finds visual imagery particularly compelling and ends his paper with reference to Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow Up*. Not only the patient's material but Arlow's writing, like the photographic image, implicitly asks for, and inevitably subjects itself to, readings that its own explicit ideas about the impact of fantasy cannot frame or contain. Arlow focuses on the visual, and if we have eyes to see, so to speak, we see momentous consequences for the issues Arlow touches on, such as the nature of conscious as well as unconscious mental life, memory, trauma, reconstruction, applied psychoanalysis, and the epistemology and hermeneutics of our field.

The conundrum Abend identifies is indeed momentous. For what has been less noted of this canonical paper is a problematic and provocative thread, one that either profitably enriches the psychoanalytic enterprise or fatally undermines it: traveling through the paper, unobjectionable and unobtrusive, hiding in plain sight, is the quotidian, unquestioned assumption of a sturdy analytic frame. There is a tension between how Arlow describes the analytic frame, the role of the analyst, and the ways in which he is redefining the nature and reach of fantasy thinking. For, while all of mental life is described as being perfused with unconscious fantasy, such thinking is not extended to the construction, maintenance, fragility, rigidity, utility, or constraint of the analytic frame. At the time of the paper's publication, this tension was a loose, slack thread, as Arlow's treatment of fantasy was novel and striking enough; but a revisit in contemporary times finds this loose thread pulled tight to the breaking point, as we consider how far our epistemology can take us in a two-person psychology suffused with fantasy, how much grasp we have left on psychic reality of any kind, and whether this is even a relevant question.

I propose a re-reading that considers Arlow's paper to be not merely historically significant but still timely, insofar as a reading of it that focuses on the issue of the analytic frame has us revisiting how the conundrum it introduces still troubles a contemporary psychoanalysis struggling to distinguish itself not only from other modes of psychological treatment but among its own main arteries. Like any significant work, Arlow's unleashes ideas that spill out of its own theoretical frame. For how can the frame be free of fantasy thinking? Isn't the frame also at risk? And isn't risk an inevitable partner of the creativity that was always a central interest of Arlow's? Fundamentally, is the analytic frame—even the theoretical frame—itself a fantasy, our fantasy as analysts?

Arlow's paper is both an integral part of, and a remarkable yet largely unremarked challenge to, ego psychology. It pushes against its own ego psychological frame, as a paper that contains all the ingredients needed for the canon's transformation. Arlow writes of the protagonist in *Blow Up*: "He has lost his connection with his past and has, in his hand, only a fragment of the experience, a fragment out of context, enlarged to the point of unreality" (p. 49). To blow up is to magnify something in order to see it in finer detail, until, as Arlow points out, at some point this fine

detail leads to both molecular accuracy and visual incoherence and loss of recognizability. Arlow follows an interpretive line intended to enlarge our conception of fantasy thinking while at the same time indicating that such mental content is somehow distinct, extractable, and recognizable, delineated with a boundary and a frame. The meaningless fragment is reintegrated with the past: with memory and fantasy and reality, all discrete but reconcilable elements. But this paper intended to make ego psychology a more powerful way in which to understand mental life also renders ego psychology unrecognizable and dangerously incoherent. The other meaning of blowing something up is neglected by Arlow, but I think this is what he is doing while identifying the *kernel*, the *stream*, the *sample*, terms he uses as if trying to hang on to *something*: blowing up ego psychological theory as it stood in its Hartmannian conception and leaving us to re-create it.

Arlow's paper begins with a reference to Hartmann. Arlow writes about reality testing: "According to Hartmann it consists of the ability to discern between subjective and objective elements in our judgment of reality. Learning to do this is an unending process. Essentially this is the principle task which the analyst poses to his patient" (p. 28). That the task is unending but that the ability to discern the subjective from the objective, the existence of two such discrete categories, is nevertheless possible and the goal of analysis, introduces the conundrum immediately. The conundrum laces through every section. As Arlow describes how the mind perceives external and internal stimuli, he notes:

> The data of perception are not perceived in isolation. They are perceived against the background of the individual's past development and are checked against earlier perceptions and the memory traces which they have left. Stimuli are selectively perceived in terms of the mental set operative in the individual at the time. [p. 30]

Such a phrase could be found in a current description of field theory, though perhaps in less mechanistic language. And Arlow notes that the "unending" task of the analyst in this world of mental sets is one for which the analyst may be unprepared:

> Although Freud wrote often about the process of exteroception he said little about the so-called endopsychic observer. Perhaps he took it for granted that psychoanalysts, so fully involved in their own and their patients' introspection, required little instruction in this area. [p. 31]

In a sense, this paper, while ostensibly providing just such instruction, confuses more than it clarifies, or, to take a different tack, it lets us know just how fatally complex the task is, how "unending" indeed. It is as if Arlow recognizes a disturbance in the field and, like Freud and his discovery of the transference, also recognizes that this disturbance can be an asset but, again like Freud, cannot recognize the full implications of the interconnectedness of mental life and the risk posed to the analyst's empirical stance. Neither Freud nor Arlow can commit to taking the next step of acknowledging that analyst and patient are equally vulnerable to the same transferences, fantasy thinking, and wavering ability to discern between outside and inside. And, while not explicitly described, this dilemma is contained in Arlow's description of the endopsychic observer considering the fantasy thinking and acting "like an internal psychoanalyst, observing the stream of fantasy thinking and making an interpretation for himself before the disturbing material appears in undisguised, panic-provoking form" (p. 33). The ego's initiation of the anxiety signal is made parallel with the analyst's work. One could say that Arlow's paper is the anxiety signal transmitted to the ego psychological frame, an early description of a disturbance in the frame that has been largely neglected by those in the ego psychological neighborhood, a disturbance more fully explored within other contemporary theoretical models.

Arlow remarks on the frame throughout his paper in a variety of ways:

> The adventitious words describing the realistic setting in which introspective data are perceived exemplify this process in daily analytic work. Like the comments which a patient makes about the form or structure of a dream, these adventitious comments may be considered part of the inner fantasy. [p. 36]

The form or structure is not separate from the fantasy. Are the "adventitious words" in Arlow's paper, those words that take the frame for granted, also the most revealing or the most neglected, most in need of revisiting as we re-read this classic paper? Any work is itself framed with an introduction, conclusion, and references that are held within a context. This paper itself revisits a classic, framing itself with Freud's paper on screen memories: "Like so many of Freud's ideas, the ideas contained in that paper have to be rediscovered periodically" (p. 38). Arlow echoes the archeological metaphor Freud was so fond of, that of discovery of a mental artifact from the past. He pledges metaphorical allegiance, though he is not rediscovering so much as adding something new, choosing to maintain the fantasy of continuity with his ancestor even as he introduces a substantive and destabilizing challenge. Arlow quotes Freud: "The first and immediate aim, therefore, of reality testing is, not to *find* an object in real perception which corresponds to the one presented, but to *refind* such an object, to convince oneself that it is still there" (Freud 1899, pp. 237-238). How does the saturation of fantasy thinking apply to the mental encounter with the original object? Aspects of the paper echo the task of the analysand: "The experience of being an analysand provides the conditions, the training, and the motivation to take note of the fleeting fantasy thoughts and to hold them fast, long enough to examine them" (p. 35). The metaphor here is also that of examining an archeological find. And, as readers, we encounter a paper that is giving us a new find: a new definition of fantasy. Yet analyst and analysand, writer and reader, all face the same dilemma: How can we frame or contain the fantasizing? One could argue that our various theoretical constructs are the analyst's fantasies about what they are doing in these intimate encounters with other minds: logically understanding, repairing, integrating, co-creating, and so on. One of the challenges of Arlow's paper is that he ostensibly works within a largely objectivist frame in which new ideas help us to approach a reality, and yet the new idea he presents undermines the sort of methodology—theoretical and clinical—he is working within.

In one of the clinical examples Arlow presents, the fantasy presented is one in which the patient specifically attacks the frame. This

is Arlow's reaction to the patient's fantasy: "He wishes to get rid of me but I cling to my possessions. He will use greater force, throw me out, and claim my position, my office, and the attractive woman patient as a special prize" (p. 42). The central fantasy is that the frame is upended, turned upside down. That the central fantasy of the clinical material addresses the frame is intriguing, as is the idea of the analyst clinging to his possessions. I think the analytic "possessions" at the core of this paper is the analyst's ability to identify and extract the fantasy contribution to mental life and to be able to do this, both with the patient's material and with his own theory building. Indeed, there is a strikingly materialist aspect to the descriptions of fantasy thinking. Arlow writes: "Free association in the psychoanalytic situation represents an artificial method for tapping samples of the constantly flowing steam of fantasy thinking" (p. 34). When Arlow writes later of the "inner stream of fantasy thought" (p. 42), he implies that there are banks to this stream, that one can wade out to dry shore.

The other side of this materialist conception of fantasy thinking as a substance that can be extracted, an intrusive contamination, is that its extraction will leave us with some objective reality, the kernel. He writes: "When we are able to undo the defensive distortion which the ego has imposed on the material, we can see that the fantasy contains the kernel of what really happened" (p. 38). The stream can be sifted through; the kernel of reality can be panned like gold. The intrusion can be identified and corrected: "The most powerful influence distorting the image of the past and contributing to the misperception of the present is the intrusion of unconscious fantasy thinking" (p. 31). These materialist metaphors become reified in Arlow's theory as discrete mental substances that the analyst is able to sift apart: "Only through the process of inference can the analyst sometimes elucidate from the material that part of the individual's recollection which belongs to objective history, as it were, as opposed to the patient's personal 'mythological' past" (p. 38).

I began by noting that Arlow is part of our own mythological past. How can he both speak of objective history and write the following, in the same paper?

> Some form of visual thinking occurs in the analyst's mind as he thinks along with his patient's free associations. The joint search by patient and analyst of the picture of the patient's past is a reciprocal process. In a sense, we dream along with our patients, supplying at first data from our own store of images in order to objectify the patient's memory into some sort of picture. [p. 49]

Arlow introduces the ideas of mental sets and schemata, of the unconscious as a process rather than a static content. Even so, in this paper the reciprocal dreaming leads to an unlikely move back to objectivity: we dream with our patients "until we finally get a picture that is trustworthy and in all essentials complete" (p. 48). Finally, "only though psychoanalysis can the picture be restored" (p. 49). A significant strand in contemporary psychoanalytic theory, as exemplified by Ogden, Ferro, and, most recently, Civitarese has developed the idea of the patient and analyst dreaming together as the essential task of the analytic enterprise, with the eventual delineating of a complete or trustworthy picture less important than the potentiating, development, and mutual witnessing of this dreaming function. Arlow introduced an idea that was then taken in a direction he could not have foreseen. This is always the gift, and the constraint, of our ancestors: they leave us things only for us to need to transform them.

Moss wrote about his own revisiting of another classic Arlow paper, "Unconscious Fantasy and Disturbances of Conscious Experience," that "Arlow wrote from an idealized, epistemological vantage point. I granted him this point and aspired to someday arrive there myself. Now I find that this artifact, this coupled essay and reader, seems to surface from a distant and radically different past" (p. 64). Again, we have the urge to see artifacts rather than ancestry. Whether one finds radical disjunction or threads of continuity might be another sort of fantasy we engage with as analysts. Arlow's writing about dreaming along with his patients, in the historical context in which he wrote it, strikes me as revolutionary, fresh, and still as problematic as ever.

CONCLUSION

In a sense, it is the contemporary self-identified ego psychologists who stand to gain the most from an investigation of just how much this paper contains, as this process can help alter the very frame of how we analysts demarcate our theories, one from another, and how we decide what sort of epistemology we cling to as we are buffeted by shifting theoretical constructions. I find Arlow's paper contains all that is needed to move into a fully two-person psychology lacing the interpersonal and intrapsychic in an inextricable meld. Yet it appears that revisits by others to this paper have either stolidly reiterated and celebrated Arlow's place in the ego psychological pantheon or have found him outdated, indeed too stolid, tragically limited. Moss finds Arlow's ideas to be fixed, inert entities and of merely historical interest. His old idol is to him moribund rather than still breathing, ensconced in a long-abandoned (by Moss) theoretical crèche. Although I have traveled a not dissimilar trajectory, from an ego psychological–focused training to a more Kleinian perspective, my own revisit is quite different. I find Arlow's work to be still lively, paradoxical, generative, unexpectedly maddening, and unwittingly modern, and I note, along with Abend, that its implications are still resisted by those who consider themselves in his camp.

Is it a matter of perspective that determines the outcome of one's revisit to a classic work? Moss's revisit is a combative and disillusioned one, involving the toppling of a hero and an observation of how far his thinking has traveled; mine involves a wish to establish a richer relationship with an ancestor I too quickly left behind and insufficiently appreciated. We can perhaps better call the matter one of fantasy than perspective. An embrace of my ancestors, even as I play with their ghosts, wanting to find a continuity, even as things change, less an Oedipal murder than a transformed but enduring attachment: that is my fantasy about revisiting Arlow, and the frame I desire.

For, while I register the constraints of an almost fifty-year-old text, even so I am not sure that the reach of this paper has been fully recognized, not by Arlow certainly, but neither by his readers, disciples, and apostates alike. So, in revisiting this paper I find the not-yet-germinated

kernel, so to speak, of our epistemological revolution to be located within Arlow's work, not excluded from it, even if he did not quite have the historical and philosophical eyes to fully see it: he began our encounter with it and left it to future generations to blow up—in various ways—the implications of his seminal work. This paper strikes me, on my latest re-reading, as a bomb with a very long, but lit, fuse.

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Mingling and Stretching: Revisiting Arlow's "Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing"

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MINGLING AND STRETCHING: REVISITING ARLOW'S "FANTASY, MEMORY, AND REALITY TESTING"

BY BRUCE REIS

Keywords: Arlow, fantasy, perception, memory, reality testing, ego psychology, Spillius, Loewald.

Perhaps the first thing to notice when reading Arlow's (1969) classic paper "Fantasy, Memory and Reality Testing" is the lack of subject headings. Arlow does not devote a section to fantasy, a section to memory, and a section to reality testing; and his not doing so proves integral to understanding his approach to these topics. And, even though Arlow did not add the word *perception* to the other terms in the title of his paper, it is as much a focus of the piece as any of the others—and it doesn't get its own subject heading either. For Arlow does not write about fantasy without also writing about perception, about perception without also writing about memory, or about memory without also writing about reality testing. For Arlow, these terms are very clearly interimplicated and cannot be considered by themselves. The term he uses repeatedly throughout the paper to describe these relations is "mingling" or "intermingling," such as in his understanding of screen memories "as an exquisite example of the mingling of fantasy with perception and memory" (p. 38).

In revisiting Arlow's classic paper, I draw on a number of psychoanalytic writers from different analytic traditions in order to "stretch" Arlow's ideas, and to see how they agree or diverge from other currents within

All quotes from Arlow's "Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing" paper take their pagination from the original 1969 publication.

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the literature. Sometimes, I will admit, the stretching is rather speculative, but I think that doing these sorts of comparisons may ultimately serve to highlight Arlow's own ideas with regard to what fantasy and memory are, and what the individual's relation to reality is dependent on—that is to say, what goes into the constitution of one's experiencing. It is also interesting to me to read this work with an eye toward later developments within psychoanalysis. I believe that doing this situates Arlow's piece in the development of the history of psychoanalytic ideas, which broadens our interest in it beyond its importance as a seminal contribution to ego psychology.

FANTASY

Arlow begins his paper by operationally defining his terms. By fantasy he specifically means "a constant stream of inner stimulation" (p. 29), which he compares with the stream of perceptual stimulation the ego receives from its attention to the external world. He calls the "organized mental representations" arising from this stream "fantasy thinking," which is in part constituted by "fantasies and the memory schemata related to the significant conflicts and traumatic events of the individual's life" (p. 29). For Arlow, this type of thinking can be conscious or unconscious, but it is "constant" and "persists all the time" whether we are awake or asleep (p. 29). Interestingly, Arlow claims that "the data or contents of our fantasy thinking become known to us through the process of introspection" (p. 30).

Admittedly, these are just a few lines from the beginning of Arlow's paper, but they are saturated with psychoanalytic assumptions and history, some of which I would like to attempt to unpack. To do this, I draw on the work of Spillius (2001), who noted that Freud wrote no books or even a single paper devoted to the concept of phantasy.[1] She finds his most explicit theoretical statements on the topic in two writings: "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" in 1911 and Lecture 23 of the *Introductory Lectures in Psycho-Analysis* (1916), though she importantly

[1] Spillius, a Kleinian, utilizes only the *ph* spelling of the word *fantasy* for both Klein's as well as for Freud's conception, and in the section of this paper in which I utilize her work, I will follow suit.

observed that Freud "uses the term rather differently in different places" throughout his work (p. 361). Because for Freud the prime psychic mover was the unconscious wish, she observes that he mostly used the term *phantasy* to refer to a wish-fulfilling activity that takes place in the face of instinctual frustration (e.g., Freud 1911). Spillius states: "In Freud's view the basic motive force for phantasy formation is an unconscious wish that is blocked from fulfilment, and the phantasy is a disguised expression and partial fulfilment of this unconscious wish" (2001, p. 362).

Returning to Arlow's work, we find these Freudian ideas embedded in his approach to fantasy. In an extremely complex short paragraph, Arlow writes:

> The perceptions of reality are sensed against the background of individual experience. Memory, recording conflicts, traumata, vicissitudes of the drives and of development are organized in terms of the pleasure-unpleasure principle into groups of schemata centering around childhood wishes. These make up the contents of a continuous stream of fantasy thinking, which is a persistent concomitant of all mental activity and which exerts an unending influence on how reality is perceived and responded to. [p. 29]

In this multileveled experiential process perception (of reality) is always mediated by the experience of the individual, which is internally sorted on the basis of the pleasure principle and ultimately organized in relation, as Freud would have it, to "childhood wishes." What is fascinating here is that Arlow begins this paragraph with reference to perceptions of reality and switches quickly to the idea of fantasy thinking. This creates an ambiguity with regard to the latter conception, which may be thought of either as limiting one's access to an external reality or, in an admittedly more speculative reading in Winnicottian (1971) fashion, as making such access possible, as in the phrase "sensed against the background of individual experience." It is on such an idea that Goldman wrote: "Psychoanalysis, it might be said, takes place where reality—or at least the effort to speak as truthfully as possible about reality—meets up with the vital illusory 'juices' of our minds such that one is not blind to, nor blinded by, the truth" (2017, p. 107).

The above point is especially interesting, given Arlow's stated interest at the beginning of his paper in *distinguishing* perception from ideas, subjective from objective, external from internal and may serve as an early indication of where the paper is going. As fantasy is seen as inevitably mingled with the perception of reality, it increasingly becomes a question as to whether the relation can be unmingled—or should be. Grotstein pointed out:

> Traditionally, when psychoanalysts interpret unconscious fantasies to analysands, the predominating point of view has always been that of external factual reality, for instance, "When you were in the waiting room and heard me on the phone you thought that I was talking with my mistress" (in fantasy)—implying that, factually, I was not. In other words, phantasies have been understood as the prime cause of pathology, and debunking the phantasy by a safe restoration of reality has been thought to constitute the cure. [2004, pp. 115-116]

It would be interesting to approach this issue from other directions, however, perhaps by not simply juxtaposing fantasy with reality but staying with the intermingling of the two and, rather than factually implying what the actual state of things is, to "play with reality" (Fonagy 1995)—and thus help the patient in a developmental task rather than clarifying an epistemic one. As Reed has observed, Arlow's technique "implies the presence of a robust capacity for representation and a considerable degree of psychic organization" (2015, p. 475). The point is salient, I think, because Arlow is implicitly writing about the treatment of neurotics, and today these patients are more rare than common in our practices. This being the case, when reading Arlow's paper, and especially his clinical vignette, we might keep in mind that the very goals of psychoanalysis have changed along with our patient population and now may have less to do with pointing out to patients what is fantasy from what is reality and more to do with helping them to develop mental capacities and representational modes of psychic functioning.

One thing to note, and it may well be an indication of an American's approach, is Arlow's insertion of a consideration for the individual and

his or her history of experience. One doesn't really get the sense of how idiomatic this paragraph is intended to be until one has read it several times. Arlow is writing of an individual's experience—of memory, and its failures, of individual traumas, of the level of drives and how those have been experienced, and how a person's developmental journey has been negotiated. To the degree that Arlow brings all this to bear on the issue of "perceptions of reality," might it be fair to say that he is introducing an appreciation for the individual's unconscious subjective experience?

For Freud, the basic unit of the system unconscious was not phantasy itself, as it was for Klein, but the unconscious wish. Phantasy was the disguised expression and partial fulfilment of that wish that arrives or is formed in consciousness. Arlow's expressed interest is in distinguishing memory, phantasy, and perception so as to have a clearer view of what's real and what's not real. But on the topic of phantasy Spillius writes:

> If they [phantasies] are formed in the *system conscious* or if they are allowed into it—that is, if they are daydreams—they are known not to be true. If they are formed in the *system preconscious* or if they are repressed into it, they will be descriptively unconscious but formed according to the everyday logic of secondary process. If phantasies are further repressed into the *system unconscious*, they become subject to the peculiar logic of the primary process and from their position in the *system unconscious* they may become indistinguishable from memories and may also find their way into dreams, symptoms, symptomatic acts, further preconscious and conscious phantasies, and other drive derivatives. [2001, p. 362; italics in original]

Recall that Arlow described fantasy thinking as made up of "fantasies and the memory schemata related to the significant conflicts and traumatic events of the individual's life." This conception is consistent with the Freudian view thus far stated. But if it is also true, as Spillius has suggested, that phantasies repressed to the level of the system unconscious begin to take on peculiar primary process forms and "may become indistinguishable from memories," then an obvious problem arises for the clinician: How could one ever tell the difference between an unconscious phantasy that has been repressed and an unconscious memory? For that matter, how would we know that the phantasy itself had not originated in the

unconscious, without having originally been preconscious or drawn on conscious derivatives of unconscious wishes, as in the example of the primordial phantasies Freud believed to be inherited and not dependent on the events of external reality for their occurrence—for example, phantasies of the primal scene, of castration, of seduction by an adult?

MEMORY

For Arlow, memory is no more discrete a process than fantasy. Indeed, he writes, it is because there is a "constant intermingling of fantasy and perception" that memories, especially memories from childhood, are "so unreliable" (p. 37). Complexities of recall are grounded by Arlow in the well-known quotation from Freud (1899, p. 322):

> Whether we have any memories at all *from* our childhood: memories *relating* to our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal . . . memories did not . . . *emerge*; they were *formed* at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in the selection of the memories themselves. [quoted in Arlow 1969, p. 38]

Arlow utilizes the quotation to make two points with regard to childhood memories: first, that recollections from childhood do not show us how things were—they show us the experience of the individual at the time (as influenced in its recording by a mingling of fantasy and perception of reality); and second, as per Freud, that they don't even do that, given that the process of recollection itself has an effect on memories, both in terms of their selection as well as their construction/content.

Given this definition of memory, an interesting question to ask may be: What it is *for*, or in other words, what *function* does memory, on this understanding, perform? For Loewald, with his characteristic interest in increasing levels of organization and integration of the ego, memory and memorial activity serves a linking function. It shapes present experience by virtue of the patterning of perceptual experiencing of the past. "Memory, in this broadest sense," he writes, "is the activity by which above all,

some sort of order and organization and some sense of permanence, as well as of movement and change, come into our world" (1976, p. 149). Memory thus becomes the floor or grounding of experience, allowing for organization of perception:

> If memory is that aspect of our activity as humans that links events and phenomena together so that they are more than unrelated bits and pieces, namely, by holding an experience in reproductive continuation while the next one occurs, then perceptions as organizations of simulation events cannot exist without memory. [p. 159]

Key to Loewald's discussion of memory is the notion of perceptual experience, which Arlow has already described as being intermingled with fantasy thinking. One does not passively perceive; instead, experience is actively constituted along numerous dimensions of registration and retention now conceived, at least in part, as motived phenomena. What Loewald adds to Arlow's conceptualization is a consideration of the reciprocal relation between perception and memory. Not only do fantasies influence perception, which becomes memory, but memory in turn influences perception:

> This reproduction—and here we go a step further in our discussion of perception and memory, and object cathexis and narcissistic cathexis—this memorial product, while being itself further organized by new perceptions, in turn further organizes perceptual material. . . . Perception, rather than being the forever fresh and pure receptivity that Freud often claimed it to be, is shot through with memory. Because this memorial element in perceptions is for the most part unconscious and automatic, we take the so-structured material as what we call objective external reality. [Loewald 1976, p. 157]

It seems entirely plausible to me that we could read Arlow's and Loewald's approaches to memory and perception as also reflective of their notions of the development of an unconscious subject of experience. Both would consider the infant to make no distinction between internal world and external world. Thus, the infant would not be able to differentiate a past perceptual act with regard to the external world

from a current memorial act occurring internally. The process of the development of a subject of perception and a subject of memory, then, becomes predicated on drive-related experience (i.e., childhood wishes) that, in the form of fantasy thinking, influences these two functions, I will say, for the purpose of the further development (integration, organization) of an unconscious subject and its relation to, and separation from, its external environment.

REALITY TESTING

Although Arlow begins his paper like a proper positivist, writing about the development of the ability to distinguish between perceptions and ideas, between what is external and what is internal, and between what is subjective and what is objective, he ends it with a reference to Antonioni's motion picture *Blow Up* and the hero's doubt about what is memory, what is fantasy, and what is reality. By the end of the paper, Arlow is writing not about distinguishing these terms from each other but about their connections. Indeed, on page 48, he tells his reader that he has "tried to make room in my conceptualization for the infinite complexity of the relationship between the outer world of perception and the inner world of thought." This comes after Arlow has written that perceptions of reality are sensed against the background of individual experience, which includes quite a large category of phenomena, and that he believes there is a constant intermingling of fantasy and perception. Reality testing is anything but clear and not something that can be simply grasped. Indeed, he calls it a part of a "conglomerate" of ego functions that also include perception, memory, object relations, sense of reality, superego, and reality constancy. Arlow has indeed illustrated through his paper the statement he made in its very first sentence, that the concept of reality testing "is relatively easy to define but quite difficult to comprehend" (p. 28).

After all this, how could Arlow suggest an analogy of the interaction between fantasy thinking and reality, wherein he proposes that the operation of the mind could be compared to two motion picture projectors? Each is supposed to

> flash a continuous series of images simultaneously but from opposite sides onto a translucent screen . . . [so that] there are

> two centers of perceptual input, introspection and exterospection, supplying data from the inner eye and data from the outer eye. It is the function of a third agency of the ego, however, to integrate, correlate, judge, and discard the competing data of perceptual experience. All of these factors influence the final judgment as to what is real and what is unreal. [p. 48]

The reason this analogy fails is because Arlow, to borrow a phrase from Lear, "takes reality as a given" (2000, p. xiv). In introducing the collected papers of Loewald, Lear comments on Freud's neglect in conceptualizing reality: "Freud barely had any *conception* of reality, he simply *appealed* to reality in his explanations. He seems to have assumed that because reality is real, it does not need a conceptualization of its own" (2000, p. xiv; italics in original). Loewald, by contrast, put the ego in relation to reality rather than in opposition to it, which allowed him to address varied forms of reality. It is because of this conceptualization that Loewald can write about the ego's relation to reality, whereas Freud can only make unquestioned appeals to reality. According to Lear:

> It is Loewald who worked through the psychoanalytic significance of the idea that reality is always reality for a subject. Its meaning is never simply given, nor can it ever be simply invoked. A brute appeal to reality can never be the explanatory end-of-the-line. There is always the further question of what shape this reality has for the subject, and what the subject has done with it. . . . Because reality does not come with its own meaning inscribed in it, this opens up the field of meanings that reality can take on. Again, the point is not that we can ascribe different meanings to reality—that is still to treat reality as a brute given onto which we project our fantasies. It is, rather, that in our engaged interactions reality can change in character. [2000, p. xvi]

So where does Arlow come out on this point? It would most likely be said that he has adopted Freud's position with regard to having not conceptualized reality at all, and proof of that comes in the first lines of his essay, where he attempts to sidestep the issue by instructing his reader that "as used in psychoanalysis, reality testing refers to the ability to distinguish between perceptions and ideas. It is quite different from the philosopher's concept of the nature of reality" (p. 28). Indeed, the whole idea of

exterospection seems only to reify the opposition between the ego and some given reality. However, a more speculative reading has Arlow's dual-projector analogy offering a reality for a subject, the shape of which will depend, in a very individually idiomatic sense, on what is coming from the other (inner) projector. That is to say that one could conceptualize the screen itself as a relation or a boundary or membrane that functions as a relation. Granted, what Arlow takes to be the ego's function of judging, correlating, integrating, and discarding the data of perceptual experience in order to judge what is real from what is not real undermines this reading.

Was the ghost of Hamlet's father *really* there? We can understand his appearance in terms of fantasy or memory; but isn't the point really that reality has changed in character? Hamlet's madness is not merely his own. His seeming problem in reality testing reflects that something is rotten, and that he has been changed by the experience of loss—of a father, of a path to the throne, of a love interest, of a mother's loyalty, of childhood mates, of a tutor, and so on. Shakespeare's play reflects the space of infinite complexity in the relationship between the outer world of perception and the inner world of thought *for a subject*. We may, as analysts, have every indication to speculate that the dagger appearing before Macbeth, like the ghost's appearance before Hamlet, results from an amalgam of memory and fantasy, but would we wish to say that they were not real? From Loewald's position one might instead say that this is a change, a regression in the relation to reality, wherein the boundaries *between* ego and reality and the boundaries *of* ego and reality become more fluid and, to varying degrees, get lost. In taking up Arlow's concern for distinguishing what is inside from what is outside, Loewald writes: "In the formation of the ego, the libido does not turn to objects that, so to speak, lie ready for it, waiting to be turned to. In the developmental process, reality, at first without boundaries against an ego, later in magical communication with it, becomes objective at last" (1951, p. 19). But even then, notes Loewald, this relation of integration between ego and reality continues to vary considerably from day to day—as a function of different periods in an individual's life, as a function of varying mood states—people seem to shift considerably in this respect, and perhaps, Loewald concludes, that is not a bad thing:

> In fact, it would seem that the more alive people are (though not necessarily more stable), the broader their range of ego-reality levels is. Perhaps the so-called fully developed, mature ego is not one that has become fixated at the presumable highest or latest stage of development, having left the others behind it, but is an ego that integrates its reality in such a way that the earlier and deeper levels of ego-reality integration remain alive as dynamic sources of higher organization. [1951, p. 20]

DISCUSSION

In revisiting Arlow's classic paper, I have put him in dialogue with several leading psychoanalytic writers for the purpose of mingling their ideas and stretching the original conceptions he describes. I do not think Arlow himself would have been comfortable with these comparisons, but it is just this discomfort that allows us to appreciate some of the more interesting facets of his approach—where it appears to succeed, where it appears limited, where it appears to touch on the approaches of others investigating similar ideas, and where the ideas he was writing about appear dated in the current analytic context.

Although a psychoanalysis of subjectivity was decades away, I believe that the reader can see implicit signs of its emergence in the ways in which Arlow approaches the issues of fantasy, memory, and reality testing as subjective phenomena, that is, as relating to the experiences of an individual unconscious subject and the development of that subject. Arlow's very subtle emphasis on the distinctively subjective qualities of experience can be seen in his discussion of his approach to the perception of reality.

More than anything else, the power of revisiting Arlow's piece for me was encountering the complexity he afforded to his terms. Fantasy, memory, reality testing (and perception) are described in dynamic relation to each of the other terms in ways I found satisfying as compared to some contemporary approaches that can feel clinically naive due to failure to theorize a relation of mingling. In this and other ways, Arlow's contribution continues to educate and inspire analysts seeking to engage the infinite complexity of the relationship between the outer world of perception and the inner world of thought.

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Arlow's "Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing": The World Found and Refound

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ARLOW'S "FANTASY, MEMORY, AND REALITY TESTING": THE WORLD FOUND AND REFOUND

BY JASON A. WHEELER VEGA

Keywords: Arlow, unconscious fantasies, memory, perception, reality testing, Moss, Shapiro, dream screen, screen memories, enactments, pornography.

READING ARLOW

As with any interpretive project, there are a number of ways to approach a writer like Arlow and this paper in particular. A previous revisit in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* of another classic paper by Arlow, his "Unconscious Fantasy and Disturbances of Conscious Experience" (2008/1969; hereafter "Disturbances"), was given two quite different readings, by Shapiro (2008) and Moss (2008). Although his "Disturbances" paper was published concurrently with the one we are currently revisiting, "Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing" (1969; hereafter "Fantasy"), it was in fact presented several years earlier, in 1963, and stands in relation to it as a prototype.

Shapiro (2008) gave an appreciation of Arlow's "Disturbances" and of his legacy in analysis. It was written from the perspective of someone who was taught by and studied with Arlow when he had become a venerable figure, and his reading aimed to deflect looming critiques of Arlow's classical theory and technique. He observes, along with Moss (2008), that the

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All quotes from Arlow's "Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing" paper take their pagination from the original 1969 publication.

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reader of 2008 may notice the absence of the detailed case descriptions and exploration of the analyst's experience that have become common, if not indeed normative. Then, however, Shapiro and Moss diverge. As Shapiro remembers things, against the background of topographical theory and related technique, Arlow and his American colleagues were "the 'moderns'" (2008, p. 49). He briefly praises Arlow's style as "almost lyrical" in places (p. 52). He fills in some gaps in Arlow's exposition, for example noting that he used the idea of *Nachträglichkeit* without naming it (p. 51). And he makes theoretical points, noting for instance that Arlow's work was involved in the decline of the concept of the preconscious (p. 49), where Arlow observed that unconscious fantasies were well structured and contained linguistic elements previously seen as exclusive to the secondary process.

Later in his review, Shapiro develops a defense of Arlow as a classical one-person ego psychological analyst. He anticipates that readers may ask: "Where are the self states and countertransferential issues we have learned to refer to as intersubjectively determined? Where is the analytic third, the two-person psychology, and the enactments so prevalent in our literature during the past thirty years?" (p. 53). Shapiro explains that Arlow believed in *discovery* rather than in the intersubjective co-creation of psychic material (p. 54). He looked for ways that unconscious fantasy "distorted human interactions" (p. 55). The very idea of "distortion" in a classical sense is in question in psychoanalysis today. Nevertheless, Shapiro believes that Arlow's classical approach can elucidate contemporary problems. For example, the concept of an *enactment*, which was developed in more recent intersubjectivist and relational writing, can be understood in Arlow's terms as resulting from the "fortuitous interplay of mutual or complementary unconscious fantasies" (p. 58). I will return to this idea in the final section of this paper.

In bold contrast, Moss (2008) approaches Arlow's "Disturbances" paper by presenting two conflicting readings of it, developed thirty-five years apart. They are both intentionally personal. The first is yearning and compliant; the second is disillusioned and activist. Moss doesn't directly criticize the ideas in the paper, which he says in one place are basically correct (2008, p. 75), so much as its style and tone, which he interprets as revealing a worldview that he finds outdated and

exclusionary. In a way, he complains that Arlow's "Disturbances" paper was not *disturbing* enough.

Moss comments extensively on the form of Arlow's writing and on the metaphors that he chooses. First, on Arlow's voice in the "Disturbances" paper, Moss describes him variously as declarative (pp. 62, 67), confident (pp. 67, 70, 76), agile and easy (p. 62), writing with casual brilliance (p. 63), autonomous (pp. 67, 70), certain (p. 67), audacious (p. 67), Lutheran and reformist (p. 68), assertive (assertoric) (p. 70), dry and academic (p. 74), tranquil (p. 74), stilted (p. 75), and unlike Freud, in writing "without need of an interlocutor, imaginary or otherwise" (p. 67).

Taking up the most vivid element of Arlow's influential model, Moss interprets Arlow's position in his original projector metaphor. He quotes from Arlow:

> It was after Thanksgiving dinner and a friend had brought a movie projector to show the children some animated cartoons. Since we did not have a regulation type movie screen, we used a translucent white window shade instead. During the showing of the cartoons, I had occasion to go outdoors. To my amusement, I noticed that I could watch the animated cartoons through the window on the obverse side of the window shade. [quoted by Moss 2008, p. 63]

Arlow did not just have occasion to go outdoors. He was not accidentally amused. Arlow finds a spot "outside and by himself" looking in at the action (p. 63), which is just where American analysis was at the time, and where it wanted to be (p. 70). Moss extends this metaphor as a critique of Arlow's approach—outside looking in—giving a synoptic overview of something fascinating, amusing even, discovered within the patient by the analyst rather than put together inside the treatment with both the analysand's and analyst's voices heard (pp. 74-75).

As noted, Moss does not say that Arlow is wrong, as such. He writes, "I do not mean to suggest that Arlow's conclusions seem false or misconceptualized. I mean instead to say that, without more presence, the conclusions seem insufficiently weighted" (p. 75). Moss found that after thirty years of working as an analyst, his perspective on Arlow's work had

transformed, from it seeming "both self-defining and classical . . . into a warning example" (p. 65).

It is an American pragmatist insight (among others) that it is not possible to adopt a view from nowhere (Nagel 1989). Shapiro and Moss viewed Arlow from where they stood, and so must we all. I must approach him as someone who was not alive at the time that "Fantasy" was published. I have had some teachers who knew the man or his work (including Don Moss). I was not raised as a faithful Arlowvian, but neither would I say that I've been disappointed by him either. So, from my perspective today, the questions I will be interested in here are: Where did Arlow's ideas in "Fantasy" come from, and what can we still do with them?

"DISTURBANCES" TO "FANTASY"

In addition to those very major concepts named in the title of "Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing," Arlow's paper touches on the psychology of moods, personality, clinical technique, transference analysis, reconstruction, dreaming, metaphor, psychic reality, creativity, countertransference, and applied analysis, among other topics. But we might say more narrowly that in the "Fantasy" paper Arlow gives more mature expression to ideas outlined in "Disturbances." Though the two articles appeared back-to-back in volume 38 of *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, "Disturbances" was written and presented five years earlier.

A metapsychological difference between the two papers has already been mentioned in regard to Shapiro's commentary, above. In "Disturbances," Arlow seems to agree with some other writers that unconscious fantasies are highly organized and contain persistent verbal as well as visual components, which facts "embarrass our methodology" (p. 24), as these qualities are not attributed to the system unconscious. In "Fantasy," Arlow emphasizes the predominance of visual material in unconscious fantasies, making them more consistent with the earlier Freudian model of the primary process. This difficulty, and possible inconsistencies, led Arlow, like Freud, to move toward structural language and away from previous topographical concepts. Instead of the term unconscious fantasy *simpliciter*, Arlow says, "it would be more appropriate to speak of

unconscious fantasy function" (p. 25), more in keeping with the approach of the final Freudian model.

Arlow's central idea, which he states in "Disturbances" (2008, p. 25) and fills out in "Fantasy," is that "fantasy activity, conscious or unconscious, is a constant feature of mental life. In one part of our minds we are daydreaming all the time." There is a tension in both papers between what we might call a *normative* view of the role of fantasy, on the one hand, and a *neurotic* view, on the other. There is some shift of emphasis between the two papers, evident even in the titles, with a gradual inclination from the *neurotic* to the *normative*.

For example, in "Disturbances" Arlow uses the following geological metaphor with regard to the phenomena of metaphor itself: "I have found the examination of metaphor to lead directly to concrete representations of an unconscious fantasy. Metaphor constitutes an *outcropping* into conscious expression of a fragment of an unconscious fantasy" (p. 27; italics added). Although Arlow states later in the "Disturbances" paper that "fantasy activity is a persistent and constant function" (p. 38), it is often described in this paper with a flavor of being found where it should not quite be. He says very similar things still in "Fantasy," as when noting that, although dreaming is the prime example of fantasy thinking, "daydreaming may *intrude upon* the conscious experience of the individual at all levels of wakefulness and somnolence" (p. 33; italics added).

His movement toward a normative view of fantasy begins in "Disturbances." He outlines a reciprocal relationship between perception and fantasy: unconscious fantasies provide a mental set that shapes the interpretation of perceptions, and perceptions may in turn stimulate the activation of unconscious fantasies (p. 28). Notice that in the "Disturbances" paper Arlow is using a two-term model: *fantasy* and *perception*. In "Fantasy" he integrates the role of *memory*, making it a much richer, three-term model.

In "Disturbances" fantasy and memory are contrasted rather than unified. For instance, discussing a clinical example in which the patient had a fantasy that he had not paid a bill that he had in fact paid, Arlow writes, "This vengeful undoing of the payment in fantasy was so vivid that for the moment he could not tell whether his fantasy was real or whether his memory was fantastic" (p. 30). The later, more sophisticated model in

"Fantasy" of the role of memory makes the contrast between the two concepts much less stark.

Arlow's remarkable projector metaphor also takes its initial form in the "Disturbances" paper, as mentioned above in reference to Moss's (2008) discussion. To continue that quotation from "Disturbances" (p. 43):

> It occurred to me that an interesting effect could be obtained if another movie projector were used to flash another set of images from the opposite side of the screen. If the second set of images were of equal intensity to the first and had a totally unrelated content, the effect of fusing the two images would, of course, be chaotic. On the other hand, however, if the material and the essential characters which were being projected from the outside and the inside were appropriately synchronized according to time and content, all sorts of final effects could be achieved, depending upon the relative intensity of the contribution from the two sources.

Here is a memorable picture of inner and outer experience, fantasy and perception, fusing on the screen of the Freudian *Pcpt.-Cs.* system. This is stated even more succinctly in "Fantasy": "The stream of perceptual data from the external world which passes before the outer eye is paralleled by a stream of perceptual data from the inner worlds which passes before the inner eye" (p. 32).

The normative and the neurotic views of this model remain in tension in "Fantasy." For example, Arlow suggests that one can measure how neurotic someone is from how much unconscious fantasy material competes with daily realistic activity (p. 44). In the terms from "Disturbances" quoted above, someone with a strong showing of internal perception that is not consonant with external perception will have a frequently chaotic experience. An example that Arlow gives is of a kind of fetishist who has taken reality itself as a representative for the female genital that cannot be seen, and consequently, "they refuse to face it [reality]. They cannot take a really good look at anything" (p. 44). This makes them impractical, in Arlow's terms. (Another character type met with in psychoanalysis perhaps: the *Impracticals.*) The continued presence of the *neurotic* side of the

tension is one thing, I think, that maintains Arlow's position as a classical analyst.

Like Freud in many of his works, Arlow is assured enough to describe evolutions in his thinking without fear of obsolescence. Describing the development of his quasi-visual analogy of the projector in "Fantasy," he notes, "At first I thought of this relationship in terms that were uncomfortably static" (p. 47), initially using the bibliographic analogy of fantasies as different *editions* of compromises related to wishes, then, more eidetically, as several photographic *slides* one or more of which might be projected, depending on conditions. The eventual projector metaphor made perception an increasingly fluid process.

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

Arlow's central idea of the constant parallel contributions of fantasy, memory, and perception to our mental life is deceptively familiar. One thinks, "Yes, of course!" and imagines that one has read this somewhere before, even if one cannot think of exactly where.

Analogies

One possible prototype for Arlow's memorable projector metaphor is Lewin's concept of the *dream screen* (1946, 1953). Extending Isakower's explanation of looming visual masses approaching as one enters sleep as early memories of the breast, Lewin describes a related phenomenon reported by a patient that prompted his idea of the dream screen: "As it approaches the sleeper, the breast seems to grow; its convex surface flattens out and finally merges with the sleeper. . . . My patient's belated waking up was the reverse experience. The flat screen curved over into a convex surface and went away" (1946, p. 421). This dream screen is "the surface on to which a dream appears to be projected" (p. 420). It is a memory of the mother's breast, the setting for the infant's first experiences of sleep.

Even more evocative as a possible ancestor of Arlow's analogy is Lewin's later commentary on his idea. He observes that in his earlier paper he "thought of the dream as a picture or a projected set of images, and for the reception of these images I predicated a screen much like the one

we see in the artificial night of a dark motion-picture house before the drama has radiated forth from the window of the projection box" (1953, p. 174).

The dream screen concept is widely known. More directly, Arlow (1957) cites Lewin's original dream screen paper in an early short clinical article, cites four other works by Lewin in the "Fantasy" paper, and wrote an obituary and appreciation for him in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (1971) and the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (1973). One can see where elements of Lewin's concept may have been remembered, repurposed, and extended by Arlow in a creative visual metaphorization of his metapsychological ideas.

Analogies can be very useful in showing concepts to people learning analysis and to people in therapy. The film projector analogy no doubt worked smoothly in the era of home movies, but it may be becoming a stretch for people in 2018. Yet it is hard to think of a better one for the idea of the unification of different streams of complex information.

A couple of more contemporary analogies are the *random dot autostereogram*—developed early in the twentieth century but made popular in the 1990s with the *Magic Eye* (N. E. Thing Enterprises 1993) book series—and *virtual reality*, which has recently moved out of exclusive research laboratories and into people's living rooms on home computers and (in a more modest form) even smart phones. In the former, two images are "hidden" in an apparently random picture pattern, which when focused on in a particular way are combined by stereopsis into one apparently three-dimensional image. In the latter, two slightly different moving images are projected, one to each eye, through stereoscope headsets, which are combined by the viewer into a startlingly immersive experience. These share the elements of Arlow's projector analogy of technology allowing the combination of two sources of perceptual information. However, a serious disanalogy is that the two sources are not significantly different in content nor varying in their degree of consonance with each other.

Technology aside, the very process of perception itself, in its most ordinary and everyday forms, could serve as another analogy for Arlow's central ideas. In fact, it is possible that work on the psychology of

perception contemporary with Arlow's work may have had some influence on his thinking.

Arlow seems to want to distance himself from traditional philosophical approaches to the central concepts in "Fantasy" (p. 28). But there is no place to stand entirely apart from the history of ideas. Arlow argues, following Freud, that perception occurs against a background of memory and unconscious fantasy, not in isolation; nothing is perceived simply as it is in itself. Here, at the intersection of empiricism and rationalism, and close to the avowed empiricism of Freud, Arlow stands in the roughly Kantian space that has become the implicit foundation of modern psychology where the mind reaches out toward the world as it approaches.

In "Disturbances" and "Fantasy," I think that Arlow was in touch with a wider spirit in psychology at the time. Perhaps most notably, Neisser's 1967 book *Cognitive Psychology* makes a similar case for a constructivist theory of perception and thought (Neisser 2014). This work was so influential that it was still in use as a textbook when I was an undergraduate in psychology in England in the early 1990s. Strongly influenced by Bartlett's (1932) much earlier work on memory, Neisser integrated the latest research on then disparate fields such as visual and auditory attention, pattern recognition, imagery, speech perception, grammar, executive functions, memory, and creative thought.

It is not obvious that Arlow read Neisser (that I have found), but Neisser clearly read Freud and was unusually respectful of him for an experimentalist of the time, and happy to use his ideas where they could be put to work. He even suggests in his Introduction, tongue in cheek, that his book might have been titled "Stimulus Information and Its Vicissitudes" (2014, p. 4), in homage to Freud's classic metapsychological paper.

Neisser builds throughout his book, tackling topic after topic, toward an integrative theory of cognitive processing that he calls *utilization*, in contrast with what he names the main competing theory at the time, *reappearance*: "The central assertion [of this book] is that seeing, hearing, and remembering are all acts of *construction*, which may make more or less use of stimulus information depending on circumstances" (2014, p. 10). Even the most apparently low-level perceptual phenomena consist of constructive acts. Later manipulations of these acts are constructions of constructions.

He describes the traditional, and incorrect, reappearance model as follows, focused on the functions of memory in particular:

> If Reappearance were really the governing principle of mental life, repetition of earlier acts or thoughts should be the natural thing, and variation the exception. In fact, the opposite is true. Precise repetition of any movement, any spoken sentence, or any sequence of thought is extremely difficult to achieve. When repetition does occur, as in dramatic acting or nonsense-syllable learning or a compulsive sequence of actions, we ascribe it either to long, highly motivated practice or to neurotic defensiveness. [p. 268]

Neisser contrasts this with his own constructive model of memory, which rests on his model of constructive perception:

> One does not see objects simply "because they are there," but after an elaborate process of construction (which usually is designed to make use of relevant stimulus information). Similarly, one does not recall objects or responses simply because traces of them exist in the mind, but after an elaborate process of *re*construction (which usually makes use of relevant stored information). [p. 271]

The functions in Neisser's model that most closely parallel those used by Arlow—fantasy and memory—are usually named *schema* or *schemata*, terms introduced by the neurologist Sir Henry Head in 1920 (Bartlett, 1932, p. 199):

> It is easy to see why the schemata control the fate of stored information; they are themselves information of a similar sort. The hypothesis of the present chapter is that cognition is constructive, and that the process of construction leaves traces behind. The schemata themselves are such constructions, elaborated at every moment in the course of attentive activity. Recall is organized in terms of these structures because the original experiences were elaborated in the same terms. It probably is unwise to think of them as filing systems into which specific memories can be put; they are integral parts of the memories themselves. [Neisser 2014, p. 273]

As I will explore further below, there is some continuity between these ideas about memory and perception from the Bartlett and Neisser family and those from the Freud and Arlow tradition.

Inner and Outer

Arlow indicates some of the roots of this thinking in Freud, and it is clear that Freud tackled each of the important ideas worked over in Arlow's "Fantasy" paper at various points in his theorizing.

In the *Introductory Lectures* (1917), Freud observes that humans are reluctant to let go of infantile sources of pleasure and introduces one of his quintessential Freudian analogies:

> The creation of the mental realm of phantasy finds a perfect parallel in the establishment of "reservations" or "nature reserves" in places where the requirements of agriculture, communications and industry [civilization] threaten to bring about changes in the original face of the earth which will quickly make it unrecognizable. A nature reserve preserves its original state which everywhere else has to our regret been sacrificed to necessity. Everything, including what is useless and even what is noxious, can grow and proliferate as it pleases. [p. 372]

In his pivotal *The Ego and the Id*, Freud (1923, p. 21) speaks directly of internal and external perceptions of the ego. He describes how thoughts, internally generated material, may come to be perceived:

> The part played by word-presentations now becomes perfectly clear. By their interposition internal thought processes are made into perceptions. It is like a demonstration of the [philosophical] theorem [of empiricism] that all knowledge has its origin in external perception. When a hypercathexis of the process of thinking takes place, thoughts are *actually* perceived—as if they came from without—and are consequently held to be true. [p. 23]

Later, in his *New Introductory Lectures* (1933), Freud gives what is perhaps the clearest precursor of Arlow's central idea. He outlines a model of the mind in which the *Pcpt.-Cs.* system is the outermost structure of the ego. It receives perceptions from the external world and also receives stimuli from within the mind. The ego represents the external world to

the id for its general preservation and produces memories of perceptions of the world. The ego must accomplish reality testing, which, in attempting to represent external reality, must "put aside whatever in this picture of the external world is an addition derived from internal sources of excitation" (p. 75). Thus, *as perception occurs* it is infused with internal stimuli that may shape it in accordance with internal wishes or prior memories. Notice that this is more like Arlow's *neurotic* view than his later, more *normative* view of the influence of fantasy, from "Disturbances" and "Fantasy," in that the ego is charged with putting aside the contributions of fantasy and memory to perception.

Although Arlow draws from many places in Freud and later psychoanalytic writing, one of his most important sources is Freud's (1899) extraordinary early paper on *screen memories*. Arlow aims to reframe that article, constructed in the language of the early topographic model, in the light of the later structural theory ("Fantasy," pp. 37-38). Arlow describes screen memories as an "exquisite example of the mingling of fantasy with perception and memory . . . disguised and rearranged in keeping with the defensive needs of the ego" (p. 38). In essence, Arlow's "Fantasy" paper expands and extends Freud's account of the function and construction of screen memories into an account of all conscious experience. In doing so, he seizes on the most radical elements of Freud's account.

Freud (1899, 1901) tended to emphasize the differences between childhood memory and the memory of adults. For example, in a footnote in the "Rat Man" (1909, p. 206), he emphasizes that "we must above all bear in mind that people's 'childhood memories' are only consolidated at a later period, usually at the age of puberty; and that this involves a complicated process of remodeling, analogous in every way to the process by which a nation constructs legends about its early history."

Interestingly, Bartlett also found the special study of childhood memory useful for his theorizing and took a similar view of its development and functioning:

> I have attempted to observe as closely as possible the behavior of young children when they remember. So far as it is valid to guess from this what are the processes actually going on, here also, in very many instances, there comes first an *attitude* and then the recall of the material in such a way as to satisfy, or fortify, the

> attitude. The constant rationalization which remembering effects is a special case of the functioning of this constructive character upon which memory is largely based. [1932, p. 207; italics added]

Freud argues that screen memories are formed as a compromise between a force that wants to remember and one that wants to forget (1899, p. 307). Arlow extends the metaphor of forces in conflict resulting in compromise. For Arlow, in "Disturbances," the dominating psychic forces are unconscious fantasy and conscious perception. Later, in "Fantasy," he adds memory as a third force.

The languages of "selecting" or "choosing" memories versus "making" or "constructing" them are equivocal throughout the "Screen Memories" essay, as if they were competing alternatives. Freud's interlocutor in that article takes up the case for the construction of the early screen memory from the whole cloth of later phantasy, whereas Freud argues for the selection of a memory with a fortuitous fit with later material, and the selective emphasis of early memory material rather than wholesale creation, though they both speak the alternative view at various points.

In his long (autobiographical) case example, Freud seems perhaps a little too quick to assume the genuineness of some childhood memories—their status as discovered rather than created—by emphasizing certain elements of them that seem to him unrelated to the fantasy material reconstructed in the analysis. For example, speaking to his interlocutor:

> For instance, your boy cousin helping you to rob the little girl of her flowers [botanical]—can you make any sense of the idea of being helped in deflowering [sexual] someone? or of the peasant woman and the nurse in front of the cottage? "Not that I can see." So the phantasy does not coincide completely with the childhood scene. . . . That argues in favour of the childhood memory being genuine. [Freud 1899, pp. 318-319]

Well, perhaps we could make sense of these ideas. If we assume the "complete" Oedipus complex in "normal" as well as "neurotic" people, as Freud later asserts in *Three Essays* (1905, pp. 145-146) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923, p. 33), why might not an inexperienced younger man have some attraction to and want help with something currently beyond him from an older male figure? Could not two older female figures, one

actually giving nourishment (the peasant woman) and one standing for it (the nurse), provide safer substitute satisfactions for the bashful infant or adolescent seducer? It is at least possible to imagine these, even from within Freud's theories, as the constructions of fantasy as well as discovered recollections.

Arlow quotes approvingly from the following most radical formulation in Freud's "Screen Memories" essay: "The recognition of this fact [that some vivid childhood memories are falsified by adult observers] must diminish the distinction we have drawn between screen memories and other memories derived from our childhood. It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all *from* our childhood: memories *relating* to our childhood may be all that we possess" (quoted in "Fantasy," pp. 37-38). But, then, as Freud warns his interlocutor, if we say there is no distinction between memory and fantasy, "You are going too far" (1899, p. 318).

We do, I think, need to preserve some distinction between memory and fantasy, yet Arlow's extended account, like Neisser's, emphasizes that we have perhaps no *pure* perceptions of the world from which memories may be formed, only ones *relating to* the world. For Arlow, the world is continuously created as a compromise between fantasy, memory, and perception, between discovery and construction. Arlow's integrative work helps us see that it is misleading to state these as oppositions.

APPLICATIONS

Having looked at some different ways to read Arlow and at some of the origins and relatives of his concepts, another question of interest here is whether there are still uses for his ideas. The following three examples, particularly the last, are admittedly brief and speculative.

Interpretation

In the realm of technique, Arlow was interested in the interplay between fantasy and perception as the "immediate tactical approach of the therapist" ("Fantasy," p. 34). A patient of mine, in analysis for several years, reveals a fantasy at the beginning of a session. She has recently been talking about plans for her imminent wedding. She comes in, puts down a

large purse next to the couch, and lies down. One handle flops down against the side of the bag from where it had briefly balanced upright. My patient says: "I just had the thought that my bag was falling over and everything was spilling out, my sports bra and workout clothes, my underwear. I should have zipped it up outside but forgot." I say that it sounds like some worry just intruded itself (taking, I now realize, a *neurotic* or *distorting* approach to the infusion of this fantasy material into her auditory perception). She responds with a series of associations:

> Exposing all those things. I see them strewn all over the floor. A sweaty heap. My bag unzipped, open. It sounds like I want to show you those things, my sports bra and underwear. As if they've been removed in a hurry and left on the floor. This sounds like I want to have sex with you on the couch, or on the floor. The bag unzipped, like my fly unzipped, like me open to you. The damp workout clothes like me overly excited. The deep bag like in Mary Poppins, lots of pockets and things inside, a lamp, unusual things.

In the (lamp) light of these associations and Arlow's theory, a minor movement of the bag and its hidden contents form a bridge between a pressing line of unconscious fantasy and my patient's perceptions of things in the outer world. She hears something happen with the bag, and her perception is infused with a rich vein of fantasy material.

I suggest to her that the bag is a condensed image of both her mind, with its bottomless wishes, and her body, now open, now shut, zippered tight. Also, that one of the most striking things about it is the contrast between the contents of the bag—her steamy fantasy life—and her usual Mary Poppins–like buttoned-up-ness. Even us talking about all of this wild, sweaty material had a somewhat starched and impenetrable feeling—there was not much excitement or danger in the room that I could detect. She responds with another rich set of associations:

> My fiancé and I were having sex the other day on the floor in the living room. Well, we tried. We felt awkward and went to the bedroom. It seemed like my knees were getting burned; he felt awkward too, and the lights were too bright out there. The bedroom, darker and safer. I'm wearing a black turtleneck today. Its funny, sometimes I don't feel very sexual at all, and other times like I

> could be way too sexy, like something could happen if I don't keep it all under control. And then the other day I was thinking of buying a sex manual, with positions and illustrations.

I offer that she hoped a manual would have a magical effect on her and her fiancé, when in fact knowledge was not the main issue. She's worried about a dangerous animalistic side of her from which she retreats, converting doggy-style sex under bright circus lights into something sedate and turtle-like in the darkened bedroom. She feels some urgency about her last chances to do something wild and dangerous with me before her wedding and its implied domestication.

My patient's associations began with her hearing a sound from her bag and imagining the contents spilling out. The contents of her fantasies pour out in a series of striking associations. Though rich in content, they are weak in affect. She is someone who turns *coitus a tergo* into *cogito a tergo*.

Enactment

In his review of "Disturbances," Shapiro (2008) picks up the importance that Arlow places on the "consonance" between a real situation and an unconscious fantasy. Interpreting his long clinical example in "Fantasy," Arlow refers to the value of noticing "adventitious words describing the realistic setting in which introspective data are perceived" (p. 37). As with the day residue in a dream, external details are not chosen at random but because of their consonance with the activated and activating internal fantasy material; namely, the *purse* in the previous example, with all its expectable "Freudian" associations. Shapiro suggests that Arlow would have understood the now widely studied phenomena of enactments as occasions when there was a "fortuitous interplay of mutual or complementary unconscious fantasies" (2008, p. 58).

A supervisee describes a difficult session with a borderline adolescent about some high-risk behaviors. She feels like she had gotten into a fight with her in the session. The patient is protesting that she does not want to be in therapy and does not want to discuss anything personal either with her therapist or her mother. The therapy has never really gotten off the ground, but my supervisee has been reluctant to let the case go. She is

feeling confused and unable to think clearly, and the patient begins to laugh at her. Flustered, she misspeaks and tells the patient, "I need to speak with my mother." The slip "my mother" was obviously supposed to have been "your mother." The therapist immediately has a vivid memory of arguing with her sister and feeling similarly tongue-tied and ridiculed, and wanting to turn to her disappointing and self-involved mother for help.

One way to think about this enactment, using Arlow's language of *consonance*, is that the patient's powerlessness and anger are projected onto the therapist at the same time as the therapist's memories of relating with her own sister and mother are reactivated. Though it didn't feel much like it at the time, this was actually a "fortuitous interplay" of internal and external forces. My supervisee's particular sensitivity to these interpersonal patterns brought to life something in the session that, though she experienced it as getting into a fight, was potentially illuminating both for herself and her patient and family. For instance, my supervisee can work to further master her conflicts about getting into "fights" (though she retreats in the moment) and her reluctance to retreat from losing situations (as she finds it hard to give up the case).

Pornography

A third area where Arlow's ideas might be put to work is sexuality, and even more so in the now seemingly ubiquitous realm of online pornography and its problematic uses. Though not explicitly concerned with the use of pornography, Arlow was interested in problems of masturbation as an aspect of sexuality, and he mentions this in his "Disturbances" paper. Arlow borrowed the idea of the "entire masturbation complex" (1953, p. 48) from Freud, for whom the complete masturbatory act is a "compound" of an autoerotic motor behavior and some conscious fantasy material to which it has become contingently associated, "merely soldered together" (1908b, p. 161), in a favorite phrase. This monadic material is then usually later connected with a fantasy about a love object, hence the turn of most masturbatory fantasies outward toward other people, in some form.

Fantasy is an essential and omnipresent component of masturbation. Freud (1908b, p. 161) noted that many unconscious fantasies were once

conscious infantile masturbatory fantasies that have become repressed. The content of the fantasy may stay the same or be altered by defensive transformations, becoming modified derivative fantasies. Masturbatory fantasies active in porn use are determined as compromises between the expression of a wish and defense against a wish, often condense multiple fantasies including both libidinal and aggressive drive derivatives (Arlow 1953, p. 56), and usually contain bisexual elements in the compound masturbatory act (Freud 1908b, pp. 164-165). As Arlow (1953, p. 55) puts it, "almost all masturbation involves the acting out of complementary roles" such as active-passive, male-female, submissive-dominant. This is a lot to try to fit into an actual adult sexual life.

Though with a focus on conscious daydreaming, Freud noted that "a happy person never phantasies, only an unsatisfied one. The motive force of phantasies are unsatisfied wishes, and every single phantasy is the fulfillment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality" (1908a, p. 146). Almost by definition, real sexual lives are frustrating and unsatisfying compared to their fantasied equivalents, and masturbatory fantasies offers a "nature reserve" of sorts. Some people prefer their private fantasy lives to reality and become *introverts*, in Freud's term (1917, p. 374), turning away, to greater or lesser degrees, from an unwilling world.

People approach pornography perhaps with some conscious intent to find arousing material for masturbation. But soon unconscious fantasy themes steer them through a kind of associative process that is facilitated by the most common method of presenting internet pornography, the thumbnail gallery—an internet page containing small clickable links that preview larger pictures or video clips. Porn surfers may click from link to link in a roughly free associative manner (constrained by advertising and other hidden factors), sometimes arriving at places they had not set out to find, though often by well-trodden paths.

Porn surfers come to the perceptual stimuli of pornographic images and films with conscious and unconscious fantasies and memories of actual and vicarious sexual experiences. Associative surfing may bring in new perceptual material to add to their previous sexual schemata. The compulsive hunt for ever new, varied, and intensified material is driven by the most powerful drives and channeled into compelling fantasy formulae. In pornography, people go looking for a wished-for situation,

relationship, or event and actually find it. Imagine, regularly finding your deepest wishes, and the wishes of others, come true!

Film, broadly speaking, offers some of the easiest and most immersive forms of trial identification. I imagine myself a protagonist, or adversary, or both, and think what they might think and feel what they might feel. Some characters and experiences from film can stay with us for our whole lives and shape our lives as much as real people do. In "Fantasy" Arlow observes (following a later Freudian line): "The first and immediate aim. . . of reality testing is not to *find* an object in real perception which corresponds to the one presented, but to *refind* such an object, to convince oneself that it is still there" (p. 31). But reality testing itself is compromised by the vividness and intensity of pornographic material and at both ends, as it were: in perception and in memory.

The idea of reality testing was introduced by Freud (1895) in the baroque vocabulary of the *Project* as a way for the psyche to distinguish between external perceptions, on the one hand, and wishful ideas or memories (taken as the same at this point), on the other. Later, in "The Psychology of the Dream-Processes" (1900), Freud observes that "the bitter experience of life," reality, interrupts the first efforts at thinking, which aim to reproduce a perception as a means to satisfying a wish. But a memory or fantasy leaves us hungry:

> An internal cathexis [wish for nourishment] could only have the same value as an external one [perception of nourishment] if it were maintained unceasingly, as in fact occurs in hallucinatory psychoses and hunger phantasies, which exhaust their whole psychical activity in clinging to the object of their wish. In order to arrive at a more efficient expenditure of psychical force, it is necessary to bring the regression [from feeling of hunger to hallucination of nourishment] to a halt before it becomes complete, so that it does not proceed beyond the mnemic image [memory of feeding], and so is able to seek out other paths which lead eventually to [actions that cause] the desired perceptual identity [actual repetition of the remembered state of feeding] being established from the direction of the external world. [p. 566]

Reality testing is the mechanism whereby remembering an event is interrupted so that one can orient oneself to the world to seek a real

satisfaction. With a continuous stimulus, one may never turn outward to the world, remaining in an introverted state. Viewing pornography is very like viewing a fantasy made flesh. Continual viewing leaves someone with little motivation to turn outward to an often unwilling world to try to actualize one's sexual wishes. With reality testing compromised in this way, perception of externalized fantasies in the form of pornography takes the place of action in the wider world.

In watching pornography, intense images may then stay with us in the form of memories that are as clear as if they were of actual experiences—clearer even, being expertly lit, filmed, and acted—exciting and vicariously satisfying experiences that we have lived through, in a fashion, and that may be retained as a form of screen memory. Memories of wishes can be indistinguishable in form and power from what we may call veridical memories. Wishing then operates, in its usual way, to try to bring about again the remembered scene, as if of a "real" past experience. Searching to refind the remembered experiences, one goes back to the origin of the memory, to the pornographic sources, with new memories and new derivative wishes formed into unconscious fantasies, with all the power of the drives behind them.

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A Political Exploration of Psychoanalysis: *Political Freud: A History*, by Eli Zaretsky

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A POLITICAL EXPLORATION OF PSYCHOANALYSIS: *POLITICAL FREUD: A HISTORY,* BY ELI ZARETSKY

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As a historian, Eli Zaretsky is well situated to provide an analysis of the development of psychoanalysis from its origins to the present. In this context, unlike others who have attempted to do this by focusing their attention primarily on metapsychological issues and the clinical work that flows from those suppositions, Zaretsky contextualizes these matters by providing a political, economic, social, and cultural framework. He did this initially in an earlier work, *Secrets of the Soul* (2004), but in his most recent book, *Political Freud*, he expands on this earlier work by exploring the manner in which Freud's ideas have been responded to, especially in the United States, from approximately 1900 to the present. Of particular importance to Zaretsky are the theoretical, clinical, and political implications of these responses. According to him, Freud's ideas have been diluted by many of those both inside and outside of the psychoanalytic community.

In addition, Zaretsky is concerned that although Freud's work focused on the nature of inner life, particularly the world of the unconscious, and was therefore not overtly political, it still had a political

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dimension that has not been adequately addressed. In the process of exploring this dimension, Zaretsky is bound by his political orientation, which is contestable. He utilizes a specific lens that is outside of the American mainstream, for he speaks of his commitment to socialism and to the importance of "collective values such as public goods and social solidarity" (p. 184). This commitment very much colors his presentation, especially some of his assertions, in ways that could be construed positively or negatively depending upon one's political orientation.

In his assessment, Zaretsky provides "two meanings" of *Political Freud*—"as a way of understanding history and as a product of history" (pp. 1-2). His allegiance to the political Left infuses his presentation; for example, he often utilizes the perspectives of Marx to explain how we should understand Freud's work in a historical context. Very early in his book, he states that the "plausibility" of psychoanalysis

> was undermined through the dynamics of consumer capitalism, the commercial ambition of pharmaceuticals and insurance companies, the openness of the public sphere to any sensational claim, no matter how ill-founded, the politics of gender and sexuality, and the changing meanings of private life. [pp. 1-2]

Since the utilization of Freud's perspectives in America is central to his book, Zaretsky is particularly interested in the way that so many psychoanalysts turned away from some of Freud's most important ideas. At the heart of this observation is Zaretsky's belief that the concept of developing an autonomous ego that is rooted in the dynamic unconscious, which can be approached only through the analysis of resistances, has been gradually lost. This has led to an equally important loss of the ability to examine and transform the public sphere, such that "in the 1970s the critical tradition of political Freudianism was largely obliterated" (p. 4).

More specifically, Zaretsky is critical of those who have moved away from an exploration of the idea of "a unique, idiosyncratic intrapsychic life" (p. 5), with its emphasis upon the power of the unconscious, especially the sexual and aggressive instincts. In its place, another perspective has emerged, which tends to de-emphasize the power of the instincts in favor of a view that stresses the perspective that "the ego is formed through recognition, object relations, and language" (p. 11).

Zaretsky is aware that innovators of classical psychoanalytic theory have at times expanded its scope, especially in the degree to which they have elaborated on the fact that vulnerability and dependence are a central aspect of our lives, but he is very troubled that too often this has led to a loss of "the focus on ego autonomy that gave psychoanalysis its critical force" (p. 11).

Zaretsky reiterates a view he advanced in *Secrets of the Soul*, that the notion of ego autonomy emerged, in part, out of an awareness of the constraints on developing a personal life imposed by capitalism in the nineteenth century. He defines personal life as "the experience of having an identity distinct from one's place in the family, in society, and in the social division of labor" (2004, p. 20). Zaretsky emphasizes the unique aspect of this condition by pointing to

> a historically specific experience of singularity and interiority sociologically grounded in industrialization and urbanization. The separation (both physical and emotional) of paid work from the household, which is to say the rise of industrial capitalism, gave rise to new forms of privacy, domesticity, and intimacy. [2004, p. 20]

As part of this process, there occurred what was thought of as a progressive transformation of values from an emphasis on personal discipline and restraint to a greater stress on personal release and instant gratification. This encouraged a significant number of Americans to turn their attention away from larger social problems and toward more of an interest in inner experience. Concomitantly, those who were interested in large-scale political and economic problems failed to take into sufficient account "the irrational or unconscious dimension of historical experience" (p. 4).

Although Zaretsky acknowledges the repressive features of the old order, he feels that the emphasis on constantly seeking instant pleasure made it increasingly difficult for the American people to struggle with the memory of the past, as, for example, in the unwillingness to deal fully enough with the history of slavery. Freud's concept of repression, then, is useful not only in terms of understanding private life but also in terms of its relevance to the way we approach larger social issues. According to

Zaretsky, for Freud this involved "an ethical commitment to self-reflection" (p. 13).

It is that commitment which Zaretsky also feels is necessary if progressive social change is to occur today. For him, the willingness of those individuals who are participating in current political movements to explore the intrapsychic dimension of their experience is essential. Without this, "the blind spots of the past" will be overlooked, which may lead to a failure "to identify the regressive forces of our own time, which, as always, present themselves as the most progressive" (p. 14).

In analyzing and assessing our current condition, he first explores the relationship between psychoanalysis, Protestantism, and capitalism. Drawing heavily on Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Zaretsky speaks of the importance of "thrift, discipline, and self-denial" (p. 16) that accompanied the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These virtues later became detached, in part, from their religious framework as a more secular worldview took hold, especially in the nineteenth century, when industrial capitalism became pervasive. The concern with religious salvation diminished as the economic production of goods became increasingly important.

A concomitant change occurred as the Protestant emphasis upon introspection as a way to achieve religious goals was undermined by an interest in psychological issues conceived of in a secular manner. With the further development of capitalism in the twentieth century that included mass production and consumption, psychoanalysis began to enter public awareness, in part because it encouraged people to examine the kinds of restrictions, especially upon sexuality, that had been imposed in the past. Freud's structural theory of the mind was an appealing set of ideas, with its emphasis upon the need simultaneously to modulate the power of the superego and to utilize the ego in order to allow for both the expression and sublimation of one's sexuality.

According to Zaretsky, in the period after World War I until approximately 1939, psychoanalysis adapted to changes in capitalism that occurred largely as a result of the emergence of large corporations. This involved a change in the conditions that existed in many workplaces. Instead of constantly subjecting workers to highly mechanical, routinized, and often brutal conditions, workplaces became at times somewhat more

humane, as managers were increasingly employed to implement forms of "scientific planning and efficiency" as well as the manufacture of "cheap, mass consumption goods" (p. 24).

As part of this process, workers benefited from these changes because they began "to gain flexibility and control," "even on the assembly line" (p. 24). All this had an impact on psychoanalysis, which "became a mass cultural phenomenon, integral to and diffused by the new mass media, such as film and radio." The new media "helped generate the utopian ideology of individuality that accompanied mass consumption" (p. 18).

During this same period, psychoanalysis adapted to changes brought by events immediately surrounding World War I, especially the problem of dealing with shell-shocked soldiers. Together with the Russian Revolution and the rise of fascism in Germany, there arose a greater interest in aggression. This was a major factor in Freud's revision of his metapsychology, with its emphasis upon the conflict between Eros and the death instinct.

This interest was reinforced by World War II, which pointed not only to the power of aggression but also to the degree to which people were vulnerable to forces over which they had little or no control. That vulnerability was increasingly viewed in relation to the template for human development because of the lengthy period during which the infant and the child are highly dependent on the early caretakers, most often the mother.

It was in this context that the work of Melanie Klein became important as an increasing number of psychoanalysts came to view the mother's ability to care for her infant emotionally as the foundation for later development. Freud's primary interest in oedipal phenomena, which involved the centrality of the father, gave way, especially in England, to an equal interest in preoedipal phenomena.

According to Zaretsky, an "ethic of care" (p. 134) emerged that, at its best, acknowledged the psychic depths of the unconscious and also contributed to the development of social democracy politically. But the emphasis on vulnerability also led to a de-emphasis on the power of the ego and the use of reason as ways to develop a theory of the nature of a just society.

In this context, Zaretsky is especially concerned that the ethical component of this object-relations perspective turned away from Freud's emphasis upon the importance of universal moral norms that is suggested in his conception of the superego. In its place, what was emphasized more was the idea of "meeting concrete obligations to particular others" (p. 29).

A somewhat comparable perspective took hold in the United States as Freud's structural theory led to the emergence of ego psychology, which too often stressed the importance of social adaptation through the power of the ego to control unconscious forces, especially the instincts. For Zaretsky, this was problematic because it helped prop up too much the idea of a welfare state that served some of the needs of many people yet did not acknowledge sufficiently the nature of inequality in America.

Accompanying this perspective in the 1950s was the development of a "maturity ethic" (p. 30) that was fueled by McCarthyism. Dissent was stifled and conformity promoted in an atmosphere of hysterical anti-communism. Attempts to counter this perspective were successful only insofar as McCarthyism lost most of its power, but what emerged was "a new, technocratic, 'growth'-oriented liberalism that supplanted the New Deal and created the context in which the maturity ethic flourished" (p. 154).

As part of these developments, there was an emphasis on living in a nuclear family that stressed traditional gender roles and embraced the pleasures of consumption. In the realm of politics, the idea that America was a pluralistic society was stressed, which turned dissent into ideological blustering, especially when it came from the Left. For Zaretsky, this atmosphere "was fertile ground for a debased reading of psychoanalysis" (p. 155) that involved discouraging the expression of strong feelings. This was most notable in the work of some who embraced ego psychology.

As the 1950s drew to a close, this point of view began to be undermined, for on the horizon were "the looming critique of rationalization" and "the charismatic rejection of the mundane" (p. 32) by a large number of people who rejected the maturity ethic. For Zaretsky, this was especially the case for those who embraced the New Left politically. As much as he sympathizes with some aspects of that rebellion, he is very concerned that too often the New Left embraced the idea of "instinctual release" (p. 149).

As a result, "the goal of ego autonomy" was too often lost sight of and was replaced with "the idea of an 'oceanic feeling,' or primal unity, rooted in the infant's earliest relation to the mother" (p. 149). The loosening of inhibition that this entailed was aligned in some ways with the growth of the consumer economy as a counterculture emerged that was intent upon embracing what was thought to be new forms of individuality as this might be expressed in a variety of contexts.

Zaretsky points to the popularity of "the *Whole Earth Catalog*, and a new model of work, symbolized by Silicon Valley," both of which "bridged the utopianism of the sixties with the entrepreneurialism of the seventies" (p. 169). He also states that "although the dominant ideology associated with the market was one of rational choice, neoliberalism was also able to capture much of the creativity previously associated with the unconscious and with private life" (p. 169).

It is with this in mind that Zaretsky speaks of the development of the "post-Fordist ethic," "characterized by hedonism (or narcissism), flexibility, and empowerment" (p. 150). In speaking of flexibility, he is referring to the rise of "the network society, typically linked to globalization, enhanced immigration, and the two-earner family" (p. 181). The narcissistic dimension is especially important for Zaretsky when he speaks about Freud's belief in the necessity for the sublimation of instincts, which was central to his emphasis on the importance of love and work. In its place, a new ethic emerged that tended to celebrate too much the continual searching after new experiences in the private realm and a loss of a sense of the importance of public life, especially in a disengagement from politics.

According to Zaretsky, despite these failures, attempts were made that utilized either implicitly or explicitly Freud's thought to further understand the issues referred to above and also to engage in political protest. The major examples that he cites are the activities bound up with black resistance, the emergence of the New Left in the 1960s, and the subsequent widespread revival of feminism.

In his discussion of various forms of black resistance, which he explores primarily from approximately 1920 to 1960, Zaretsky provides his most positive assessment of political Freudianism within the framework that he establishes in his book. His major focus is on "the

transformation in the self-image of American Blacks" (p. 38). In speaking of Freud's appeal to black people, he refers to their awareness of the importance of understanding "the irrationality of racism" and the need to "overcome this horrendous legacy . . . through mourning, working through, and the constitution of collective memory" (p. 39).

In this context, he draws upon Hegel's ideas about the stages of the master–slave relationship. He begins with a discussion of the way that the slave first must confront the problem of dealing with an ongoing sense of the presence of the oppressor. For example, in the United States, we see this in the emergence within the music world of the blues, an art form that was "closely linked to psychoanalysis" in reflecting both "the emotion-wracked collective voice of an oppressed group" and "the personal voice of the individual longing for emancipation" (p. 41).

Zaretsky points to how this condition is analogous to the way that analysts are often concerned with resurrecting the past, which inevitably arouses "*defenses* or *resistances*" and is often accompanied by a great deal of "shame, guilt, and anger" (p. 42, italics in original). Some of the work of W. E. B. DuBois reflects these concerns, since he points to the way that psychoanalysis could be useful to address the psychological dimension of the oppression of black people.

For Zaretsky, the second stage of the relationship between the master and the slave is best understood as a moment of awareness on the part of the enslaved that risking one's life in order to obtain freedom is a possibility. His major example here can be found in the life and work of Richard Wright, who utilized the ideas of both Marx and Freud. Wright described the social and psychological agony of black people in his fictional characters, such as Bigger Thomas in his novel *Native Son*, as well as in his autobiography, *Black Boy*. In both of these works, he drew upon psychoanalysis, particularly its emphasis on the importance of sexuality and aggression as well as the significance of traumatic memory in human development.

Of particular importance to Wright was the way that blacks internalized the negative views that whites had of them. He viewed this as a ubiquitous problem, which in part led him, given his interest in Marx, to open a clinic for low-income people of all ethnicities in Harlem with a psychiatrist, Frederick Wertham. Zaretsky states that Wright's experience gathered at this clinic, "linked as it was to the Supreme Court integration

decision, provides an indelible moment in situating Freudianism in African American memory as it exists today" (p. 62). In addition, Wright's written work and his commitment to the clinic reflected some of the forms of activity engaged in by members of the Popular Front, who promoted not only a communal vision but also the importance of "individual subjectivity" (p. 62).

In the next incarnation of political Freudianism, the Popular Front's preoccupation with equality tended to shift to an emphasis on freedom. Zaretsky's principal example here is the impact of the struggle against colonialism after World War II. His focus is less on American forms of this struggle and more on the work of African and Caribbean intellectuals, most of whom exemplified Hegel's third stage of the relationship between master and slave. In this stage, the master's role changes drastically and involves becoming "dependent on the slave," whereas "the slave's consciousness exists 'for itself'" (p. 39).

Given his focus on America in the book, Zaretsky points out that Freud's thought was utilized not so much to oppose colonialism as to temper dissent. This was the case especially in the 1950s, when the Cold War mentality elevated anti-communism to a position of preeminence, rather than the struggles of the colonized for freedom. Since those struggles at times involved people who were committed to communism, the opposition of the United States often took virulent forms. Although once again the maturity ethic was invoked by the American intelligentsia, there were forms of opposition, particularly "artistic radicalism, including music such as the blues, jazz, and bebop" (p. 65), as well as the literary work of members of the Beat Generation.

In Europe, the maturity ethic was challenged by such figures as Sartre, whose ideas about existentialism emphasized the importance of individuality and subjectivity. Even if Sartre was critical of much of psychoanalysis, Freud's ideas "brought to existentialism" (p. 66) the role of the past in shaping people's lives.

To illustrate this, Zaretsky uses the work of Frantz Fanon, a psychoanalytically oriented psychiatrist "who sought to synthesize the existentialist subject and the Freudian unconscious in his historically framed conception of a 'racial complex'" (p. 66). Zaretsky's emphasis upon the importance of memory in the construction of individual subjectivity is stressed

by Fanon, who believed that understanding the impact of the past, particularly as it resides in the unconscious, could promote not just individual change but also social and political change that had revolutionary potential with regard to the defeat of colonialism. For Fanon, external subjugation, as this occurred over time, led to internal subjugation by the colonized, who unconsciously adopted many of the colonizers' negative beliefs about them. This is the nucleus of the racial complex.

In making these observations, Fanon drew on the psychoanalytic emphasis upon the importance of the infant–mother relationship, which for him served as a template for understanding the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer with regard to the nature of dependence. Therefore, Zaretsky states that "Fanon's sense of the colonial power as a negligent and often cruel mother lies behind the pathos of his entire contribution to African American and Afro-Caribbean memory" (p. 70).

Fanon observed how often black people wished to be white because they had so thoroughly internalized the whites' view that people of color were highly aggressive and sexually rapacious, to name just a few of the many highly derogatory stereotypes. In addition, Fanon pointed to the psychoanalytic idea of castration, which in this context involved fear of the father as an embodiment of colonial domination.

Zaretsky, then, was very impressed with the manner in which Freudian thinking was utilized to explore the plight of black people. However, with regard to the New Left of the 1960s, he believes that it failed to engage Freudian thought carefully. A common option was simply to reject Freud because of his sexism by citing those aspects of his theorizing about women's experience that, according to Zaretsky, were rightly challenged. Another option was to disregard Freud because of the way that he did not engage fully with the political realities of his time, especially the danger of Nazi Germany. Others were inclined to dismiss his work because of his heavy emphasis upon the power of the instincts and his failure to explore more fully the manner in which the environment shapes our inner lives.

These negative views of Freud were only one dimension of the limited way that his work was approached by many members of the New Left. Of equal concern for Zaretsky was the way that a significant number of those who identified with this group embraced the work of theorists such as Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown. According to Zaretsky, these

figures utilized Freud's work in such a way that they did not acknowledge enough the importance of ego functioning. This resulted from their emphasis upon the ego as that system of the mind that was intent upon controlling the world in an aggressive manner, which in turn would be used to provide justification for the exploitative features of capitalism.

For Zaretsky, these thinkers went too far in the way that they advocated a relaxation, if not dissolution, of ego controls, which ultimately led to a reinforcement of "the infantile well of self-love and merger with the mother's body" (p. 165). Zaretsky suggests that the emphasis upon the need for instinctual liberation, especially Eros, by Marcuse and Brown resulted in a celebration by the New Left of what Freud would describe as primary narcissism, as opposed to a critical engagement with the public world. Ultimately, "the New Left began to disintegrate into assorted grouplets and crowd crystals, of which radical feminism was the most enduring" (pp. 168-169).

I believe that Zaretsky is too quick to generalize in his discussion of the New Left, whose composition was extremely complex, given its varied political and cultural components. In addition, although he does recognize that radical feminism had a major positive impact on certain aspects of American life, he tends to be overly critical of it. At the center of his critique is the way that some feminists, like parts of the New Left, totally rejected Freud's work because of its real limitations with regard to its descriptions of women's experience.

Zaretsky does acknowledge that there were feminists who developed a more complex perspective. For example, he states that in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Juliet Mitchell argues that Freud's ideas should be viewed as "a theory of how a psychology of female inferiority is created in early childhood" in the context of a patriarchal society and not as a "*prescription*" (p. 173, italics in original) for such a society. However, Zaretsky is critical of this work by Mitchell: he believes that it does not deal adequately with the relationship between patriarchal forms under capitalism, since it focuses primarily on "kinship" (p. 174).

According to Zaretsky, other feminists who utilized Freud's work did so in order to describe the way that the family was, essentially, not only a place where women were likely to be dominated but also a place where "respect, love, and sexual desire" (p. 176) existed. But he argues that

among these feminists, there was not enough exploration of the nature of the unconscious. This became even more pronounced as the feminist movement increasingly focused upon increasing women's ability to connect with one another. Central to this process was the flowering of women's groups, which Zaretsky criticizes for their focus on the details of everyday life, especially intimate relationships. He calls this "the triumph of narcissism in its group-psychological form" (p. 178).

However, he does not elaborate on the way that this strand of feminism developed, in part, because of the way that women were exploited as members of the male-dominated New Left. Zaretsky then suggests that women cut themselves off from the radical political project of the 1960s and ultimately allowed themselves to be absorbed into "the new spirit of capitalism," which "assumed the naturalness of egoism or, as it came to be called, rational choice" (p. 180). In the women's movement, identity politics moved to the center of attention, which for Zaretsky was a reflection of primary narcissism, and self-assertion became prominent, which he links to secondary narcissism. For Zaretsky, the feminists' failure to consider these possible links might have been averted had Freud's work been used more carefully. In lieu of this, many feminist theorists who were interested in psychoanalysis turned to revisionist schools of thought, especially relational theory.

Zaretsky's exploration of this last issue is problematic. For example, his discussion of Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) is too limited. In this work, Chodorow explores the psychological results of child-rearing practices, which most often involve an overreliance upon the mother as the primary caretaker. In his critique of Chodorow's book, Zaretsky states that she replaces Freud's belief in the importance of sexuality with an emphasis on a more object relational approach involving the process of identification as that occurs for men and women in the course of the construction of gender identity. What Zaretsky misses here is the way Chodorow (1978) utilizes Freud's conception of "the character of the ego" as "a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes" (p. 49).

In addition, Chodorow expands Freud's conception of the ego by providing a more relational perspective, and she differentiates her work from that of ego psychologists when she indicates that "differing orientations to parenting are located in the development of relational capacities

and intrapsychic structure—in affective development. They are not located primarily in adaptive ego capacities" (1978, p. 49). Her commitment to Freud's id psychology is especially evident when she states that her understanding of human development "incorporates a view of the place of both drives and social relations in development" (p. 47). In this context, her interest in the work of Hans Loewald is important. Loewald wrote almost exclusively about Freud's work in an attempt both to elucidate its meaning and, at times, to expand it. Like Loewald, Chodorow makes clear the extraordinary importance of the dynamic unconscious and the importance of the drives as fundamental constituents of human development and central to the process that culminates in the Oedipus complex. All this points to Chodorow's belief in the importance of the emergence of an autonomous ego as well as its preoedipal underpinnings, which rely upon an extended period of dependence on the early caretakers.

In his assessment of her work, Zaretsky does not do justice to Chodorow's thinking, stating that she "substituted the theme of identification for the theme of sexual object choice that characterized classical psychoanalysis" (p. 179). That the two themes are interrelated is not sufficiently addressed by Zaretsky, nor is the fact that Chodorow explores the difficulty that girls experience "in finding their way to heterosexual desire" (p. 179).

Zaretsky's evaluation of *The Reproduction of Mothering* is typical of his assessment of most of Freud's successors. Zaretsky is concerned that most of Freud's successors have replaced drive theory with an exploration of interpersonal relations. In this context, preoedipal phenomena have been lifted to a position of preeminence, as the nature of the interaction between the mother and the infant has taken on a great deal of importance with regard to theory building and clinical practice.

Unfortunately, Zaretsky does not adequately explore developments in psychoanalysis such as Winnicott's conception of the necessity for an early holding environment, Kohut's ideas about the infant's need for mirroring, or Benjamin's views about the significance of recognition. Looking at their entire body of work, it is apparent that none of these theorists are committed to diminishing the importance of the development of autonomy at the same time that the capacity for feeling dependent on others is preserved, a motif that is so central to Zaretsky's perspective.

In addition, for Zaretsky, the interest in the concept of the self has further diluted Freud's work. Zaretsky suggests that this interest led to an increasingly "affirmative therapeutic approach" to the psychoanalytic process, which earlier had focused on "the analysis of the resistance" (p. 164). Zaretsky points to Kohut's ideas as an example of this kind of thinking, which looks at narcissism too positively by reassuring "injured selves" and not encouraging "the strengthening of the ego by practicing analytic restraint or 'abstinence'" (164).

In making these observations about Kohut's work, Zaretsky does not elaborate sufficiently. When Kohut speaks about self psychology, he suggests that his ideas should be viewed as complementary to Freud's structural theory of the mind. Kohut's innovative perspective grew out of his interest in narcissism as a clinical phenomenon that could not be addressed well enough by traditional psychoanalytic theory and practice. According to Zaretsky, narcissism had been "regularly contrasted to autonomy" and was "viewed as an obstacle to analysis" (p. 35). Because of Kohut's work, narcissism came to be viewed by some in the psychoanalytic community as a stage of development that is not simply to be overcome, but that can be transformed and possibly provide a basis for creativity.

In addition, on the basis of his work with patients whom he diagnosed as within the narcissistic spectrum, Kohut developed his ideas about empathy as an instrument for the analyst to enter more fully into the patient's inner life. This was misunderstood by many analysts who thought of empathy as a violation of the analyst's neutrality and ability to be objective. To this, Kohut responded by stating:

> The cognitive framework sees the analyst only as the observer and the analysand only as the field that the observer-analyst surveys. Since this orientation fails to do justice to one of the most significant dimensions of the psychoanalytic situation, we need an orientation that complements it and thus gives us a more complete picture of the analyst's significance in the analytic situation. [1984, p. 37]

In trying to understand Zaretsky's opposition to the work of so many of Freud's successors, it is necessary to explore the interesting manner in which he reads *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). In this work, according to

Zaretsky, it might be useful to consider the possibility that Freud was comparing himself implicitly to Moses, who, against much opposition, tried to institute a relatively new doctrine that emphasized the importance of instinctual renunciation and the elevation of intellectuality. Furthermore, in an effort to support his position, Zaretsky states that both thinkers faced the problem of having their ideas misconstrued, or even eviscerated, through "idol worship" (p. 83) that included the setting up of false gods. These false gods would replace a fundamental truth: the existence of a set of ideas that suggested the nature of the unconscious, which cannot be fully understood even if one is committed to the importance of understanding its processes and content.

In saying this, Freud compared the revival of polytheism in the form of a commitment to the idea of "'the great mother-goddess'" with the advent of Christianity, which also "'found room to introduce many of the divine figures of polytheism only lightly veiled'" (p. 99). For Freud, Christianity should be viewed in terms of the way it encourages people to identify with Christ, the son, who has sacrificed himself for God, the father.

Freud added that this idea is much easier to embrace than the Judaic concept of guilt attendant to the experience of slaying the primal father, Moses. At the same time, Freud speculated that both religions might be viewed as examples of the return of the repressed, that is, the unconscious representation of memory traces of actual events, namely the murder of the primal father by the sons, which has occurred repeatedly throughout history. To Freud, the Jewish solution to this problem, rather than the Christian one, was preferable. Therefore, Zaretsky supports Freud's idea that

> Moses brought *the law* to the Jewish people . . . he thereby launched the world on its first reliable step toward conceptual thought. Insofar as that step concerned struggles with authority, tradition, and guilt, and not only with metaphysics, it was not intellectual alone. From the modern Jewish point of view, reflected in such figures as Kafka and Freud, it was not Christ's sacrifice that gave meaning to history, but rather the covenant between a single people and God, a modus operandi that began the long process of emancipating humanity from the rule of the father. [pp. 114–115, italics in original]

According to Zaretsky, the problems surrounding the acceptance of psychoanalysis are bound up with comparable issues. For example, Jung, who was the most notable figure to first break with Freud, "described the earliest societies as mother centered and polytheistic" (p. 101) and thereby devalued the importance of the father in preparing the child to enter a world governed less by myth than by reason. Having said this, Zaretsky argues that Freud at the same time recognized the importance of the earliest tie to the mother. However, for Zaretsky, this tie has been elevated to a position of such importance by some theorists that the father's role has been minimized and, with that, the role of the Oedipus complex in human development.

According to Freud, the relationship between mother and child, which is sensually rooted in caring and nurturing, is part of the earliest phase of development. This generally precedes the relationship between father and child, which is rooted more in a respect for "culture and law" and therefore represents "an intellectual advance" (p. 100). The ease with which Zaretsky accepts Freud's formulation here is troubling. It reflects a point of view that could be understood as a social construction that was more prevalent during the time in which Freud wrote than it is today, when women are so much more involved in public life and therefore are so often active in the transmission of custom and law.

For me, this is a reflection of the major problem in *Political Freud*, since Zaretsky does not acknowledge sufficiently the importance of the contribution to the theory and practice of psychoanalysis by some of Freud's successors, who advanced psychoanalytic theory by exploring pre-oedipal phenomena when the importance of the mother is so evident.

Despite this concern, I believe that this is a very valuable book, if for no other reason than that Zaretsky demonstrates the complexity of Freud's thought and argues against those who carelessly criticize it. This is true not only for those outside the field of psychoanalysis but also for those who have at least somewhat embraced it. Of particular importance has been the loss of an interest in Freud's perspective with regard to his interest in the dynamic unconscious and the ubiquity of inner conflict, all of which is shaped by the power of the instincts.

Moreover, we have suffered a loss because of the way that Freud specifically and psychoanalysis in general are not utilized sufficiently to

explore the manner in which the larger culture functions with regard to issues pertaining to the impact on inner experience of a person's race, class, or gender. Finally, Zaretsky shows how each of these issues in different ways has shaped psychoanalytic theory as well as its use, especially in the United States, from the time that it was introduced, in the early part of the twentieth century, to the present.

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Murdered Father, Dead Father: Revisiting the Oedipus Complex

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BOOK REVIEWS

MURDERED FATHER, DEAD FATHER: REVISITING THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX. By Rosine Jozef Perelberg. London/New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2015. 260 pp.

> Oh, God said to Abraham, "Kill me a son"
> Abe said, "Man, you must be puttin' me on"
> God said, "No" Abe say, "What?"
> God say, "You can do what you want, Abe, but
> The next time you see me comin', you better run"
> Well, Abe said, "Where d'you want this killin' done?"
> God said, "Out on Highway 61"
>
> —Bob Dylan

Rosine Jozef Perelberg has written a book that she hopes will renew interest in the classical Freudian perspective on the Oedipus complex for psychoanalysis. Her combination of wide-ranging cross-disciplinary scholarship, deep grasp of psychoanalytic theory from multiple perspectives, and illustrative clinical work make for a challenging but very productive reading experience. Her clear writing style and her willingness to explain ideas in detail more than once throughout the book allowed me to chew on and take in some of the more difficult approaches (especially from French psychoanalysis) to the complexity of the Oedipus complex and the paternal function in oedipal configurations. While her subtitle modestly asserts "revisiting the Oedipus complex," it seems to me that her intent is to reclaim it and put it in what she sees as its rightful place, at the center of psychoanalysis.

Several chapters provide detailed examples from Perelberg's clinical work to show how her ideas are applied in the consulting room. She introduces a new idea, the phantasy of "a father is being beaten," to help clinicians recognize when their (mostly male) patients are working through conflicts that allow a transformation from an anal sadistic to an oedipal

organization. She also includes a chapter on the application of her ideas to the Holocaust and understanding Auschwitz as a dreadful example of when the dead father is murdered, leading to a rupture in the lawfulness of European culture. Altogether, her book represents a remarkable exposition of an old concept made new with innovative thinking and impressive scholarship.

The Nobel Laureate for literature cited above narratively illustrates one of Perelberg's central ideas. God, here representing the egoistic, tyrannical, and absolute authority of the father who has the power to kill his own children, demands a sacrifice of Abraham's most precious possession, his only son. Abraham, though aghast, must comply. However, at the moment of the sacrifice, the knife hovers in the air and Isaac spared, with a ram sacrificed in his stead and further filicidal killing is prohibited. "This story marks the passage from the narcissistic father to the law of the symbolic dead father, inaugurating a generational link that involves at least three generations: God, Abraham and Isaac . . . It is this open intergenerational temporality that inaugurates thirdness, as it establishes a link with another time and another space that is not part of the here and now" (p. 61). "The narrative makes sense from the perspective of the whole story, après coup" (p. 65).

Perelberg credits first Freud then Lacan and several others, and more recently and specifically Jacques Hassoun,[1] with the conceptual distinction between the murdered father and the dead father. As she cogently states, "If the Oedipus story represents the (murdered father) and parricide as a universal infantile phantasy, the Oedipus complex represents the (dead father)—the institution of the dead father as the symbolic third. The shift from the murdered to the dead father represents the attempt to regulated desire and institutes the sacrifice of sexuality" (pp. 11-12). The seven chapters of her book provide a persuasive case for reinvigorating psychoanalytic discourse with a modern understanding of Freud's most outrageous, most easily repressed, and of course, fundamental discovery.

[1] Hassoun, J. (1996). Du pere de la theorie analytique. In *Meurte du pere, sacrifice de la sexualite: Approaches anthropologiques et psychanalytiques*, ed. M. Godelier and J. Hassound. Paris: Arcanes.

In working on a revised developmental track for my institute's curriculum, it was difficult to find modern papers dedicated to the exposition of the Oedipus. This seems to be due to the idea that psychoanalysis has moved to a focus on early object relations in which the maternal function, either as a phantasy in Kleinian theory or as an attachment figure in Relational theory, is emphasized. The "third," such a universally appreciated notion, rarely is written about these days in the paradigm of the oedipal child and the organizing function of negotiating this developmental era. This seems to be coincident with the diminished focus on ego psychology, drives, and sexuality. While it would be hard to find any psychoanalyst who did not give credence to the importance of triangulation, the traditional Oedipus complex appears to have moved from center court to one of the side courts. Perelberg intends to move it back where she feels it belongs.

It is clear that Perelberg has taken up a scholarly battle with Relational and Kleinian theorists who (mostly she says) view the third through a different lens, and this view, she feels, misses essential psychoanalytic truths. She advocates a Freudian view of the Oedipus complex based on representational capacity of the older child in which early experience is retranscribed après-coup into symbolic meaning. While she objects to the Kleinian view of an early Oedipus complex taking precedence over the structuring function of the Freudian Oedipus, it is also clear that she finds much to appreciate in the Kleinian understanding of early experience, since it includes the forces of love and hate and sexuality and destructiveness around which she too organizes her theory. She is less charitable with the relational theorists she cites (Ogden, Benjamin). "What is at stake is the acknowledgement of the role of violence in human interactions, a violence that needs to be repressed, renounced and sublimated so culture may exist. Ogden and Benjamin do not take into account the taboo of sexuality, the violence of one's beginnings and the centrality of Freud's idea that any individual is by definition excluded from the primal scene. This is the notion of the sacrifice of sexuality that is present at the foundation of psychoanalysis and culture" (p. 74).

As you may infer, Perelberg is not shy about advocating her point of view. Her way of making rather dramatic differentiations when some integration is certainly possible may annoy readers who do not see the

psychoanalytic theoretical world as in such a battle for supremacy anymore. However, as a rhetorical style, there is much to value in a clear exposition of differences.

From my point of view, there are three fundamental contemporary hurdles that need to be overcome to move the classic Oedipus complex back into the foreground of psychoanalytic theory. The first is to come to a different understanding about Freud's persistent notion that the origins of the superego is in an actual event of sons murdering a primal father and having that event transmitted across the generations genetically, à la Lamarck. The second is to revise the notion that penis envy is the bedrock of female psychology in light of modern observation and sensibility that anatomy is not destiny regarding authority, power, moral standards, and other elements that smack of support for a male hegemony over leadership roles in the family and in society. The third is to provide a theory that maintains a regard for the great strides psychoanalysis has made that is the result of focusing on early infantile experience and the role of unconscious phantasy in structuring the superego. That is, for her position to be given its due, there needs to be appreciation for complementary points of view. If this is possible, it will create a dialogue that does not simply repeat the positions of the controversial discussions, since it is quite likely that this time around it would be the classic Freudian view that would need to give way to Contemporary Kleinian or Relational points of view, rather than the other way around as it was in the 1940s.

Perelberg's complex, compelling arguments and the evidence she uses to address these challenges are not easily summarized. The reader who is intrigued to find out just how uncomfortable one might feel with having disposed of the centrality of Freud's view on the Oedipus is strongly encouraged to read her book. I will detail some of her thinking on revising the fatal flaw of Freud's conceptualization in *Totem and Taboo*[2] and how, then, this new understanding points to revitalizing Freud's powerful insights and making them available to the clinical analyst. I will then look at the other two challenges in less detail.

Perelberg's review and analysis of *Totem and Taboo* provides the reader with a new way of appreciating Freud's sojourn into historical cultural

[2] Freud, S. (1912–13). *Totem and Taboo, S. E.* 13, pp. 1-162.

anthropology. In her expert hands, she persuasively argues that despite Freud's flawed claim that learned experience can be transmitted genetically, his explication of the transgenerational transmission of a code prohibiting sexual contact with proscribed relatives that must be adhered to for the survival of the clan, and, beyond that, the survival of culture and society remains central to understanding psychic functioning. She surveys historical and contemporary views from cultural anthropology on the incest taboo and their perspective on Freud's contribution. Many anthropologists at the time Freud published his view were taken by his powerful way of illuminating the source of essential elements of human culture, particularly those that are repetitive and recurrent. However, most if not all viewed the "actual event" element of the murder of the father as not only preposterous historically but then also as a reason to dismiss his entire thesis.

Perelberg explicates another way to make sense of the view that incest is a universal prohibition. She sees it as a myth that organizes life experience in relationship to current life events and primal phantasies transmitted by all cultures in their particular form and across generations. Following Lacan, she states that there is an "already-there presence of the paternal function in its function of thirdness, especially through language; the child is already born in a triadic structure, although its relation takes place *après-coup*" (p. 140). Perelberg proposes to add the thirdness of the Oedipus complex, with its relevant elements of filicide, parricide, and incest, to Freud's list of primary phantasies (seduction, castration anxiety, and the primal scene). Each culture finds unique ways of conveying the central story of *Totem and Taboo* in which the dead are given more power to influence the living than the living. Her thoughts on this transmission converge in my mind with the powerful contemporary notions of the transgenerational transmission of trauma, as outlined by authors such as Faimberg[3] suggesting that similar processes are at work, albeit on a grander scale. After reading her chapter I could no longer easily dispense with *Totem and Taboo* as interesting but erroneous story. Instead, as Perelberg shows, one needs to take it seriously as a fundamental psychoanalytic accounting for the origins of and sustaining of culture and society, rooted

[3] Faimberg, H. (2005). *The telescoping of generations*. New Library of Psychoanalysis. London: Routledge.

in our biology and maintained by our ability to communicate essential rules for survival unconsciously across generations.

In order for this "father complex" orientation to complement or compete with the current emphasis on the pervasive and persistent influence of unconscious phantasies of early infantile life, Perelberg turns to revising another somewhat moribund psychoanalytic concept, après coup. Perelberg's notion of reactivation or reactualization of a primal fantasy is central to her point of view that psychoanalysis is not simply a here and now endeavor but both an encounter with the there and then in the here and now in which the primal fantasies of the Oedipus are activated in the transference and that the experience during analysis then revises the individual's view of the past. The concept of après coup from Lacan, Green, and other French psychoanalysis has a central explanatory role in Perelberg's metapsychology. In this or its other forms, Freud's Nachtraeglichkeit or Strachy's translation, deferred action, it is, like the classical Oedipus complex, less well known or less frequently used in contemporary theories of therapeutic action than it has been in the past. The focus of much analytic thinking on the nature of therapeutic action has moved to the here and now as the principal means for understanding the influences of the past and changing the present. There is less or no emphasis on the retroactive revision of the past through interpretation in the present.[4] Perelberg's book is an effort to revisit this concept too.

Regarding the second challenge, Perelberg is quite aware of the inherent problems involved with proposing a theory of superego development and identity and sexuality that is based on a simplified view that the girl turns from the breast to the penis because of her hostility toward the mother because of the damage she did to her genital. There are many twists and turns in Perelberg's exposition of her ideas of the feminine and femininity and the structuring function of the Oedipus for the girl, and I am still digesting the complexity of her integration of many sources of understanding. She calls on theorists from many different perspectives, (e.g., Winnicott, Lacan, Kestenberg, Riviere, as well as many French

[4] Turo, J. (2013). Freudian temporality: Resuscitation of the concept of Nachtraeglichkeit-its role in psychoanalytic process and therapeutic action. Unpublished paper presented at the meetings of the International Psychoanalytic Association, Prague.

feminists who are probably lesser known among English-speaking analysts) to explicate a complex understanding of the interplay between the early experience with the mother and the later experience in the encounter with the Oedipus and the revisiting of the early experience within a symbolic triadic configuration après-coup. Her argument leans heavily on Freud's proposition of the essential bi-sexual nature of humans. Within this masculine feminine, active passive, and ultimately receptive position, Perelberg privileges the structuring function of the phallus for both genders. She distinguishes clearly and repeatedly the difference between the anatomical penis and the symbolic phallus to provide the reader with a new appreciation of a Freudian view of development. I will quote her at some length here to be sure I do not misrepresent her view.

Under the subtitle "The structuring function of the phallus," she writes:

> The distinction between penis and phallus refers to the differentiation between biological and psychic reality. Penis designates that anatomical and physiological reality; phallus on the other hand exists outside anatomical reality. Lacan suggests it is the signifier of the mother's desire. The central question of the Oedipus complex thus becomes to be or not to be the phallus—that is, to be or not to be the object of the mother's desire.

Citing Gallop[5] she continues,

> Gallop also explores the ambiguity of this distinction (between penis and phallus). The phallus unlike the penis is possessed by nobody (male or female) and it represents the combination of both sexes where neither is given up. The confusion between penis and phallus supports a structure in which it seems reasonable that men have power and women do not and implies the reduction of Law of the Father to the rule of the actual living male. However the phallus has a structuring function instituting the distinction between the sexes where both have to come to terms with the impossibility of being the object of the mother's desire. There is an intrinsic link in Freud's formulations between the primacy of the phallus, the castration complex and the

[5] Gallop, J. (1982). *Feminism and psychoanalysis: The daughter's seduction.* London: Macmillan.

> Oedipus complex. The phallus represents an unconscious phantasy about the object to the mother's desire. [p. 138]

This is just the tip of the iceberg of Perelberg's efforts to bring Freudian views on female development into the modern era without either abandoning Freud's insights about the role of the paternal in creating a symbolic third or ignoring the many developments within and outside psychoanalysis that have led many, perhaps most, to reject penis envy as the bedrock of female psychology. The reader will need to read and reread this section and the whole chapter in which it resides (The structuring function of the Oedipus, Chapter 6) to fully appreciate Perelberg's passion, scholarship, and determination to rehabilitate the Freudian Oedipus complex in a modified (but not too modified) form.

Finally, the greatest challenge, I think, to wide acceptance of this book comes not from what it says but from what would come next. How do we provide an integrated theory of sexuality, morality, culture, and development that allows the clinician to make use of complemental views rather than a singular one? That is, it has been my experience in training, clinical work, teaching, and supervision to draw on multiple points of view to help me and my students observe what is going on, think about what it means, and decide how or if to intervene. In a powerful way, Perelberg takes two powerful traditions, Lacan (and other French analysts) and classical Freud and brings insights from both to illuminate her thesis. That is, she is not opposed to integration, it seems to me. However, the sharp line she draws between Kleinian ideas and relational perspectives and her own seem overstated at times and perhaps unnecessary in the long run. Her investment in the structuring function of the Oedipus is extremely valuable. However, so are, for example, Greenberg's[6] reinterpretation of the Oedipus from a relational perspective or the Kleinian perspective on the Oedipus and its relationship to the depressive position (e.g., Segal,[7] Steiner,[8]

[6] Greenberg, J. (1991). *Oedipus and beyond: a clinical theory.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[7] Segal, H. (1989). Introduction. In *The Oedipus Complex Today: Clinical Implications*, ed. R. Britton, M. Feldman, and E. O'Shaugnessy. London: Karnac Books, pp. 1-12.

[8] Steiner, J. (1985). Turning a blind eye: the cover up for Oedipus. *Int. Rev. Psychoanal.*, 12:161-172.

Feldman[9]). I hope her next book emphasizes complementarity and usefulness of multiple perspectives as I believe it would enhance the appreciation of her focus rather than detract from it. This is a large order and it is, of course, not her responsibility to provide a unified theory. I suggest that readers of this important book start task for themselves to see, as I did, how to incorporate her ideas into their own. After digesting Perelberg's *Murdered Father, Dead Father*, I find that as I listen to patients and clinical presentations at conferences and from supervisees I have relocated a useful sector of knowledge that helps me understand what might be going on in the troubled minds of those who do not have a dead father at their representational disposal.

If readers of this review finds themselves trying to remember misplaced metapsychological knowledge such as après coup, primal phantasy or, Oedipus, superego and thirdness, and in the effort to remember has a powerful sense that something valuable has been misplaced, then reading *Murdered Father, Dead Father* would be an excellent mean of experiencing a version of après coup in which the past is recovered and yet it is changed (for the better) by the encounter in the present. This certainly was my experience reading this evocative and significant contribution to psychoanalysis.

RICHARD C. FRITSCH (WASHINGTON, DC)

MANUAL OF REGULATION-FOCUSED PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR CHILDREN (RFP-C) WITH EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIORS: A PSYCHODYNAMIC APPROACH. By Leon Hoffman, Timothy Rice, and Tracy Prout. London/New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2016. 256 pp.

Mental health practitioners who work with children with externalizing behaviors—defiance, disruption, aggression—can find them baffling and so provocative that it is difficult to maintain empathy for them. These children present as an obstacle to treatment because they behave as if it is the

[9] Feldman, M. (1989). The Oedipus complex: manifestations in the inner world and the therapeutic situation. In *The Oedipus Complex Today: Clinical Implications*, ed. R. Britton, M. Feldman, and E. O'Shaugnessy. London: Karnac Books, pp. 103-128.

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Manual of regulation-focused psychotherapy for children (RFP-C) with externalizing behaviors: A psychodynamic approach

Maida J. Greenberg

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parents, teachers, and therapists who cause their problems. They are most often diagnosed with ODD, ADHD, DMDD, and CD. This manual lays out a short-term treatment of such children and their parents that differs substantially from Parent Management Training programs, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, or the use of psychotropic medication. The focus of this treatment is not on re-directing the children's actions but on exploring with the child his/her inability to regulate implicit—unconscious—emotions. The authors' aim is to present this use of what they have termed Regulation-Focused Psychotherapy so that it can be applied and eventually evaluated in a systematic way.

Their rationale is based on the major tenet of psychodynamic thinking: all of a person's emotions and behavior have meaning. Two observations that have been systematically verified by clinicians support this assumption. First, events in childhood affect emotions, behavior, and personality in later life; second, much of a child's as well as an adult's mental activity occurs outside of his/her conscious awareness. In particular, painful emotions may be avoided through the use of various defenses like denial and projection.

Thus when working with a child who wants to fight, mess up, or leave the room, Hoffman et al. outline a strategy in which the clinician focuses on understanding the emotions driving the behavior and conveying that understanding to the child, even while setting limits and preventing harm to anyone in the room.

In the introductory chapter the authors provide a clinical example of a 7-year-old girl who made life tense at home and was so disruptive at school that the family was threatened with her suspension. She carried this behavior into the therapeutic session by cheating at every game in outrageous ways. At one point the clinician was so provoked she said to the girl: "You know, I really don't understand why it's so difficult for you to ever lose a point, even though you win every game." One can imagine the clinician's tone and affect while she said this and how often the child had heard similar comments from her parents and teachers. The child ran out of the playroom to her mother, screaming, "She wants to cheat all the time and stops me from winning." The little girl did not return to therapy after that interaction. The therapist in this case, the authors point out, addressed the child's actions rather than the painful feelings that

motivated them. Moreover, the clinician expressed her own upsetting feelings. Here, the authors address the idea of the countertransference invoked in the clinician when working with such a child. This psychoanalytic concept is a significant one in the treatment as described in this manual.

Section 1 of the *Manual*: The first four chapters of the book provide a thorough introduction to the theoretical background and rationale for this kind of psychotherapy. In the second chapter the authors review the basic psychodynamic and psychoanalytic approaches to the mind. They acknowledge the significance of the developmental perspective, including attachment theory research, which illuminated the gradual development of unconscious mental activity, and the influence of the past on the present by means of unconscious mental mechanisms. Central to their rationale is the presence of conflict within the mind and the use of defenses to cope with conflicted emotional states. Psychological conflict is seen as the result of the interplay between the agencies of the mind, first introduced as constructs by Freud as the id, ego, and superego. In reviewing these constructs, Hoffman et al. find it important to keep the concept of drive (id, or basic human desires) as internal motivation while acknowledging the centrality of both the intrapsychic (internal emotional regulation) and the interpersonal (external emotional regulation) throughout life.

More specifically they see emotion, or affect, as the primary motivator of behavior; citing literature by Tomkins (1962), Greenson (1967), Basch (1967), Nathanson (1992), and Lichtenberg (1983), all of whom incorporate the centrality of affect in their analytical models. They quote Lotterman (2012), who notes that, differing from ideas and fantasies, affect is "part of a very early signaling system that alerts the individual (in this treatment of the child) and others (e.g. the therapist) about the status of the self; therefore, affect can be a particularly consistent and helpful barometer of what is on the patient's mind." In this way, Hoffman et al. show how their psychoanalytically informed treatment is substantiated by contemporary neuroscience.

In setting forth their rationale, Hoffman et al. focus on the defense mechanisms that drive externalizing behaviors. They describe Anna Freud's comprehensive study, but they select three defenses as particularly relevant to children with externalizing behaviors; denial in fantasy, denial

in word and act, and identification with the aggressor. With denial in fantasy a child denies an underlying worry or fear by fantasizing an object or condition that the child can cope with. Denial in word and act and identification with the aggressor are more problematic. In these instances the child takes her fantasy to be real in order to protect herself from more painful feelings about people or situations. The authors cite examples that have been observed in these children. The child may be convinced that the child may project onto the clinician that the clinician is the problem. If the child feels that the clinician prefers another child—perhaps one who was sitting in the waiting room—the child experiences that as a certainty and as a transgression against her. Children with externalizing behaviors find it difficult to utilize fantasies to cope with stress. Instead, they need to act out, believing that their fantasies of being mistreated are facts.

The authors refer to the work of Phoebe Cramer; she has studied defense mechanisms and the ages at which they most frequently occur. She has identified three broad categories of mechanisms: "denial" by young children, "projection" by school-age children, and "identification" in adolescence. Hoffman et al. note that this progression fits with what is now known about brain development and maturation. Their approach in this therapy could be briefly summed up by her statement: "Once a person understands the connection between motive and the mechanism of mental mechanism of defense, she gives up the defense because its adaptive purpose is not longer functional." Because the child is likely to utilize defenses in the therapy room itself, the clinician has the opportunity to help the child recognize the defense and its function; this is what Hoffman et al. calls an "experience-near" intervention, which works especially well with children whose immediate behavior is of concern. The authors show how the contemporary neurocognitive concepts of *implicit emotional regulation* used in this book is equivalent to using the psychodynamic concept of unconscious automatic defense mechanism. They explain that they use the term Regulation Focused Psychotherapy instead of Defense Focused Psychotherapy because the term *regulation* is a more descriptive and theory-neutral term than the psychoanalytic term *defense*.

Section 2 of the *Manual*: The practice manual section of the book is divided into three steps, which are further divided into 16 therapy sessions for the child and 4 sessions at the intake, the beginning, the middle,

and the end of treatment for the parents. With the parents the therapist endeavors to establish a working relationship through empathic listening and exploratory discussion. Sessions 1 and 2 with the child proceed much the way any play session with children does. The clinician tries to provide a friendly, supportive atmosphere, letting the child choose and initiate play while observing what the play's communicative intent is and what issues appear to be emotionally difficult for the child.

After these two sessions the clinician arranges a feedback session with the parents, organizing discussion within a stress-diathesis mode of understanding a child's problems and introducing for the second time Malan's Triangle of Conflict: the feared feeling, the defense (phobic avoidance reactions), and the anxiety (why is that feeling being avoided?). Above all, the clinician tries to communicate to the parents that the child's irritability and oppositional behavior are maladaptive ways for coping with intense negative emotions that consequently interfere with her development. Finally, the clinician reviews the timeline of the treatment, including the 14 remaining sessions with the child, optimally 2 sessions a week, which include a brief parent "check in" at the end of each session.

Step 2 comprises 9 sessions of play therapy with the child in which by following the child's play and verbalization, the clinician can see the problematic reactions that lead to disruption at home and at school. The clinician can observe directly the child's maladaptive behavior, the triggers to it, and her attempt to avoid disturbing emotions. The clinician's task is to address with the child the sequence of events in the session, especially the child's avoiding the verbalizations and/or actions. This "in the moment" way of working keeps the focus on the here and now. The goal is to help the child find more adaptive emotional regulation mechanisms when experiencing unpleasant emotions.

After the seventh session the clinician meets with the parents again to explore progress and encourage the parents' reflective functioning on how emotional regulations works. They are encouraged to link outer behavior with the inner workings of the mind. Like their child, they too must grow in their ability to tolerate unpleasant emotions. The clinician's reflective stance and ongoing collaborative effort promote the parents' growth as well.

Step 3 comprises the termination phase of the therapy. In Session 12 the clinician reminds the child of the approaching termination. The goal of this phase is to help the child master the painful emotions associated with separation. Using examples of actual treatment, the authors illustrate how different children react to the emotions provoked in contemplating the final, as opposed to bi-weekly separation. They point out that children can be in touch with their feelings without verbalizing them directly. They may communicate indirectly through play and activity, through using metaphors and stories, and by changes in facial communication. The authors provide clinical examples of how different children have reacted to this planned ending, noting that each showed how they could now tolerate the painful emotions connected with separation. The authors discuss how addressing what occurs between clinician and child had made the treatment "experience-near" real for both of them. It is the interchange (not necessarily verbal) between clinician and child that provides the child with the opportunity to modify maladaptive responses. The authors conjecture that "the therapeutic process facilitates the development of an awareness that painful emotions do not have to be so vigorously warded off. The sustained limbic and brainstem hyper-arousal witnessed in children with the underdeveloped implicit emotional regulation systems resolves, and the child is less prone to the enactment of fight/flight stance" (p. 216). As another way of helping the clinician, the authors offer appendices to the *Manual*. They contain a brief outline of this psychotherapeutic approach and a number of useful adherence scales and rating scales which the clinician can use during the treatment.

In summary, the *Manual* offers a basic, well-reasoned dynamic approach to short-term therapy for youngsters who manifest disruptive, oppositional *externalizing* behaviors that cause considerable distress to their parents, teachers, and to other children. The *Manual* not only teaches new clinicians who enter the field but is helpful to seasoned clinicians as well, providing them with new ideas and approaches to therapy with these particularly difficult children. This is an integrative approach that combines elements of behavioral therapy (limiting dangerous behavior in the therapy room) with psychodynamic therapy (allowing the child to lead the play and discussion). It makes a good case for the latter by

discussing the neurological reactions to stress, who would only feel more stress if they were "directed" how to behave.

The authors provide many examples of how best to work with these children. I did wish that I could follow the process with one child more thoroughly so that I could understand how the changes to more adaptive behavior came about. But that would perhaps have made the manual too long and unwieldy. (The first chapters, on theory, felt both dense and somewhat repetitive. The authors may have considered the repetition helped the reader internalize the theory. Another mild irritant was the way Hoffman and his colleagues highlight certain passages of the text by placing them in bold print in rectangular boxes. Perhaps that served as a teaching device. I also found the acronyms difficult to follow and would have preferred spelling them out each time or perhaps offering a list at the front of the manual for easy reference.)

At the end, I was left with the question of how long does this emotion-regulating change last after the short-term therapy ends. I have been seeing a child with these kinds of behaviors once a week in psychoanalytic psychotherapy for several years. I have been trying to incorporate the approach of the manual into my work with this youngster. She certainly behaves more appropriately in her therapy sessions. However, I have learned that when she is on the playground at school and is teased by other children, although she tries to manage her feelings, and is sometimes able to do so, in other situations she resorts to kicking, screaming, biting, and spitting. Thus I remain somewhat skeptical about the lasting effects of a short-term treatment, but I will be interested to follow the findings from the author's research in this regard.

It is clear that the approach of this *Manual* permits hypothesis testing and empirical study. I understand that the authors are requesting volunteer therapists and families to be part of a substantial research project. It will be most interesting to follow their findings. Hoffman, Rice, and Prout had provided clinicians with a scholarly comprehensive approach to the treatment of children with externalizing behaviors that cause them and their parents so much pain. It is a successful attempt to integrate findings from the fields of neuroscience, psychodynamic theory, and developmental and cognitive psychology to provide a systematic short-term treatment

that can be measured. It is a remarkable endeavor and a major contribution to the field.

MAIDA J. GREENBERG (NEWTON CENTRE, MA)

ART, CREATIVITY, AND PSYCHOANALYSIS: PERSPECTIVES FROM ANALYST-ARTISTS. Edited by George Hagman. London/New York: Routledge, 2017. 186 pp.

"Art, Creativity, and Psychoanalysis" is an unusual book, edited (or perhaps more likely assembled and introduced) by George Hagman, who has himself written on the subject.[1] The text consists of twelve essays by individuals (10 women, 2 men) who represent themselves as psychoanalysts (or "therapists") and artists, mostly painters but occasional poets and musicians. All in turn describe, in some detail, the origins of their creative activity and its interaction with their work as "analysts" or "therapists." In most cases they provide some specificity of their training in each area, emphasizing in several cases the appeal of Kohutian theory and self-psychology. In each instance, illustrations are provided—both of the art work and, to lesser extent, clinical experiences.

Perhaps the best illustration of the integration of these two elements is that of David Shattock, who describes himself as "a poet and a psychoanalytically-oriented therapist" (p. 21). He elaborates in detail the evolution of his poem "Asymptote," and follows this with a defined vignette of the "therapy" with his patient Dan. Although he refers to himself as *analyst* and to the patient as *analysand*, and cites twice the influence on his thinking as that of Kohut, he, like all of the authors, makes no reference to the frequency of sessions or the respective positions of the participants. Psychoanalytically oriented therapist he most certainly, and impressively, is.

A specific reference to each of the twelve contributors is difficult. Perhaps the most explicit of the painter-therapists is Karen Schwartz, who describes in detail and with copious illustrations the development of her somewhat oscillating career. To this reader the finest illustrations are the

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Art, Creativity, and Psychoanalysis: Perspectives from Analyst-Artists

Aaron H. Esman

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drawings of Dan Gilhooley, who impresses as something of a mystic in his work as a defined psychoanalyst but is a superb draftsman and portraitist. And the most readable essay is that of Anna Carusi, who provides a lucid picture of the experience of an Italian artist who, like many of the others, becomes captivated by Kohutian theory, *self-psychology*, and, in particular, the book of the British analyst Marian Milner ("Of Not Being Able to Paint") in her own professional evolution as painter-therapist.

Though perhaps a bit uneven, this book will be of appeal to those whose interests and possibilities straddle the realms of aesthetics and psychodynamic psychotherapy.

AARON H. ESMAN (NEW YORK)

WHAT IS PSYCHOANALYSIS? 100 YEARS AFTER FREUD'S SECRET COMMITTEE. By Barnaby B. Barratt. New York: Routledge, 2013. 240 pp.

RADICAL PSYCHOANALYSIS: AN ESSAY ON FREE-ASSOCIATION PRAXIS. By Barnaby B. Barratt. New York: Routledge, 2016. 231 pp.

These two books under review are very similar to each other, as are earlier books by Barnaby Barratt. Now located in South Africa, he has been a world traveler having lived in India, England, Thailand, Michigan, and Harvard where he obtained a PhD. In addition he holds a second doctorate in human sexuality and taught that subject as a professor of family medicine at Wayne State University in Detroit for many years. Invited to South Africa by Mark Solms, he is a training analyst at the psychoanalytic institute and teaches at two South African universities.

Both books suffer from Barratt's erudition and complexity. Where there is a simpler way to express an idea, he chooses a more difficult one. This is not to say that there are no rewards. His extensive reading and knowledge is demonstrated on every page. For example, he translates many of Freud's German words and concepts in a more thoughtful and probably correct way, getting away from Strachey's scientistic and often misleading translations. Perhaps the new translation by Solms will correct some of Strachey's translations. My own reading of Freud in German is that he is an excellent essayist.

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What is Psychoanalysis? 100 Years After Freud's Secret Committee; Radical Psychoanalysis: An Essay on Free-Association Praxis

Joseph Reppen

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On the other hand, Barratt chooses to use very complex words when a much simpler one would do and be understood as well. I am not the first reviewer to make this observation, and most past reviews have been critical. What may account for this is his need to employ his considerable knowledge of philosophy and his wide reading. But that is a weak excuse. I maintain that this complexity is not necessary, and if he wrote in a less hyperintellectualized manner, he would be read more, as he has something of value to say about psychoanalysis.

Barratt is most interested in Freud's writing until 1914 after which he feels that Freud shifted to be more systematic, with concentrations on ego psychology. In this position he is supported by the work of Andre Green, who has been a powerful influence on his thinking, along with Jean Laplanche and to a lesser extent Lacan. Green is his singular mentor, but it should be noted that Barratt has few if any followers of his work.

He notes that Freud sat next to Husserl when he took five courses with the philosopher Franz Brentano at a time when the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) were on the rise and which greatly challenged Freud's view as a natural scientist. He certainly sees psychoanalysis as a hermeneutic and not a biological science.

In Barratt's return to the earlier Freud, his essential emphasis is on the role of free association that leads to the unconscious, but more essentially to the repressed and suppressed unconscious. He gives some very good clinical examples of how he works with repressed material, but again these clinical examples also appear in previous publications. Barratt's chapter on the initial interview is a beautiful example of respect for the patient, as he will see a prospective patient at least two times and often three before beginning a treatment.

Barratt is at his best with essential criticisms of Harry Stack Sullivan, Erich Fromm, and Karen Horney of the culturalist schools and self-psychology, interpersonal psychology, and the relational group as well. Without a concept of psychic energy and the lack of the use of free association, they all avoid in one way or another the full meaning of the repressed unconscious. He does not stop there, as he is critical of the structural theorists or ego psychologists such as Anna Freud, Heinz Hartmann, and their students such as Arlow and Brenner and their students and disciples. His criticism of ego psychology seems to avoid the work of

David Rapaport, whose work extended in multiple directions including but not exclusively ego psychology. As to Arlow and Brenner and conflict theory, they hardly avoid a notion of unconscious process. As to the interpersonal school, there are many papers that suggest that Freud too was interpersonal in many of his writings. So this is what Barratt means by radical psychoanalysis, the retreat from the earlier Freud's radicalism and a misunderstanding of the notion of psychic energy. But there is something grandiose about all of these assertions suggesting that his is the only way to understand the real Freud. It is almost as if he is saying "my way or the highway."

I should note that papers that Barratt published in journals read much more easily. But that is a function of the more careful editing done in most psychoanalytic journals. Many publishers of psychoanalytic books may be best characterized as printers offering a long stream of books that cry out for an editor. The two books under review are in that category. It should be noted that the number of psychoanalytic books being published is declining, as the few remaining publishers look for best sellers that will attract a larger reading public. But those that they do publish read easily.

JOSEPH REPPEN (NEW YORK, NY)

CRITICAL FLICKER FUSION. By William Fried. London: Karnac, 2017. 160 pp.

In *Critical Flicker Fusion*, William Fried applies his considerable psychoanalytic skills to a deeper understanding of films. The book includes thirteen essays, twelve on films and one on two episodes of the popular TV series *The Sopranos*. He explains in his brief introduction that these were written as presentations to an audience that had just viewed the film, opening the path to a deeper discussion. Now, he opens it to a wider audience of readers.

Fried makes it clear that in approaching these films, he is applying the same skills that he uses in his psychoanalytic work approaching "dreams and other clinical materials." Each essay goes into detail concerning the elements of the film and the motivations and internal conflicts of its characters.

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Critical Flicker Fusion

Herbert H. Stein

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Fried makes it clear that in approaching these films, he is applying the same skills that he uses in his psychoanalytic work approaching "dreams and other clinical materials." Each essay goes into detail concerning the elements of the film and the motivations and internal conflicts of its characters.

Fried also points out that he is using "the discipline known among literary critics as close reading." In fact, Fried was a professor of literature before becoming a psychologist and psychoanalyst, and clearly sees a continuity from one to the other that gives this book an added perspective that is not present in many other psychoanalytic studies of film. His interpretations, if I may call them that, are not merely described in analytic terms, but in literary terms bringing in frequent associations to lines from Shakespeare, Dante, Coleridge, and others. These are not simply added on. They come across as having an organic coherence, the natural associations of a man who has lived his life in both the world of psychoanalytic understanding and the world of literature.

In the first essay in the book, on the film *Notes on a Scandal*, Fried examines the significance of one character's personal diary—her private recordings—and quickly compares them with the writings of Dostoyevsky's underground man in *Notes from the Underground*, then references Dante on the subject of revelations and secrets, comparing Barbara, the character, with her secret diary with a character in *The Inferno* who can tell Dante his secrets because he believes that he will not bring them back to inform the living. These come not only as a natural set of associations to the material; they also underline Fried's belief that film, particularly at its best, is part of our body of literature and art that marks our civilization.

Although his approach is to work through a close examination of the characters, his conclusions are sometimes broader. In the case of *Notes on a Scandal*, for instance, which is a story about multiple seductions and boundary violations in the context of a London school, Fried ultimately points out that all the characters are seduced by youth, ending the essay by speculating on the two Greek concepts of time, *chronos*, ordinary time, and *kairos*, "meaning the right moment, when the extraordinary event occurs, more like the suspension or arrest of time." He sees the characters in this film as trying to avoid the progression of time, the movement towards death, through enactments and identifications with those who are more youthful. He returns to this theme in a chapter he calls "Time and Death." In discussing *Up in the Air*, one of the films in that chapter, he tells us directly, "One of the problems with American culture is that it makes no provision for engaging death," moving on to a passage from *The Great Gatsby* to emphasize his point.

Fried turns to another form of cultural commentary in discussing Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*, seeing amidst Kubrick's satire of the cold war a satirizing of the American idealization of an extreme form of phallic/narcissistic masculinity (perhaps even more pertinent today). The issue of a powerful defense against femininity also appears in his essay on *Tunes of Glory*, a film about a Scottish military unit.

But I want to be clear that he does not go for the simple, one theme answer. These are comprehensive analyses, and the conclusions drawn are drawn amidst complexity. If anything, I think some readers may be overwhelmed by the complexity of the exegesis, with its accompanying multiple literary references.

I do have one caveat, which Fried anticipates himself in his introduction. These essays were written for an audience that has just seen the film. At the time of the presentation, Fried spoke to his audience with the assumption that the characters and the details of scenes were fresh in the mind of his audience. He did not re-write the essays for an audience reading the book without having recently seen the film, or not having seen it at all. Some of these films are not household names. Fried's advice to the reader is to see the film shortly before reading about it. To do so might engage the reader in a fun project. In lieu of that, a look at a synopsis on IMDb or elsewhere might be of help. I'll also say that for some of the essays, there is enough detail to carry the reader through an understanding of the film and of Fried's analysis. At the other extreme, for one film, *Certified Copy*, he provides the reader with a set of associations to the film rather than a discussion of the film's details.

For me, one particular insight stood out in my reading of the book. It came in an essay about Pedro Almodóvar's *Talk to Her,* in which an obsessed male nurse spends four years ministering to his seemingly comatose woman patient while continually talking to her. Fried points out that in this sequence, the unresponsive patient plays the role of the analyst. I'm going to quote directly at length from Fried's discussion.

> Both sets of conditions are optimal for the evocation and proliferation of transference. Both are situations in which discourse can be pursued in a relatively uninterrupted way, which is why it can arrive at destinations that are unreachable in an ordinary dialogue. That is, the relative absence of cueing from the other

> makes it possible for the speaker to project aspects of her (his) inner world onto the other, and, thus, engage in a progressively more inner determined dialogue between self and object(s). [p. 81]

Of course, Almodóvar's nurse, Benigno, is convinced that his patient is hearing and comprehending him, whereas, as Fried points out, patients have enough responsiveness from the analyst to assure them that that is so. Nevertheless, it does speak to a point of Freud's[1] that the analyst through non-gratification encourages the patient to reach out, to express his or her inner needs.

Towards the end of the book, Fried tells us the literal meaning of his title, explaining that critical flicker fusion is "the frequency at which a light must flash to be seen by an observer as continuous," the very basis of motion pictures. He goes on to explain that the term nicely evokes an image of a fusion of a critical analytic approach applied to the magical blend of reality and fantasy in the films' flickering images.

The films are divided into chapters with evocative titles: Secrets (*Notes on a Scandal, The Conversation,* two episodes of *The Sopranos*); Time and Death (*Dr. Strangelove, Up in the Air, Tunes of Glory*); Love and Lust (*An Affair of Love, Certified Copy, Talk to Her, Gods and Monsters*); and Human Identity (*Blade Runner, Lord of the Flies, Seconds*).

Critical Flicker Fusion is the eighth installment of the Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies' book series, Boundaries of Psychoanalysis, and the first in the series to deal with psychoanalysis and the arts.

HERBERT H. STEIN (NEW YORK, NY)

[1] Freud, S. (1915). Observations on Transference Love. *S. E.*, 12, pp. 159-171.