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THE EVOLUTION OF DREAMS: A FIFTY YEAR FOLLOW-UP

BY EUGENE MAHON

A child that was analyzed from four years of age to nine returned for brief visits at age twelve, nineteen, thirty; and at fifty for a more sustained analytic engagement. He reported new dreams on each return visit. Given this contact with him for almost fifty years it has been possible to reflect on the progression of his dreams over five decades. While it is clear that dreams do reflect developmental challenges there is also a remarkable continuity of genetic themes that can be identified. While dreams do reflect different phases of development, to be sure, the persistence of initial genetic conflicts are not only reflected in symptoms and character structure but in the dream work's artistry as well, as latent content is transformed so creatively into its manifest disguises. It is this striking continuity of original genetic themes, first exposed in the child analysis, that runs like the unconscious musical drone of a ground bass throughout the first fifty years of the symphonic life of one individual, that I wish to focus on.

Keywords: Dreams, transference, countertransference, development, psychological continuity.

INTRODUCTION

A record of dreams of the same patient from four years of age to fifty became possible when a child analysand reported a dream in analysis at

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age four (the analysis lasted from age four and a half to nine) and then returned for brief visits at ages thirteen, twenty, thirty, and then at almost fifty, when he returned for a more sustained analytic engagement. I will present the six dreams first; then give a description of the child analysis that lasted from age four and a half to nine, and then cite the ensuing dreams with as much clinical context as possible. (There is actually a seventh dream from early adolescence that the patient reported at age fifty, which will also be discussed.)

The Six Dreams:
The First Dream (age four):

> *There is an octopus. As big as the Empire State Building. I had a stick. It (the octopus) swallowed me. I was fighting it. It spat me out.*

The Second Dream (age thirteen):

> *I was running in the woods. Snakes appear. They come close to my face. I run and run. There are other children younger than I playing nearby. I try to make the snakes go in their direction.*

The Third Dream (age twenty):

> *I am in a Batmobile. Batman is driving. I'm in the back seat. The Batmobile is not all it's cracked up to be. We are trying to chase some bad guys. We are slow to pull out of the garage in pursuit because we have to make several broken "U" turns just to get out of the driveway. Finally we get going. I take the wheel. Eventually we catch up with the bad guys. We follow them over a desert and give chase round and round an oval.*

The Fourth Dream (age thirty):

> *Infant falling out of plane. Plane escaping from aborigines. I look back in rear-view mirror to catch a glimpse of infant if I can. I am co-pilot. Captain angry at me for looking back.*

The Fifth Dream (age almost fifty):

> *Wearing shirt with blue sticking tape attached to it. I try to pull it off. Cannot get it off me.*

The Sixth Dream (age almost fifty):

> *With Jared Kushner's brother. He is engaged in a real estate deal that*
> *Trump is involved with also. Our information can help Trump. So*
> *we meet Trump on football field. I am looking up to/at him.*

SYNOPSIS OF THE CHILD ANALYSIS

The child's (let us call him Alexander) parents sought help for their four-and-a-half-year-old for a variety of symptoms, some of which they had noticed, some brought to their attention by the nursery school. The parents, sophisticated, analyzed people (the mother was a successful artist; father ran his own lucrative advertising firm) who had firsthand knowledge of psychoanalysis and what it could offer as well as what it could not, sensed that their own contributions to Alex's developmental struggles were significant, disclosures they could make nondefensively. The mother was aware that her own conflicts about the dangers of intimacy were reflected in Alex's restlessness and difficulties with quiet time in the nursery, his obligatory "activities" being a measure of his fear of more passive aims; the father, considerably older than his wife, was aware that his life-long unresolved oedipal struggles with his father were being reenacted in his behavior with his son. The parents were refreshingly honest about their parental skills and weaknesses, and this helped create a climate of mutual respect that had a facilitating effect on the subsequent years of analysis. Child analysis is not just a collaboration between child and analyst but a collaboration between analyst and parents as well that is crucial as the emotional complexity of the analysis proceeds. The parents were alarmed by Alex's boastfulness, boisterousness, lying, and provocativeness; the school was alarmed by his unruliness and hyperactivity. He seemed to wear his castration anxiety on his sleeve, grabbing at the penises of other children as if to acquire more of what he feared to lose. At naptime while others slept or at least rested, he needed to be on the go, activity his only resource it seemed against the pressure of anxiety.

In the playroom for the initial consultations, his words, deeds, drawings, and play began to reveal the seething unconscious energies that lay behind all of his symptomatic acts. He could be provocative and scatological one minute, presenting his anus in mock submission to the

"baboon" that was "interviewing" him; at another minute he could be tell-
ing a story and illustrating it coherently and cooperatively. If there was a
desire to shock and provoke, there was also a clear wish to communicate,
which made the prospects of induction into analysis slightly less daunting.
His initial stories and illustrations describe small animals that leave home
and have lots of adventures with huge adversaries. They usually have two
psychological escape routes—the oral or the phallic. They eat up the uni-
verse or they try to become as big as it is. Poignantly the ant hero will make
his way to the top of the Empire State Building, a preposterous King Kong
mask bravely covering the terror of the little endangered face.

Here is a story edited slightly which prefigures much of his analysis
and gives a good sense of the four-and-a-half-year-old, his terrors and his
defenses, his hopes and desperations.

> *"Once upon a time there was a bunny. He always wanted to go away
> from his father and mother. He had to go to the hospital because he
> was a bad bunny and a gorilla ate his tail off. A great bull came
> running by his house and he, the little bunny, wanted to teach the
> bull how to hop on two feet and act like a rabbit. He ate orange
> carrots and turned orange. Then he discovered if he ate clear carrots,
> he would turn purple. Then the little bunny played hide and seek with
> a dinosaur. Then he jumped from the top of a tree after eating a
> whole bunch of leaves. He discovered he could fly instead of hopping.
> The very next day he discovered he could never ever ever land from his
> flying. And then he discovered that there was a boat down in the sea
> and he flew over to the ship and they pulled him down, but he flew
> up again and then he stopped flying with his wings and then he
> dropped down into the ship. So the next day he discovered that the
> word Alex was spelled 200 years ago Fred and the very very very next
> day in 1966 he discovered Alex was spelled Alex. Then the very next
> day he wanted to eat all the bucktooth rabbits that were smaller than
> his mother and father and him. He wanted to eat every single thing
> in the whole country of New York, so that day he wanted to eat every
> word that wouldn't make sense, so he got so impressed at talking that
> he did not want to talk anymore. So he never ever ever came back
> home to his family."*

The story is rich in dynamic meanings, so much so that the subse-
quent five years of analysis could be thought of as a series of associations

to the profound themes raised in a seemingly light-hearted manner behind the masks of fiction. A full exploration of all the psychodynamic threads that informed this story and weaved their way into the psycho-analysis and beyond it into all the subsequent dreams is the ambitious goal of this article. The story is "convenient" from an anamnestic point of view since it paints such a vivid picture of a young mind's struggles with size, castration, impulses (flying), control (the ship), identity (Alex, Fred), identification (could the bunny learn to run like the bull, could the bull learn to hop like the bunny?), etc. As an opening statement about the analytic situation, and whether it is safe to bring words and play and dreams to it, the child's ambivalence seems palpable. One inter-pretation of the text could be constructed as follows: "If I leave home, I may never return. If I eat, there may be consequences. If I fly, I may not be able to return to earth, but I do hope the ship will be able to ground me. If I lose my name [Alex, Fred], I hope the regression is not perman-ent. I know I can learn something from the bull, but maybe a bull can learn something from me, too. Identification is not intimidation after all. There's love and reciprocity in it too, or else it's all propaganda and indoctrination. If words don't make sense, I want to be able to eat them. Intellect that ignores appetite makes no sense that can guide you."

The first dream was reported in the seventh analytic session. In the preceding sessions Alex had talked and played, presenting himself basic-ally as brash and defensive on the one hand, and open and communica-tive on the other. Digging to the bottom of the sandbox, he commented, "I want to get to the bottom of things." He also hoped that the analyst would give him "the greatest memory in the world." All the meanings of this request would slowly emerge later in the analysis. He would build tall structures out of blocks of wood, reveling in the spatial majesty and in the destructive glee of toppling and dismantling. He would write his name on the blackboard and chalk in the number of times he had seen me, a somewhat arrogant "pupil" seizing as much con-trol as possible from the "teacher" analyst.

I will present session seven in its entirety so that the dream and its context are fully exposed.

Alex entered the playroom, noticed that the block design from the previous session was not exactly as he had left it, and complained, "Why didn't you leave them up?"

ANALYST: You're angry that things are not exactly as you left them? [Pause] Could we make it again?
ALEX: No.
ANALYST: Oh?
ALEX: I can't remember. The mouse who takes things from the back of my head to the front … I can't get him to work now.
ANALYST: He's angry, too! He'd like things to stay in their place forever.
ALEX: Not forever. For one day!
ANALYST: [Touché—not voiced.]
ALEX: I'll make a bed. Pee Pee Doo Doo Wee Wee.
ANALYST: That's the way you talked when you were … how old?
ALEX: Three. I did peepee in bed last night.
ANALYST: Oh? How come?
ALEX: I wanted to.
ANALYST: Oh?
ALEX: To get Mommy to clean the sheet.
ANALYST: Oh, you get back at Mom that way?
ALEX: Yeah.
ANALYST: How did she get to you?
ALEX: She spanked me.

Alex suddenly climbed on the block shelves. I moved instinctively to protect him should he fall (the shelves were "tall" given the size of the child).

ALEX: Why did you move?
ANALYST: To make sure you were safely up.
ALEX: [Independently] I'm up now.

From his perch on the shelf, he erased his name and the number of sessions he had seen me from the blackboard, saying good-bye Alex to his name as it disappeared and began to draw. "I want to draw a dog," he said, but instead he drew a dinosaur, a brontosaurus, and the bird dinosaur, saying, "The bird can eat the brontosaurus but not the tyrannosaur." Then he drew a lady snake and snake eggs and then a star, saying a star was a part of the night, "I don't like night."

ANALYST: Why not? Is it the dreams?

ALEX: Yes.
ANALYST: Last night?
ALEX: Yes.
ANALYST: What about?

Alex tells the following dream:

ALEX: There was an octopus. As big as the Empire State Building. I had a stick. It swallowed me. I was fighting it. It spat me out.
ANALYST: It sounds scary.
ALEX: I had another dream about an octopus in a spook house.
ANALYST: What's a spook house?
ALEX: I don't know.
ANALYST: Sounds scary, too. Was it?
ALEX: Yeah.
ANALYST: Where do you think those dreams came from? Were you worried about something maybe?
ALEX: Yeah, an accident.
ANALYST: Oh?
ALEX: Grandfather died. [This turns out to be a lie, but I am unaware of this at the time.]
ANALYST: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. You miss him?
ALEX: Yeah and my uncle Abe.

Alex went to a drawer, extracted a hammer, and started to make a plane, cars, and a motorbike tinkering away like a mechanic.

ANALYST: It feels good and strong to make things, especially when talking about scary dreams.
ALEX: [Went to the sandbox.] Let's bury grandfather. He spilled a lot of sand in the process and I asked him to try not to, even if he was showing his feelings that way.
ALEX: I like to spill the sand.
ANALYST: Yes, you told me you like to mess and have someone else clean it up. Like a baby, I guess?
ALEX: I'd like to be a baby.
ANALYST: Oh? How come?
ALEX: I wouldn't have to eat roast beef and squash.

ANALYST: Oh? What would you prefer?
ALEX: "Sol."
ANALYST: What's that?
ALEX: Soft baby food. I still like it.
[It's time to stop.]
ANALYST: Let's stop here.
ALEX: Oh, I'll take the airplane.
ANALYST: Can you leave it so we can use it again when we need to?
ALEX: Oh, but I want to paint it. [And he runs off with it.]

A SYNOPSIS OF THE PSYCHOANALYSIS

The analysis brings to mind Ernest Jones's conviction that pathology of the phallic phase of development is intimately related to earlier disappointments at the breast. In other words, a phallus that "protests too much about its captivating seductiveness" is really a mouth in disguise, a mouth that did not possess the nipple adequately and, feeling dispossessed in one erotogenic zone, tries to make up for it in another. Too much phallic pride, in other words, is a sign of oral disappointment.

Using the first dream as a guide to the initial transference communications, I believe Alex implied that his needs were urgent and even octopoid, and that the little stick of his defenses might not be up to the task of taming so primitive an instinctual source unless an ally could be found in the analytic situation. There were many other "meanings" of the first dream, one could argue, but this particular transferential conceptualization highlighted the opening phase of analytic work and is being accentuated for that reason.

Two themes from the first year of analytic work seemed to grow like offshoots, not only of the first dream, but also of the story outlined in the anamnesis above. One theme developed into a play sequence where the analyst was Dr. Doolittle, the block-shelf, which had wheels and could therefore "voyage" around the playroom becoming a ship for Alexander and Dr. Doolittle to explore wild territories and "tame" all the wild animals. The other "theme" was closely related to this analytic investigation of Alexander's instincts and his struggles with control and compromise, adaptive expression, and symptomatic action. The voyage

could get turbulent at times: the analyst got whacked on the head play-
fully with the broomstick oar on one occasion. But the voyage could be
insightful and poignant as well. In one play sequence the ship was actu-
ally compared to the analytic situation itself in a remarkable piece of
insight for such a young child. When a toy ship was lost at sea and buf-
feted by storms but still managed to make it home safely to port, Alex
interrupted the play for a moment and compared the work of analysis
and the relationship he had with me to a voyage and a return trip to the
safety and security of the analytic "port," so to speak. Alex had returned
the ship to the "terminal" and turning to the analyst said very genuinely
"maybe you can become a person terminal for me." The analyst was very
moved by Alex's suggestion of an emotional and psychological alliance
between the young child and the analyst and commented very genuinely
on the remarkable understanding of the analytic process that the child
appreciated at such a young age.

If Alex wished to fly and spit and swallow, he also hoped that there
was a "vessel" somewhere that could contain him, hold him. In the final
analysis, an analysand learned that the vessel was, of course, nothing
other than one's own mind and its structures and instincts operating in
that ironic harmony called conflict and compromise. In the course of
the analytic journey, one did not always feel that the mind was one's own
as it leaned so desperately and so dependently into the deep paradox of
transference that regressed it the better to strengthen it. At times the ves-
sel seemed hopelessly lost at sea and contact with another "human" ves-
sel was mandatory if safe harbor was ever to be reached.

These two images of "taming" and "vessel" are not the only genera-
tive metaphors of a lengthy analysis, but they have an organizational
focus that can be exploited in the interest of making a long analytic story
short.

If Alex was frightened as well as exhilarated by forces that could dis-
patch analytic grandfathers—not to mention extra-analytic ones even
closer to home—his skills at taming and vessel building were beginning
to give him the confidence needed to pursue his analytic voyages no
matter where they led. In child analysis, vessel building is not merely a
metaphoric image: Alex actually carved boats out of wood, their mean-
ings as variable as their contexts. For instance, a boat that he carved early
in the analysis had quite a different meaning from the boat he carved at

the end of the analysis. The first boat was carved in a context of exploration, which was complex and painful. The termination boat was more of a statement about journey's end than an exploration of any new unconscious territories. The first boat was called "The Catch Up" and the termination boat could have been called "The Letting Go" but was, as will be disclosed later, given a more personal hieroglyphic code name as befits latency and all its developmental intrigue. "The Catch Up" was carved while Alexander was reviewing some complicated affects about a substitute caretaker Rosa, who left abruptly when Alexander was three, promising to return but never keeping her word. In a poignant moment when Alexander's phallic shield was lowered a little, he admitted that he took her at her word and counted the days to no avail. (Alex's numbering on the backboard the sequence of days he had seen me could, with hindsight, now be seen in a more poignant, tragic light.) The loss of Rosa was made more traumatic by the even earlier emotional loss of mother (the mother had confided in me that it was not in her nature to be close to Alex at bedtime, an emotional legacy that she inherited via the constricted affects of her own mother). If the little bunny left home never to return, it was emotional retaliation, not first strike, it seemed in Alexander's primitive morality. But "The Catch Up" seemed to be an attempt to go beyond repetition compulsion and heal developmental wounds, not just rub them. Alex was trying to break a vicious cycle of neurosis in the mutative process of analysis: he was trying to replace neurotic convictions that warned (a) that loss of the object and its love would always cramp his phallic style; (b) that phallic disguise could always hide a broken heart (c) with the new conviction that would assure him that his libidinal expressiveness need not lead to such tragic consequences.

This new conviction was the offspring of several years of psychoanalytic working through. Highlights of this process will give the gist if not the bulk of the analytic work over a few years. The latency years of the analysis were conducted in the typical climate of schoolboy psychology and defensiveness: an obsession with sports and other games hid the unconscious life of the mind with a developmental expertise that was impressive and at times impenetrable. However, in "scientific experiments" that were conducted by mixing "detergents" and other objects from every "primal" crevice of my office, affects were discussed

and compared and contrasted according to their "properties" of speed or density. Anger, for instance, was an extremely "fast" affect, whereas sadness was extremely "slow." Out of this alchemy of affects came the admission that the grief in the wake of Rosa's rejection was "slow" to leave him, the sadness lasting many months as he counted the days. Surely this was grief, a child's unique way of mourning (Mahon 1977). Even the "baseball" resistance would occasionally surrender an unconscious meaning or two. Once in the middle of a baseball game with me, Alex complained that he had to interrupt the game to go to the bathroom, a deprivation that would not be necessary if the bathroom and the playroom were all one room instead of being separated. When I commented on how much Alex hated "separations" and "interruptions," Alex said, "When the doodie goes out, the poopie goes up." Analysis of this cryptic comment in ensuing analytic sessions made it clear that what was said casually had quite deep levels of unconscious meaning. Since doodie was Alex's infantile word for feces and poopie his word for penis, his comment was a variation on Freud's penis = feces equation. In Alex's psychological calculus, when the doodie goes out the poopie goes up meant when you are faced with loss, you can cover your ass with an erect penis. The phallic boast attempts to hide the anal loss or the more deeply repressed oral loss. Penis = feces = breast, to complete Freud's equation.

Alex would often make insightful comments that suggested that even in the midst of powerful defensive resistances insight could emerge and take the analyst by surprise. A child analyst's ongoing commentary on the unfolding process is mostly informed by a defense analysis point of view. If the child is insisting that he is all-powerful like Batman, the analyst may say "it must feel good to have Batman's kind of power when you're feeling weak after a hard day in school." If the child responds saying "yes, today was awful; the teacher was mean to me all day," the analyst feels that his linking of defense and affect has been understood and insight has been advanced a little. Alex once commented on this analytic *technique* saying, "you like to make things out of what I say." "Yes" the analyst says: "I guess I'm a different kind of teacher." "You sure are," Alex says and the matter is dropped. The analyst realizes that Alex is developing some rudimentary idea of the interpretive process and how analysis works. In his own words, he seems to grasp what an interpretation tries

to accomplish. On another occasion when Alex was criticizing his parents' lack of empathy, he said "Don't they know I need the person feelings"? This seemed like a profound insight and the analyst was much moved by it. It seemed to refer again to the profound idea mentioned earlier in which Alex stepped out of the play about the ship in a storm getting home safely to the *terminal* and turning to the analyst and saying, "Maybe you can be a *person terminal* for me." It is most arresting to hear a child's definition of the unique importance of what a *person* signifies. He connects the *person* with *affect* in a most profound way. Sometimes the profound would emerge out of a game. Alex liked to play chess with the analyst. It was not chess in any formal sense but a version of chess in which the pieces could be moved in whatever manner the child's fantasies dictated. Once Alex picked up a pawn and asked, "why can't a pawn become a king?" There was a poignancy in the wish as Alex identified with the pawn's role rather than with the king's role or with bishop's, knight's, rook's, or queen's. He could have identified with any piece, but the pawn's plight seemed to touch him the most and exposed his identification with the diminutive rather than with the high and mighty.

As Alex began to make remarkable progress on all fronts (social, academic, domestic, athletic) and as termination began to make an impression on the clinical process, the baseball resistance reluctantly yielded a few important insights. When I interpreted the flurry of baseball resistances with a question, "Why so much baseball now that we're thinking of bringing our work to an end?" Alex replied, "Every baseball game has to end," proving that resistance is often an analyst's word for his own ignorance and that the analysand was in fact working on the termination phase in his play.

One of the final "symbols" of the analysis was the aforementioned boat which might have been called "The Letting Go" but which was actually given a more phase-appropriate title by an industrious 9-year-old. Alex combined his own initials, my initials, and the numbers of our houses and street addresses into an impressive code name. At journey's end the boats were left behind in the playroom to be retrieved perhaps in some future nostalgic catch-up or letting go. In the meantime, they remain among the treasured possessions of a nostalgic analyst.

This "Letting Go" boat was carved out of wood, while many termination themes were being analyzed. Alex attempted to draw "a portrait of

the analyst with a broken arm" in which his aggression toward the abandoning object could not be concealed. His anger at Rosa, his parents, his sister, and his analyst were worked over for many weeks. His fear in the face of all this aggression was that his hatred would destroy the object totally or at least the object's love for him. If he met Rosa in the street now, would he recognize her? Could he have a photograph of me to assure himself that his aggression had not destroyed all hope of ever seeing me again? Concerns such as these had to be broken into their genetic components (he felt like killing Rosa and his mother and father and feared that they would attack him or stop loving him or abandon him) before Alex could begin to realize that the past could be kept "in its place" and that the present could hold the promise of a future uncontaminated by the past.

THE SECOND DREAM

At age thirteen, Alex returned for a consultation about the boarding school he would be attending soon. Boarding school was at least the manifest content of a visit that had obvious latent agendas as well which could be addressed when he recounted a dream and began to work on it as if the analysis had not ended at all! (This immediacy of transference availability years after an analysis has terminated is well documented elsewhere, particularly in regard to adult analyses (Pfeffer 1963).)

The Dream:

> *"I am running in the woods. Snakes appear. They come close to my face. I run and run. There are other children younger than me playing nearby. I try to make the snakes go in their direction."*

Alex's associations were of the superficial variety at first: he had watched a TV program on snakes, which explained their presence in the dream. The younger children referred to all the children that would be left in his school after he went off to boarding school. Then Alex went a little deeper: "close to his face" meant there was something dangerous he had to face—leaving home. Perhaps he was imagining the worst about boarding school. Was he seeing it as dangerous? Was he viewing it as punishment, being sent away? Was his "badness" catching up with him? Alex seemed relieved by airing some of these worries, affects, and distortions,

but the dream seemed to be "crying out" for deeper exploration. Alex was now thirteen years old, had grown a lot since I had seen him three years earlier. The transformations of puberty seemed to be waging a psychological civil war with the conservative forces of latency, and a developmental nudge in the form of an interpretation seemed appropriate. "What if the snakes represent your penis which must have grown a lot like the rest of you?" I asked somewhat humorously. "Why do you suppose you'd be sending them away in the direction of younger children?"

Alex had no trouble getting the point. His immediate response was a confirmation of the interpretation in the form of a complaint: "My sister [two years older] didn't get her period until she was thirteen. I've had wet dreams and erections since eleven. It's not fair." Soon the irony of his own statement began to dawn on him. Here was the most "phallic" of boys suddenly renouncing his penis now that he was old enough to put it to use! This classical dilemma of the thirteen-year-old who finds progression and regression equally problematic was certainly not unique to Alex, but with five years of analysis behind him, it was easier for him to put words to his plight and recognize the deeply ambivalent psychological currents of his dream. Could he face the transformations of puberty, could he acknowledge that his penis (snake) with its wet dreams and erections belonged to him and need not be delegated to others? Or would he invoke the personal myth of the deprived child whose older sibling had it easier? Even biology was kinder to her than to him, granting her a longer childhood, while he was expelled prematurely from the innocence of Eden by his hyperactive, precocious hormones! As Alex began to "play" with these associations, laughing at himself a good deal in the process, it became clear that his conflicts about sexuality, boarding school, and growing up were the "average expectables" of developmental life and not insurmountable obstacles that were about to derail him.

THE THIRD DREAM

Seven years passed before Alex consulted me again. By chance he had seen me on the street and recognized me, giving the lie to one of his termination fears (his anger would destroy the relationship; I would become unrecognizable). He was home from college working as a

cameraman's assistant on a movie being made not far from my office when the chance encounter occurred (actually I was unaware of the encounter until Alex told me later).

The manifest reason for his visit was to discuss academic performance in college, which was reflecting his conflicts rather than his potential. But several more "latent" communications quickly came to the fore: (a) He had learned recently that Rosa's whole family had been killed in an auto accident. He was not sure whether Rosa herself had been killed or not. (b) A two-year relationship with a girlfriend had ended six months earlier and new relationships seemed ambivalent, tentative. (c) It was depressing to come home. His old room was now "a storage room." Mother still seemed obsessed with herself and domestic details rather than with the emotional nuances of his development and conflicts.

We ran out of time on the first visit. We agreed to meet again, at which time Alex began the session with the following dream:

> I am in a Batmobile. Batman is driving. I'm in the back seat. The Batmobile is not all it's cracked up to be. We are trying to chase some bad guys. We are slow to pull out of the garage in pursuit because we have to make several broken "U" turns just to get out of the driveway. Finally, we get going. I take the wheel. Eventually we catch up with the bad guys. We follow them over a desert and give chase round and round an oval.

Alex had a wealth of associations to this dream. He had come into my office carrying a bicycle wheel, the rest of the bicycle locked to a tree outside for safekeeping. The bicycle wheel symbolized his return home to relative dependency (in college he had a beaten-up used car and much more freedom). He jokingly referred to this bicycle wheel as the "Batmobile," making it clear that vehicular symbolism was on his mind. He had a lot of fun with the idea that the Batmobile in the dream was not the magical vehicle from the recent movie but a much more down-to-earth version. The "broken U's" were emblematic of his recent academic progress, which had been anything but "linear" in direction. Alex had developed a capacity for laughing at himself, quite a contrast to the sensitivity and defensive bluster of his latency years. Alex's most emotionally laden associations were reserved for comparisons between the new

"catch up" vehicle (the Batmobile) and the old "catch up" of yesteryear. It was in such a nostalgic moment that Alex referred to the automobile accident that claimed the lives of Rosa's family and maybe even Rosa herself. Alex's uncertainty about the fate of Rosa seemed highly significant. While she had not been "a presence" in his life for seventeen years, she had become symbolic of love, treachery, object constancy, transience—all the contrary motions of outer experience and inner psychology that left him confused at certain times, neurotic at others. Rosa was no longer a disappointing object out of the past: she had become a symbol of the internalized loving objects at the core of his self-esteem—one of the lynch pins that would determine the stability of his adolescent consolidations. In this context, it was very clear to Alex that the Batmobile represented himself at the crossroads of his life. Batman was a reference to the idealized mother and father (Rosa too perhaps) who had to be diminished psychologically speaking if he was to assume the individuated responsibility for the wheel of his own life. (At this point in the hour the bicycle wheel leaning on the radiator beside Alex's chair assumed its full tragicomic significance!) "Chasing the bad guys round an oval" led to several associations: the oval referred to the shape of the baseball field, "a field of dreams" he wished to return to and abdicate all adult ambition and conflict. In fact, in another dream fragment that Alex reported, he "surrenders" an old girlfriend to a rival while he in oedipal defeat becomes preoccupied with baseball. The pursuit of the bad guys leads to the most important association of all: Alex's realization that the "bad guys" are no longer "out there," as it had seemed in latency times, but are "within." Alex reflected on the fact that his academic progress was a very precise barometer of the state of his object relations. On reflection he could "see" that the breakup of a two-year relationship with his girlfriend had affected him academically and emotionally more than he had been willing to admit prior to the consultation. There was no more time to pursue the analysis of the dream further. We left off with the idea that I was available should he want to consult me about his pattern of "failed" relationships with young women, his academic pursuits or any other issues, frivolous or serious, that he might want to discuss with me. He gave the overall impression of a young man seeking to find himself but not really ready to settle down quite yet into a totally stable identity.

THE FOURTH DREAM

Infant falling out of plane. Plane escaping from aborigines. I look back in rearview mirror to catch a glimpse of infant if I can. I am co-pilot. Captain angry at me for looking back.

Alex was thirty years old when he reported this dream. He had returned briefly to discuss his relationships with women. He had continued to begin relationships "fairly well" but then "lose out" when the relationship got serious. He seemed restless and more interested in telling me about his bodybuilding regime than about the complexities of relationships. He had not really established himself yet as the skillful financial manager of a thriving firm he would eventually settle into. This was to be a short re-engagement with psychoanalytic ideas before he "vanished" and maintained no further contact with me for twenty years. We did, however, spend a little time on the dream, which he described as alarming, given the image of the infant falling out of the plane with the plane proceeding as if nothing significant had happened. He had seen a movie about aborigines in Australia: he thought aborigine and infant were related. He believed that he was both captain and co-pilot and that the dream represented a conflict between his wish to be an infant and to be "flying high" at the same time. Before these issues could be explored in greater depth Alexander broke off the contact with me, acting out the very symptom (conflict about commitment in a relationship) he had come to investigate. I would not see him again for twenty years.

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH DREAMS

Alexander returned a few months before his fiftieth birthday. I was delighted and surprised to hear from him and to learn that he was happily married for seventeen years and had a fifteen-year-old and a thirteen-year-old son. My surprise was a reflection of a countertransference fantasy in which he had concentrated on bodybuilding to the neglect of procreativity and object relations. I was thrilled that the predictive power of my magical countertransference bore no resemblance to reality whatsoever! Alex had started his own public relations company with a team of highly artistic, business-savvy colleagues, a cutting-edge enterprise that had flourished and had satellite national and international offices.

But success phobia became a feature of Alex's career and lifestyle. His wife had suggested that he call me since he had been staying out late with his young employees who would go out drinking in the evenings when the workday had ended. Alexander never had any interest in alcohol, but he envied the camaraderie his younger colleagues enjoyed so much as they relaxed in local saloons when the workday ended. When he discussed this "infantile" behavior with his wife, Alexander sensed that it was the fear of turning fifty that had triggered the "regression" and prompted a kind of infantile behavior that was fueled by a fantasy that he was still in his thirties and not approaching fifty at all. Alexander would grow bored of the inebriated conversations, as he remained sober while his colleagues regressed, and yet he felt drawn to these evening get-togethers despite his sense that he was enacting a symptom rather than analyzing it. The couple had been married for seventeen years and it was a good relationship that he would hate to compromise based on a return to behavior that "was beneath his status" as his wife put it. Alexander agreed to meet regularly and try to understand what the unconscious mischief was all about. He expressed the opinion that it should not take too long to understand this behavior and repudiate it.

Alexander reported two dreams not long after we had decided to work together again.
The Fifth Dream:

> *I am wearing a white shirt. There is blue sticking tape attached to it. I try to remove it but cannot seem to pry it successfully off the shirt.*

We had been talking about his reaction to turning fifty, and when I suggested that in the dream, he was attempting perhaps to rid himself of the aging process, he agreed and said, "and I'm blue about it." And then told a second dream he remembered.
The Sixth Dream:

> *With Jared Kushner's brother. He has information about a real estate deal Trump is involved in. This information can help Trump. So we meet Trump on football field. The dreamer (Alexander) is looking up to/at him.*

Alexander had many associations to this dream, mostly about size and stature. Trump is six foot three inches. Melania is five foot eleven inches.

Their son Baron is tall. By contrast Alexander is only five foot nine inches. His wife and sons are short in size also. Alexander wishes that his sons were taller than he. The football field refers to Trump being actually on a football field recently celebrating a college football game. Alexander felt ambivalent about looking up at Trump. In terms of the economy and taxes the country was doing well. But there was no question that Trump was "a black eye on the face of America." And yet he was looking up at him. "That's not the same as looking up to him" he suggested. And so he changed the subject to his hanging out with inebriated subordinates. He socialized with his staff, who were all younger than he. He believed that he was blurring the distinction between the "boss" and his underlings. He felt uncomfortable "at the top."

When I asked Alexander if he remembered any of the dreams he had told me years earlier, he said he could not recall working on them. He did remember the boats we had made together, The Catch-up and The Letting Go. When I told him about his dream at age twelve he could not remember it but reminded me of a dream he had at age thirteen about a fire engine. He was able to date it to age thirteen because of the fact that the family was vacationing in a certain hotel and he associated the dream with the hotel. And he remembered telling the dream to me.

THE SEVENTH DREAM

I am driving a fire engine. Not the front steering wheel but the one in the back of the vehicle. I am having trouble steering and coordinating with the main driver.

He agreed that there seemed to be a theme that linked that dream with his current concerns about steering his company or his family as the number one guy who is comfortable with authority.

DISCUSSION

Development and continuity are strikingly etched in a study such as this. Mind and body go through extraordinary developmental changes from birth to eighteen years of age. From eighteen years on there may be subtle developmental changes also but these have not been codified as

much, if at all. If one looks at development through a Piagetian lens alone, the evolution of sensorimotor, pre-operational, operational, and formal cognitive masteries is a marvel to behold. The advance from pre-conceptual to conceptual to hypothetico-deductive, formal adolescent reasoning is a fifteen-year achievement almost too challenging to fathom. Imagined with time-lapse photography this sweep of human developmental change is a miracle on the move. Seen through a Freudian lens alone, the sweep of sexual and assertive/aggressive incremental change from incipient attachment to separation individuation, to adaptive engagement with oedipal conflict, to the sudden arrival of an infantile amnesia that represses the first six years of memory almost in its entirety, to the intellectual industry of latency that allows the mind to be schooled in and to slowly imbibe the fruits of cultural input; and on to the intellectual pyrotechnics of adolescent thought which allows free associative mastery to be achieved, is staggeringly impressive. That said, while there are these incremental changes in structure and content, there is also a continuity of psychological themes that becomes highlighted in a longitudinal study such as this. And it is this balance between developmental change and tenacious continuity that I wish to highlight.

In a sense, the stubborn insistence of continuity and the incremental changes of development could be recognized as the over determined vicissitudes of long-term psychological conflict that will never be completely *resolved,* except in adaptive *compromise.* The mind remains a political theater of opposing forces throughout life: it was Hartmann, I believe, who suggested this political metaphor, but the idea of ongoing psychological conflict has always been the core idea of psychoanalysis since its inception. Development assists the mind in its struggles with conflict from dyadic preoedipal separation-individuation issues to triadic oedipal turmoil. Freud's theory of a "dissolution" of the Oedipus complex at age six, as the newly structured mind authorizes the superego to squash oedipal desires in the interest of civil obedience, had to be modified. The Oedipus Complex is not squashed. There is no absolute dissolution. There is repression, to be sure, and identification with authority rather than anarchic perpetual strife with it. There is sublimation of hatred rather than chronic enactment of it. The infantile amnesia that lowers its curtain, at age six approximately, on the whole tormented

sexuality and aggression of preoedipal and oedipal drama is remarkable to witness as parent or analyst as latency transforms a wild imaginative pre-conceptual animistic child into a reasoning conceptual being who embraces the intellectual challenges of a world of "reading, writing, and arithmetic" with an *industry* that is impressive, as Erikson noted.

In this discussion, I will compare and contrast developmental change and the seemingly unchanging continuity of the earliest desires of infancy, early childhood, latency, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood proper. Continuity is not static, of course. It is always being challenged and modified by the developing mind's maturing structures and sophistications of defense. The metaphors at the mind's disposal will change from octopus and stick, to snakes and bicycle wheels, to fire engines and Batmobiles, to airplanes with infants falling out of them, to a dreamer looking up at/to Trump. Each developmental epoch, be it preoedipal, oedipal, latency, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, old age, will deal with conflict uniquely, differentially and yet the continuity of the desire to be taller, to be more phallic (which may of course be a poignant cover-up of a deeper longing to be held and cherished by a *person terminal* that represents mother/father/Rosa/wife/analyst) will persist. The great psychological theater that illustrates these developmental lurches and abiding continuities is the transference/countertransference drama that dyadic analysis exploits as it proceeds on its therapeutic odysseys.

The Complexities of Transference/Countertransference Issues

It is strange to be analyzing a man at age fifty that you analyzed already at age four for five years. It is strange to be in possession of knowledge that the previous child analysis yielded, knowledge that the current analysand knows only partially or unconsciously. It is akin to Freud's astonishment when Herbert Graf returned to see *the professor* who conducted an analysis via the father that Little Hans, now age nineteen, had no memory of, all the extraordinary, even revolutionary ideas that that analysis had uncovered, now returned to the unconscious again from whence they had first sprung! For instance, when the analyst shared with Alexander his dreams from age four and thirteen, Alexander, not unlike Herbert Graf, did not remember them even though he did remember the wooden boats he had carved and painted in the company of his

analyst when he was six and eight years old. While he did not remember the second dream I have outlined above, he did remember an alternate dream he recalled from that same period when he was twelve years old. It is clear that selective memory, repression, and infantile amnesia are in evidence in what Alexander recalls and does not recall.

I have used the word *strange* twice in the last paragraph and it cries out for analysis of the counter-transferential complexity compressed in it. The most accessible counter-transferential affect consciously available to me is a sense of pride, pleasure, and joy that I was fortunate enough to be in the position to receive dreams such as these over such a long span of time. Since the whole engagement with the dreamer was not planned in any way except for the years of the child analysis, all subsequent unpredictable visits seemed fortuitous, almost uncanny. But the affect on seeing an "old" patient return on four subsequent occasions bearing dreams did seem *strange,* to use that vague language again. There was a magical sense that this long clinical follow up could go on providing research data about development and the evolution of the dreaming process forever. Mortality and transience were surely being denied here. Since I had heard Paul Dudley White (many years ago when internal medicine was my first choice of a career) speak about the endless information regarding the natural course of normality and pathology that the long clinical follow up could provide the curious, scientific practitioner, I had imagined that psychoanalysis was surely the epitome of the long clinical follow up, the human mind itself on display for the analytic dyad to explore endlessly. The word "endlessly" exposes the countertransference embedded in the fantasy of the long clinical follow up, as if the history of ideas could be the sole property of any one observer as opposed to the legacy of all scientists over time. That particular countertransference also ignores the goal of the essential function of analysis, which is to restore the analysand to the management of his own individuality (Poland 2015) once the work of analysis has achieved its goals. Analysis was not meant to be interminable no matter what countertransference insists or claims to the contrary!

Child analysis breeds its own particular kind of countertransference perhaps, given that the analyst becomes such a real object in the child's mind. This is surely true in adult analyses as well, but in adult analysis the very nature of the relationship between analyst and analysand

becomes one of the great windows into the elucidation of the whole analytic process as the transference/countertransference relationship is explored in depth constantly. In child analysis, the real relationship between the child and analyst is *experienced* rather than constantly *explored* or deconstructed. This is a relative issue to be sure and worthy of deeper commentary. One of the dangers of the countertransference in child analysis is its cultivation of a neurotic proprietary sense that views the child as the analyst's child even when the child is fifty years old! I believe I have guarded against this pitfall by insisting on its becoming conscious rather that remaining unconscious. The corollary of this is equally important: the fifty-year-old man may wish to remain a child in the analyst's eyes forever. The dream in which Alex is looking at/up to Trump highlights this issue. Is Alex trying to draw attention to his need to analyze the profound difference between looking *up at* someone as opposed to looking *up to* someone? Looking up *at* someone is merely a spatial issue; looking up *to* someone is an emotional/psychological issue. Alex's shorter size makes him look up at people taller than he. But he does not need to look *up* to them unless he truly admires them in a non-neurotic evaluation. This issue was just being explored when Alex needed to interrupt our work based on a worldwide financial crisis. There may have been a resistance issue as well of course. It is possible that Alex felt the need to assert his individuated status rather than surrender it to an analyst he still looks up to too much, thereby weakening and diminishing his own status. (It is possible that this may be explored analytically in future sessions but for the present such judgment must be postponed).

Could all of Alex's return visits to the person terminal be viewed as bouts of refueling, a concept Margaret Mahler used to describe the behavior of the child in the rapprochement period of development when the eighteen-month-old is testing the wings of individuation by making more and more excursions away from the mother, while at the same time retracing the footsteps back to the source to make sure that the journey away can always be undone, confirming over and over that love is not lost as separateness and individuality are being experimented with and gradually established. At eighteen months this doing and undoing in action becomes the precursory model of the later psychological doings and undoings that typify the defensive, more intrapsychic aspects of such psychodynamics. Is Alex *refueling* as he returns to the

person terminal and can it be analyzed as such so that its psychological dimensions can be deconstructed, and the repetitive nature understood so well that it becomes unnecessary? Is that how the analysand will terminate from the person terminal when such issues are completely metabolized? Such questions may perhaps be answerable in future visits either to this analyst or to a new analyst. Countertransference must be willing to contemplate the retirement or demise of the analyst and how the work might proceed with a new person terminal.

Development and Continuity

From a developmental point of view Alex's goals could be depicted as a voyage through the pre-oedipal and oedipal complexities of the first six years of life into the relatively smoother waters of latency and then through the rapids of adolescent turmoil into the challenges of adulthood. The first dream suggests just how complex this voyage is going to be. Each image of the dream is fraught with the combustible nature of instinctual unconscious life. *There is an octopus. As big as the Empire State Building. I had a stick. It (the octopus) swallowed me. I was fighting it. It spat me out.*

     If every image of this dream represents a facet of Alex's unconscious mind as it struggles to represent its conflicts, the octopus is perhaps the most striking and overdetermined. Surely, it could represent the desire of this most phallic boy to have eight penises as opposed to just one endangered organ. His symptomatic behavior in school, grabbing at the penises of other boys, represents the frantic nature of this kind of endangered interiority, not to mention inferiority. But of course, the octopus is a devouring creature and may well represent Alex's hunger for love, sympathy, contact, and nourishment as well as a more primitive desire to sink his teeth into the breast of this world and be loved for all his aggression. The Empire State Building looms large in his ideals and introduces the concept of size that will be such a dominant psychological motif throughout his symphonic development. His little stick represents a more accurate view of his diminutive anatomical size, perhaps, and how his normal phallic-oedipal strivings can be swallowed so readily by the regressive overwhelming pre-oedipal oral longings that have never been adequately engaged by a facilitating environment that allowed its own past conflicts with unfinished parental development to interfere with

parenting in the present. This was an intergenerational transmission of neurosis that had a significant effect on Alexander. The mother's understanding of her own conflicts without being able to correct them as they engaged with Alex's development became, nevertheless, an important affective cooperative corroboration and endorsement of the analytic enterprise that nourished Alex's development, albeit indirectly. Child analysis cannot proceed to a beneficial outcome without such cooperation from sympathetic parents. The analyst's skill in maintaining a strong alliance with the parents is crucial as the storms of the child analytic process are being negotiated. Child analyses are often interrupted or scuttled by parents who become envious rivals of the analytic process rather than supporters of it. It is the analyst's responsibility to be attuned with parental attitudes throughout the whole process.

The octopus has a transferential meaning of course as the first dream image to capture the nascent relationship between the tall person terminal and the diminutive boy at the beginning of what surely must seem to him to be an adventure into wonderland with a giant! And what a strange giant his imagination dreams up! An octopus as big as the Empire State Building! Anatomy makes it impossible for him not to look *up* at this giant analyst. Hope will insist that the giant should be a person terminal he can look *up to*. From whatever angle one studies these first unconscious moves in the incipient analytic chess game, it is the transference and its myriad potentials that will steer the imagination throughout the process. Alex's initial transference fantasy suggests that as a very little boy it is best to carry a stick and hope that your phallic aspirations can guide you through the looming fantasies of the curious analytic journey ahead.

The relative "dissolution" of the Oedipus complex is negotiated at age six approximately, when the infantile amnesia shelves the bulk of the affective storms the first six years of developmental life struggled with. Latency then ushers in a new kind of engagement with those earlier conflicts. Psychodynamic and developmental components make this extraordinary transition possible. Identification with the parental authorities that had been challenged so vigorously up to now brings about a developmental détente. Repression seals the deal, so to speak. Sublimation and all the other defensive maneuvers have roles to play in paving the way for latency to become consolidated. Alex, from age six to

nine, engages in an analytic process that is decidedly more controlled by ego growth and defensive achievements. One aspect of countertransference in child analysis is the analyst's regret that the imaginative playful dramatic elements of pre-latency analytic process have been transformed into much tamer expressions of themselves. The analyst must recognize that the advance into latency is a triumph of developmental progression and not some less poetic version of the child that latency has produced. It is the cognitive, conceptual advances of the child's more mature ego that assist the child in his struggle with oedipal impasse by convincing him that his phallic equipment is numerically the equivalent of his parent's. Perceptual size no longer trumps numerical conceptual abstraction in the brave new Piagetian world of the concrete operations of latency (Mahon 1990). Boy and man, son and father, have *one* penis despite the *size* difference. That Alex has not completely metabolized this concept is a demonstration of how neurosis can continue to compromise cognitive conceptual achievement no matter how advanced in age you are!

It is striking how, whenever Alex returns to the analytic setting, whether at twelve or nineteen or thirty or fifty, he immediately reacts as if no time has passed at all and the analytic relationship proceeds again without much sense of the significant gaps that occurred between nine and fifty. Alex may not remember all the psychological links of the analytic process but the trust in and reliability of the relationship (with the person terminal) seems a constant. He tells dreams as if that is natural and comes with the territory. At fifty he knows that the two dreams are significant, and he is willing to work on them; and in addition, he remembers a dream from age thirteen even if he doesn't remember the other dreams from age four, twelve, and nineteen. He is aware that turning fifty has great emotional and psychological significance for him and he associates freely to the images in the dreams.

Size was one of the first issues in the manifest content of his dreams that seemed pivotal in Alex's endangered psychology since he first introduced the octopus as *big* as the Empire State Building in the first dream. Alex only had a small stick to defend himself with. The architectural size of the octopus and the diminutive size of the stick are poignantly striking. Now in the Trump dream *size* seems to be significant again. Trump is tall, his wife and son too. By contrast Alex and his wife and son are all

short. Alex is aware that having to look up at a taller person is not the same as *looking up* to someone, which implies admiration, idealization, or respect. He knows that Trump is an embarrassing national disgrace, "a black eye on the face of America" as he put it. Given how important the economy was in Alex's line of business his ambivalence was understandable even though it troubled him greatly. *Size* and *value* were quite different entities and yet Alex's old conflicts about his vulnerable size and status in the precarious unconscious world relied on magical thinking to sustain them. Even turning fifty could be seen as an issue of size and stature: it was as if age diminished your size. It was a blue adhesion to your shirt that could never be removed. It brought depression (the blues) with it and it could never be undone since age could never be reversed. It was best to fall in line with the Kushners of this world, feed the information to the tall man, and hope that some of the tallness would rub off on you.

The latent dream thoughts in the Trump dream that the dream work transformed into the manifest imagery reflected Alex's conflicts about *size*. Alex, despite his short stature, has information in the dream that can help the taller Trump. As a statement of transference this could be read as the analysand believing that he has *inside* (unconscious) information that will be useful to divulge to the tall analyst. Now while it is true that every analysand has the insider information in his unconscious mind that can break the pathological code that has compromised his development, it is important that the analysand realizes that analysis is a collaborative project. The analysand does not just hand the information over to the idealized person terminal, he also collaborates with the analyst in a mutual voyage of discovery. Alex looks up to the *person terminal* identity of the analyst since he was a child. But that does not mean that the relationship with the analyst is devoid of conflict. In the manifest content and in the first associations to the dream Trump and his wife and son are admirably tall. He looks up at Trump even if he does not want to look up to him. But there is an unconscious wish not to look up to anyone but to be secure in one's own skin. Trump as a black eye on the face of America is relevant in this context. The imagery is revealing. A black eye suggests violence: someone has blackened Trump's eye. Alex may need to look up at him, but he also wants to give him a black eye. Alex once hit the child analyst with a broomstick when they were

playing the Doctor Doolittle voyages to tame the wild animals. Even when the mission is to tame the wild, the wild may still feel compelled to lash out at the Doctor who does little to calm the wild instinctual states Alex needs to tame in the company of his person terminal.

This is the ambivalence that all analyses engage with as positive and negative oedipal transferences display themselves in analytic process. As an association to the size issue in the Trump dream Alex expressed the wish that his son would grow taller than he. Oedipal desire has been reversed in this association. Alex wants the best for his sons, to be sure, but in normal development the father doesn't have to diminish his own size to masochistically enhance the stature of his sons. In child analysis when the analyst and analysand were playing chess, Alex bemoaned the fact that the pawn could not just assume the size of the king and win the game readily. This poignant oedipal wish is still reflected in Alex's associations to the Trump dream. Analysis tries to change a perpetual idealization that looks up to the person terminal without ever valuing self-regard, self-sufficiency, and agency adequately.

Neurosis could be defined as a pawn that forever yearns to possess the stature of the king without realizing that both sides of a chessboard come with equal chess pieces and that he is in possession of a king already and does not need to yearn for one. Alex has not resolved this essential oedipal conflict without resorting to self-diminishing tactics. His current resolution seems to need socialization with inebriated subordinates to blur the oedipal distinction between him and his employees. It also needs the fantasy of sons growing taller than their father. Alex's reliance on the concept of a person terminal needs to be able to incorporate the idea that in a healthy object relationship no party lords their stature over another. Mature love is not perpetual dependence looking up to the need-satisfying object obligatorily, but an insistence on equal status that has integrated love and aggression into its philosophy. Both parties to such mature love are equally assertive. Neither has more stature than the other nor would think of claiming it.

The dream that Alex remembered from age thirteen about the fire engine and the two drivers front and back with Alex in the back having trouble steering the vehicle had an oedipal core to it that was as prominent at fifty as it was at thirteen. In early adolescence the two dreams are very revealing. The dream about Alex sending the snakes away towards

the younger children shows how ironic the phallic defense was: Alex liked to strut his cockiness but when adolescence presented him with the potential for actual sexual prowess he felt completely overwhelmed by such developmental precocity and ambition. Why was this developmental stature being thrust upon him so prematurely? His sister had not been rushed into her developmental maturity prematurely. There is something poignant about this dream that wishes to throw the oedipal stick (penis) away and stay swallowed by the pre-oedipal primitive octopus (womb?) and remain infantile forever. Similarly, the fire engine dream highlights Alex's wish to be second fiddle, and even as second fiddle, the developing fiddle doesn't seem to work properly. This type of conflict resolution seems to be displayed in Alex's character (he sometimes acts as if he were not the co-owner of his own business but was a subordinate looking up at his equals rather than sharing the crown with them.) This lessening of his status is ego syntonic for Alex: It is displayed in the symptom that brought him back into treatment: his hanging out with his inebriated subordinates blurs the distinction between his status and theirs. Such neurotic behavior also demeans him in the eyes of his wife and sons. Alex abhors this symptomatic behavior consciously but unconsciously seems to rely on its regressive energies.

If *size* (as a reflection of self-esteem and oedipal prowess) is a prominent manifest dream issue, another theme that could be isolated for closer scrutiny is *vessel* whether it be boat or fire-engine or bat-mobile or airplane. The fire-engine dream from age twelve, which he reported at age fifty, is the first iteration perhaps of being second-in-command as a resolution of oedipal strivings. The dream of snakes close to his face that he wishes to send away towards younger children complements that neurotic solution. In the fire engine dream, Alex is driving the rear wheel of the fire engine and not very competently. Being second fiddle seems not to be enough of a regression: incompetence reverses the assertive oedipal desire even more so. What is striking of course is the timing of these dreams to coincide with the onset of adolescence and its sexual and ambitious awakenings. Similarly, the Batmobile dream seems to reflect a lack of readiness for mature age-appropriate action. And the airplane dream from age thirty seems to be a continuation of the theme. Alex is co-pilot (second-in-command) and reprimanded by the head pilot for giving his attention to an infant that had fallen out of the plane.

The conflict between pre-oedipal dependency needs and more assertive oedipal needs seems to be illustrated by this manifest imagery. It is striking that vessels in manifest dream content are a reflection of conflicted ambivalent ambition, whereas the actual vessels (boats) that Alex carved and painted while in child analysis seemed much more progressive rather than regressive. The Doctor Doolittle voyages on the "bookshelves boat" were excursions into the wild in the service of taming it and changing wild instincts into adaptive social communications. Another boat ("The Catch-Up") was designed to help him propel his analysis forward and yet another ("The Letting Go") was designed to help him terminate. The portrait of the analyst with a broken arm contained and expressed the aggression he felt about *graduation* from analysis, but the Letting Go boat was a concrete substitute for the *person terminal* he must now take his leave of. By carving initials and addresses into the sides of the boat he was perpetuating the contact with his person terminal, in fantasy to be sure, but fantasy framed in the concrete reality of a piece of sculpted art.

While it could be argued that the first three dreams suggest ways of thinking about development from four to nineteen and how unconscious infantile wishes react to and reflect different developmental challenges as pre-latency becomes latency and latency becomes adolescence, all of the dreams from four to fifty could be thought of as a seamless flow of unconscious infantile wishes, modified to be sure by fast changing, developmental experiences. In other words, there is a continuity of desire, ambition, disappointment, and aggression that persists throughout life even if development, in the first eighteen years of that life, changes the cognitive and psychological equipment that shapes the expression as life proceeds. Development and continuity can clash. Maturation and development proceed whether the ego is ready for it or not. Alex's phallic erections were experienced as developmental challenges that he was not ready for. This un-readiness acts like a day's residue that becomes one ingredient in the formation of the dream. If development itself is a theme, the theme of size and stature, as well as the wish to attain a personhood that is cherished and promoted by parents and substitute *person terminals,* is a lifelong project that analysis and post analytic self-analysis must always engage with.

Alex invoked the concept of a *person terminal* early in his child analysis. It is a generative concept that will change and mature over time as it engages conflict throughout life. A person terminal not only survives the analysand's aggression but welcomes it so that the analysand knows through an analytic sustained experience that his fight with the unconscious octopus will clear the necessary space for octopus and stick wielding child to cohabit in the democracy of the unconscious, in the united states of a fully integrated psyche. A fully integrated psyche must of course contend with oedipal as well as pre-oedipal development. Alex's current resolution of oedipal conflict is a compromise formation that is adaptive in many ways but diminishing and maladaptive in others. The need to hang out with inebriated employees of lesser stature than himself exposes his fear of fully claiming his own full stature. His desire to remain in the number two position in an organization is adaptive to the extent that such lesser stature allows him to create the necessary space for his family which total immersion as the number one leader of his company would not. But if this is an obligatory lessening of his stature in the service of neurosis, a basic retreat from full engagement with the Oedipus Complex, it may weaken his self-image in a chronically demeaning fearful manner. He shouldn't be *obliged* to look up to leaders rather than claiming that honor for himself. He shouldn't need his sons to be taller than he based on an unconscious fear of being a powerful father and claiming that loving assertive authority for himself. He needs to become a fully integrated person terminal, secure in his own authority to define what personhood is when it completely strips itself of any mind-forged manacles.

I would like to end with a discussion of a final countertransferential attitude. Alex may have gotten what he wanted, or certainly what he needed to gain victory over a symptom that was compromising his relationship with his wife and son. Should the analyst be satisfied that the consumer has returned to refuel with the person terminal and after sufficient engagement with the analyst has set his life on the proper course again? In this vision of development, Alexander has accomplished his immediate goal and may never return again for further analysis. His self-analyzing instrument, fashioned over the years by his collaborative work with the analyst, has kicked in and now he wishes to steer the vessel of his life alone. The analyst would surely be content with this outcome

unless there were some nagging unanswerables tugging at the sleeve of his own unconscious deliberations. Did Alexander sense that the analyst was a much older person terminal than the original boat builder? Could he paint a portrait of this older person terminal with a broken arm and would such aggression be as welcome today as it was in the past? Did Alexander leave prematurely, exploiting a world financial crisis as a most convenient resistance to the full exploration of such issues? Now this is all countertransferential speculation since no such issues were explored in the sessions I have described earlier. Alexander would have to return at some point in the future before such issues could be addressed. Perhaps it is neurotic of me to emphasize such countertransference naggings, as if some hunger for further knowledge from the unconscious trove that Alexander's dream life exhibits makes me lose sight of what the collaborative psychoanalytic labor has accomplished already. If there is more to discover, more to learn, so be it. In the meantime, countertransferential alleluias seem more appropriate than ruminations about a glass half empty or half full.

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"On Nomadic Shores Inward": Harry Martinson's Journey to Late-Life Suicide

By David Titelman

"ON NOMADIC SHORES INWARD": HARRY MARTINSON'S JOURNEY TO LATE-LIFE SUICIDE

BY DAVID TITELMAN

The aim of this study was to explore the unconscious dimensions of suicide as conveyed by the Swedish writer Harry Martinson, who took his life in 1978, four years after having received the Nobel Prize in Literature. A psychoanalytically informed "listening" to Martinson comprised a close reading of his writings, reflection on my total response to the material, the application of psychoanalytic hypotheses on severe depression and suicide-nearness, and the study of biographical sources. The dramatic fluctuations of Martinson's self-regard were noted, as was the juxtaposition of opposites in his poetry: darkness that seeps through observations of the beauty of nature and man or the reverse, a gleam of love that defuses the cruelty of the world. Martinson's drive to communicate with himself and others by talking and writing, to find auxiliary objects compensating for the traumatic losses of his childhood, and to realize mature love in adulthood was understood as a counterforce to self-destructiveness and threatening narcissistic disintegration. Pressured by negative reactions to the Nobel, which overlay decades of envy and

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political critique from colleagues, whose support he coveted, Martinson's aggressivity—reflecting the near soul murder *of his early life—exploded in his suicide.*

Keywords: Harry Martinson, suicide, creativity, narcissism, aggressivity, object relations, depression, Nobel Prize.

After deservedly but also, according to some, scandalously receiving the Noble Prize in literature 1974, the Swedish writer Harry Martinson at age seventy turned silent. The alleged scandal was that he, like Eyvind Johnson, with whom he shared the prize, was a member of the Swedish Academy, the institution that had bestowed it. "Derision and laughter roll around the globe in response to the academy's. . . corruption and will sweep away the reputation of the prize," one critic wrote (Delblanc 1974, cited by Espmark 2005a). Four years later Martinson irreversibly quieted himself by slitting his abdomen with a pair of scissors seized at the psychiatric clinic of the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm where, severely depressed and possibly in a state of confusion, he had been taken by friends.

This study is an inquiry into the psychological dimensions of Martinson's journey towards its grim end. My first aim is to elucidate the unconscious determinants of suicide as conveyed in his writings. A second aim is to introduce him, a rarely translated poet of great distinction, to English-speaking psychoanalytic readers. My method is to "listen" to Martinson by (a) closely reading his works and correspondence as well as selected biographical material, (b) making use of my affective response to his texts, and (c) applying relevant theories on severe depression and suicide in understanding the material at hand.

The applied theoretical frame rests on the three dimensions of the unconscious psychology of severe depression outlined by Freud (1917) and further elaborated by, among other psychoanalytic writers, Green (1986), Grunberger (1979), Kernberg (2004), Salonen (2018), and Segal (1993): unintegrated narcissism, self-destructiveness or aggression, and unsatisfactory internal object relations. Borrowing from Strindberg, Ibsen, and Freud's *Schreber* (1911), Shengold (1989, 2013) supplemented the metapsychological perspectives on radical despair with the experience-near term *soul murder,* a concept that is also expected to be relevant.

Contributions by additional writers will, I hope, be justly credited along the way, albeit that the application of theory in this work is tacit. The primary focus is on Martinson's own formulations.

Using the outlined method, I have earlier (2006) addressed the fate of another writer, Primo Levi, whose death at age sixty-nine was a probable suicide. Having survived a year as an inmate of a Nazi extermination camp at age twenty-four, Levi for the rest of his life was tormented by memories and vulnerable to renewed narcissistic insult related to this experience (e.g., the denial of the realities of the Holocaust by revisionist historians), a predicament that can be compared to Martinson's experiences. The aim of this study is, however, not to compare the two writers in a systematic fashion but to replicate the method of the previous study in a similar-enough empirical context.

Two of the chosen inroads to depression, unintegrated narcissism, and aggression turned against the self, were salient in Levi's writings. Although inconsistently effected—his reflections on the links between his relations with others in the camp and his sense of self are germinal—Levi's efforts to restrict his readers' view of his most intimate relationships limited our freedom to apply an object-relations perspective to his attitude to suicide. I expect that Martinson's more explicitly autobiographical writings will add to our understanding in this regard.

TO TALK OR NOT TO TALK

Overcoming an impulse of my own to remain silent and refrain from again (as in the Levi study) exploiting the suicide-nearness of an admired writer and making claims about his death, I begin this exploration from "the surface" by citing a text in which Martinson's conflict between a wish to talk and a wish to be silent is manifest. In *Kap farväl* [*Cape Farewell*] (1933), the second of his two early travelogues about his experiences as a merchant-ship stoker around the globe, in a chapter called "Places where nothing happens"—placed between chronicles of the seemingly more glamorous Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean and La Plata in Buenos Aires—Martinson recounts how he and a companion, a Scandinavian named John, roamed the alleys of the smoggy port of Middlesbrough in East England, daydreaming about women and relaxation from the strain of life at sea. He writes that the port area, a

junkyard filled with dilapidated naval equipment and metal scrap from World War I, seemed empty of life:

The most we could figure out about these heaps of metal was that they consisted of discarded boilers, into which we stared as if they were [empty] wine barrels, and of what remained of an exploded German submarine from the Scapa Flow [the sheltered waters in the Orkney Islands, where a British marine base was located and German war ships were closed in and sunk by the Germans themselves during World War I].

It lay as a dead shark with the tangled remnants of its machinery as intestines. One of its torpedo tubes was almost intact and stared back at us. We threw pieces of junk into the carcass. Straight into the tube! A broken manometer swung back and forth on its copper pipe. We struck it down, too ... .We grabbed a huge propellor wrench, the kind that weighs about 45 kg, to smash many other objects of the submarine to pieces. We continued this work until we were sweating and exhausted. A pair of childish boy jackals, tired out on the *Campo Santo* of junk from the war.

 ... .We lit cigarettes. Before the match went out, blinded by it, we stumbled over even more junk. "It's got to be another damned submarine shark," John, who had hurt his toe, howled. "No, stop, it's a stone." We lit more matches and held them to the stone, which was formed as a short obelisk. "Here is something to read," said John, "light the matches and shine on it! I guess it's about the steel works. Or, 'here rests the man who invented bacon.'"

We started to read and were filled with the chilling sensation that follows shame. We lit match after match. When. . .our two match boxes were empty, we hadn't read more than one of the four sides of the stone. "Guys from the steel works. They died in the war", said John. "We're out of matches, I said. "We can buy a flashlight up in the dump."

It's dirty and dusty, the dust smears in the humid fog, the ground is full of gravel and mud under the soles of our wide shoes. First coal dust- and dirt-splashed shabby palisades, then housing blocks, shacks—the color of which no-one can define.

Brown, blackish grey perhaps. A paradise for eyes that cannot take bright colors; strangely soothing: lazyish. The life of man probably has three shades: lazy, lazier, laziest. The soul of the environment is like a soaked rat's nest. People pass by full of lazy, heroic proletarian phlegm. England's proletarians are the Chinese of the Western world. . . too many on islands that are too few. Yet, England is the source of the modernity of the West: the industrial epoch.

Most certainly everything must be connected in other ways than people say. Delete the name of England. Delete all names of nations. Life is psychology. Countries are psychology. They exist on different psychological levels and are differently pained by dogmatic ideas. "I'll be damned, if the world. . .doesn't suffer from a personality split in 15-20 different ideals or genders. Or what do you say, John?"

[John:] "Can't you ever stop talking. . .?" [pp. 191-193] [1]

Before John asked Harry to shut up a second time and Harry explained that putting thoughts into words is what civilization is about, the two men visited the local general store. The shop attendant was a young woman whom they first approached by asking if there might be a place where they could find girls who like sailors, to which she shyly replied: "I wouldn't think so." She was a girl with "beautiful hands and nails that gleamed like lilies of the valley. No doubt she can play the piano too … we hear a piano singing somewhere in the house" (p. 194). Warmed by the visit to the store, a "woman's universe," Martinson continues:

The door closes behind us. . . .Never again in our lives will we meet that girl. . . [Her name may have been] Svea Nilsson, Saya Valcaya, Alice Brown, or any name. Outside is Middlesbrough. . . in East England. I didn't say any of this to John, he would only have told me. . . to shut up once again. [pp. 194-195]

In this passage, central aspects of Martinson's life and writing are evident: the richness of his narrative, his hope for a more rational world

[1] All translations from the Swedish in this article are mine except *Aniara*, the rendering of which is my slightly modified version of an English translation by Martinson, Klass, and Sjöberg (see Martinson 1956).

and a better future for himself, his self-irony, and the shadow over every-thing he wrote of his mother, who had abandoned him and his six sisters when he was six years old. His self-confidence rings loud here and, even stronger, in the nomadism he preached in this book and the preceding *Travels with no Destination* [*Resor utan mål*] as well as in his breakthrough collection of poems, *Nomad* (1931a). That one senses an underlying con-flict between creativity and self-silencing in these texts adds to my appre-ciation of them. And that Martinson's youthful universalism was a defense against homelessness diminishes neither its moral nor its adap-tive value.

THE UNDOING OF A FAMILY

Between ages five and seven Martinson experienced three significant losses: (1) the death of his father, Martin Olofson, an abusive man—Harry remembered the periods when he was home as the worst of his childhood—who in 1910 succumbed to tuberculosis (TB) after having been sent back to Sweden by a physician in Portland, Oregon, where he had fled some years earlier from a prison sentence for violent assault (he was immediately arrested upon his return but released on medical grounds); (2) the departure of his mother, Betty, who in 1911 emi-grated to *Karlifonien*, as the six-year-old Harry called it, albeit that she too settled in Portland; (3) the death the same year of his eldest sister Edith, by then a mother substitute who was entrusted with the care of their father and infected by him with TB.

After Betty's departure, her sister Hilda took care of the children but withdrew from this responsibility when she got married a year later. Harry and his six sisters, four older and two younger, were placed and for more than a decade regularly moved between foster homes on farms in *Blekinge* in south-eastern Sweden. Soon after Edith's death and Hilda's retreat, Harry suffered from hallucinations, a symptom that would recur in difficult periods of his "parish wanderings," as he called his childhood after age six (Erfurth 1980; Martinson 1935).

Martinson's childhood has generated several myths. One is that he and his sisters were sold to the lowest bidders at a community auction. An auction was indeed organized, by Hilda, but it was the family's furni-ture and other belongings that were sold—in the children's presence. A

second myth concerns Betty, who is sometimes said to have abandoned her children out of the blue, acting on an unexplained impulse. However, according to Erfurth (1980), Betty, a woman of middle-class origin and ambitions, during her last years in Sweden struggled hard to manage her absent husband's mismanaged general store and to support her children; she survived several financial crises with the help of relatives. When Martin Olofson died, she had no choice but to again file for bankruptcy, this time without being bailed out by anyone. Edith informed the five-year-old Harry about this, but he didn't know what *konkurs*, the Swedish word for bankruptcy, meant. He sensed that it was something bad that turns downward "like a corkscrew" (Martinson 1935, p. 24) and that additional disaster was looming.

Harry's other two elder sisters, who eventually joined their mother in Portland, told Erfurth (1989) that Betty's reason for emigrating was to retrieve a pension granted to families of deceased employees of the Portland public transport system. In Portland, however, she was informed that the benefit was not applicable in her husband's case. Erfurth presented a more pressing reason for Betty's escape from Sweden: she was pregnant with a child, fathered by a man who was not her husband, a transgression that could be dealt with only by fleeing. On her way to America, in a hospital in Gothenburg, she gave birth to a child that was immediately transferred for adoption. Although Harry several years later told their former housekeeper (who told Erfurth) that he knew about his mother's illicit pregnancy, he kept this to himself and, as far known, never referred to it in his writings.

Briefly visiting his home region in 1921 after his first stint at sea, the seventeen-year-old Harry recognized his youngest sister Mimmi by a village well. She was twelve, but looked like an aged woman, emaciated and with frozen bare feet. He learned that she had carried water for her foster family since age six, although she suffered from an unhealed fractured hip after having fallen under a millstone. Clearly, her fate was worse than his. Thinking about this and about his own demeanor, with ripped trousers and shoes, he was paralyzed by guilt feelings and shame (Erfurth 1981); he would never stop criticizing himself for being self-absorbed and having permitted himself to forget about his sisters' hardship.

A year later, Martinson, now an eighteen-year-old marine stoker, found himself in New York waiting in vain between ships for his mother's reply to a telegram he had sent her in Portland. Bending to her devastating silence but also, I surmise, trying to maintain his idealization of her, he chose never to talk or write about this experience. Nordström (2002), who documented Betty's fate in America, including Harry's actual (external) search for her, nonetheless found references to it in Martinson's sea books. Awed by the American landscape that opened up before him and a coworker named Wallrich as their ship traveled up the Mississippi river, the narrator of *Travels with no Destination* slips: "Here it was, the country to which my mother had run away. . .I began telling Wallrich about it, a bit carelessly, the way you do about things you intend to forget" (Martinson 1932, p. 55). And in *Cape Farewell*, Martinson (1933) concludes that he was driven to write these books by his "formless, wordless longing for California" (p. 293; Nordström 2000, p. 262).

Flowering Nettles

In Martinson's seminal childhood novel *Flowering Nettles* [*Nässlorna blomma*] he describes the protagonist, Martin, as "more stupid at age seven than when he was five and above all more frightened, many times more frightened" (Martinson 1935, p. 47). An abandoned, near-psychotic boy—visibly oedipal, his sexuality is seething—Martin saves himself by means of his intelligence and the support of caring adults whose paths cross his. He sometimes finds solace in the bosoms and warmth of women among the farm-owning families or girls on the lower rungs of the hierarchy of laborers. But his comfort is sometimes marred by strange, instinctively forbidden feelings, even in relation to the immense and sometimes cruel Karla on the farm called Norda, the worst of his provisional homes. There, after having been thrown into a brick wall by one of Karla's brothers, Wilhelm, Martin regains consciousness, feeling that "he no longer wished to have a future" (Martinson 1935, p. 224). He thinks hard about the riddles that confront him, is embarrassed by his own feelings, and hates his own ingratiating smile. He sometimes takes revenge on his tormentors, including the goading women, in fantasies of burning down their farms.

One Sunday in the fall, his contracted day of rest, Martin is ordered by Wilhelm to make bundles of Ash-tree branches for feeding the sheep.

After two hours of hard work a disaster befalls him. Exceedingly lonely, he has the following stream of thought:

Wilhelm had said: forty bundles and then you are free.

God would give Wilhelm half of the punishment, for breaking the Sabbath. At least some consolation.

I better not make them too thin, he thought. And so he made the bundles thick around the bosom, as matrons with a sash of young branches tied around each one of them—a waist.

Best not to make them too thick, he thought. If I do, the bundles won't dry inside. And so he made them thinner, thin even. In this way they turned out uneven. Sheaves of vacillation.

It is a sin to cut down trees, he thought, and let the heavy knife rest in order to make up his mind about how sinful.

It's a sin to starve the sheep too. Sin stands against sin. . . . He approached the glowing moment of reconciliation. The heavy cutter swung, it cut and cut. His thoughts were ever blonder. . . as if he were in a poster reproduced in a Christmas magazine, harvesting leaves. Wilhelm was almost forgiven by him now and almost forgiven by God.

Then something happened!!!

Yes, something happened under the brightness of the Ash-tree arches, at a time when all real children were comfortably seated in Sunday school.

Unseen, one of the neighbor's grazing calves had entered through a weak part of the fence. Now it reached the sheaves and, ignorant of all evil that resides in "parish orphans", it started eating their leaves. And it did more. It soiled the sheaves in the middle of the stack.

Martin turned around. Discovered what had happened. With a cry of painful rage his soul was pulled back a thousand years into the cold. With a single cut of the heavy knife he split the calf's head. It fell. Ooh! Ooh! With the blood gushing from its forehead it fell dead, without a sound.

And now. Now he danced around the calf. No! No! His despair only made it look that way. His whole body froze with terror. His heart began to pound, to batter him. He beat himself in the face with his fists. Like a madman he ran around the calf in circles and screamed, God! God! God! [Martinson 1935, pp. 130-131, italics in the original]

Martin manages to bury the calf and conceal all traces of blood and of having moved earth from one place to another. When the neighboring farmer queries about the missing calf, Martin lets a louder-voiced farmhand deny knowing anything about it and suggest that the tinkers, who had recently passed by, may have something to do with its disappearance. Martin thanks God for the tinkers, but his guilt feelings accompany him wherever he goes.

As far known, this animal sacrifice did not in fact occur in Martinson's life, beyond his witnessing a pig being slaughtered for Christmas (also retold in *Nettles*). The killing of the calf is, I believe, a fantasized catharsis that mitigated his rage and bolstered the organization and coherence of his mind and sense of self. The profound existential danger that young Martin faced was sensed by Martinson at age thirty, when he published *Nettles*; we encounter it again, in new versions, in his later writings. In *Nettles*, after this incident, when one of the farmer's daughters tells Martin that he looks pale and mild-eyed, his first thought is: "So it shows, they can tell that I am walking around feeling grateful to God." Martinson (the writer) added:

Beneath or over. . .his false appearance he was in another state of mind, which undid. . .annulled, and displaced. Everything in him was in flux; the whole world was moving inside. He was in between Life and Life, between birth and maturity; in his lonely childhood's forbidden semi-life. In a desert. [p. 141]

RECOGNITION

Life Savers (Auxiliary Objects)

Martinson's first publications were poems, submitted 1925-27 to newspapers and labor-union bulletins whose reimbursements were sometimes limited to coffee and sandwiches. Occasional reviews were favorable. But

he was criticized for copying identifiable literary forbears, among them the Canadian Robert W. Service (whose tales from the Gold Rush, Erfurth [1987] tells us, were popular in the North American workers' press), Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, and Rudyard Kipling. Driven to develop his craft, Martinson seems to have been stimulated by being likened to his literary heroes.

In the late 19th century, an uncle on Martinson's father's side, Jöns (a.k.a. Olof) Olofsson, published a collection of poetry, titled "Serving Chief" ["*Tjenande Chef*"], under the pen name *Obed Xefe* (again, "serving chief" [Hebr. and Span.]). In a poem written at sea in Antarctica, Obed recalled taking leave of his mother whom he did not expect to meet again: ". . . the salty waves separate her from me, but my mother's tears will not wane" (Erfurth 1980, p. 32). He was said to have died on this trip, on his way to India, at age twenty (Martinson 1945b). Harry read his uncle's poems on printer's scrap, used as wrapping paper in his father's store. I suggest that Obed was the object of a benign primary identification (Freud 1921, 1923; Salonen 2018) who Martinson failed to find elsewhere. If so, it is likely that this internal bond stood in conflict with a concomitant early identification with his raging father, which we may assume played a destructive role in Martinson's life, including in his ultimate self-immolation.

At age eleven, Martinson wrote and put together a book about "American Indians" and read from it to his classmates. The school he attended meant the world to him. He was attached to his teacher, Karl Johan Staaf, an eccentric, unmarried man who was both respected and socially maligned for his unconventional ways. Stav [Swe.: staff, pole], as the children called him, appreciated Harry's intelligence and imagination, including his fantasized adventures across the globe. Yet he warned Harry about lying and encouraged him to continue his explorations by reading. Harry was secretly disappointed when Stav consented to his foster parents' written request that he be exempt from school to work with the harvest; he scorned himself for his feigned gratitude in response to the teacher's positive reply. Learning about Stav's death in 1936, Martinson wrote the following words in his memory:

> Yes, Stav was a living human being, and after his death his school continued to rock as a cradle, which was gratefully

preserved in my…soul, across the seas. [What Stav gave me]…turned out to be limitless and its lesson infinite…there were times when my gratitude to him was such that, to me, it placed him on the level of men like Columbus, Magellan, Livingston, John Ericson, Sitting Bull…and Jack London. [Susic 2014]

Only a year later Martinson confronted Stav's fallibility as a dependable inner presence. In a nature essay, he recalled how Stav, introducing the children to the symbol of "a mild *passage wind* emanating from the warm seas between the 8th and 30th latitude," managed to calm "the half of. . .[young Harry's] soul [that thrived] in adventure," while he at the same time disregarded that "the other half remained in the boy's private darkness" (Martinson 1937, p. 80; cited by Söderblom 1994, p. 210, italics added). As a young sailor, Martinson's recollections of Stav were even more conflicted:

More than once I was ready to jump, to leave this life, in which one level scrubbed against the other in ways that Stav had never talked about. . . .He sat only on one level, while I restlessly moved from one to the other. . . .The years at sea were…confusing for a person who sought a plan for unity in the world. [Martinson 1937, p. 81]

On a cold October evening in 1919, in the waiting hall of the Jonsered train station in Western Sweden, Margaret Kjellberg observed a surprisingly young tramp-like beggar. She approached the boy who, noting *her* fearlessness (Martinson 1936), told her that he had spent the night in a barn and asked her for food. He was on his way to Gothenburg to seek work at sea and sail to America, where he hoped to find his mother. Seemingly an experienced boater, the "noble lady," as he called Ms. Kjellberg in his coming-of-age sequel to *Flowering Nettles, Vägen ut* [*The Way Out*] (1936), said that it was a bad idea to set out to sea in the rough autumn storms. With the understanding that she would recommend him to the owners (her own family), she advised him to seek employment at the Jonsered textile mill the next morning and remain there at least until spring. Following this advice, Harry spent the fall at Jonsered, which to his amazement comprised not only a factory but also a food canteen, social services, and a library for its employees—in

addition to a fairy godmother who looked after him from time to time. In the spring he left for Gothenburg and his first job at sea. For the rest of her life, Margaret Kjellberg continued to assist him, including with financial loans. When he eventually published books, he always sent her a copy, and at his ceremonial appointment as member of the Swedish Academy 1949 she was his personal guest of honor (Kjellberg 1978).

Another formative relationship was with the publishers, father and two sons, Karl-Otto, Tor, and Kaj Bonnier. Although Karl-Otto and Tor were impressed with the poems Martinson submitted in the spring of 1928, they recommended postponing publication until he had assembled a collection that was "as a whole, stronger" (Anderson 2011, p. 20). Sensitive to the tone of their letter rather than the rejection—maintaining a degree of idealization of the senders as well as of himself—Martinson took the counsel to heart, soon resubmitted, and in 1929 published his first major collection of poems, *Spökskepp* [*Ghost Ships*]. The dynamics of this interaction were to be repeated: in 1930-1931, Tor Bonnier wrote no less than four rejection letters in response to Martinson's different submissions (Anderson 2011). Politely acknowledging each letter and continuing to take them as encouragements, which in fact they were, he (1931) published the widely praised *Nomad.* But Martinson was even more gratified by being included the same year in an anthology, *Modern lyrik* [*Modern Poetry*] (Asklund 1931), that featured modernist Swedish-language poets, including from Finland, foremost Rabbe Enckell whom he considered his most important mentor.

Kjell Espmark (2005b), professor of literature and member of the Swedish Academy, has written that Martinson's nature poems were indeed inspired by Enckell's "sensual presence. . . affinity to nature, and magic humanization" (p. 47) without, however, emulating his expressionism; Martinson's poetic voice, Espmark writes, was profoundly original. One recurring figure of thought I have noted in this poetry is that Martinson lets an initial observation of nature's cruelty, or of the futility of its creatures' struggle, be supplemented by a no less organic, contrary force—*Eros*—that at least intermittently neutralizes the destructiveness of the preceding observation. A specimen:

A clock wanders
tonight over the clearings –

> Over the forests, mile after mile: the echoing sound of a crow.
> She wakes a fox
> and the moss-covered rock by the lair's dark eye
> watches sinisterly from its shadow.
> But the sun's lizard-like gleam is seen climbing up the trunk
> of the Aspen tree.
> It is in the lingonberries' youth. [Martinson 1931b, p. 165]

POLITICS

During the 1930s, Martinson was hospitalized for tuberculosis, pained by doubts about his marriage, and censored politically, most notably by Ture Nerman (1931), the editor of a communist newspaper, who in a critical review of *Nomad* ridiculed Martinson for his alleged individualism and betrayal of his own social class. The title of Nerman's piece was (in my translation): "From the culture front, pee in the snow and neurotic waterfalls: More 'modern poetry'—enough already." Writer friends protested against Nerman's insults in articles and letters to editors. These exchanges culminated in a public debate on modernism, which Martinson is said to have won by contrasting the slogans of social realism with what he considered true poetry, including that based on the first-hand experience of class differences by the Russian poets Blok and Yessenin (Åberg 1931; Erfurth 1987).

In the late 1940s, a professor of the sociology of literature, Victor Svanberg, emerged as a new inquisitor from The Left. After a series of attacks by Svanberg, Martinson, overcoming his civility—his habitual "ingratiating smile"—at last struck back in a brief communication in a literary journal. His reply was sharp but also seeped in sadness:

> From the cradle to the grave controlled numbered, registered, as required every year voluntarily adding my name to the census register to the point of lethal exhaustion, when November comes with loneliness, lung disease, and snow; rationing-loyal since God knows how many years and most likely onward until the day I die. . . .Since many years accused of being a unsocial poet by the professor of esthetics and politics Victor Svanberg. Born into a world that I didn't create and a human society for which I, having been born too late, cannot be held responsible,

in so far that I do not have to atone for the transgressions of my grandmother's grandmother, which also included being born to late, confess that I am who I am. [Ulvenstam 1950, pp. 166-167]

In a conversation in the late 1960s, Martinson confided to Espmark (2005b) that he was "working in the catacombs" (p. 6). Espmark was shocked to find himself listening to an admired colleague who at the peak of his creativity was losing his self-confidence and trust in his own language. Martinson's sense of being neglected by the new generation of writers and critics was no delusion: writing with a political message was the norm among the younger generation of Swedish writers at this time, and in a 1969 newspaper article with the insulting title "Do you remember Harry Martinson?" an aspiring poet questioned whether Martinson's work was genuinely creative or mere "nostalgia. . . without satisfying imagery or interest. . . to a generation awakened by Vietnam" (Håkanson 1969, cited by Espmark 2005b, pp. 8-9).

The most hurtful critic in this period—perhaps throughout Martinson's career—was the politically radical yet also aristocratic editor of *Dagens Nyheter*, Olof Lagercrantz, who had followed Martinson since the 1930s and, according to another member of the Swedish Academy, Lars Gyllensten (2000), contributed to Martinson's demise in 1978. In 1956 Lagercrantz's criticism of *Aniara* reiterated what he had written 20 years earlier about Martinson's "bent for tasteless linguistic constructions" (Anderson 2000, p. 80; Lagercrantz 1936, 1956). While Gyllensten's moral outrage is understandable—he saw Lagercrantz as a leader of a mob that hounded Martinson to his death—a masochistic quality of Martinson's relationship with his lofty critic is also noticeable, for example, in these words in a letter to him: "Thank you for your patience, and your unassuming manner every time you apply the burning coals onto my blockhead's stumbling thoughts" (Martinson 1944, p. 321).

Married to a Communist

Harry first met Moa Swartz, who was fourteen years his senior, in 1927. He had just returned from sea, unemployed and homeless. Moa, to this day—under the name Moa Martinson—a recognized writer in her own right, was charmed by the young poet and provided him with a home in her cottage, some 80 kilometers south of Stockholm. Although friends soon noted Moa's emotional instability and held that it was Harry's

interventions that made her manuscripts publishable, he insisted that the psychological support went both ways. In a letter 1929 he wrote her: "life at last gave me too a heart, the heart for which I hungered all these years" (Erfurth 1989).

The winters were particularly hard, Moa's cabin was cold. Harry suffered from recurring TB symptoms and needed to spend time in sanatoriums. While he fared well from these breaks, they left Moa feeling abandoned and upset. The couple's mounting differences and conflicts culminated in Harry's failed attempt to establish a romantic relationship with another woman and in his subsequent abrupt escape, including from the completed manuscript of *Flowering Nettles*, which he had left on a table exposed to Moa's feared revenge. He had decided to travel to Iceland with the fantasy of ending his life there. En route he corresponded with the Bonniers, keeping them updated on his personal predicament as well as on the completion of *Nettles*, which he knew was the weightiest literature he had written thus far. Bonniers in turn—to Moa's mortification—honored their promise not to reveal Harry's whereabouts and sent him an advance payment, which he retrieved by general delivery in Trondhjem, Norway. After having boarded a ship there for the last stretch of his trip, he received a telegram from Tor Bonnier with a message from Moa: *she* was contemplating suicide and threatened to destroy his manuscript first. Martinson immediately arranged to be disembarked by lifeboat and cabled Bonnier that he was "homesick and guilty and returning immediately" (Erfurth 1989, p. 118).

Later that year, the couple participated in the "First All-Soviet Writers Congress" in Moscow, where Harry was invited as an international delegate. He was disturbed already by the conference motto, "the poet is the engineer of the human soul," and by Stalin's lethal campaigns against his imagined enemies, many of whom were writers. In a plenary lecture the former member of the Soviet *Politburo*, Bukharin (1934), who also had reason to fear for his life, slandered Martinson's admired colleague Yessenin, whose character flaws and ideology were said to be reflected in his poetry as well as in his alleged suicide in 1925. He noted the anguish of Pasternak, who sat on the podium, "looking sad. . .his gaze. . .far away, mentally absent and timeless, fatalistically proud. And Isaac Babel uncannily said to

him that "if we had people with your open face, we wouldn't have to shoot so many" (Svensson 1980, p. 71)—the atmosphere was maddening. Moa was nonetheless dazzled by the parties and gifts that were showered upon the foreign participants, and uncritically embraced the political charades. After a tortuous return journey through Soviet-occupied Karelia, during which, as Martinson wrote in a letter, "we nearly killed each other" (Anderson, 2011, p. 94), she eulogized the Russian communists in the social-democratic daily, *Stockholmstidningen,* only to be attacked from the Left and the Right for being unfathomably naïve.

Martinson remained silent about his Russian experience as long as he and Moa were married. They separated in 1939, when he had already met Ingrid Lindcrantz whom he was later to marry. The separation was painful for both parties. From Martinson's correspondence (Erfurth 1987; Martinson 1934) we know that that he consulted a psychoanalyst in the 1930s and 40s, most likely Nils Nielsen, a founding member of the Swedish Psychoanalytic Society in 1934. An indirect documentation of Martinson's analytic work is his recollection of a nightmare that was eventually structured as poem and published after his death (Martinson 1980), without the suicidal ending of its original form:

> I stood in the dream's cathedral of fear
> The big copper woman, who lay there
> with her back soldered to the lid of the sarcophagus
> drove terror into me, shackled my foot with led
>
> That the copper woman knew who I was
> I immediately sensed as a deadly weight
> and that I had been summoned here by her alone
> of this I am sure.
>
> … from the gallery's emptiness the organ's pipes glimmered
> like stalactites in the arch of a cave
> … there was nothing …
> that could help collect my crumbling courage.
>
> For all was fulfilled as was written in stone
> in a time when water deserted all plants

and it was said that man shall pass away
and become dead stuff's dead slave.

 …from the towers bells suddenly fell down
towards earth, shaken by the ore-marbled roar
and the copper woman rose, a cry
as of *Erinyes* traveled from afar
unto her lips when she pulled me in
tight against her copper body in fearful death.

And while the final, frightened insight emerged
cooling the spark of every sense of joy
I gazed towards the law of space where my thoughts wrote
a guilt-laden formula: better to be dead. [Erfurth 1987, pp.
225-226]

With Nielsen, Martinson acknowledged that the copper woman
represented Moa—and, I assume, mother. The "guilt-laden formula"
seems to have been acted out as a self-punishment: after signing a
contract with the publishing house *Norstedts* he broke his long collab-
oration with the Bonniers. In a letter to Tor Bonnier he explained
his step as motivated by "a conflict with myself that bothers me pro-
foundly and that I wish to cure myself from—if this is possible"
(Martinson 1940a, p. 253). Bonnier responded tactfully and under-
scored that Martinson would be welcomed back, should he wish to
return to the fold. He did so a year later, when Bonniers issued a
revised edition of *Nomad* (Martinson 1941).

WAR PANIC

Reality Unto Death [*Verklighet till döds*] (1940b), one of the two books
Martinson published with *Norstedts*, is a testimony to his depression at
the time. In addition to the report from the writers' congress in Moscow,
it includes a stunningly realistic short story about a sailor's death by
drowning, titled "Death by water" ["*Död genom vatten*"] and a narrative
about two journalists' experiences as recruiters to the Swedish battalion
in the Finnish Winter War against the Soviet Union, the yearlong war
that broke out in November 1939 after the signing of the Molotov-

Ribbentrop pact, when Finland was attacked by the Soviet Union in symmetry with Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland two months earlier.[2] The journalists, Holger and Eyder, represent Harry Martinson and Eyvind Johnson, both of whom in actual reality took part as volunteers on the Finnish side of the war. Both men would also become members of the Swedish Academy—Johnson in 1957, eight years after Martinson—and share the Nobel prize 1974 under equally complicated circumstances but with different personal consequences (Johnson continued to lead a normal life and died from natural causes in 1976).

Reality Unto Death opens with a description of pro-Nazi manifestations in the streets of Stockholm as well as in Sweden's upper cultural echelons and of Holger's mounting claustrophobia in this environment. He was nauseated not only by politics, but by the materialism he saw evolving around him, assumedly more undisturbedly in neutral, unscathed Sweden than in war-torn Europe at large. Martinson claimed that the young generation was swept away by Hollywood's ideals of woman- and manhood, including "perverse illusions" (his expression) about the glory of war. The impact of "engineers" and the cult of modern technology disturbed him: war tanks, ships, cars, and military and civil airplanes alike were worshiped at the expense of the needs of the human soul, which he felt were addressed only by a minority of "poets."

Holger's and Eyder's unease rose on the sideline of the Finnish-Russian warfront, where the Swedish army waited impassively, bound by nonaggression commitments east, west, and south. Financed by the Swedish government, which covertly supported Finnish independence, they were expected to honor its official neutrality in their talks to the soldiers who flocked to the meetings. Another balancing act was not to be trapped in polemics either with communist or Nazi spies, whom they knew infiltrated their audiences. The two speakers were also affected by an inner conflict between their internationalism, presumably shared by the Soviet soldiers, and sympathy for the Finnish struggle. Martinson knew that he projected his personal history in his idealization of the

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[2] After losing the Winter War against Russia in 1940, Finland in 1941 entered a second "War of Continuation," coordinated with Nazi Germany's attempt to invade the Soviet Union.

Finnish peasant fighters whose lives and habitat were ravaged by the Soviet war machine.

In *Travels with no Destination*, he had asked himself whether the idea that "all cultures are mere steps toward the ultimate: the world nomad" held true, and responded, as if praying: "Give us truth and open-mindedness. Let us stubbornly keep singing our vagrant song" (Martinson 1932, pp. 10-11). Two years later, on a propaganda flight arranged for the foreign delegates to the Moscow conference, the desolation of the Soviet pioneer towns, unmistakable from above, told him that his nomadism was a lost cause (Söderblom 1994). In an essay written in 1937, formulating a rationale for standing up for yourself and your own, Martinson had invoked his mother: "he who in these dark times forsakes self-defense may just as well spit on his own mother and say, 'No-one was more meaningless than you, who gave birth to me. As long as oppression reigns, self-defense is the. . . [highest] form of life'" (p. 38). If these words, which now became Holger's *credo*, were to embolden the Swedish fighters for Finland in 1939, they had to ring louder than the competing thought, which he was careful not to utter:

> It was sometimes difficult not to express your innermost opinion … which acknowledges that suicide might just as well be completed at a … gathering point in the Finnish forests straight ahead from here to the north-east in the large parish of death *Salla*. For, in times like these, that moral gesture would at least be pure, compared to the meaningless idiocy of things that has driven the small nations to embrace it. [Martinson 1940b, p. 63]

Firing up young men to cross the frontier only to end up as cannon fodder was the ultimate moral dilemma and the tipping point for the two orators' decision to stop talking and physically join the fighting. Holger—like Martinson in actual reality—was now assigned the task of delivering military post to and from the battlefields by whatever means available: air, dogsled, or foot, usually at night. The final ten days of the battle at Salla were beyond words. We again hear Martinson sternly criticizing himself for talking too much:

All was lost in alarm and fire, cries, dread, evil reality's dread without end. The spanning peacock tail of the aurora, which every night swayed back and forth with its gaudy feathers high above the crying despair of the war, that tail itself was darkened by soot and extinguished when the shots in the face, the terrible face shots, hit their target in an ear, an eye, a cheek.

It is a crime to believe that you can describe this. Don't waste your ink on the cruel cat-and-dog game and hypocritical hyena-behavior of pretending to recount how everything transpired when terror and grenades tore a tendon, when machinegun-swarms showered a chest to death, when the foot that was to take a step no-longer existed, when the cold sought out the wounds and killed reality with reality. [Martinson 1940b, p. 107]

In the end, barbed wire and military debris were all that could be seen protruding from the snow-hills that covered the battlefields. Even the trees along the Finnish line of defense were felled and hidden under the snow together with the corpses.

There were no longer any landmarks for localizing villages or towns. . . .Nor were there, for those who had lived here, any anchors for memory. . . .Memories themselves were extinguished and. . . those who had lived here had to make do with a dream of loss and want, but without the option of reconnecting this dream with the reality of a forest whose mild wind can embrace dreams, as forests are prone to do. Reality, cursed be its name, had expanded here in a genuinely concrete way. In large concrete strokes everything was annihilated [Martinson 1940b, p. 85]

SOOTHING WINDS?

Martinson characterized *Reality Unto Death* as an unfinished outline of a larger work, to be completed in better times. This completion was never written, unless we consider as such the fruitions of his restored creativity after the war. After being treated for his lung disease, he (1945)

published a collection of poetry titled *Passad* [*Passage Wind*], which was hailed by the critics as his emotionally and poetically best contained work thus far. Its opening poem, "In praise of maturity" ["*Till mognadens sång*"], announces reconciliation:

> . . .At dawn from the baths we saw
> a boat escaping to sea.
> A holding boat it was
> it fled to holding seas.
> . . .
> By a law of compelling necessity
> a ship rocks towards the day;
> held by holding seas [Martinson 1945a, p. 10]

Sensitive to the underlying darkness of everything Martinson wrote, Söderblom (1994) noted that the passage-wind metaphor is a symbol not only of peace and calm, but also of loss. He wrote that it was the waves of these winds that carried the swollen corpse of the drowned sailor of *Reality Unto Death* all the way into the now considered poetry: "my brother the sailor/who remains afloat/while he is drowned and dead. . . . [beyond] the rescue that that didn't happen" (p. 212). I, too, hear the new beginning heralded in the final poem of *Passad's* introductory suite as a sad retreat, if not resignation:

> I have planned a voyage,
> I have furnished a house
> on nomadic shores inward [Martinson 1945a, p. 24]

In *Passad's* concluding group of poems, "*Li Kan talar under träden*" ["Li Kan speaks under the trees"], a Taoist master recounts his experiences of persecution and survival to his followers, the vulnerable *Cikadas.* The Martinson reader is reminded of the legion of tramps depicted in Martinson's (1948) *Vägen till Klockrike* [appr.: *The Road to Bluebell Country*] in which he, again, depicts the social realities and tensions of Sweden between the world wars. Led by a vagabond philosopher named *Sandemar* who, strangely able to avoid begging, walks the roads dressed in a tattered British tweed jacket and writes and wipes out his experiences on a portable slate (like Freud's [1925] "mystic writing pad" that

holds detectable traces of memories, even after they are erased), the tramps assemble by the still hot ovens of an abandoned brick factory, only to be locked in and trapped—they are burned to death—by the police. The reference to the Holocaust is clear in both books.

In *Passad*'s penultimate suite, "Hades and Euclid," Martinson addressed the conflicting life and death drives in history, mythology, and his own life:

> When Euclid wanted to measure Hades
> he found that it lacked depth and height.
> . . .
> Low lay the furnaces of hell
> on the flat land.
> There in the brick chambers
> – superficially as in graves of the dead –
> the arbitrarily sentenced were burned
> . . .responded to without dignity,
> . . .responded to without the perspective of eternity.
>
> . . .
>
> And Euclid, king of measures, cried
> and his cry sought the god of spheres, the Cronid
> . . .
>
> And Euclid fell forward.
> The great measurer pressed himself against the ground,
> bit the dust and cried.
>
> He called:
> who ascends?
> Who descends?
> Who ascends with good will?
> Who descends to depths
> with truth's searching eye and heart?
>
> . . .And by good will he heard a wave
> through all
> and through all peoples.
> He heard a high and a deep stream,
> a steady and high wind of passage.

It came to cleanse the air,
it came to awake.
It came to air out
for maturity and growth, for height and depth,
for a good will's abundant world for all
the surface that had frightened him so;
the surface that had tormented him for a thousand years
and a thousand more;
the surface that rages in Hades. [Martinson 1945a, pp. 143-147]

EXPLODING

Driven by the need for love and food, a loathing of ordinary work conditions, and an "inexplicable" desire to move from one end of the country to the other—he crosses national borders too—*Bolle*, the ageing, main protagonist of *The Road to Bluebell Country*, feels worn. His ways exact a price. One day, after being cruelly shamed by a farmer, he:

> walks [away] slowly. Resigned and with mildness. It is almost a sport to. . .maintain such mildness for hours. . .the most hateful moments. . . .The farm is already out of sight when the. . .mildness begins breaking, like a tight film of. . .control around. . . [your] growing inner hardness. This is what is called *exploding*. [Martinson 1948, p. 271, italics added]

About a decade after writing about the fallen Euclid and the exploded Bolle, Martinson (1956) completed his ultimate travelogue, *Aniara,* a 160-page, epic poem about a spacecraft with 8,000 refugees escaping from Earth in times of total war and environmental devastation. Aniara's planned destination is Mars, but after a critical incident it is thrust out of its orbit into an unknown journey in more external space. Six years later, the pilots who manage the vessel's steering system, a computer named *Mima,* establish that it is heading to its predictable extinction in an unknown universe, the *Lyra* constellation of stars. *Aniara*'s narrator, the *Mimarobe*, is responsible for Mima's maintenance.

The highly intelligent Mima is able to provide comfort to the passengers as long as Aniara travels within the known laws of space, time, and causality; unmoved by emotion and moral conflict, she retrieves

objective and believable signs of human life from the increasingly distant *Valley of Doris*, from where the passengers originate. But when she too develops feelings, the consequences are dire for herself and those who have depended on and even worshipped her. Taking advantage of this crisis, *Chefone*, a Stalin-like dictator, strengthens his position and enforces a death cult and a persecutory rule on Aniara.

The Mimarobe is not only attached to Mima; he also loves a female pilot, *Isagel*, who is but one of several representatives of his original love *Doris* from earthly Dorisburg. He knows that his love for Isagel is an unsatisfiable yearning. *We* know that she represents the poet Karin Boye, with whom Martinson had an unconsummated amorous relationship around 1940 and who took her life 1941 (Erfurth 1989; Svedjedal 2017). But Isagel—her mild articulateness, her beauty, her hands, her ambiguity—also bears a resemblance to the shop attendant in Middlesbrough whom he had described in 1933:

> Something in her eyes is an unreachable
> yet lovely glow from the unspoken:
> the attraction that ambiguity often holds
> when the beauty of the riddle prevails.
>
> She draws curves, her nails shine
> as dimmed lights through the dusk of the hall.
> She says: follow this curve with numbers, here
> where my grief's darkness casts its shadow. [Martinson 1956, *Aniara* 34, p. 58]

The Mimarobe and Isagel are imprisoned by Chefone who, maddened by the annihilation anxiety that gradually permeates everyone in Aniara, rages against love and life. His own fate is indeed soon to be sealed, as is that of all Aniara's inhabitants: they die twenty-four years after the vessel's departure from Earth and 15,000 years before its arrival in Lyra. Even though Martinson wrote that "there is no protection against man" (*Aniara*, 26, p. 46), he let the Mima profess trust in the individual's capacity to dream and reflect:

> Our soul is worn by dreams, we continue to rub
> dream against dream *in lieu* of reality,
> and every new pretense becomes a ladder

to the dreamer's next wishful castle in the air.
And all that is far away becomes home;
yes, beyond all borders lies our protection. . .
. . .
When afterwards it dawned on the High Command
that there was no-more a return
and that the laws of the external field were
different from those that firmly determine
the safety of voyages in internal space,
panic first broke out, then apathy
that between storms of despair spread
its cold stillness of emotional death,
until the Mima as a consoling friend
with specimens of life from other worlds
to everyone's comfort, unlocked the treasury of her visions.
[A*niara*, 8, pp. 20-21]

The last words the Mima transmitted were from someone on Earth
who called himself "The Exploded":

She let The Exploded himself bear witness
and, shattered and stammering recount
how hard it always is to explode,
how time rushes in to prolong itself.

At the call of life, time rushes in
prolonging the second when you explode.
How terror rages in,
how horror rages out.
How hard it always is to explode. [*Aniara*, 29, p. 51]

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This study evolved as a review of Harry Martinson's life-long struggle
with extreme narcissistic hurt, longing, and rage. His life was marked by
grief and severe anxiety, including a lasting fear of exclusion. Orphaned
and abused but also strikingly intelligent, he as a child and young adult
protected his sanity by finding auxiliary benign objects: respectable and
respecting others whom he also allowed to find him. His proclivity for
communicating with others as well with himself by talking and writing

and his capacity to love nourished his self-regard and for a long time formed an antidote to suicide.

Martinson's literary renderings of the cruelty and shallowness of life, notwithstanding its beauty, and of the desolation and coldness of outer space, aside from its starry nights and the life-giving sun as seen from Earth, stand out as life-supporting compromise formations; his embrace of opposites and containment of conflict, which outweigh the threat of resentment and resignation, are compelling qualities of his poetry and prose. The recognition of these and other qualities of his work he received in his own lifetime was, however, all too often coupled with envy and political criticism that joined forces with his self-contempt. With age, his narcissistic balance deteriorated, and depression gained the upper hand. His resistance was broken after the Nobel calamity in 1974; disarmed, he approached the breakdown he had anticipated in his writings.

The applied method—listening attentively to Martinson and reflecting on my theoretically informed perceptions—proved helpful in elucidating what I had previously, in the study on Levi, discussed as a *suicidal process*: the internal development of self-destructiveness from unconscious death wishes to completed suicide, under the influence of interacting internal and external vulnerability- and protective factors. In my version of this model, Martinson's journey was a life-long balancing of narcissistic calamities—challenges to his self-regard and wish to live—and a formidable but, in the end, failed struggle to overcome them. The closeness of this psychoanalytic portrayal to Martinson's self-understanding attests to the validity of our narrative. His being a devoted Freud reader does not diminish the significance of this convergence; the resonance he felt with Freud was a meeting of the poetic imagery of two creative minds.

That the expectation that object relations would be addressed more directly by Martinson than by Primo Levi proved correct does not signify that object relations *per se* are the key to the psychology of suicide. In subjective experience, unintegrated narcissism, aggression, and unsatisfactory object relations usually overlap. Neither aspect is by itself sufficient for solving the riddle of suicide. Moreover, rather than object relations, it was unbound self-destructiveness, corresponding to what Freud (1924) eventually named *primary masochism,* that grew on me in a

humbling way in this work: Martinson's ultimately unbound self-destructiveness made his suppression of healthy narcissism and self-preservation—the actual killing—understandable. The death drive (of which primary masochism is a manifestation) remains useful as a construct that directs our attention to aggressivity against the self (Segal 1993).

Kernberg (2009) has emphasized that the death drive is manifest only when a person's life is difficult, and that it is expressed as an affect—when anger or depression are seething. On varying levels of ego integration, Martinson's material attested to this point: from the threatening soul murder of his childhood to his ambivalence to "talking" in his sea books to the endured political persecution throughout his career as a writer, the derealization chronicled in his war book, the barely contained darkness of his late writings, and the explosion of his suicide in 1978, we were privy to Martinson's self-directed rage.

Acknowledging the acuity of Kernberg's observation and continuing to reflect on my attachment to psychoanalytic tenets, including an openness to metapsychology as (scientific) poetry, I hold on to Freud's view of man as torn between loving and creative instincts on the one hand and opposing, destructive ones on the other. Without this outlook, it would have been more difficult to capture the depicted experiences of Martinson's life and work. Another conclusion is that, in psychoanalysis as well as in poetry, a brave confrontation with the derivatives of the forces of love and destruction in self and life can be helpful, but it can also be, as in Martinson's early and late life, when the accumulated onslaught on his self-regard was intense and his defenses weak, instrumental in breakdown.

The following excerpt from a letter Martinson wrote to Tor Bonnier in 1935 touches upon the threads of this discussion: the interwoven manifestations of unintegrated narcissism, self-destructiveness, object loss and hatred, the wish to communicate, and—with the provisional help of a trusted listener—find safety on inner shores, however insufficient that lonely retreat would prove to be with time:

> At heart I am an incurably sad human being, an oversensitive destiny-driven type of a person constantly on the run from my memories. . . .By birth and fate I belong to wandering, to the roads, and to the sea. The yearner's cabin is mine. I am the

courier of my own fire. Maybe I didn't want this, but this is how it is. This became my fate and it has its horrible causes. My family's cruel tragedy and my broken childhood form the background of the unease that will someday kill me. [Andersson, 2011, p. 93]

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Opening Laplanche's Window: Transference-Countertransference in Psychoanalytic Group Psychotherapy

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OPENING LAPLANCHE'S WINDOW: TRANSFERENCE-COUNTERTRANSFERENCE IN PSYCHOANALYTIC GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY

BY RICHARD M. BILLOW

Comparing analytic activity to a spaceship launching, Laplanche (1999, pp. 231-232) suggested that there are "windows;" opportune interpretative moments. Laplanche emphasized the enduring impact of intergenerational "enigmatic messages," such that all individuals cope with an essential "alterity" (otherness to oneself). He did not consider the counter-transference implications. I propose that the analyst must also open the self-reflective window and pass through "originary situations" to prepare for intervention. In accordance with Kaes' (2007, p. 98) formulation that "the unconscious is structured like a group," I illustrate how unique windows of opportunity exist in psychoanalytic group treatment. Sharing and competing in a therapeutic space with "like me's," group members reexperience intense "horizontal" as well as "vertical" transferences, as does its leader. Clinical examples illustrate my efforts to mediate among interacting "translations" of early developmental experience—mine as well as other group members—to understand emerging psychic material.

Keywords: Transference-countertransference, Laplanche, Kaes, Freud, Bion, fraternal complexes, siblings, group, psychoanalysis.

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Comparing analytic activity to the launching of a spaceship, Laplanche (1999, pp. 231-232) suggested that there are "windows," opportune interpretative moments. Should these moments pass, the gravitational pull of the traumatic, "originary situation" reasserts itself. The analyst must wait for another opportunity to launch the patient out of the orbit of the repetitive "spirals" of fixated self-states: "The subject's elaboration passes periodically through points, memories, fantasies. . . . there is no new translation which does not first pass through the old translations, in order to detranslate them in the interests of a new translation" (Laplanche 1999, p. 231).

Laplanche emphasized the enduring impact of intergenerational "enigmatic messages," such that all individuals cope with an essential "alterity" (otherness to oneself). He focused on the progression of the analysand, gradually freed from the control of unconscious, intergenerational messages. To break out of the gravitational spiral of old relationship patterns one has to pass through them, revising "the other self he once was" (Laplanche 1999, p. 103). That is as operative for the analyst as it is for the patient. Laplanche did not consider the countertransference implications of his formulation. In accordance with Kaes' (2007, p. 98) assertion that "the unconscious is structured like a group," unique windows of opportunity exist in group psychoanalytic treatment. Sharing and competing in a therapeutic space with "like me's," both group members and group leaders reexperience intense "horizontal" as well as "vertical" transferences.

This paper describes efforts in opening my own self-reflective window: attempts to pass through "originary situations" to prepare for and make interventions. Mediating among interacting "translations" of early developmental experience—mine as well as others—I illustrate how early and later developmental traumas assert influence in the ongoing transference-countertransferences of analytic interaction.

INTERNAL GROUPS AND ENIGMATIC MESSAGES

Because we are born in a social network (Freud 1921), and because it is the nature of human psychology to form ensembles (Piaget 1969), dynamic "internal groups" serve as organizing mental systems and form the basis of object and social relations (Kaes 2007, p. 99; also Klein 1952). Family members serve as prototypes and, in the course of

development, other individuals acquire symbolic functions as mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers, representing psychic qualities (e.g., warm, cold, sexual, aggressive, good, bad, nurturing, informing, etc.). Under the auspices of an innate groupality, internal groups continually associate, combine, organize, and transform ensembles of psychic elements.

Internal groups are polyphonic. The "voices" consist of images, scenes, memories, feelings, and fantasies from different developmental epochs, superimposed on each other and reconfigured ongoingly. Individual biological factors and family dynamics orchestrate the symphony of inner life, mediated by intergenerational "enigmatic messages" (Laplanche 1999). Originating in early childhood, enigmatic messages broadcast information that was beyond the developing child's intellectual, corporeal, and emotional equipment to understand. Enigmatic messages assert through tone, gesture, gaze, and muscle tension as well as semantically.[1] Further, they transmit without awareness by those themselves subjugated by such messages, and who would be horrified to know of their primitive affect and unconscious meaning.[2] In effect, we are born into a collective, "a network of desires and thoughts preceding each of us" (Kaes 2002, p. 20, in Kirshner 2006, p. 1010; see also Levy 2019). Society's elders bequeath the next generation with beliefs and values to which they themselves may not consciously adhere.

Enigmatic messages are initially encrypted and successively retranslated as the individual develops cognitive skills and accumulates life experience. To the extent that the unconscious is a Lacanian discourse of the Other, "profound reshaping" occurs between the two; over time, the discourse is reshaped in the subject's mind (Laplanche 1999, p. 160). Laplanche analogizes the process to a metabolism that breaks down food into its constituents and reassembles a completely different

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[1] Developmentalists have recorded the prolonged period of mutual "eye love" between mother and infant, involving the visual, and also touch, sound, and movement (Beebe and Lachmann 2002). There are also intervals of what I consider expressions of "eye curiosity," as in experimental gestures, expectant gazes, and verbal and physical play; and "eye hatred," as in blankness, narrowed pupils, aggrieved tones, and tense movements.

[2] From Freud (1905, p. 223): "A mother would probably be horrified if she were made aware that all her marks of caring [derived from her own sexual life] were rousing her child's sexual instinct and preparing for its later intensity….She is only fulfilling her task in teaching the child to love."

entity. However, the metabolic process is incomplete, and very partial. Some elements are excluded: "untranslated signifiers" do not come together, and "persist side by side without influencing or contradicting each other" (Laplanche 1999, p. 104).[3] Throughout life, the other's messages—some untransformed, others retransformed successively—remain to "sting" with enigma (Browning 2016), reviving internal groupings. Enigmatic messages put in motion that which is not yet thought about but already located in the unfolding multiple transferences and countertransferences of analytic relationships.

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN VERTICAL AND HORIZONAL TRANSFERENCE-COUNTERTRANSFERENCES

Freud positioned the Oedipal complex as the primary organizer of object relationships and situated sibling bonds and relations as displacements. In shifting focus to earlier, mother-infant relations, contemporary psychoanalytic theory remains fixed on "vertical" parent-child relationships, and "horizontal" relationships between siblings in the context of the family remain relegated to secondary or surrogate roles. Observational studies document that infants form meaningful relationships with sibling by the middle of the first year of life. Extensive empirical research studies have established that sibling relationships often exert definitive influence on later identifications, adult marital patterns, and overall psychological adjustment (Abar et al 2015; Balsam 2013; Cicirelli 1995; Hiatt et al 2017; Jambon et al 2019; Jensen and McHale 2017; Jensen, Pond and Padilla-Walker 2015; Kerr, Stattin, and Ozdemir 2012; Lee, Padilla, McHale 2016; Litt, Stock, and Gibbons 2015; Marion

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[3] Laplanche (1999) described a therapeutic process in which the "filled in" transference, a reproduction of childhood images and relationships, progresses toward "hollowed out" transference which reproduces the enigmatic relation to the other. Here lies the opportunity (only partial) for further translations. Certain parental intromissions remain unmetabolizable and "cannot be diluted," forming "psychotic enclaves with the human personality," (Laplanche 1989, p. 139), and which also "has a role in the *formation of the superego*, a foreign body that cannot be metabolized" (Laplanche 1999, p. 136, his emphasis).

et al 2014; Milevsky 2011, 2016, 2019; Moser et al 2005; Parens 1988; Wallendorf 2014).

A number of psychoanalytic investigators have made the case for the significance of sibling constellations in the study of early object relationships (Coles 2003, 2014; Lamoureux and Debbane 1997; Moser et al. 2005; Sharpe and Rosenblatt 1994; Vivona 2007). Prominent among them are Kaes (2007, 2016) and Mitchell (2000, 2003, 2013), both likely influenced by Lacan's formulation of developmental traumas structuring a pre-Oedipal unconscious (Chiesa 2007).[4] Sequential traumas of weaning and maternal abandonment are followed by the experience of intrusions into the mother-child relationship and culminate in the realization of a mother-infant-phallus triangle (the "Phallus" standing for the fantasied object of the mother's desire). To the child's horror, it discovers that the mother desires another "little thing like me," a "mirror" of oneself.

In contrast to the Oedipal triangle in which the competing figure is the opposite sex parent, in the pre-Oedipal triangle the rival is the figure of child-other, the actual or fantasied sibling. (The assumption is that the fraternal complex develops without the actual arrival or order of siblings [Lewin and Sharp 2009]). The rival is both loved as an extension of itself and hated as its replacement (Mitchell 2003). For the rest of life, the person will struggle with the emotional and social problems associated with what Klein described as the "depressive position." Living in a world of others, all of us, analyst and patient alike, mourn the loss of exclusive claims on love and attention (Billow 1999a, 1999b).

PSYCHOANALYSIS SUFFERS A FRATERNAL COMPLEX

Freud conceptualized a fraternal complex without naming it as such (Sherwin-White 2007): "When other children appear on the scene the Oedipus complex is enlarged into a family complex. This with the fresh support from the egoistic sense of injury, gives grounds for. . .

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[4] Laplanche's (1999, p. 171) clarification is pertinent: "You will be getting a little brother is not purely an objective fact but also an enigmatic message from the other." Any expression of psychic life, not only verbal, may be perceived as enigmatic, particularly to the young child.

repugnance and for unhesitatingly getting rid of them by a wish" (Freud 1916-1917, pp. 333-134).

Although Freud (1925) omitted mention of his seven siblings in his autobiopic sketch, his thinking regarding fraternal trauma extended into his self-analysis. He diagnosed himself as suffering neurotic "survivor guilt" regarding the death of his younger brother, Julius, which occurred when Freud was eighteen months old (and thus pre-Oedipal in the Freudian developmental schemata). Freud's relationship with his half-brother's son, one year older than Sigmund, became the model for intimate peer relations:

> I can only say shortly that der Alte [my father] played no active part in my case ….I greeted my brother (who was a year my junior and died after a few months) with ill-wishes and genuine childish jealousy, and that his death left the germ of self-reproaches in me. I have also long known the companion of my evil deeds between the ages of one and two. It was my nephew, a year older than myself. . . . This nephew and this younger brother have determined what is neurotic, but also what is intense, in all my friendships. [1886-1899, pp. 261-262]

Freud was a competitive, jealous, and intolerant brother who dominated his five sisters in place of his weak father (Kahn 2014, pp. 46-47). As an adult, he displayed similar autocratic behavior with colleagues and psychoanalytic organizations (Wellendorf 2014). Freud recognized his failure in establishing "friendly relations" among the Wednesday's Society's Bruderhorde (horde of brothers): Jones, Rank, Abraham, and Ferenczi (Jones 1955).

Racheal-Left (1990, p. 325) has suggested that the death of Freud's younger brother has haunted psychoanalytic theory, which remains "encapsulated as an unprocessed wordless area of prehistoric deathly rivalry and identification." Freud passed on his internal group—traumatized also by additional fraternal events—to succeeding generations of psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic organizations. Enduring individual and institutional defenses of dissociation and denial attest to the intergenerational influence of Freud's sibling complex and could explain its omission from analytic theory and practice. Agger (1988, p. 12)

speculated that Freud's formulation of the Oedipus complex—in addition to its scientific merits—represented a neurotic displacement from siblings to parents, sparing Freud of his intense primitive feelings towards his siblings. Likewise, the contemporary analyst, in a life already rife with "competitive strivings with colleagues and unsatisfying intimacies with friends" (Schecter 1999, p. 2), might find horizontal, sibling transference-countertransference realizations more threatening than vertical, parent-based formulations. Kieffer (2014) suggested that sibling phenomena in the analytic relationship may be mutually disavowed because their acknowledgment and examination would threaten the hierarchical power structure that remains inherent in psychoanalytic treatment.

Without a sibling paradigm, the analyst will be unlikely to think of siblings, whether or not the patient or analyst had an actual sibling. Yet, siblings and near siblings are always present: those who wait outside the analyst's consulting room and those that are within. The presence or absence of siblings, birth order, and the developmental shifts in the complex system of family dynamics all participate in the vertical and horizontal patterns likely to occur in a session. Omitting sibling relationships from transference-countertransference considerations may contribute to intervals of treatment deadness, stalemate, and partial or outright failure.

Guntrip (1975) provided a sad personal example. His successive analyses with Fairbairn and Winnicott failed to address a puzzling series of incapacitating illnesses following the deaths of friends and colleagues. At age 70, he broke through amnesia surrounding the events of his younger brother's death at Guntrip's age of three and a half. The displaced memories of the "repressed idea" of his brother exerted "an unconscious pull out of life into collapse" (Guntrip 1975, p. 150).

Some analytic and group analytic case reports have attended to sibling dynamics and, specifically, to their relationship to the transference and treatment process (e.g. Ashauch 2012; Brown 1998; Brunori 1998: Caffaro and Coon-Caffaro 2003; Grunebaum and Solomon 1982; Lesser 1978; Levin 2016; Shapiro and Ginzberg 2001). Consideration of countertransference has been cursory, without fuller consideration the topic deserves (e.g. Colonna and Newman 2017; Lesser 1978; Mitchell 2003). A notable exception is Roth (1980), who accompanied a description of formative stages of a "borderline" group with a narrative of intense countertransference responses. In the case examples that follow, I bring forth

some of the transference-countertransference configurations that likely both hindered and fueled therapeutic launchings.

INTERACTING VERTICAL AND HORIZONAL TRANSFERENCE-COUNTERTRANSFERENCES PLAY OUT IN THE THERAPY GROUP

Despite his major contributions to the understanding of group, Freud did not favor its clinical extensions (Campos Avilar 1992), a prejudice maintained by ongoing analysts and analytic institutions. Bion, the most important group theorist since Freud, adhered to the advice of his analyst, Melanie Klein, and desisted from group work, returning to it only in his last major metapsychological writing (Bion 1970).

In a critique of psychoanalytic education, Kernberg (2000, p. 113) acknowledged "regressive idealizations and split-off paranoiagenesis … that haunt psychoanalytic institutions." While Kernberg recognized the striking avoidance of studying the essential literature of small and large groups, he did not go so far as to suggest structured and ongoing group experience among his proposals to address the authoritarian pathology in these oligarchic and parochial training organizations. Perhaps, as Kaes (2002) suggested, psychanalysis suffers a narcissistic injury in considering the idea of one's origin as belonging to a collective network of desires and thoughts (in Kirshner 2006, p. 1010).

Freud described the two intrinsic features of psychoanalysis that retain prominence in psychoanalytic group treatment: transference and resistance. "Any line of investigation which recognizes these two facts and takes them as the starting-point of its work has a right to call itself psycho-analysis" (Freud 1914, p. 16). Supporting a "multi-person" rather than a one or two-person psychology model, the psychoanalytic group modality actualizes many of the precepts of relational psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on destabilizing absolutist thinking, reducing patient-analyst asymmetry, and fostering a collaborative truth-seeking process (Billow 2003, 2010, 2015, 2021; O'Leary and Wright 2005). Since group analysis takes place in a consultation room with many "like me's," it presents a methodology uniquely suitable to reveal derivatives—the

untranslated, translated and here-and-now retranslations—of early horizontal as well as vertical patterns of experience.

The psychotherapy group is structured by an aggregation of the members' unconscious forces. From its exterior, group boundaries are relativity fixed, defined by time, place, and membership. However, from its interior, a group is psychically crisscrossed with multiple boundaries. Unconscious pre-Oedipal, Oedipal, and fraternal complexes are variously stimulated and underscore whatever is taking place. Unanchored from consciousness, boundaries within and between individuals blur, stratify, and multiply, the imaginative process energized by each person's unique developmental history. Time extends backwards and forwards, to the past and future, from the "here-and-now" to the "there-and-then," to the feared, painful, and disavowed, to the anticipated, wished for, or dreaded. People and places are both real and imaginary, renovated moment to moment in each encounter.

The dynamics that play out in actual groups contain symbolic enactments of each member's internal groups: dramatic unfoldings of representations, affects, desires, and inhibitions. Organized clusters of pre-Oedipal, fraternal and Oedipal fantasies, wishes, fears, and affects spur rivalry, curiosity, attraction, and rejection, structuring individuals and group process. Representing symbiotic, sexual, masochistic, aggressive, fratricidal, parricidal, matricidal, and cannibalistic fantasies and urges, they are repressed, and also disavowed, dispersed, projected, and enacted collectively as well as individually.

The group, as a site of the cultural (familial and societal), is also a "site of an enigmatic interpellation, with many voices, many ears" (Laplanche 1999, p. 233). Shadows of siblings as well as parental figures lurk and participate in the horizontal and vertical alliances and misalliances of interpersonal encounters. Their voices often resonate louder than the broadcasts in the here and now, conveying enigmatic messages and driving unconscious thinking, interpersonal exchanges, and group enactments. Not surprisingly, these enigmatic voices influence and may direct countertransference.

Case l: "I Like People Who Talk"

A day's experiential-didactic workshop at an international group conference brought to my sudden awareness the enduring impact of originary

complexes on my work. The morning's lecture, discussion, and process group revealed a lively, interactive assemblage of thirty individuals, with some large personalities dispersed through the wide range in age, clinical training, and country of citizenship. Resuming after lunch, I realized at some point that some of the attendees had spoken minimally or not at all. I had tried to involve them, such as inviting participation with a welcoming or questioning smile, picking up on body language, and "bridging" (Ormont 1992), inviting one member to reflect on another's presentation.

Now I specifically addressed their lack of verbal participation: "You will get more from this afternoon's meeting if you say something. Even one comment gives you a new sense of the group." The room remained quiet. Then I said: "It's okay even if you grunt or groan." My humorous intervention met with some success.

"I've been wanting to talk, but I've been afraid. Thanks for noticing." The member then filled in some biographical data, as did several others who followed, but the process lost impetus, and the group turned to other interactions. I felt unsatisfied and curious, and near the afternoon's midpoint, I said: "There seems to be two groups here—the talkers and the nontalkers." That drew the group's eyes to the verbally nonparticipating, and I felt anxious about scapegoating them by applying peer pressure.

Someone came forth: "In my family, I was always very quiet. At home, I let my mother speak for me until I left for college."

"Who reminds you of your mother?" I asked, seeking more individual participation and wanting to demonstrate transference analysis to the training workshop.

"I don't know … maybe anybody who dared to speak."

I had found a useful angle to extend participation: who reminded someone of whom, and why, and how did it feel. I was feeling relaxed and successful, until an attendee broached a change of direction:

"If I were running this group, I'd want to know what I did to cause the 'two groups'."

I felt embarrassed, as if accused of not practicing what I preach about self-reflecting on one's influence on whatever transpires. The comment was delivered respectfully, and I answered in the same way.

"What do you think I did to cause subgrouping?"

"You like people who talk."

Several members came to my rescue: "Well, he was faced with a new group, of course he wanted people to talk." "He tried to bring people in, he's doing it now, [and to the person who posed the challenge], you tried too."

Although I did not have access to the concept of therapeutic "window" at that time, I felt inspired by the question I had posed a few moments earlier: the topic of family relations and intragroup originary-based horizontal and vertical transferences. I shared an insight that felt sudden and intense: "Well, I was the first born in my family, and I maintained my position by doing a lot of talking." Now other people pressed to talk.

"I was the 'golden boy' in my family. Talking, but not talking too much. I want to be the golden boy in your group. Just me. [humorously] Am I being it now?"

"I was the second fiddle, literally, in a musical family. I feel like that here, and that's why I haven't revealed myself. I have to think about my responsibility. You welcomed me, several times."

"I was my parents' 'joy', their 'ray of sunshine.' [and with irony] See how I always smile and am seen and not heard."

A young man volunteered: "Maybe I've been Cinderella here, waiting to be invited to the ball. I need to man up, I got my own balls."

"In my family, I was the oldest, and my job was to take care of my siblings, as they arrived, one by one. But I liked it. My parents weren't close, I was afraid of my father and my mother wasn't very warm either."

One of the members who had tried to shield me from criticism joined in: "I had to protect my mother. She had 'issues' and got depressed and the family went haywire. When you blamed Richard for creating the 'two groups,' I worried that he would fall apart and everyone would start fighting. I'm always worried that my patients are going to fall apart, and then my psychotherapy group that I run. I see that not happening here."

Discussion

I could easily justify my technical approach to the silent members: after all, people unfold at different times, and not always verbally. But I came to realize that identification, projection, envy, rivalry, guilt, and

reparation were among the psychological rudiments I exploited—for better and worse—in conducting the workshop. Silent members and subgroups exert power, and may even hold a group hostage, demanding special attention by their very quietness. In terms of my psychology, of which I was not conscious at the time, such individuals represented my younger brother.

His emotional unavailability was intriguing, stimulating, and frustrating. I provoked him to respond, teasing, wrestling, socking him when necessary, which was often. In my reflective, adult consciousness, I know (and probably knew as a child) that he wished to isolate himself from any unpleasant intensity of our family, some of which I caused. Selective withdrawal was beyond my emotional capabilities. In my ongoing unconsciousness, he was (and is) a rivalrous model of a "better" type of individual, one self-contained and without need. Apparently, I was still operating under the influence of this past complex.

In the group, the quiet members entered my unconsciousness as rivals too, competing with the talkative ones, which included me, for my attention (as father-leader) and for the group's attention (my "parents" and extended family). I could easily express curiosity, fight, and embrace the talkative ones. Whether they were friendly or hostile, I knew who they were, and I "liked" them. In terms of infantile narcissism, they were reflections of "me." I resented the quiet ones, the "better than us," who deigned not to participate in the intensity of our group. Caught between deciding to kill or love—ignore or attend to—the quiet ones, I tried both.

This example demonstrates how subtle and unconscious cues from the analyst can powerfully impact group behavior. I came to realize that the signs that I "like people who talk" were obvious to certain members, who interacted with me with growing confidence. While there was no obvious injunction directed to the nontalking subgroup, silence for them had different meanings. Spiraling within their successive orbits of vertical alliances, those well-behaved members, in being seen but not heard, were doing just what they imagined I would like!

The startling question—what I did to cause "two groups"—delivered with apt timing, jolted me out of a countertransference spiral into a window of opportunity. I was now more acutely aware of the originary horizontal and vertical roots of the differences in enthusiasm in which I

invited, met, and sustained the gaze of various group members, and also more aware of their visual and bodily reactions to me. I returned home with new understanding and compassion for nontalkers, for the shared predicament of childhood and the roles imposed upon us as siblings, and for the one who is truly my brother.

I thought more about my being intentionally self-revealing, a spontaneous "act of freedom" (Symington 1983) that would have been unlikely in one of my ongoing domestic groups. I suspect it had to do with a sense of loneliness, having travelled without my wife, and wanting to be a "friend" rather than the dominating figure that I suddenly felt I was in prompting silence from some members. Indeed, one remark from that workshop still rankles: "Could you have gotten the same results if you had stayed out?" I heard another voice: "Why can't you behave like your brother!" In "causing" the two groups, I was leery of behaving in the dominating manner like my mother, rather than in the retiring manner like him. Hearing her refrain and seeing her unforgiving countenance in my mind, I can feel the bewildered wound that still can accompany my actual relationship to my often-charming mother. Carrying an originary enigma, originating prior to language (I am hypothesizing), extending through my toddler epoch, and continuing into adulthood, I did not know that I was bewildered or why, and left with an inexpressible sense of absence that no one in the family or afterwards had fulfilled.

Who was this group member, and who was my mother? How did these individuals—mentally superimposed on each other as one vague emotional image—think of me: a friend, brother, father, sister, son, daughter, confederate, competitor, or foe? In internal groups, we inherit, inhabit, and project onto others multiple roles: Oedipus, Laius, Jocasta and Antigone, Cain and Abel, Joseph, and his brothers. Like Oedipus, we all are "adopted" at birth, and unaware of our ignorance regarding who our parents are (Faimberg 2005, p. 66), who our sibs are, and who we are to them.

Originary traumas and the hypnotic power of their enigmatic messages can be modified but never erased, and we cannot be sure where our therapeutic urges arise from. Would it be better to stay out, tolerate "absence" and hold off interventions to see what develops? My interlocutor's cogent question cannot be answered definitively. Opening one

window of therapeutic opportunity bypasses others. In deciding what aspects of clinical interactions should be dealt with, and in what terms, "to a great extent the choice is already determined by the analyst's personality" (Bion 1965, p. 166; also Freud 1912). The best we can do is strive to become a more mature version of who we are.

Case 2: He Wouldn't be Interested in Talking to Me

A man joined our group of nine, and towards the end of his first session, a woman addressed him, breaking into his silent participation. "You remind me of the handsome boy in the high school cafeteria. I would never talk to him; he wouldn't be interested in talking to me." A hesitant attempt by the new male followed, but tearing and frozen, she did not engage. Even after a year in our group, we did not know the woman very well (and for this reason, I will leave her as yet unnamed). I wondered whether her fantasy of the other's lack of interest—explained why. She was an attractive and appealing adult, yet we just witnessed a shy adolescent girl in a peer crush. Were all of the males in our group handsome enough to serve as inhibiting figures, or more likely, did her admission also represent a retranslation of something earlier, more primal?

The woman had spoken to the new member and to us all. What did she want, what did she expect from her discourse? Other members filled the space she had opened, and the group became a place of engagement, flirtation, and competition. Hormonal adolescents were at play; the woman remained left out.

I thought of myself in that fantasized cafeteria: one of the three shortest males in a class of 400 students. At our twenty-year reunion, sporting the numerous inches I gained in my late teens, I was pleased to meet one of the two others, now also a six-footer, the two of us towering over the fattening football and basketball stars of our school. Too pleased! How envious and jealous I had been at the whole lot of them, and despite many friendships, how constricted and lonely. They didn't talk to me either! But many had, I reminded myself. Superimposing a vague collection of high school figures on our psychotherapy group, I had transpositioned who didn't speak to whom—they to me, rather than I to them.

Although we were of different genders and cultural backgrounds, and separated by forty years, we shared what Warner (2020) describes as

a "middle school feeling" that lingers even in adulthood: an enigmatic sense of being somehow wrong, inferior, unfinished. As if to exit from a mindset that Warner asserted as inescapable (and I agree), I turned inward to vectors of other developmental periods: myself as a biologically liberated college student, myself as a little boy playing with a younger brother and "near brother" cousins, a series of best friends (the crucial "chums," as Sullivan underscored), romantic partners, and back to the group and the female member. She was an educated and successful career woman, and with a mate to boot. I could not believe that she lacked a similar access to positive, thinkable peer relationships to bring to the group.

The woman's claims of being confused, not knowing how group operated, and having difficulty in locating her own feelings uniquely positioned her as a younger sister, the group's pre-adolescent. Mothers of both genders beckoned with encouragement. "Something is blocking me," she repeated, and the group redoubled its efforts.

Months passed and I found myself increasingly irritated by the group's sympathetic entreaties, as well as by her recurring rationalizations for denying them, as tearful as they were. Her window refused to budge. I thought by acquainting members with my disbelief regarding her self-presentation might rouse them to reflect on the monotonous spiral of our group process and I could recruit them to participate in a launch. Arising also from what I believed to be a benevolent urge that might not have been obvious to the group members (or to the reader), I wanted to protect the woman. Their sympathy-infused approach reinforced the conviction that suffering brings connection and invited more of the same retraumatizing behavior. In my experience, members who present themselves as victims wear down their kindhearted cohorts; eventually, they come to feel victimized themselves. Laplanche (1999) insisted that the analysand must be "provoked" by the analyst into the transference (also Lacan 1977[1958] p. 14). It was no favor not to provoke, even though it was likely to stir negative feelings.

"I know you find me difficult," she said eventually. "I find you difficult too. You don't like it when I cry, I'm trying not to." "You could try harder," I suggested, slightly factitiously. "I hate you," she exclaimed through tears, a predilection momentarily shared by the members vehemently protesting my recommendation. Both her protests and the group

support seemed to provide her with relief and some satisfaction. Over time she became comfortable declaring her hate and each time I noted with faint praise her increasing mastery of not crying. Some members trusted that I probably knew what I was doing, some continued to supply the explanatory and supportive therapy unforthcoming from their leader, and some betrayed impatience by moving on.

During one now typical exchange between us, tearing but with palpable pleasure, the woman declared: "I really hate you, but somehow love you and I don't know why. Maybe I'm a masochist." "Maybe," I replied. A growing chorus wished she would be that direct with them and tended to silence in response to her now mostly tearless profusions of helplessness. From a member: "You talk about yourself like an observer. That irritates me." "A protective mechanism," she apologized, only to be challenged again: "You seem so calm about it." "The only time you come alive is when you can fight with Rich."

Cornered by a schoolyard of the disgruntled (my fantasy of the group at this moment), she blurted: "I feel I don't count in the group. Yet I'm beginning to suspect that I might be responsible for that. I want love and care, but I don't think it will last, and will be something I have to return. They don't care about me and I don't care about them."

"Who's the 'they'?" I inquired, conveying little expectation of an answer. "I don't know … My parents were very busy, although I knew they loved me." An "I" emerged that we had not heard from before. She had moved from obstructive "I don't knows," to "I hate you," to "I hate you and love you," to her "very busy" parental figures, represented by uncaring group members, me particularly, I surmised, and finally, to self-agency: "I'm beginning to suspect that I might be responsible for that [not counting]." Further translations—deconstructions and reconstructions—would follow.

Discussion

Groups are very busy, even when silent, for the participants are coping with a profound trauma. "The instantaneous experience of an individual member confronted with the group is that of massive loss" (Debbane et al. 1986, p. 523). Each new meeting reacquaints its members with the originary betrayal: the mother very busy with another child, a father, and the world out there.

Freud wrote that:

> the fact that the younger child is loved by the parents as much as he himself is … .he is forced into identifying himself with the older children … which is then further developed at school … .What appears later on in society in the shape of … "group spirit" does not belie its derivation from what was originally envy … .Thus social feeling is based upon the reversal of what was a hostile feeling into a positive-toned tie in the nature of an identification. [1921, p. 120]

The woman could not operate with authentic "group spirit," as she was convinced that no matter the group's messages to the contrary, no one was interested." Operating from an enigma "frozen in a developmental time" (Bollas 1984, p. 210), she pushed away those who tried.

Given the force of developmental regressions and fixations, preparing to launch an individual out of an "originary" spiral can be extensive. My counterforce of skepticism and unwillingness to sooth her wounded displays seemed to offer possibilities, whereas explanations, apologies, and profusions of caring did not. She was being difficult, and she knew it, and learned that I knew she knew it. We were both difficult, which I believe she came to appreciate.[5] As both an absent and overwhelmingly present symbolic parent, I welcomed her admission of hatred, and felt confirmed when she expanded her animosity to include her "uncaring" group cohorts, and associatively, to her parents.

Mitchell (2003, p. 11) asserted that before siblings "are equal in their sameness to each other for their father, children must be equal in their difference from each other for their mother. This will be the first vertical relation for siblings." In actuality, children are not equal to parents, whose unconscious pre-Oedipal, fraternal, and Oedipal complexes are variously stimulated (Magagna 2014). Likewise, analysts do not relate to each patient equally, for reasons proper and less so. In preparing to launch an intervention, the analyst reflects on different developmental levels of the analysand's psychic reality. The group analyst makes retranscriptions that are not only unique to each individual, but are also specific to the group process and culture. However, given the

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[5] Winnicott's (1949, p. 69) assertion is apropos: "The patient can only appreciate in the analyst what he himself is capable of feeling."

unremitting influence of enigmatic messages, the analyst's retranscriptions are shaped also by the analyst's internal conflicts and by fantasy. These may not match up with the realities of the other(s), and of the current therapeutic situation.

Sometimes a launch is jarring for the patient (and group), because in disrupting a pattern of behavior, the analyst may be experienced as startling and unexpected (Greenberg 2001, p. 364). Perhaps a launch is always jarring for the analyst, who is summoned in the transference-countertransference to traumatic "places and correlations of places" in one's own internal groupings (Kaes 2016, p. 191). I could recognize some of the internal places the group occupied in her transference because I had felt and could think them in my own reflexes: a contemptuous urge to block meaning and meaningful engagements.

Drawing on my own childhood history of being "difficult" with busy parents, I revived the vague hope that if my parents, or somebody, would ask me about my experience, we would have come to a more satisfying resolution of a situation that pleased no one (Billow 2019). It took me years of individual and group analytic work to retranslate and align with reality my originary, vertically-based trauma: in fact, on many occasions, such hopes had been realized. Being too hurt, too angry, too disbelieving, I pushed away those that had tried to talk to me. I knew too well the subject-object reversals between the "doer and done to," permutations and retransformations of the "who did not talk to whom" that often do not correspond to historical reality.

I could feel myself operating from a subjective interactive space, mediating among many developmental levels: a spiteful child who would not listen; an extroverted adolescent with a lonely, introverted core; and an alarmed parent who would not give up speaking. My encouragement to "try harder" was directed also to other members who needed to find their own individual voices and not be inveigled by hers. Their ceaseless attempts at rescue suggested to me that the members were struggling with their own abandonment anxieties, intensified by the woman's lack of participation (and likely by my nonconforming therapeutic behavior).

Winnicott (1949, p. 70) made what was then a radical assertion that, in "the position of the mother of an infant unborn or newly born," the analyst must be aware of his or her own fear and hate. He emphasized

that however much the analyst loves, "he cannot avoid hating, and the better he knows this the less will hate and fear be the motive determining what he does to his patients" (Winnicott 1949, p. 68). Winnicott assumed that the analyst, through personal analysis, could "become free from [enacting] vast reservoirs of unconscious hate belonging to the past and to inner conflicts" (Winnicott 1949, p. 69). Many of us no longer believe that is possible (or even desirable, see Renik 1993; Searles 1979). Analysts must possess "a certain amount of cruelty" and not be "too nice," Carl Jung declared (in Atlas and Aron 2018, p. 117). That characterization fits a developmental role of parents and siblings too. Since no one else took on that role, I "carried" the disavowed frustration and hatred. But it is likely that my aggressiveness had another source: unmetabolized anger from my years as the "not talked to"—a reconstructed originary plus school-related social trauma. It was a bumpy launch for the group member and unsettling for me, for I did not enjoy my outlier role. Further, I could not be sure that a different approach with a different analytic personality might have led to a smoother launch.

Case 3: Let Me Talk

We are all too familiar with monologists and soliloquists—self-mythologizers, storytellers, intellectualizers, and dramatists—people who stick to their scripts and consign us to watch and listen. Held captive by their internal parents' narcissism, these individuals early on found themselves in the role of enforced listener. The Other did not listen and now must listen. Some individuals get trapped in the role; the protagonists in this example rebelled against it.

The group came to accept with humorous resignation Marcia's disruptions. She stated and restated her opinions, talking over speakers. The members came up with numerous behavioral descriptors, none of them meeting her approval. In yielding, Marcia negotiated the terms: "I'll try to hear you, but don't tell me I'm 'spinning.' Think of another word. Not 'ranting,' that's worse. I know I do this. That's why my [ex-]husband hated me, but he criticized me no matter what." Marcia rested comfortably with the knowledge that she was not hated but enjoyed and valued for her good-hearted empathy, and for the most part, she affably tossed aside confrontations and criticisms. "I just

needed to get this out; I don't need feedback." "I'll talk about this with Rich in individual."

Our "talk in individual" tended to replicate these temporary group impasses. "I know, I know, it's my mother, I fight back and don't let anyone pressure me to be or to do." Both of us ended up repeating ourselves, even if I remained silent and she mouthed what she believed to be my interpretations. Her wall of words fended off unheard enigmatic maternal messages. But she reassured me of the opposite: "I remember everything, not only what you say, but how you say it and your look, and think about it, even when I change subjects. You're right; I need to trust more. I'm more intimate with you than with anyone else, maybe not as much in group, but I think a lot about group afterwards." Her forceful insistence once again uncomfortably brought to my mind her invasive mother (and mine as well) and once again I told her so. She sympathized with why I would think that and not like it, without any suggestion that she would or could do better.

The members did not want to hurt Marcia or risk her affection, and they were careful when and how to intervene. She was habitually late in making her grand and noisy entrance, and occasionally they took the opportunity to implore me to "do something;" "you deal with her;" "she listens to you, sometimes." I returned their good-natured entreats, encouraging them to be more upfront, and pledged that I would too. I found myself saying kindly but forcibly: "Marcia, hold back, give others a chance;" "you're getting off subject;" "you said your opinion well, you don't need to repeat it;" "you don't need to say anything right now, let's just listen." "You're not hearing what people are saying to you." These types of comments were not easy for me and I hated making them, remembering how often I was on their receiving end with my parents.

My work seemed tolerable to Marcia and good enough for the group, but Hank complained that I was charmed and seduced. There was some truth in the accusation, certainly his truth, and mine to think about. Marcia claimed that Hank was my real favorite, since he often talked like me. There was some truth in her rebuttal too, for I admired his insights and how well he expressed them.

In the midst of one session, Hank blurted "shut up," and held his ears humorously. Marcia made it clear that she didn't like being told to shut up, which I knew since I had said the equivalent and received the

equivalent. Hank tried to repair: "I thought we were friends." "Not that kind," Marcia retorted steamily. Other group members tried to adjudicate. Hank could have said it better, but his frustration was understandable, and maybe I as the leader should have done more. "He was trying to talk," someone explained, to which Marcia countered coolly, "go ahead, I'm not stopping you."

"I need a little time," Hank replied noncommittedly, which the group respected and turned to other topics. Marcia partook with typical animation, but Hank did not participate further. He remained "wiped out" and considered leaving group, he reported in the next individual session. "Something went horribly wrong." There was no repair, given the intensity of Marcia's anger. "What intensity?" I inquired skeptically, adding truly that I did not notice anything different from Marcia's animated piques that I, along with the other male members, were regularly subjected.

Hank returned three weeks later; it took several months of individual work before he cautiously addressed Marcia, haltingly describing the deep fissure in their relationship and his anticipation of group denunciation. Reminded of the encounter, Marcia reassured Hank that she hardly thought about it afterwards, maybe not at all. Perceiving that her reply did the opposite of reassure and might have hurt, she clarified: "I'm not saying I don't think about you. You're very important to me and I hated it when you didn't come to group. I just don't like it when you act superior like a professor and tell me what to do. That's Rich's job."

Somehow, I felt it was the right time to accentuate Marcia's risible characterization, and I said that I thought I was pretty good at acting superior and telling people what to do, and perhaps I would be even better if I did it more, as people suggested. This seemed to provide a humorous respite to allow time for people to sit with what had transpired and not rush to premature resolution.

Discussion

I had agreed with Hank that something had gone wrong—but not "horribly" so. What had he been expecting? I considered the question too: who were these antagonists to each other, and who were they to me? Hank's "shut up" fleetingly disrupted Marcia, who shrugged him off with

the confidence of a lifetime of male adoration. I visualized with amuse-
ment her memorable narrative of three nettled brothers, ensconced in
the family car, her father hollering to his dawdling daughter: "you're
going to walk to school," a walk that never happened. The group was
that car, and we its occupants eager for her appearance no matter our
remonstrations about lateness. No wonder she declared group "her
favorite place all week."

Not so for Hank. The group had no zone of safety, no trusted parent
to lead, no dependable brother or sister to witness, partner, and counter
unfair treatment. A well-behaved, athletic, high-achieving male child, he
was a "messiah or pariah" to his parents. His adoring mother, for reasons
he still did not understand, reported to his father infractions in his treat-
ment of his younger sisters, who relayed every one of them, real, exag-
gerated, or fabricated. "I'm so disappointed, I expect better of you"
haunted Hank's inner life, a stereophonic maternal-paternal message he
had transmitted to Marcia, and which he had heard returned in her
harsh rebuke.

Whereas I registered Marcia's anger at Hank, I assessed hers as not
severe, and not entirely believable. Listening to my own reveries, I heard
girlish screams in Marica's spirited protest, alluring threats, and uncon-
vincing reproaches. My uncle's gentle admonitions to be "nice to your
[twin] cousins, they're little girls" went unheeded by my brother and
me. Only a few years older, we were able to monitor our treatment and
the level of mutual excitement. A change of scene: the smell of pine had
waffled into the session; speckled streams of flashlights illuminated a
line of boys in pajamas. We had crossed into Girls' Camp: a yearly raid
and yearly penitence of midnight calisthenics. What joy in those August
nights of male bonding and female exploration! No further repercus-
sions followed or unfriendliness—quite the opposite from making our
heroic presence known. Crossing lines, it seems to me, is what latency
and adolescent courtship rituals are all about, and I conceptualized and
responded to the wrangling between Marcia and Hank from that devel-
opmental window.

However, while Hank (and I) had assumed his "shut up" and gesture
of covering his ears were brotherly communications and typical, Marcia
heard an unprivileged paternal injunction. "I just don't like it when you
act superior like a professor and tell me what to do. That's Rich's job."

Other members had entrusted that job to me as well: "Do something, you deal with her [Marcia]." But for Hank, my voice proved unreliable like his father's, and he risked his own to educate Marcia on her effect. No one had shamed him or gullibly denied Marcia's share of responsibility. Yet, despite contrary evidence of support, Hank found himself once again in an internal family grouping that had kept him at emotional distance in subsequent intimate relationships.

Each of us heard words and viewed that which passed in the group space in terms of our own developmentally influenced relational complexes, that is, within our repetitive "spirals" of internal groupings and their successive retranslations. Although I have exhibited and been on the receiving end of mean play, with a sibling, cohorts, faculty colleagues, and others, horizontal mistreatments usually do not hold lasting mental sway. Like Marcia, I tend to replay vertical grudges, having a parent—actually two—who talked over and at me. And like Hank, my parents expressed disappointment that I didn't do better. At one time, Marcia or Hank could have become that parent to me. I complimented myself for having matured and relating with such warm aplomb. A window had opened for each of them and I was confident that they would work out their sibling conflicts in time.

Indeed, the contested encounter was one that finally enlivened their relationship. Productive work followed for Hank who, in his efforts to revamp his relationship to Marcia, became less the professor and more the peer to his group cohorts. For Marcia, Hank provided a persuasive example of her effect on others—a thoughtlessness that could cut her loving peers deeply without their acknowledgment (and which likely contributed to her failed marriage). I had many opportunities to accentuate to Marcia that she could be hurtful without knowing it, and that she did need not "hit people over the head" to get her opinions and insights heard. As expected, she did not like that and similar metaphors, or being told what to do. Talking over her oppositions to my oppositions, and vice versa, we advanced amiably.

In revisiting this case example for publication, I had the opportunity to consider what I likely avoided in constructing the courtship theories I called upon and memorialized in my idealized reminisces. I had heard and seen nothing worrisome or undeserved in Hank's "shut up" and pantomime of covering his ears; I had behaved similarly in my

childhood and have wished to do it again. I was surprised but not troubled by the intensity of Marcia's feisty retort, either; that too has been in the repertoire of my behavior. Both of them were troubled by their interaction, however. While it was momentary for Marcia (or so it seemed), shucked off and left unresolved, it persisted for Hank. Not troubled, I minimized my tertiary position in a fraught Oedipal drama in which I was a key player. Marcia was fighting for me. Hank was fighting with me. Only one of us could be the "professor" that Marcia had declared was part of my "job." As a peer, I was willing to share Marcia with Hank, but as the group leader, I did not want to relinquish the job. I had to continue to "do something" with Marcia, for her benefit and the group's. Further, Hank's pain regarding me as a failed father figure would not have been alleviated by my relinquishing my role, which would have replaced one type of failed father figure with another.

For me to be troubled, I would have had to consider the intense desire, envy, and rivalry stimulated in others by our very job as analyst, and in which we also partake. Racker (1968) suggested that a neglected aspect of the Oedipus complex was the analyst's wish to be master or king, not only of other people, but also of one's own unconscious. Quite possibly, a residue of repressed Oedipal excitement and guilt led me away from reconstructing a significant aspect of a series of interactions that involved us all. A window of opportunity had passed, but it remains open should the group, and I, be ready.

RETRANSCRIBING THE *CONTAINER-CONTAINED*

The addition of a horizontal to the traditional vertical perspective necessitates a retranscription of hallowed theory and contemporary technique. Fraternal dynamics enter the analytic register, destabilizing the tidy metaphor of the container-contained. Bion's (1965) symbolic representation of the meaning-making relationship [♀♂] ideographically represents only two of three interacting elements of analytic co-participation. The addition of the horizontal to the vertical vortex extends psychic territory to unexplored developmental zones of what seems urgent.

A revised version of the container-contained grounds and expands our technical options, clarifying how we may shift our boundaries and modify our interventions. In some encounters we aim to function as the benevolent maternal figure who holds the group and encourages bonding. In others, we aim to contain the group, being the symbolic father who encourages thinking and verbal language. And as a sib, we want to be available to play in the group and joyfully allow ourselves to be played with. Bringing these roles into conceptual focus may free up the analyst to think symbolically and traverse developmental levels experimentally. Transference-countertransference caveats still operate. The analyst meets others with infiltrating pre-Oedipal, fraternal, and Oedipal complexes; others receive us with theirs.

Opening the Countertransference Window in the Group Situation

Freud's (1896, p. 233) concept of *nachträglichkeit* (or afterwardness) throws an unexplored light on group process. "Our psychical mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory-traces being subjected from time to time to a re-arrangement in accordance with fresh circumstances—to a re-transcription." The group represents "fresh circumstances" and the internal "re-arrangements" of developmental events delineate both an individual and collective activity. Group dialogue serves as associations, operating as "passing points from one subjectivity to another" (Kaes 2007, p. 90; also Foulkes 1990). However, we have seen that a group's discourse process is not a simple matter of member-to-member transmission. Language is suffused with originary situations: voices that have been heard before and through which individuals speak and hear the speech of others. No one listens and resounds to group events in the same way.

In the polyphonous group situation, Ferenczi's "confusion of tongues" is typical and likely. Multiple retranslations go on simultaneously, subjectified by the developmental history of each member, and by the dynamics of the group and one's roles within it. The analyst has to be aware of one's own recourse to narrativity, the temptation to impose static constructions that remove us from the jarring psychic actualities of the encounter. Maintaining allegiance to our own vertical and horizontal developmental complexes, we may "rehash" (Laplanche 1999, p. 161) our own reveries and mistranslate others'.

Laplanche's "window" is a metaphor of timing, when an intervention connects to urgent moments of affective intensity (Strachey 1934) and might be effective. But urgent for whom? Windows need to align sufficiently to provide a clear enough vision for a launch. While concordant and complementary symmetries exist in the transference-countertransference (Racker 1968), they do not eliminate what is private and distinctive in each person's internal groupings. No matter the therapeutic setting, the analyst's retransciptions are shaped partially by fantasy—imaginings related to the analyst's personal history and the unremitting influence of enigmatic messages specific to that history. The panes of the "countertransference window" remain clouded with the analyst's pre-Oedipal, fraternal, and Oedipal anxieties and we have limited success in seeing through them. The analyst cannot be sure whether a window has matched up with others or is merely refractive versions of one's earlier self. Sometimes the patient or the group is at a window first and has to wait for the analyst to meet there. One can only surmise afterwards whether the analyst's window has aligned with the realities of the other(s), and of the current therapeutic situation. Even then, the analyst's set of interventions might not have been the agent of change.

Laplanche gives short shrift to the limitations of the analyst's personal analysis, and similarly to Lacan, no place for the analyst's subjectivity seems to exist in his analytic model. But given Laplanche's (1989, p. 139) assertion that certain psychotic-like "enclaves exist within the personality and cannot be diluted," it follows that an unmetabolized analyst stands side to side in interaction with partially metabolized and with more mature versions (see also Bromberg 2001). Each version carries its countertransferences. Inevitably, we can only know and translate some of what is enigmatic, and every choice exposes our own "conflictual network of associations" (Smith 2000, p. 124). Enigmatic messages influenced what I offered and what I avoided; they infiltrated what I said, could have said better, or should not have said.

Laplanche (1999, p. 229) suggests adopting an "interior benevolent neutrality" concerning our own enigma … for it "*truly creates, provokes transference*" (italics in the original). "The truth rebels," Lacan consoles in similar fashion. "However inexact it might be one has all the same tickled something" (2002, p. 267). In each of these case examples, I

found myself tickled by countertransferences provoked by people who talked and did not talk, which led me to a window. In opening a counter-transference window to include others, the analyst may fail to launch but still tickle and disturb. From these "fresh circumstances" new opportunities arise for detranslations of what has gone on before and better translations of what could be.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Approaching the analytic patient, Bion (1977, pp. 48-49) advised formulating a method that can "penetrate" the barrier between different layers of the analysand's personality. I have suggested utilizing our own successive layers of personality, as best we can understand them, to bridge to others. Something new has to happen to move out of the repetitive spirals of the consulting room. It must happen to the analyst too. Although first traveling over familiar psychic territory, there was nothing emotionally stale about my journeys. In making translations—from then to now, from "them" to "me," and from their internal groupings to one's own, the analyst establishes integrating links between his or her psychic growth and the group's. As a multi-relational process, the group penetrates into the core of identity, and like other members, the analyst matures and is gradually transformed.

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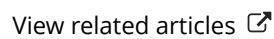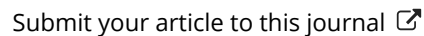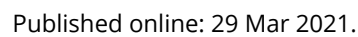
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Our Unconscious Relationship with Psychoanalytic Theory

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OUR UNCONSCIOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

BY GRETCHEN A. SCHMUTZ

The author explores the role of the unconscious in relationship to psychoanalytic theory. Using clinical material, the author argues that we have an important bidirectional unconscious relationship with theory. Theory allows us to have experiences that contain important unconscious thinking, which in turn contributes to new understandings about theory. The author uses John Dewey's concept of experience as a vehicle to elucidate how theory is used unconsciously.

Keywords: Unconscious, theory, psychoanalytic education, potential, Dewey.

In this paper, I explore the analyst's unconscious use of psychoanalytic theory. My aim is to foster thinking about the relationship between learned theory and its unconscious role in creating new ways of thinking and learning in psychoanalysis. A clinical example is used to focus on the unconscious use of theory and argue that using theory clinically and creating new theoretical ideas are often unconscious processes. With my clinical vignette, I consider how the disciplined study of an analytic school of thought can result not just in conscious understanding, but in an unconscious encoding of thought that allows for more opportunities for learning about theory through experience. I argue that we have a bidirectional unconscious relationship with theory; on the one hand,

theory is imprinted on our unconscious through learned study and then available for use in unconscious thinking. On the other hand, our experiences with patients lead to unconscious thought and learning, which in turn creates new understandings of theory. So, our understandings of theory come from study and from clinical experience. It is the role of the study of and education in theory and its unconscious impact that is the focus of this essay.

I use a clinical moment with Charlie to invite the reader to think about how the learning and study of psychoanalytic theory impacts the way we learn from experience in our clinical practice. This essay is formulated in the spirit suggested by Sandler (1983), in which he suggests that to further analytic theory, psychoanalysts need to make explicit their implicit use of theory. I attempt to demonstrate how my study of a psychoanalytic school of thought, and being supervised by a supervisor from that theoretical approach, impacted my use of theory, my clinical practice, and my own theorizing. Psychoanalytic training and practice require a great deal of study. Therefore, thinking about theory, not only from a clinical perspective but also from the point of view of education and learning, seems important as we think about the future of psychoanalytic ideas and how analysts are trained. In arriving at the bidirectional unconscious relationship with theory that I am writing about, I utilize the writings of John Dewey, an American educator, philosopher, and psychologist, because he writes about important relationships between disciplined study, the way we educate, and their impact on unconscious creative thinking.

THE EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING A THEORY

I am exploring the experience of my intensive study of a psychoanalytic model both academically and clinically. I am examining my unconscious use of theory and its impact on my own theorizing. My supervisor was teaching from a single analytic perspective. His interest and teachings concerned the clinical psychoanalytic technique delineated by the American psychoanalyst Robert Langs. Langsian theory, though not widely accepted and utilized, could be considered a coherent analytic theory and the writings of Robert Langs are extensive (1975, 1976,

1977, 1978, 1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985). Langs argues for
the centrality of the analytic frame and he emphasizes the importance of
listening to displaced representations of unconscious reactions to the
analytic frame. Langs' approach is distinctive because, in listening to
free association and derivative representations, he gives extraordinary
weight to the analytic frame and its impact on the way in which the
patient represents his unconscious intrapsychic issues. Any alterations in
what he considers the ideal frame are considered "deviant" (1982, pp.
324-353). Given the specificity of the focus, much of what constitutes
interventions are interpretations or corrections of "mistakes" related to
the management of the frame or holding firm in the face of the patient's
efforts to disrupt the frame. Adhering to the frame is presumed to have
a holding function for the patient (1982, p. 728), whereas deviations are
assumed to elicit a negative unconscious response. Langs' conception of
the appropriate frame is narrow and does not simply refer to the ordin-
ary routines of office space, payment, and time. Having a home office,
using insurance, or having a shared waiting room are examples of what
he considers to be reality precipitants (adaptive contexts) which may be
expressions of the analyst's or the patient's psychopathology (1982, p.
135). Interpretations are most often here-and-now interpretations
related to the frame. Langs' work is not widely practiced and authors
such as Krupp (1984) have commented on the many limitations of this
point of view, including a tendency for oversimplification.

   I approached the study of this analytic school with seriousness and
read many of the works of Robert Langs over a several year period. I
applied the theory as best I could in my clinical work. I had an immer-
sion in this school of thought as I had supervision, class time, and a study
group with a person who had studied with Langs and identified himself
as a Langsian. By studying this approach in such detail, I had an appreci-
ation for its potential. The model is quite specific and therefore provides
an organized system for listening to associations and understanding the
mind. Furthermore, the model considers the impact of the realities of
what the analyst does and does not do with the patient. Because
Langsian theory so specifically zeroes in on certain types of information,
it was a very efficient way for a beginning analytic practitioner to learn to
think about derivative unconscious communication. As I comment on in
my clinical vignette, the theory helped me to see the impact of the frame

with certain patients. In this essay, I use Langsian theory as a vehicle to talk about our unconscious relationship with theory because of its coherence and detail, and because my exposure to this analytic model was significant. Moreover, because this learning experience occurred before I had studied other theorists extensively, it is easier to examine its unconscious effects.

In thinking about the unconscious impact of the study of theory, the attitude of my supervisor seems important. He taught the theory in detail and offered a careful and considered opportunity to learn this theory with specificity and singularity. The fact that I was learning a singular theory with this supervisor also allowed for a more focused learning of this point of view. After a significant period of learning, I began to think about what I saw as this theory's power and its limitations. Though the theory itself is extremely specific, my supervisor was not punitive in his supervisory approach. Throughout the process, I tried to stay with the task of learning the approach, but eventually I began to share some of my thoughts about the limitations of the theory by writing up a case example. Though I did not dissuade this supervisor from his theoretical stance, the freedom to think about the problems I had with the theory had the effect of crystalizing the theory in my mind and cohering my own thinking. An advantage of studying such a clearly articulated point of view is that I became more aware of my own thinking by finding points of agreement and disagreement.

So, I was being taught and I was open to using a theory in detail but in an atmosphere in which I could think for myself about the theory as I learned it. I had a growing unease with the approach and many objections to it which are beyond the focus of this essay; but they include, for example, my objection to the prescribed narrow focus of attention on the meaning of the frame, which seemed the antithesis of free-floating attention as suggested by Freud. My supervisor had asked me to present a case to Langs on one occasion and Langs proved to be decidedly unhappy when I did not follow the approach as fully as he intended. Langs' attitude made me think more deeply about the difference between the impact of a clear idea or analytic model and allegiance to a way of thinking.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH CHARLIE

What I am going to describe is a clinical moment with Charlie and my reflections about it. I chose this example because of the coherence of the analytic point of view being absorbed, and my ability to demonstrate the unconscious use of a theory in a clinical moment in order to foster discourse on the unconscious impact of theory. My experience with Charlie occurred early in my career, though I am reflecting upon it now as a trained psychoanalyst. During this time, my supervisions and a clinical moment with Charlie very much affected my thinking about theory and its unconscious use. At the time that I came to know Charlie, I was a therapist in a school for severely disturbed psychotic children. Treatment teams consisted of therapists, teachers, and consultants. As the consultant to the team for Charlie, I helped think through decisions in an analytically informed way about matters such as limit setting and approaches to problems in the classroom. Having consultants on the treatment team allowed individual therapists to engage more freely and exclusively in the analytic process with their patients. Children were usually seen three times weekly.

Charlie was a wiry, handsome, blond ten-year-old boy living in a residential setting who would come during the day to the school where was I working. Charlie was put in a residential setting following a long hospitalization for aggressive and self-destructive behavior, which included head-banging and hitting adults. Charlie's background was severely traumatic. His psychotic mother had abandoned him two years earlier and he was left in the care of a physically abusive uncle. At the school, anxiety was high because of Charlie's capacity to be physically aggressive towards himself and others. Each day a person was assigned to greet Charlie at the bus to make sure he did not hit himself or disrupt other children. Staff were fearful of hurting him or being hurt when he was out of control.

For several months, I had been in complex consultations regarding this boy because everyone was upset and concerned for him. For weeks, teachers and therapists had been meeting to discuss and understand Charlie. One of my supervisors was heavily focused on object relations theory and some of these ideas proved crucial to the group. To give just a few examples of points being considered, we were thinking about

Charlie's attacks on teachers as his identification with a powerfully abusive uncle, which helped to engender empathy for Charlie as well as the wish to set limits in a kind and neutral way. A great deal of time was spent considering Charlie's internal objects and their impacts on his head-banging behavior, as we thought about how to approach this disturbing behavior.

On a beautiful, warm October day, the leaves on the trees were colorful, and I was waiting outside for Charlie's bus to arrive. I smiled warmly at Charlie as he started down the stairs of the bus though he did not smile in return. Instead, his face was impassive until he got to the bottom of the steps and took a giant leap and ran towards the forest that was behind the school. I hollered to the principal that I was going after Charlie and I began running too. Charlie was running at an extremely fast pace and many anxieties were going through my mind as I tried to catch up with him. Would I be able to reach him before he got lost? Would he be violent if I did catch up with him? And if so, what would I do? Surely picking a child up and bringing him back to the school was not analytic and it was likely that I would not even be able to do it. I worried that I might get hurt in the process. Would he hit me, or would he expect me to hit him? Would he hurt himself? Occasionally Charlie turned to see if I was behind him, but he ignored my requests that he stop running.

We were deep into the forest when I finally caught up with Charlie. I grabbed him around the waist and sat us both down on the forest floor. He was surrounded by my legs and my arms. One of my hands circled the forearm of my other arm allowing me to encircle Charlie without touching him. He made this easier because he rolled himself up tightly holding his legs with his arms and resting his head on his legs. While he was encircled by me, we were not touching. I told him that I did not want to grab him, but I could not let him get lost because it was not safe. I told him we were just going to sit for a while until we figured out what to do. We were both breathing awfully hard; I realized I was having trouble thinking because I was worried that he might bang his head backwards and knock out my teeth. I thought to myself: "I am not analyst/therapist to this boy" but this was followed by another thought: "Maybe at this moment in time I am the analyst. I am meant to make meaning

out of this situation as best I can with the hope that no traumatic out-come happens." I noticed that I was still finding it hard to think.

As we sat there, I found myself telling Charlie that I was going to tap my finger on my wrist, and he could see this out of the corner of his left eye. I counted aloud to 100 and told him I would check with him every 100 taps to see if he was ready to go back or talk. At first, I counted out loud but eventually began counting in my head. I did this for a while, maybe twenty five minutes, but there was no answer from Charlie though I kept checking in. I noticed I felt calmer, and my breathing had slowed as had his. I told him he could speak at any time and we would take our time. I told him that I would keep tapping but he could let me know if he was ready to go back. Though I continued to tap on my wrist, I also gradually stopped trying to think. Instead, I listened and looked around me at the forest. I relaxed and just sat there with him, tapping and being. I noticed the quietness, the stillness of the forest. I could hear a few birds but little else, as we were far into the forest. I could see him resting with his eyes open watching me tap my wrist. Eventually I let my mind wander as we sat. After a while, maybe another fifteen minutes, a childhood memory came into my mind.

I remembered a time when I was about Charlie's age. I was in a for-est camping at night. I heard a sound and got up and suddenly saw an owl close by in a tree and I was very frightened. I remembered being ter-rified of that owl. The owl was quite large and white, with brown and black flecks of color among its feathers. He also had large ears and huge yellowish eyes and he was looking right at me. Very loudly, I could hear the owl vocalizing "who who." It was as if the owl could see right into me. I tiptoed away and felt further spooked when I realized the owl could rotate his head around and follow me as if to see me from every angle. I remembered the sense of fear and the sense of being studied. I found myself telling Charlie that I had once been in a forest in the fall and I had come upon an owl that really scared me. I described to him what it was like being with the owl. He lifted his head at this point and looked at me to see if I was going to say more. I told him how scary it was to feel the owl watching me as if he could see inside me. Charlie nodded his head vigorously. He asked me if I had been worried that the owl would hurt me; I said "Yes," but I told him that the owl had not hurt me. The owl had watched and studied me. I kept tapping for a while more, maybe

five minutes or so; I then asked Charlie if he was ready to go and he nodded his head yes. We got up and slowly walked back to school, side by side.

MY USE OF THEORY WITH CHARLIE

When I was with Charlie, I was not thinking about theory. My unconscious choice of tapping as an action created a sense of time by dividing time into units. The tapping game also helped to define space by emphasizing what was me and what was not me, much like having separate chairs. It emphasized to me and to him what was my body and what was his and that we were separate. In this way, the tapping functioned in a similar fashion to the physical aspects of an office. So the tapping game defined time and space, which are both important features of the analytic frame. The tapping game, I believe, was an unconscious creation of a frame that helped to calm and orient both Charlie and me. I suggest that my creation of the tapping game was an unconsciously derived idea that was made possible by my exposure to Langsian theory.

It is my argument that my creation of an impromptu analytic frame with Charlie was an unconscious use of Langsian theory. I believe that, in my study of Langs' works, I had internalized a point of view that gives great significance to the holding capacity of the frame, and I ultimately used this unconsciously in my interaction with Charlie. The effect of this way of thinking led me to pay considerable attention to the analytic frame and its impact. I found over time that the analytic frame proved important for traumatized children who had never experienced reliable others and whose capacity for differentiation of self and others was poor. Time and time again, my supervisor would help me see displaced representations of reactions to the disruptions in the frame in the clinical material of these very disturbed children. Indeed, for these children who were often violent and disruptive, sustaining a consistent frame was quite difficult. At times, these children said extraordinarily little and engaged almost exclusively with the room and the frame in varying ways. The Langsian supervision had the effect of zeroing in on the role of the frame for these children and for myself, providing an organizing focus in what was often a sea of chaos.

This use of theory also created an opportunity for other thoughts to arrive about Charlie, which resulted in new understandings about him. Most of Charlie's communications up to that point had been in the form of aggression. The experience with Charlie in the forest, and the arrival of the image of the owl, allowed me to understand different aspects of Charlie's mental life when I later reflected upon what had happened. For example, I thought of the image of the owl as a condensation. And my reactions to it helped me to understand Charlie's fear of others and his fear of being attacked and scrutinized, which contributed to his wish to get away and to attack others. The experience also helped me to understand the psychotic part of Charlie: his confused identity and his lack of sense of "who" he is. Additionally, my memory of the feeling that the owl could see right into me could be seen to represent Charlie's acute lack of definition of himself and other, as well as a more paranoid aspect. These were parts of Charlie that, until that point, had not been represented in a way that could be understood. Subsequently, I used these understandings to help people at the school make sense of Charlie.

It is my view that my unconscious use of Langsian theory and its focus on the frame is what allowed a different kind of moment to arrive with Charlie. This material was not part of an analysis and I cannot make universal claims about this material, but I can consider the impact of theory. Once we were seated and I had introduced the impromptu analytic frame, one might argue that I arrived at a state of reverie as described by Bion (1991) or that through my free association I was using my alpha functioning to help metabolize Charlie's inner experience. However, this could not have happened because of an encoding of theory since at that point I had not read Bion. Additionally, I might have utilized the notion of holding as conceived by Winnicott (1960), as I had read some Winnicott. But I am not certain that Winnicott would have given me any idea how to hold this patient. In my view, it was Langsian theory that allowed me to appreciate the importance of the frame as an organizing impact on psychotic children. Being taught Langsian theory is what allowed me to unconsciously intuit what might be holding for this child. Therefore, the theory was organizing to me unconsciously in such a way that I could arrive at a different experience.

It is natural that supervisees want to please their supervisors. Despite my supervisor's accepting attitude, I am still not sure I would have had the same experience with Charlie, had I anticipated presenting Charlie to this supervisor. By the same token, had I not studied Langs' theories as carefully as I did with this supervisor, I think I would not have understood some of the meanings of the frame in the same way, and I would therefore not have arrived at this moment with Charlie. With Charlie, my unconscious was free to use the theory in whatever way it chose.

THE UNCONSCIOUS USE OF THEORY

I have argued that I used theory unconsciously with Charlie. Psychoanalytic authors such as Sandler (1983), Ghent (1989), Stein (1991), Canestri (2006a, 2006b), Canestri et al. (2006), Fonagy (2006), Grossman (2006), Tuckett (2006), Jíminez (2009), Stern (2012), Bollas (2013), Hamilton (2013), Blass (2017), Cooper (2015, 2017), LaFarge (2017), and Zimmer (2017) have been exploring the analyst's unconscious use of theory alternatively referred to as the unconscious, preconscious, or implicit use of theory.

Jíminez (2009) writes about the difficulties in achieving and understanding what we are doing in psychoanalysis and attempts to separate out theory from practice to see what psychoanalysts are doing. He writes, "The idea is to give legitimacy to implicit mini-theories, to give them a chance to surface and to be expressed so that they can be studied on their own merits" (p. 245).

Hamilton (2013) tries to ferret out relationships between psychoanalytic theory and technique that are specific to different analysts' groups, cultures, countries, and psychoanalytic identifications. Using interviews, Hamilton observes that, at times, analysts are unaware of using certain theories. Canestri (2006a) suggests that we may be unaware of using one theory over another and that private theories may eventually become official theories as in the case of Bion, Winnicott, and Kohut (p. 1). Canestri (2006b) comments that the experienced analyst is both implicitly applying and constructing theories (p. 13). Canestri et al. (2006) refer to the implicit use of psychoanalytic theory as "lived" theory (p. 29). They examine our implicit use of theory and attempt to delineate interactions between what they call public theory-based

thinking and private theoretical thinking. Stern (2012) writes, "It seems uncontroversial to claim that, often, we are not fully aware of using ideas that we learn explicitly" (p. 39). He suggests we are likely to use theories that we have learned explicitly in a preconscious way if we are very familiar with the theory and that they come to influence us in a nonconscious way. In this essay, I am attempting to use clinical material to do exactly what these authors are discussing: to examine what I did in practice with theory.

Zimmer (2017) observes that our relationships with theory are complex, and though we may need to identify with organized schools of thought, unified models may be somewhat of an illusion. He suggests that even if we consciously agree to use a model, there may be a wide variance in how we use the model (p. 826). He also observes that analysts may use what he calls a hybridization of two or more models (p. 819). Zimmer comments that in bringing together models or parts of theories, differences in models can be lost.

LaFarge (2017) puts forth her notion of a personal core model which is the analyst's overriding conceptions of what analysis is and what the analyst is doing (p. 831). She argues that this functions as framework for working with patients and may not be explicit but is specific to each analyst. She also notes that an analyst with a personal core theory that is well delineated but also not rigid allows to what she calls the "importation" of new theory without discarding the personal core theory itself—thus steering away from an either-or posture in relation to theory (p. 833).

Cooper (2017) notes that there can be an advantage to using a singular model in terms of organizing meaning and the ability to observe aberrations in technique (p. 867). Cooper (2015) discusses emerging theory and suggests that in addressing some of the educational implications of emerging and divergent theories, he argues that for students, "Nothing is more important than a thorough immersion, reading and thinking deeply, within a particular clinical model" (p. 290). This seems evident in my experience with Charlie. I might not have arrived at this moment were it not for the organizing impact of Langsian theory and its focus on the frame, even though I did not adhere to the model in the moment. Blass (2017) discusses the utility of focusing on a singular model and argues that when we consciously commit to a single model, it

enhances our capacity to use that model and appreciate its complexity. She argues that holding in mind different analytic models is not possible because they have tenets that are mutually exclusive (p. 845). By carefully studying Langs' theory, I argue that I was able to appreciate its complexity and that this is part of what allowed me to use it in the moment with Charlie. However, I did indeed change the model when I used it because my unconscious used the theory in a quite different way than what was dictated by the theory. Sandler (1983) makes sense of this discrepancy by suggesting that we unconsciously think and fill in gaps and discrepancies in theory; he writes, "That they may contradict one another is no problem. They coexist happily if they are unconscious" (p. 38).

EDUCATION AS UNCONSCIOUS POTENTIAL

Psychoanalytic ideas organize our thinking consciously and help us communicate to ourselves and others about what is happening with patients. However, they also hold potential to organize our thinking unconsciously. In this section, I argue that studying a specific analytic school of thought offers potential that we can use unconsciously. I utilize the writings of John Dewey to make sense of the impact of psychoanalytic education. Dewey's thinking can be effectively brought together with psychoanalysis because he examines the way that we learn and think, and the unconscious potential of learning and thinking through experience.

I use Dewey's concept of experience because he was exploring how to educate in a less authoritarian way, without losing the value of ideas or arriving at chaos because of a lack of organization or structure. This is important because Langs' writings and theory are, arguably, authoritarian in the degree to which there is a sense of certainty about what is right and wrong within the analytic interaction. While other thinkers inside or outside of psychanalysis could be used in this examination, I chose Dewey, because, like Langs, Dewey is part of my theoretical background. He was a professor at the University of Chicago, which is my alma mater. Dewey also founded the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. Over a two-year period, I interviewed teachers at the school with the explicit

purpose of understanding how teachers were utilizing Dewey's concept of experience in the way they educate.

In the late 1800s, Dewey was experimenting with ways of educating that were less autocratic as he was disheartened by authoritarian attitudes in education. This seems relevant to psychoanalysis because it is a field, arguably, that struggles with how to resolve our divergent approaches and understandings of the mind without resorting to overconfidence in or oversimplification of any theory. Dewey's concerned questioning of authoritarianism bears a striking resemblance to some of the concerns raised by contemporary American psychoanalysis about classical psychoanalysis. Dewey (2015) notes that there had been many attempts at more "progressive" approaches to education, which led to disorderly environments that were undisciplined and unproductive. He acknowledged that we need disciplined study, but he was adding and defining his concept of experience, which offers the opportunity for unconscious thinking as another aspect of education. Dewey cautions that the intent is not simply to eradicate past ideas as this would constitute an either-or posture.

Central to Dewey's thinking is his specific concept of "experience." Unlike a fact or a previously known idea, an experience is something that *happens*, occurs with others, and its consequences are not understood at the time it is happening, though we set out with an aim. Much of our thinking occurs outside our awareness, and our conscious understanding of our thinking arrives after a lived experience. We are changed by experience; we reflect upon it (we *consciously think*) and it affects us going forward. For Dewey, meaning is created by activity and the recognition of its consequences (2012, p. 150). Dewey's notion of experience is predicated upon the idea that by listening and interacting with others, experiences happen that generate new thinking. Certainly, psychoanalysis is an experience with another, and we arrive at new ideas about patients but also about theory. For Dewey, it is because of the relationship between the habits of study and the opportunity for new experiences that we arrive at new creative thinking.

Dewey emphasizes the habits, aesthetics, and atmosphere of learning. To demonstrate the difference between static ideas (already known) and experiences (which generate previously unthought ideas) and the relationship between the two that Dewey is capturing, I will describe a

learning exercise I observed in the school that Dewey created, The University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. Children practice and memorize math tables to be able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide numbers together without thinking. These are static facts and *higher order math depends on the capacity to access these mathematical "facts" without conscious thought.* Compare this to an "experience" I witnessed in the Laboratory schools. Students were using math skills by engaging in a shared purpose. In each small group of students, the group was supposed to carve a pumpkin and figure out how many seeds were in their pumpkin. At the start, they were thinking about how to count but as I watched the groups, many other ways of thinking emerged in the students' experiences with one another.

While all the students ended up with a final number count of seeds in their pumpkin, the process within each group was quite different. One group came up with a new and efficient way of collecting the seeds, by sorting them into smaller groups of ten to make the total counting process easier. Another group devised an assembly line approach, thereby making the whole process timely and efficient. Yes, the seeds were counted but the students learned other things along the way that were not expected when they started the process. Those experiences were made possible by understanding static math "facts" but also by the interactions with each other. The meaning of the experience was processed *after* the seeds had been counted. The students created and learned ways of thinking through their experiences with the pumpkin.

I argue that the math facts might be similar (for the sake of argument) to the learning of a well-defined school of analytic thought. Granted, a psychoanalytic school of thought is vastly more complex than math facts. Nonetheless, I am suggesting that these learned understandings are akin to static knowledge and are used unconsciously for further experiences, understandings, and development of theory. In psychoanalysis, there is a complex relationship to theory which can mean many things, including loyalty to one analytic point of view, using more than one analytic school of thought, or blending schools of thoughts. Perhaps we do not yet know how the atmosphere and manner in which we teach theory affects the unconscious creativity of the student of psychoanalysis. Dewey was trying to open education to the unknown by allowing students to have experiences using already learned material in

ways of their own making, and it is this process that he calls learning through experience. Vygotsky (1981) also commented on the interpersonal nature of learning by positing that learning often begins as an interpersonal experience that later is transformed into an intrapersonal one—the uniqueness of what one does with their experience with others (p. 57).

So in psychoanalysis, the habits would be the disciplined study of theory and the experience would be how we use the theory unconsciously. Most analysts would agree that psychoanalysis is an experience and that we do not know the outcome. But what about teaching and supervision? What is the relationship between learned theory and the habits of learning theory? If we follow Dewey's line of thinking about education, we need to teach students specifics about theory, but we will not know what a person will ultimately do with theory. Trained analysts will have "experiences" with theory that might help them arrive at new ideas. This is different from loyalty to an analytic point of view or the absence of a coherent organized way of listening to patients. My supervisor taught Langsian theory very specifically and in a disciplined way throughout, including correcting what he perceived to be my mistakes. By doing this, he helped me to understand the benefits of the theory and its complexity. However, he was never punitive, authoritarian, nor rejecting. Additionally, I was not focused on disagreements with the theory before I had immersed myself in trying to understand and use the theory as it was being taught. He talked with me about my disagreements, and ultimately, in my experience with Charlie, I felt free unconsciously to use the theory in my own way. Certainly, what I did with Charlie would not have been "acceptable" according to Langsian theory. The "frame" I created would have been a massive deviation and I would have been expected to be listening for the negative implications of my mistakes. Nonetheless, my learning of Langsian theory and my opportunity to use the theory unconsciously with Charlie allowed for an experience and unconscious creative thinking as defined by Dewey. I had the opportunity to think unconsciously in the moment and learn from it. So, at stake here is both the specificity with which a theory is taught and the attitude with which theory can be applied.

In this essay, I use Dewey to help me highlight learning a theory as unconscious potential (like the math facts) and the freedom to use the theory—the experience—in the moment. This is unconscious thinking as Dewey conceived it. Dewey's concept of learning resonates with some of Bion's ideas. While Dewey is talking about the relationship between learned information and experience, Bion (1991) makes a similar point to Dewey in terms of the unconscious use of an acquired skill and its role in thinking:

> A child having the emotional experience called learning to walk is able by virtue of alpha-function to store this experience. Thoughts that had originally to be conscious become unconscious and so the child can do all the thinking needed for walking without any longer being conscious of it. Alpha-functioning is needed for conscious thinking and reasoning and for the relegation of thinking to the unconscious when it is necessary to disencumber consciousness of the burden of thought by learning a skill. [Bion 1991, p. 8]

So, theory is unconscious potential and experience is the use of the theory that is now unconscious.

Perhaps theory helps us to arrive at states of mind that are consistent with Ogden's (1997) view of reverie when he writes, "Reveries (and all other derivatives of the unconscious) are viewed not as glimpses into the unconscious, but as metaphorical expressions of what the unconscious experience is like" (p. 718). Theory that is unconsciously encoded, especially theory that is understood and studied explicitly and in detail, allows us to arrive at different states of mind. Alternatively, theory may be used to achieve what LaFarge (2008) describes as knowing one's mind through another (p. 168). Bollas (2013) suggests that when a coherent theory is understood, it functions as a form of unconscious perception (p. 80). Bollas (1992) suggests that an analytic school of thought allows for the potential in the analyst to be used as a different kind of analytic object for the patient (p. 99). Therefore, Langsian theory may have allowed me to be a particular kind of object for Charlie.

CREATING THEORY FROM UNCONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE

I now segue to the other half of the bidirectional relationship with theory: How does our unconscious use of theory impact our learning about and creation of theory?

Fonagy (2006) discusses theory as a metaphor for the mind, but he emphasizes the need to examine what we do in practice as a source for new ideas and understandings of the mind (p. 86). Stern (2012) states, "As new theories of technique are explicitly articulated, our clinical perceptions are broadened and deepened, and our implicit theories are therefore able to reach further. Explicit and implicit theories bear a generative, dialectical relation to one another" (p. 44). In elucidating my study and use of theory in a clinical moment with Charlie, I examine just the kinds of issues these authors raise. Atwood and Stolorow (1993) argue for an intersubjective view of our understanding of theory and suggest that even the creation of theory is impacted by the personality of the creator. What this means, they elaborate, is that theory can also serve defensive functions including the reification of theory (pp. 176-177). From Charlie, I learned that the analyst's unconscious determines his use of theory, which is consistent with the idea that the analyst himself is crucial to theory development.

So, how did my experience with Charlie affect my own view of theory or my own theorizing? This experience allowed me to see theory as unconscious potential and that well-delineated theory can have great value even if I disagree with it. It still holds unconscious potential. I also learned that part of the power of an analytic model comes from studying it carefully, which is hard to do without adhering to it in the first place. Additionally, my experience with Charlie underscored that what we do with theory will be idiosyncratic to each analyst and determined, in large part, unconsciously. I did not remain a part of the Langsian group because I was concerned about many things, including its tendency toward an attitude of certitude. Nonetheless, the theory gave me potential that I used unconsciously. There are inherent limits to the conclusions I can draw in this essay since I am attempting to examine something that is unconscious. One could use an assortment of thinkers inside and outside of psychoanalysis to think about

education and theorizing in psychoanalysis. Because we are talking about the relationship between theory and the unconscious of the analyst, I used Dewey and Langs because these thinkers are a part of who I am.

Through my use of theory with Charlie, I began to think about the unconscious creative potential of a well delineated theory. Little (1991) reminds us of the great value of doubt. If we can live with uncertainty or doubt about what we will do with theory, but continue to study theory carefully, there may be plenty of opportunities for new ideas in psychoanalysis. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud (1900) demonstrates the infiniteness with which the unconscious mind can represent itself, so we might assume that each analyst has the potential to use a theory or think about theory in many different ways. If theory is a springboard that offers unconscious potential *but* its use is dependent on the unconscious of the analyst, then it stands to reason that different analysts will use theory differently. It may be that for one analyst, consciously striving to adhere to a singular analytic school is what holds the most potential for them as thinkers or practitioners. For someone else, the opposite may be true. Perhaps, then, psychoanalysis needs different kinds of minds. With Charlie, I learned that a well-defined theory fosters a capacity to organize experience both consciously and unconsciously. It is an irony that Langsian theory, which so rigidly dictates practice, provided unconscious potential in a situation in which I did not conform to the theory.

In this essay, I argue that we have a bidirectional unconscious relationship with theory. We encode theory and use it unconsciously. In turn, these unconscious experiences using theory contribute to our learning about theory. Langsian theory provided me with unconscious potential for a different kind of experience with Charlie. What happened with Charlie, in turn, allowed me to realize that theory is unconsciously evocative—it holds potential—and therefore, the teaching of a specific and organized analytic point of view may hold unconscious potential for psychoanalysts both in practice and in theory building. So, having reflected upon this experience with Charlie, I see the study of a defined school of analytic thought as providing unconscious potential for practice and for theorizing. But for any theory I study, it will be a surprise to find out how my mind will use the theory or what I

will learn about theory. This experience is our unconscious relationship with theory.

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The Paranormal Surrounds Us: Psychic Phenomena in Literature, Culture, and Psychoanalysis

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE PARANORMAL SURROUNDS US: PSYCHIC PHENOMENA IN LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND PSYCHOANALYSIS. By Richard Reichbart. New York: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2019. 232 pp.

From its beginnings, the history of psychoanalysis has involved phenomena that go beyond the limits of everyday experience. Initially, these took the form of hysterical symptoms and hypnoid states, but as Freud and the early psychoanalysts developed their technique, they found that in the analytic setting their work began to resemble that of spirit mediums, reawakening the ghosts of the past and opening up previously hidden and unknown channels of communication between people. As Richard Reichbart describes in this book, the degree to which this was a metaphor, and the degree to which Freud, Jung, and Ferenczi took this literally, varied considerably. Freud's views shifted over time, but by 1921 he was a believer and went as far as discussing with his patients possible telepathic connections that they might have had with each other and their motives for establishing these connections (p. 83).

Psychoanalysts continued to be interested in paranormal phenomena through the 1950's and George Devereux's *Psychoanalysis and the Occult* (1953) was a high point of this period. However, after the 50s, mentions of the paranormal significantly decreased in the analytic literature, which Reichbart implies is in inverse proportion to discussions of unconscious communication between patient and analyst by means of projective identification, empathic attunement, and so on.

In this book, Reichbart makes a strong claim that the paranormal (what he and other paranormal researchers call "psi") is a critical part of human experience and especially relevant to psychoanalysis. Reichbart

believes in no uncertain terms that humans are capable of intuitively predicting the future (precognition), receiving ideas from others (telepathy), and exerting force across distance through purely mental means (telekinesis). He feels that the trend in psychoanalysis to explore unconscious communication in the analytic setting scotomizes the truth of the existence of telepathy and psi phenomena.

Reichbart is a past president of Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research (IPTAR) in New York City and an accomplished analyst. Before his analytic career, he worked as a lawyer on a Navajo reservation and had powerful experiences which influenced his interest in psi phenomena, some of what he discusses in a chapter near the end of this book. He writes that he has had to keep his interest in the paranormal under wraps for fear it would threaten his career and writes of other analysts who have been interested in the paranormal, most notably Robert Stoller and Ralph Greenson, but who suppressed their thoughts about it for fear of the damage to their professional reputations.

One analyst who was open about his belief in the paranormal was Jule Eisenbud, to whom this book is heavily indebted and is influenced by. Reichbart writes that Eisenbud was at one time on the faculty at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute and was on track to become a training analyst before he was thwarted because of his interest in psi phenomena. He then moved to Colorado where he set up a practice, taught, and explored his interest in the paranormal. Reichbart acknowledges having been in analysis with Eisenbud and feels that Eisenbud's contributions to psychoanalysis are under acknowledged. Eisenbud followed Freud's example of speaking to patients about what he hypothesized might be telepathic correspondences between their dreams and associations and those of other patients. However, he also speculated that these areas of correspondence might touch upon vulnerable areas of the analyst's life as well as countertransferential areas of vulnerability on the part of the analyst.

The first part of the book has chapters on Shakespeare, Tolstoy, G.K. Chesterton, Ingmar Bergman, E.M. Forester, and James Joyce. The chapter on Shakespeare is the best one of this first section; Reichbart introduces the novel argument that *Hamlet* is an extended thought experiment on how the titular hero attempts to verify whether his seeing the ghost of his father was a genuine psi experience or whether it was a

hallucination. His chapter on Tolstoy is convincing in terms of recognizing that Tolstoy's foreshadowing of Anna Karenina's death, more than a literary device, is a representation of psi phenomena that jibes with present day accounts of paranormal experience. Reichbart notices a continuity in the representation of the paranormal in all of these authors and makes a case that the way that psi phenomena are represented in these literary works resembles what is found in clinical psychoanalysis. However, more dubiously, he appears to use these literary representations as evidence for the existence of paranormal experience, which is clearly problematic.

The centerpiece of the book are two long chapters on psi and psychoanalysis. Reichbart includes a history of the research into paranormal experience in psychoanalysis and its prehistory. This history is brief but excellent and it clearly describes how an interest in the paranormal united researchers from America, England, and Europe in the late 19th century including William James, Freud, Charcot, and Janet. He also reminds us that Freud believed in telepathy in a more literal way that we often recognize, and that while contemporary analysts are tempted to think of it as a metaphor for the way that patients disown aspects of themselves and their experiences, Freud at times believed in a stronger form of it. Reichbart's point is well taken, and I think he is right to say that psychoanalysts are only too willing to forget this part of our history. The rest of the chapter contains many examples from his long experience as an analyst and that of others to demonstrate the existence of psychic phenomena.

Reichbart notes that telepathy often occurs in psychoanalysis in dynamically motivated contexts. He sees that patients often resort to psi and telepathic communication when they feel they need to grab their analyst's attention and focus it on a certain point. He reports many, many examples of patients whose dreams tend to touch upon similar themes which often carry resonances with his own life. He advocates for the possibility of exploring what he sees as the telepathic way they have intuited facts they could not have otherwise known about his life or other patients' dreams. He struggles with describing their telepathic intuitions into his life as he thinks that his disclosure of events in his personal life may interfere with the unfolding to the patient's transference to him. I find this curious, as I suspect that disclosing to a patient that you believe that they might have telepathic abilities might shape the

field more than telling them about your life. Also, if the patient's motivation is to get the analyst's attention why does it matter what means they are using to get it? It is unclear why any analyst, no matter what their beliefs in the paranormal are, would not adopt the strategy of simply saying "Perhaps you feel that I have not been paying attention to you."

His work occasionally reflects some more contemporary intersubjective concerns as he follows Eisenbud in being concerned with the analyst's contribution to the kinds of telepathic communications that he thinks patients make. However, Reichbart's clinical work very clearly resembles a traditionally ego psychological approach focused around defense and a resistance to awareness of the derivatives of sexual and aggressive drives, distorted frequently by traumatic experience. The conflicts that he describes his patients suffering from are organized around Oedipal themes of competition, rivalry, and fear of punishment. In his clinical accounts, Reichbart rarely departs from the ego psychological vocabulary that North American analysts are familiar with and his descriptions of psi-phenomenon are basically superimposed upon this model.

I see this as surprising because I would imagine that the positing of a wholly novel realm of human experience (psi) might entail some kinds of revisions to our model of mental functioning. Some questions that one might ask are: is psi a mental content or a psychic process? How is it encoded in the mind as telepathically salient? Is there a structure in the mind responsible for it? Which part of the mind receives it? Is there a transmitting part and a receiving part? Does a telepathic state involve some kind of dedifferentiation between self and other? Is telepathy a phenomenon of the paranoid-schizoid position or the depressive position?

If psi phenomena do exist, I think that attempting to think about them psychoanalytically would involve some kind of reworking of the way that minds are constituted, but Reichbart largely avoids this effort. What does it mean for a mind to do something that radically transcends the limits of what we thought it could do? I mention this because, had Reichbart thought through some revisions to our available conceptual models of the mind, it might supply interesting models of thinking about unconscious communications that skeptical people like me could at least use as a metaphor for thinking about how the eerie things that sometimes happen in clinical work might pertain to the way that our patients' minds are organized.

There are two ways of reading this book. The first is as an argument in favor of the existence and ubiquity of paranormal phenomena, and their relevance to the psychoanalytic process. Reichbart is decidedly a partisan and sees skepticism about the paranormal as blindness to the overwhelming evidence for its existence, much of which he cites in the book. In this, he adopts a "you're either with us or against us" tone that is off-putting and makes it difficult for many (like me) who are skeptical to give credence to the arguments. While on the one hand the book is a creatively synthetic look at art, law, psychoanalysis, literature, and Native American culture, it is also essentially polemical. And, as with most polemics, my sense is that a reader will leave the book believing pretty much what they believed having started the book. Those who believe in the presence and relevance of paranormal activity will find those beliefs supported and doubters will likely not be convinced.

In the second way of reading the book, one could see it as an impassioned and evocative presentation of a wide range of strange, anomalous, uncanny events and exciting, otherwise hidden histories of colorful people who have seen and felt things which defy the limits of ordinary experience. If you read the book this way (which is what I recommend), you may leave with a sense that the world is a bigger, stranger place than you had before, and that indeed, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," as Shakespeare wrote in *Hamlet*. Evoking that feeling might be what is most psychoanalytic about this book after all.

NIRAV SONI (NEW YORK, NY)

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    John Steiner. London and New York: Routledge, 2020. 167 pp.

A patient, a few years into analysis, shared in one session that she had an idea for a book cover. She would be standing in front of a tree, leaning her elbow against it, looking serious, emotional, and "super cheesy … only, it would be ironic."

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Hannah Wallerstein

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A patient, a few years into analysis, shared in one session that she had an idea for a book cover. She would be standing in front of a tree, leaning her elbow against it, looking serious, emotional, and "super cheesy … only, it would be ironic."

This image gave me real pleasure, as it seemed to capture her so well: she could be immensely tender, filled to the brim with wonder, care, and sentiment ("cheese," as it were), but most of the time kept this part of herself hidden and had a great deal of contempt for it, even as she simultaneously and often privately recognized its value.

Outside of my patient's momentary conjuring, I had not thought much about the clinical value of irony until reading John Steiner's lovely new book *Illusion, Disillusion, and Irony in Psychoanalysis.*

Being an avid reader of Winnicott, I am more familiar with the usefulness of paradox, or the articulation of unsolvable, contradictory phenomena (e.g. the transitional object is both created and found). But irony, while sharing with paradox the capacity to express opposite ideas, exhibits important differences. Irony is not the description of phenomena as such, but instead a subjective position in relation to phenomena. More specifically, an ironic stance is one in which different and often contradictory positions are held simultaneously. My patient, for example, is ironic when she expresses both her affinity and contempt for sentimentality simultaneously. For John Steiner, who has grappled with the dueling "wish[es] both to deny and to accept reality" (p. 152) for much of his career, such a concept offers a kind of resolution, if that can be said of something inherently irresolvable.

Where in his seminal book *Psychic Retreats,*[1] Steiner articulated a particular type of patient who retreats from reality in order to escape the concurrent pains of paranoid and depressive experience, in his newest work the joke, so to speak, is on all of us, "since we are all patients and all have serious problems with reality" (p. 129). Illusions or, to use Steiner's definition, "states of mind to which we can withdraw mostly to escape from various sources of anxiety and pain, but partly to enjoy the instant gratifications they provide" are now recognized as "universal and ubiquitous" (p. 1). Life, in fact, is more lively and creative because of them, even as psychic development follows the perhaps impossible trajectory of letting our illusions go. An ironic sensibility allows us to hold these contradictions, enjoying our illusions and those of our patients while simultaneously extricating ourselves from their pull. While this

[1] Steiner J. (1993). *Psychic Retreats: Pathological Organizations of the Personality in Psychotic, Neurotic, and Borderline Patients.* London: Routledge.

entails a kind of detachment, Steiner distinguishes the ironic stance he is interested in from one of superiority or callousness: "in true irony," he writes, "the smile is always tinged with pain since we are simultaneously laughing at ourselves and identifying with the protagonists of the tragedy" (p. 153).

Indeed, throughout the book many of Steiner's insights seem to be offered with a smile tinged with pain. No position or psychic structure is without merit, while none are pure, stable, or offering of salvation. What shines through is a wisdom that seems only possible when nearing the end of one's career, the kind that only time garners, a concept that is also central to Steiner's thinking.

Steiner begins by introducing what he calls "Garden of Eden illusions," or fantasies of a paradise once had and since lost. Pervasive across cultures and individuals, these myths are shown to symbolize the idealized mother-infant dyad in which there is "unlimited access to the breast without interference" (p. 19). Through a reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Steiner argues that central to the concept of paradise is timelessness: there is no waiting and no frustration. This brings him to observe that the Garden of Eden would in reality be far from ideal, because if time were experienced its constant state of satiation would become boring and mundane.

Comparing the idealized love of paradise to more "earthly" types, Steiner notes that timebound love is colored by the possibility of loss, as well as by hateful feelings that, within time, can be integrated with loving ones. This leads to feelings of shame and guilt and, potentially, a press towards reparation. Combined with libidinal feelings these different hues create a "deeper and more convincing expression of love" than idealized forms (p. 23). However, the fall from paradise is always brutal, with little immediately present to gain.

Chapter Two elaborates two paths following this fall. In the first, as exemplified by Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*, the fall is followed by shame, guilt, mourning, and the development of symbolic capacity. In the second, as exemplified by Lucifer, the humiliation proves too great, the idealized fantasy cannot be given up, and there is either an ongoing concrete relation to the ideal or a paranoid reaction of rage and envy at what has been taken away.

Most interesting in this chapter is Steiner's focus on the importance of rebellion, complicating any clear opposition between the two paths of acceptance and refusal. He proposes that if one simply submits to the authority of the law, it is impossible to sort out whether one is accepting a necessary constraint of reality, or instead submitting unjustly to an authoritarian leader. It is only through rebelling against constraints, refusing them as it were, that a true acceptance of reality can be garnered. Thus, Eve emerges as the true hero of *Paradise Lost* precisely because of her willingness to rebel against God and come to know the reality of her human condition because of it.

Here, I was reminded of Winnicott's work on object usage,[2] which proposes that in order to relate to the world as truly external to the self and part of a shared reality, one must first "destroy" his or her objects as subjective phenomena and find them to have survived this destruction. For Winnicott this is a pivotal discovery regarding the relationship between aggression and reality. Aggression becomes not simply a response to the frustrations of reality, but also and originally the mechanism by which one locates reality. Steiner's theorization of the significance of rebellion, while situated within the Kleinian tradition, seems to suggest a similar primacy of aggression in the search for what is real.

In Chapter Three, Steiner addresses the cruelty of truth and the dangers of the zealot, offering an important reminder to the passionate among us. Alongside a reading of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck,* Steiner shows how an overly righteous and rigid commitment to truth can be both destructive and also, surprisingly, less honest. "It is not simply that truth without kindness can be cruel" writes Steiner, "but that truth without kindness is not fully true" (p. 57). This is because a rigid approach to truth tends to not take in the multiple layers of reality (subjective and objective) that make up the "truth" of a situation, but also because such an avid commitment often has more to do with idealism than reality, distorting what "truth" can be both found and accepted.

If truth is shown to be neither solely nor inherently in the service of development, fantasies of omnipotence are presented as neither solely nor inherently an impediment to it. Instead, Chapter Four looks at the

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[2] Winnicott D. W. (1969). The Use of an Object. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis,* 50:711-716.

importance of omnipotent illusions to psychic functioning, linking them to hope, overcoming helplessness, and the capacity to challenge prevailing norms and discover something new. This recuperation of omnipotence is another important reminder, for just as we can have our own reasons for wanting to maintain our patients' omnipotent fantasies, we can have our own reasons for wanting to puncture them, whether due to envy, anxiety, or zealotry.

And it is not only the omnipotence of patients that Steiner reconsiders. Chapter Seven looks further into the analyst's relation to omnipotence, and more specifically the necessary movement between omnipotence and disillusionment through the oscillations between empathic identification and differentiated observation. Steiner writes, "every time we enter the patient's mind through an act of sympathetic imagination we enjoy an illusion of closeness based on omnipotence, and every time we emerge to observe what we have been doing we have to face and mourn the loss of the illusion we have been enjoying" (p. 114). Through a lovely reading of Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," Steiner elaborates the pain of facing the illusory nature of identification, pointing to the seduction of imagining our patients to be the patients we want and not the patients they are, and the collective idealization that can occur.

Chapter Five delves further into the humiliation that is central to all moments of disillusionment, charting out what Steiner, following Money-Kyrle, considers the unbearable facts of life which our illusions defend against: dependence, exclusion, and death. The significance and inevitability of shame when confronting reality is a persistent theme throughout the book, inviting the question of what makes this experience manageable for some, whereas for others it proves unsurmountable. This chapter suggests the critical factor is the mother's love, which in favorable circumstances "creates a link and is felt to rescue the baby from the abyss" of humiliation (p. 82). Unlike admiration, which those in the throes of omnipotent fantasy may be swept up in, love does not depend on potency; it can exist alongside weakness and even embrace the nastier parts of life. Importantly, the mother's rescuing mission is not one that takes away the baby's humiliation, but "accept[s it] … and recognize[s] … it as inevitable" (p. 82). Here Steiner provides further important advice to analysts: do not steer clear of humiliation, help

patients "endure and survive it" (p. 82). This requires the analyst to be in contact with the long-term advantages of facing reality and to be able to "tolerate the passage of time and not expect immediate results" (p. 82).

Chapter Six casts the process of illusion and disillusionment in gendered terms. Penis envy and masculine protest are linked to a fantasy of phallic omnipotence that defends against actual masculine and feminine capacities alike. The near universal devaluation of femininity is connected to hatred of vulnerability and to the sadism which is directed at the mother's body throughout development, leaving the feminine body mutilated in fantasy and frightening to identify with. Finally, stagnation in analysis is argued to result from the combined difficulties of giving up phallic omnipotence and tolerating the receptivity necessary for growth.

A final theoretical development occurs in Chapter Eight, which expands the understanding of the processes of illusion and disillusionment by looking at the specific case of serious trauma. This chapter underscores the fact that not all disillusionments are equal, and that the reality we have to face is different for each subject. When someone has experienced serious deprivation or abuse, the reality to be faced can be extremely difficult to come to terms with, presenting a world in which "cruelty and persecution actually exist … violence may be unavoidable, and … the protective environment, which we were led to trust, can let us down" (p. 121). Such experiences often lead to the development of more powerful omnipotent defenses, as well as to more intense guilt. The latter may seem incongruous, since serious trauma often renders the line between the innocent and the guilty starker. But Steiner convincingly argues otherwise, and not simply because victims of abuse tend to internalize blame for what has been done to them. He points instead to the role of unconscious fantasy, and the "undercurrent of injury, resentment and violent revenge that trauma leaves behind in the unconscious mind," which must be contended with and accepted as one's own (p. 123). Parsing out appropriate guilt from masochistic guilt in cases of trauma can of course be extremely difficult, as the details of the experience are often neither clear nor entirely retrievable. Nonetheless, I found Steiner's underscoring of the unconscious violence and consequent guilt severe trauma leaves behind to be both helpful and resonant with my clinical experiences.

Steiner closes the book with two chapters that turn to *Don Quixote* and *Oedipus the King* respectively, illustrating the tensions he has elaborated throughout and summarizing the ironic attitude that at once holds them all. "We are hypocrites if we pretend we are 'made of truth' and do not need illusions," he concludes, "but we cannot casually become liars … the ironic stance … protects us from the corruption of lying on the one hand and from the cruelty of truth on the other" (p. 144).

Before closing, I'll share some thoughts on where I depart from Steiner theoretically. As I hope to have shown, Steiner's newest work embodies a deep respect for the non-ideal and the painful albeit generative limits of life (including our need for illusion) that I have come to associate with the most compelling contemporary Kleinian writing. He does so with grace, humility, and a profound appreciation for his subjects, whether they be classic texts, patients, or psychoanalysis itself. However, alongside this respect for the limits inherent in living, and perhaps as a consequence of it, there can be a subtle essentializing of the reality that must be faced, risking presenting "the order of things" as more natural than not, to be accepted rather than confronted. I'll offer two examples to illustrate.

The first is an often-repeated refrain in the book of finding ones "realistic" or "rightful" place in the family. This is seen both as the consequence of disillusionment and as its antidote. It is a consequence insofar as it refers to accepting the painful "facts of life" (e.g. the differences between the generations and sexes); it is an antidote insofar as it refers to being loved and wanted which "rescues" the disillusioned child from fears of complete rejection (p. 82). Here, I am interested in the first meaning, or the assumption that the facts of life lead to a determinable "place." Steiner elaborates this most explicitly in Chapter Five, when he writes about hierarchy: "differences that arise as a consequence of the facts of life mean that we each have a place determined by our capacities" (p. 74). While I agree that differences determined by the facts of life are central to human life and have real consequences for all of us, I take issue with the idea that one can know what these facts mean in any direct or essential way. We relate to these mysterious facts through representational processes, which are always indirect, shifting, and marked by both the social and the subjective. If we forget this, we risk objectifying

our representations, and thereby collapsing our capacity to think with them.

The second example I'll address is Steiner's brief discussion of *Nachträglichkeit*. This is a small example, but one that allows some of the subtle but interesting theoretical differences to emerge. Returning to Freud's concept of a delay existing between a traumatic event and its impact on the individual, Steiner suggests that this is not simply because new levels of symbolization retroactively create effects as Freud argued, but also because illusion intervenes. "Could it not be," Steiner writes, "that, in some situations, the initial trauma has been so effectively covered up by the idealized illusion that it appears to have little effect until a subsequent event awakens the trauma and reveals the full impact of the disaster?" (p. 128). Here it is not lack of understanding or representation as such, but instead the defensive use of illusion that leads the subject not to register what has occurred. While this is an intriguing recasting, it leaves out the continuous re-inscription of the traumatic event itself. In other words, where Steiner positions illusion to do the work of blocking and then faltering, he leaves reality a stable entity, first hidden and eventually "exposed" (p. 128).

Let me compare Steiner's version to Winnicott's own reimagining of afterwardsness in his essay, "Fear of Breakdown."[3] Similar to Steiner, Winnicott formulates the initial non-reaction to trauma not as a simple lack of understanding, but instead as a product of the unbearableness of the event itself. Where Steiner theorizes idealized illusion as the protective solution, Winnicott turns to the concept of non-experience, in which something occurs that the overwhelmed subject is not able to be "there" to receive. Again, similar to Steiner, Winnicott imagines the reality of the event that was not experienced to press on the subject, eventually vying for recognition. However, Winnicott differs in proclaiming the event to be, nonetheless, fundamentally irretrievable: "it is not possible to remember something that has not yet happed."[4] Instead, the traumatic occurrence can only be recuperated if it is "experienced for the first time in the present,"[5] via the transference situation. This

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[3] Winnicott, D.W. (1974). Fear of breakdown. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 1:103-107.

[4] Winnicott, D.W. (1974). Fear of breakdown. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 1:105.

[5] Winnicott, D.W. (1974). Fear of breakdown. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 1:105.

experiencing is not remembering in any direct sense but is instead a creative act of imagining. Interestingly, where Steiner theorizes the mutative element as the breaking down of illusion, Winnicott theorizes it to be the "gather[ing] … up" of the experience "into the area of … omnipotence"[6] which paradoxically (not ironically) is the only way for the experience to be accepted as real. Winnicott's version, in other words, does not oppose reality to illusion but ties them inextricably, even as the terms remain in tension.[7]

I present these differences to illustrate a spectrum between imagining reality knowable (albeit defended against), and assuming it to be radically unknowable (albeit with very real effects). Perhaps we are always leaning one way or the other with regard to accepting reality and accepting the impossibility of knowing it, with costs and benefits to each orientation. This kind of irresolvability is of course central to Steiner's thesis, and his newest book feels like sustenance for the difficult albeit rewarding task of keeping these tensions alive. I cannot think of a more important reason I turn to psychoanalytic writing.

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[6] Winnicott, D.W. (1974). Fear of breakdown. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 1:105.

[7] In Winnicottian terminology we could say the health-producing (as opposed to pathological) illusion is one that is an act of dreaming, aimed at contact with reality, as opposed to fantasying, which aims at its denial. See Winnicott's essay "Dreaming, fantasying, and living: a case-history describing a primary dissociation" in *Playing and Reality*) for more. Winnicott, D.W. (1971). *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock Publications, pp. 35-50.