

Critical thinking, creativity, and contemporary
issues in psychoanalytic practice and theory.

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Change is Coming

By Bruce Weitzman, PsyD, MFT

A year ago, COVID cases and deaths were mounting, most of us were transitioning our practices to ZOOM, and George Floyd was murdered. A year later, we voted a despot-President out of office, half the population has already received at least one dose of the COVID vaccine, and a Minneapolis jury found Derek Chauvin guilty of three charges in the murder of George Floyd. Change is happening. Look at how much has happened in just a year’s time.

A year ago, PINC began its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work with VISIONS, Inc. Over the course of the year, VISIONS, Inc. completed a Critical Incident Review of the circumstances surrounding our loss of a candidate of color, as well as a broad-based investigation into PINC’s lack of preparedness to welcome members from diverse backgrounds. That eight month investigation required 30 focus groups and involved nearly 100 members. The VISIONS, Inc. work culminated in a two day Community Meeting attended by 85 people, in which the consultants engaged our membership with information about the structural issues at PINC that make our institute unwelcoming or inaccessible to many.

This project may be the most extensive DEI effort initiated by any psychoanalytic institute. I’m willing to bet on it. I’m quite proud of our membership and our willingness to look at ways in which elitism and exclusivity have been baked into the way we operate, producing a type of monoculture.

In the last segment of the 2-day Community Meeting, four small groups individually reflected on PINC’s greatest DEI challenges and generated ideas for change. The overlap of ideas among these groups was telling.

Nearly every group touched on the same basic challenges: a financial requirement that makes training unaffordable for many people; an inflexible, time-intensive training model that makes it untenable for many people to consider; an outdated curriculum missing many underrepresented voices and perspectives; and a lack of BIPOC representation among faculty, PA/SAs and administrators.

These groups also independently proposed an overlapping set of creative solutions, such as an agreed upon standard lower fee for all personal analyses and supervisions; the development of a scholarship fund; a training program reimagined so that candidates could move through it at their own pace (i.e., as time and money allow); a broader curriculum that is more relevant to diverse groups and might even offer a variety of training tracks (i.e., no one size fits all); and outreach and partnerships with other community organizations, in which greater diversity is present.

In the coming academic year, I would like us to take the next step in the process of transformation: the creation of a DEI Vision for PINC. A DEI Vision might establish goals for what PINC would ideally be like in the future. It might further define the terms diversity, equity and inclusion and set

out as an aspiration that, in some number of years, a certain percentage of our faculty, PA/SA and candidates would come from “diverse backgrounds.” Diverse backgrounds would recognize obvious underrepresented populations, such as non-white and socio-economically more diverse people. They might also identify a variety of less obvious characteristics that are not currently present at PINC in large quantities, such as practitioners from non-private practice settings. The PINC of the future might look quite different than the typical psychoanalytic institute does today.

The work of creating a vision is aspirational. It is a wish for what we want our future as an institute to be. It is also a destination towards which we can journey. Change is coming to our world. The question is whether or not we are to be its advocates and architects.



Editorial Notes

Carolina Bacchi, Psy.D.

Welcome to our Spring 2021 Issue of Critica! While navigating the pressures and uncertainties of the COVID crises, we encountered an explosion of disruptive social unrest, both at PINC and in the world at large. A denial of otherness and the emergence once more of white supremacy speech and actions led us to re-consider the impact of systemic othering within psychoanalysis. Our editorial team decided to focus on those challenging and current questions.

Facing this topic is never an easy task, revealing buried pain and silenced disagreement and oppression. It requires courage to face what is uncomfortable in ourselves, and in our

relationship with others. As PINC navigates those issues, exploring its own systemic struggles, we opened Critica to become a container for difficult but necessary conversations. As we initially envisioned this issue focusing on the question: “is assimilation of otherness possible in psychoanalysis?”, we were faced with the shadows of our assumptions, and the ripple effect of systemic issues within the river of psychoanalysis. Our Committee took up the challenge on our Sunday morning conversations. We decided to explore our own experience; when we first came up with the word assimilation, what we meant and hoped to invite, and the ways to further conversation within PINC around whiteness and systemic racism in psychoanalysis. We moved away from our initial idea of considering assimilation as a process of taking in and fully understanding otherness, while recognizing its connotation as referring to a forced erasure of others by an oppressive demand to become similar without consideration of difference. Our editorial team made the decision to shift our theme to ‘Psychoanalysis and Otherness’ as a way to hopefully be more inviting, create more openings, and allow for spaciousness in our conversations. Our authors immersed themselves with

questions around otherness, racism, privilege, difference, whiteness, while also considering the potentialities of the analytic encounter and the importance of authorship and vigorous exchange of ideas. As always, our task was not an easy one, with turbulence and discomfort along the way. Isn’t that the psychoanalytic journey?

We hope you enjoy the product of our effort of the last several months. Critica’s essays, poems and images reveal our attempts to grasp concepts, ideas, and emotional experiences that are strenuous to confront. Beyond pain and inevitable turmoil, we hope you can also find that our pages offer an aesthetic experience and provocation towards diving deeper into the unconscious of psychoanalysis.



Editorial Notes

Luca Di Donna, PhD.

I was very excited to read Bruce’s editorial. The idea of culture change at PINC is essential at the current time. Bruce clearly detailed a plan to transform an ideology of whiteness and promote a

psychoanalytic institute that provides opportunities for a more diversified group of analysts and a broadened view of psychoanalysis. We strongly agree with these changes.

We at Critica would like to thank both the PINC community for their support and the authors who have submitted pieces on the subject of “Psychoanalysis and Otherness” for this issue. Their innovative ideas are very impressive.

My brief editorial follows Carolina Bacchi’s in which she conveys the struggle of “Otherness” to find a place in our society. It provokes violence and aggression, a state of madness. Why this difficulty, why this violence and madness?

After the election, on January 6, 2021, the US Capital Building was invaded by a violent group who tried to take over the

Senate. Last month in Atlanta a young man killed eight people. In Denver another mass murderer killed ten people. Every week the police kill a black man. At this time the Asian community is the target of racist attacks. The cause of these crimes by white supremacists seems to be a resurgence of hatred, a return of the repressed. Contemporary historians have linked this violence with the beginning of slavery.

Why is there so much aggression and cruelty toward other human beings? Primo Levi, in his book *Se questo e' un uomo* (1947), asked how it is possible that one human can treat another human with such violence. He spent his life trying to understand the de-humanization of man.

Freud, in his old age, was also puzzled by aggression. He explored the predatory nature of it, stating that “man is a wolf to man” in *Civilization and its Discontents*. This elaboration of the concept of aggression led to changes in his later theoretical ideas.

Recently the concept of aggression and civilization is revisited in a seminal paper by Rosine Perelberg (2020), “Psychoanalysis and Social Violence: Civilization and Discontent Revised” in which she links Freud’s ideas with the violence and aggression that has taken place in Argentina.

She reviews the revolutionary work of Janine Puget and Yolanda Gambel, two Argentinian analysts, which critically analyses the social violence during the military regime. Puget and Gambel’s papers link clinical psychoanalysis and social reality in an original manner which is very pertinent to contemporary psychoanalytic theory.

Perelberg concludes:

“The articles by Janine Puget and Yolanda Gambel belong to a different and important intellectual and clinical path: one of trying to engage with the malaise in civilization. Psychoanalytic writings like these have been able to point out the destructive drive as inherent in humans and manifested in group or societal situations. The question of what conditions allow violence to express itself needs to be examined in conjunction with other disciplines: history, sociology, political science, philosophy, literature and art, as well as the work of contemporary psychoanalysts, have addressed the challenges of finding ways of representing and keeping alive the memory of something that challenges traditional ways of representation” (p 1261).

Solving this complex problem is an immense task, one which has always confronted psychoanalysis. I think the PINC community and Critica can

continue this journey with intellectual rigor and alive, fertile dialogue. We are seeking ideas, words, and images to express the unconscious in all its different manifestations.

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2020

By Shelley Nathans Ph.D.

Dread and death surround us
burrowed in the air we breathe
like camouflaged commandos
poised to pounce
on unsuspecting foe
We are naive
We are vulnerable
We are innocent

The air we fear to breathe
Is redolent of disinfectant
contaminated
by the smoke
of fire storms
stoked
by the denial of change
and blindness
to white knees on black necks
I cannot breathe
Mama I cannot breathe

We cannot breathe
We are not innocent

I went to the beach
to breathe
unmasked
uninfected
undisinfected
air

Only to return to the dread of news
the dreadful news
the daily dread of news
dealing denial
pandering paranoia
the twin maladies
hibernating infections
waiting for their call to arms
the signal to charge and corrupt
the moment
to invade
to destroy
lungs
hearts
and the facades of capitals

The inescapable news
the relentless news
alarms me awake each morning
anesthetizes me at night
20,000, 50,000, 100,000, now 500,000
news infects the air
news contaminates us

The squeaking brakes
of trucks

pausing to discharge
heroes
delivering boxes of privilege
and the screaming sirens
the whole world wailing
at once
while tyrants
twiddle and twitter

But there are birds
birds twittering!
I can hear them
and the laughter of children!
Joy disrupts disquiet
I am on lockdown
empty of frenzy
filled with new melodies
as I work

My neighbor died yesterday
and this one died and another one died
and another one
and another one
and another Black life died
and another Black life died
and another Black life died

And suddenly there are bagpipes
bagpipes at two in the afternoon!
My neighbor is breathing
air through pipes
offering sustained notes
of mourning
a dirge for the world

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Return of the Repressed: Otherness, assimilation and psychoanalysis

Carolina Bacchi, Psy.D.

“the process upon which psychoanalysis is based lies at the heart of Freud’s discoveries - the return of the repressed. The ‘mechanism’ is linked to a certain conception of time and memory, according to which consciousness is both deceptive mask and the operative trace of events that organize the present . If the past (that which that took place , and look for the form of , a decisive moment in the course of a crisis) is repressed, it return in the present from which it was excluded , but does so surreptitiously.”
(Certeau, 1986, p. 3)

In conversation with Molly Merson

In her paper published on our last issue of Critica, Merson (2021) calls us to action as she questions the ways in which whiteness is continuously preserved within the psychoanalytic field. She explains that “psychoanalysis is well positioned to take up this work of linking things that have been kept separate (like the social and the personal), and de-linking collusions with systems of oppression— if we can prioritize these efforts within ourselves and our institutions, too.” (p. 34) The pressure to assimilate in psychoanalysis emerges as a mandate to accept the status quo. In that context, what is ‘other’ is conquered/colonized while difference is smashed and denied. From the perspective of the assimilator, it is a forced imposition out of fear of losing an always precarious position of privilege. The assimilated, on the other hand, is the one who left something behind to become ‘part of’. An ongoing pressure to assimilate leads to a deep sense of dislocation and uprootedness, an inner experience of foreignness and otherness, while maintaining a quest for becoming less other, and more equal, more of the same. Otherness then hides underneath a shadow of pretend belonging, while preserving a concealed narrative of exclusion and oppression.

Rosa & Nogueira (2017) while considering the search for diversity in immigrants as they seek to become ‘other’ describe the foreigner condition as one of exile and uprootedness, much as our human condition relates to the enigmatic dimension of our unconscious. They

explore the ethos of the analytic position as the space to grant in-dwelling or a way of being, as the trauma of uprootedness calls for an analyst able to sustain working through the unsayable in the transference - the shared experience of the field allows for connection and separation, leading to the construction of in-dwelling. They propose a transferential field that allows the construction of a shared intimacy. The patient will then be able to encounter the other and the uncanny familiar, while the field itself becomes the refuge, from what was once experienced as invasion of privacy, to become an opportunity for deep intimacy with the other and oneself. In addition, Rozmarin highlights the ethics of psychoanalysis as situated in what Levinas describes as responsibility for the other because someone was responsible for us; highlighting that the analyst's "aim should be to step into the other's place, take on the his trouble and guilt as one's own burden—assume the other's history and potential as one's own responsibility." Gonzalez explains that "it is precisely what does not melt or assimilate, where the medium is no longer pliable, where irreconcilable difference meets, that the new emerges." (Gonzalez, p. 35) An expanding field is a receptive space for integration, where 'other' and oneself encounter in a creative dialogue and the new may

emerge. Receptivity then is the opposite of assimilation and oppression. It means an encounter in which the field expands into a shared space of intimacy with otherness from within. Contact is re-established and transformation is experienced as a fleeing sense of belonging emerges. Psychoanalysis emerged as the creative and integrative work of Jewish man in an Anti-Semitic environment while engaging with the forbidden secrets of human sexuality in a Victorian society. As such, it always struggled with negotiating a desire for recognition and inclusion in order to resist oppression while concealing a need for exclusion in order to assert ownership and legitimacy. In its dark chambers, the uprootedness of the 'foreigner', the 'uncanny', the 'other' remains disguised. Interestingly enough, psychoanalysis became a sacred field for assertion of whiteness privilege, forgetting its forbidden past in order to assimilate, and avoid persecution. Otherness was pushed even further into the deep well of our collective institutional unconscious. Merson invites us into becoming antiracists, laying down a path for inclusion and diversity as we attend to our politics, racism, biases, and complicity in our practices, theories and personal lives. She proposes a new ethos in psychoanalysis which de-links the complicity with systems of

oppression while establishing links where separation and denial preside. In our current times as psychoanalysis struggles with the quest against assimilation while facing its demons around being dis-located from a comfortable position of privilege, one can only hope the result would be a crossbreed field, one in which integrated life-lived difference is incorporated, generating systemic change while welcoming learning, participation and freedom of ideas and thoughts. A field that sustains a working through the unsayable of oppression and forceful assimilation, and upholds an ethics of responsibility for the 'other'. A field that enlarges with otherness, enriching itself and creating meaningful exchange. A field that recovers the forgotten history of its birth, maintaining the creative aspect of its otherness without needing to assimilate into whiteness in order to guarantee its legitimacy. Like Merson pointed to me in a personal conversation, a field that can deconstruct the dynamics of oppression by deeply interrogating itself. One can only wonder - is that possible?

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Dissociation

By Forrest Hamer Ph.D.

He didn't tell me what happened because he himself didn't know
And in the after he had to keep going as much and as far as he could;
so, paying attention—

as much work as that takes—meant not looking back, even at the
moment before

What's happening is always complicated
I am sitting in my chair, behind him, nervous, uncertain; imagining,
trying to notice

what happens

There is much one can do to live the life of another

There is just so much an other can do

A Poem Also about Race

By Forrest Hamer Ph.D.

The muses want the man to kill himself.
The muses want the man to live.

He dances for them, each time the same,
each time he thrives by making himself

a thing.

If a fetish is a story masquerading as an object,
terrors masquerade as the story.

Dance with me, the story goes.

*

Someone I know says the people he hurts are not hurt;
that the story he tells me is fun, one he hopes will make me hard

with him. He pays me
with the hope I will not get hard with him.

I hope to have us play. I hope to have us unravel
the story, arousing between us my life.

Forrest Hamer is an Oakland psychoanalyst who teaches at the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis. He is the author of three poetry collections.

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Terrance McLarnan, MFT, PsyD

Race and the return of the repressed in contemporary South Africa

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Time has passed since Mandela's release in 1990 and the momentous first democratic 1994 election when long queues of voters, most of whom had never had this right, snaked for miles, often waiting patiently for hours to make their mark.

Yet in 2021 the struggle continues. The fault lines of South African society exposed yet again by the pandemic. The Constitution (1996), which emerged from the oppression of apartheid, seems ahead of its people, an ego ideal hard to live up to and by. Racism is not dead nor the divisions of class and gender. A black colleague at the recent South African Psychoanalytic Association (SAPA) conference protested: "Do we have to talk about racism again? Can't we move on?" But it seems the deep traumata continue to reverberate, making necessary participation in inner dialogue as well as

"joining conversations" in our communities. (White, 2002)

On the eve of the conference, I happened to hear a radio documentary investigating the recent attack of two young poor male black workers by a family group of affluent Afrikaner white farmers. The farmers assumed that their relative had been attacked and formed a gang via SMS messages, chasing and rounding on the two black youths. They died as a result of severe beatings and subsequent transportation over rough ground in the back of a pick-up truck. The anguish of one of the men's mothers (she too had been a farm employee) was palpable, along with her and my sense of despair, yet again, of the unfairness of the outcome. There was no charge nor acknowledgement of the murder; it seemed that an agreement was reached between the wealthy farming family and

the police minimising the entire incident. The two workers, it emerged, had not threatened nor harmed the old white farmer but merely asked him for their unpaid wages. So we see the absence of the Law of the Father, as well as the return of the repressed in the sadistic hatred of the Afrikaner toward his black employees.

However racism does not exist only in such enclaves. It can be more subtle. With an expanding black middle class, the demographics of post-apartheid South Africa have changed in the past 30 years. Franz Fanon wrote about the wish of colonised black - skinned men and women to be white. Recently in my work in a pandemic township project, I had to re-confront some of my own racist thoughts and feelings- my fantasies about being black, my discomfort at being seen as a white expat living in the U.K, of black suspicion, rage and envy towards me. Racist issues are out in the open in a different way compared to the Rainbow era of Mandela and Tutu. Some view with resentment the fairytale of “rainbowism”- that all will be treated equally. Inequality continues with stark divisions within the urban townships, the haves and the have-nots, alongside extreme deprivation in rural communities. Xenophobia is apparent in some blacks calling other blacks “not South Africans”. Such sentiments fill South African born me, with

disbelief and rage- Are we not all brothers and sisters on the African continent? In my mind I hear the voice of Robert Sobukwe, one of my heroes, who sacrificed his freedom for Pan Africanism. What is this new apartheid? Now there are different voices. And the inevitable return of the repressed university students damaging statues of colonialist philanthropic figures, and complaining that the curricula are “too European”. Are we again faced with our fear and intolerance of the Other? Is it too uncomfortable to abandon the safety of “not-me” and to work towards the sensibilities of “me-too”? (White)

Two new concepts, racial melancholia and exilic consciousness have helped me in my ongoing internal conversations. The racial melancholia of whiteness is the acknowledgement of one’s privilege, of the foundations of that privilege, of the cost to the other, and of the powerlessness to change that. Straker (2017) contends that such melancholia has to do with experiences of lack in regard to one’s own group, which is then amplified by the realisation of the impossibility of using the out-group to cover lack. As a white person one may beg to be black in some way, but that will never be. I have to reluctantly accept, again, that others in South Africa see me as Other and position

me an expat, and that I need to own my exilic consciousness which has been defined by Said (cited in Burkhalter) as one in which one is “neither completely one with the new setting, nor fully disencumbered of the old”. A painful in-betweenness, perhaps mirrored in the national consciousness.

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A review of the book “CASTE: The origins of our discontents” - Isabel Wilkerson (2020)

by Rosalinda Taymor M.D.

Caste, is any class or group of people who inherit exclusive privileges or are perceived as socially distinct. The root of the word caste is from the Latin, castus or chaste, pure, separate.. Caste is about race and class. In my effort to understand Wilkerson’s insightful book on how caste applies to our current historical moment, I had to pause in her description of Martin Luther King Jr. visit to India. It is in India in the 1700’s that the study of Caste as a social system of heredity and class emerged in Hinduism. Dr King travelled to India in 1959, where he found his inspiration in Mahatma Gandhi’s struggle to end colonialism using non-violent tactics. But he was completely taken aback to find that members of the untouchables, India’s lowest and most despised class, saw him and all African Americans as one of them. It was only upon reflection did he see it was the truth. Now 400 years after captured Africans were taken from their homes and brought to build America the race problem in America finds

its origins in this moment with the fabrication of the concepts of “superiority and inferiority”. It is also easy to extrapolate and see similarities with the birth of the Nazi party and the extermination of Jews in concentration camps in 1933. Race emanating from the idea that how a person looks on the outside is substantial to give privilege and priority to one group versus another. The only way to truly heal the damage being done to people, is to learn and to embrace the complete history, to become more conscious of the reality and its consequences and to bring forth a possibility of reparation. Wilkerson identifies several dichotomies in Caste . Amongst them I found of special importance the following. Divine will and the laws of nature, where even slavery can be justified? Heritage including genes, where blond hair and blue eyes are more favorable than black skin and curly hair. Endogamy and the control of marriage and mating, where dating outside of your group is even illegal. Purity versus pollution where civil human

jobs are distributed to the “other”. Dehumanization and stigma. Terror as enforcement of control, or what we have witnessed for example with the “Capitol insurgence” January 6 th 2021. Inherit superiority Vs inferiority. In her book, Isabel Wilkerson studies the concept of the “Scapegoat” and takes us to the biblical origin of this concept. “Hebrews used to sacrifice two male goats, only one of which would be killed to appease the lord. The one that remained alive was lavished with the sins of the people and then cast into the wilderness, leaving the people to thrive in peace”, until the next One. It is of concern and it calls for awareness of how this process keeps repeating itself in institutions, including institutions that assume the role of bringing awareness to people such as in Psychoanalytic Institutes. In fact last year PINC institute witnessed candidates leaving the community. To anyone with a racial bias it is not so bad to lose the “other” who is assumed to be of a lower caste. This event has been shocking to the community as a whole and “Prejudice study groups” have been placed at the institute to prevent this from happening again and to support the “Black Lives Matter movement”. The scapegoating unfortunately is not only in regards to the color of a person’s skin but to a sense of cultural and intellectual “Otherness” that causes fear, and incites the desire to expel the “other”, rather than embrace the other. Having the possibility of learning from each other is an evolutionary step. It is fear of not having power over the “other” that perpetuates prejudice and oppression. The greatest threat to the caste system is perhaps the event that the “Others” succeed. As the book proceeds in its study of these processes Isabel Wilkerson takes us through different historical moments that portray this clearly, including the study of “Nazism” and the devastating consequences that the holocaust brought to humanity. Isabel makes an inquiry to the ways in which the black community has been abused and unfairly treated over and over again in history. It is said that even if you leave the caste, the caste never leaves you. I want to bring forth a more hopeful response, that allows one to envision change by raising our consciousness to the ways we behave towards each other”. An image of an embracing African-American couple emerged in my mind as I was reading how to let go of “Caste” and the impulse to paint it was irresistible. It is a 26 x 30 inch oil painting on gesso canvas signifying a loving couple as the path takes.

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Tittle: Black Lives Matter

The Chickens

By Rachael Peltz Ph.D.

The chickens have come home
From every corner of every state

Each day a new egg is laid
Born of the fertile roost of hate

Each new headline
Announcing yet another birth

Decades of neglect
Decades of fanciful mirth

What were we thinking
When the trumpet sounded the note

When the poisonous rivers flowed
And the deceitful voices spoke

Some warned us
Don't be fooled by promises of glory

No one's minding the store
An unattended coop -- a foul smelling story

The sinful sound of mockery
Posing as democracy

Pillaging the hearth in
what has become autocracy

Cacophonous chickens
mindless
headless
heedless
come home

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Solitude

By Paul Williams Ph.D.

Solitude, founded on silence to settle the soul, reveals its intelligence as we listen, without thought. The silence of solitude is not an absence of sound, but the pulse of life, confiding off the record, without explanation or knowledge, from infinite orbit and depth, what matters. This is wonder, the activity at our core. Unhurried, we listen through the silence to that which, unknowable, molds symbols from wonder, for no reason or purpose, whatever we do, work, sleep, play, cook, sing, put out garbage.

Solitude is not loneliness, estrangement, alienation, withdrawal, resignation or isolation. It is privacy, with everyone present. No-one who matters is left out. No-one who doesn't matter is left out. A proviso for wonder, solitude seems to lie behind all that is creative, itself the descendant of wonder in the realm of the unthinkable. Each of us is new and unique, unlike any before or after. To be creative in solitude is the experience of a close encounter with wonder through our unique, authentic self. What makes each creative moment original and unrepeatable is its intrinsically personal origin and unthought, transcendent span. Timeless, it leaves its mark on our life and the lives of others.

Wonder, like all authentic experiences, occurs when we are nothing other than who we are. When we classify, analyze, talk or write about experiences, we are uprooted. The truth of what you are reading now is worthless unless you admit, without reason, the experience of wonder in your Self, the intent of which is to withhold no experience or person, so as to remain whole.[1] We cannot fully know ourselves, or any other person, as genuine, core selves need to remain unknown, prior to knowledge and be lived as experiences about which we wonder. As we develop, patterns are laid down contiguous to the authentic self which has no concern for communication, let alone engagement. Experience of others involves departure from our authentic self which could be depleting, so a way of growing is needed which, under favorable circumstances, comes naturally, if not always easily. A true relationship must entail acceptance of the authentic self in ourselves and in others in order to deepen. This is not always possible. The parent (or person) who says to a child (or person) 'I love you but not how you are behaving' conflates self with behavior whilst believing they are not doing this, and in so doing rejects the entire child/

person. We are not made up of elements that can be suppressed or enhanced, rejected or accepted. We are inherently, originally whole and strive to protect this wholeness and integrity whatever else happens to us. Exposing and assaulting the authentic self is a mutilation, including for the perpetrator. Even in those who plan suicide, the idea of continuing to exist following suicide is a sane, albeit desperate, attempt to not forsake wholeness. We possess an in-dwelling, abiding sense of our own self and, from this, the self in others, even if we are unable to make use of it. No matter how disaffected or estranged we feel, this integrity is inviolate. When accepted and respected, our authentic self sanctions constructive engagement with others including in adversity and conflict. Appreciation of the authentic self without thought or reason may be the most natural form of love there is and an essential underpinning for the courage required to face conflict. Resolution of conflict requires negotiation of extreme feelings, competing urges and irrational as well as rational wishes and cannot succeed without regard for the authentic self in oneself and the other. The sober tenderness of this intelligence is the strategic authority for repair.

Wonder, an experience that is unpredictable and disquieting, enlivens like no other. We wonder 'about something' only for it to disperse, scatter to the four winds leaving in its wake wonder about what we have been wondering about. Is wonder the primary, private force through which we shape ourselves? When accorded the solitude and spontaneity it thrives upon, wonder treats us as longed-for beneficiaries and, when passed over, it waits patiently as it sees more clearly than we do that we are the something and the something else being wondered about, without thinking or knowing. It is an embrace without which we are unable to live life. Solitude and wonder are drawn to each other like friends comparing notes, musing, improvising, doing nothing. And we? We let them get on with it. The partnership arose prior to us, in the eyes of a mother filled with a vision of the wholeness of her new-born baby, an aliveness maintained by respectful wonder that engenders the person who is her child. The isolated person does not have this partnership, or the experience of respect for the authentic self. Confusion as to what constitutes a relationship is inevitable. Esteem by others for the authentic self may be misconstrued as distance or neglect, connection as intrusion and invasion, safety as withdrawal, kinship as psychosis. Notwithstanding this suffering, the isolated individual continues to be lived by an elemental sentience of the authentic self, which is the birthplace of hope. Hope relies upon isolation of the core, authentic self which releases the personality in search of the lifeblood of dependence on the other. Isolation of the authentic self, essential for health, lies in

marked contrast to radical isolation in which ‘psychic pseudopodia’ from the infant seeking out nutrients from the environment were met by nothing or toxins, provoking retreat by the core self into ever deeper hiding. Solitude, partnership and wonder are beyond reach. If the core self is forced to give itself up, the mind collapses, along with the personality. Those who survive such compromises of the will to live are at constant risk of splintering, there being ‘no-one inside’ to assist the personality. They live in fear and despair, a despair that can feel like a contagion.

A temptation for the personality with a healthily isolated authentic self is to ignore the unavailability of the radically isolated individual who has ‘no-one inside’. There is nothing much there, is there? Or what is there is ‘bad’. The truth is, what is there is not what there is. What there is, unavailable to both parties, is an authentic self not insulated but exposed and violated. The authority of tenderness, devoid of thinking and reason, is needed by the body and mind of the isolated individual so that respect for the authentic self may be established. Neither party will necessarily enjoy what may be painful labor, but nothing the radically isolated person does is capable of withstanding the authority of tenderness, as there is nothing to withstand. Its lifeblood is the safety the authentic self depends upon, even if the personality imagines it can’t bear it. The authority of tenderness possesses no power or influence beyond fair-minded recognition. At its most difficult, the individual’s response might be anguish that surprises or strickens the starved personality. This is not fundamental opposition, more a shock to the system like the person dying of thirst who coughs and vomits from taking in too much water. At its best, there may be wordless affiliation.

Why do all this, is the question in the minds of both parties. Because it makes it possible to create, by respecting the authentic self, an experience of shared wonder, a combination of solitude and intimate partnership which is the unique vision of where we began. Loneliness is a good thing. When we are radically isolated, we cannot experience loneliness or the need for another. Loneliness is an unattainable luxury. When the authentic self is imperiled and lacks protection, others are what we believe we need least. The personality’s ‘pseudopodia’ are withdrawn from contact, including from internal others. Until the authority of tenderness prevails and the True Self is granted the acceptance and solitude it needs, the mind and personality are caged and subjugated. It takes time for the authority of tenderness to inscribe itself. The individual may have been incapacitated by radical isolation and the authentic self may appear to have disintegrated, but respect for its dignity and thoughtful interest

in the suffering of the individual are the conditions for a resumption of living, not existing, and from these experiences, loneliness may become achievable.

Opening essay from the book “The Authority of Tenderness – Dignity and the True Self in Psychoanalysis” by Paul Williams (Routledge: in press).

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PINC Symposium:
“Authorship & the Role of Journals
in the Life of Psychoanalysis”

By Fernando Castrillón Ph.D.

“And yet, the better journals do transmit something. Stay with me here, since this is difficult to decipher but it is the difference that makes ALL the difference. In the best of cases, a psychoanalytic journal functions as a sort of palimpsest; that manuscript or piece of writing material on which the original text has been effaced to make room for later writing but of which traces remain. Which is a way of saying that a psychoanalytic journal embodies the potential for a transgenerational conversation within the field. Not necessarily between more seasoned analysts and neophytes, although this too is important. I am referring more precisely to an engagement between the many generations of analysts that have arisen and fallen between Freud’s day and ours.”

Full paper available on Critica’s online version.

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Critica Response to Fernando Castrillón

It is a great pleasure to respond to Fernando Castrillón, the new editor of the European Journal of Psychoanalysis. Fernando stated that a journal is the “lifeblood for our practice and thinking” and a link between members and the institution to generate new ideas.

Two important points were proposed: a journal should maintain a certain intellectual rigor, has its own autonomy, it must stay open to new ideas and be heterodox, avoiding a celebrity cult. Second psychoanalysis is a transgenerational method transmitted from one generation to another. Fernando’s ideas maintain a tension, with Freud-Lacan, Laplanche, Pontalis, Green, authors who believed in a transformational model of psychoanalytic thinking. In Fernando Castrillón’s paper, he stresses the Importance in journals of intergenerational communication of ideas where the person writing is in communication with the previously written work, which is taken in, erased and reworked to make room for the expansion of new ideas to emerge and be brought current. It is a constant re- inscription of psychoanalytic thinking that keeps the method alive.

In addition to this intergenerational communication Fernando is talking about, in Critica, we are trying to enlarge and broaden the field to include multiple approaches, subjects such as anthropology and philosophy and creativity to expand how we are thinking, perceiving and experiencing a particular theme together. It is a multifaceted approach and one we believe, makes our Journal stand out from previous journals. When one reads an essay, alongside a painting, collage, photograph, poem, or even a piece of music, it adds to the breadth and depth of our experience.

Critica would like to add two more visions for our Journal “A criterion for publication is saying something – about persons, process, structures, events – that is not being said elsewhere, but deserves to be “ (New Left Review, Jan /Fe 2021.) in our way of thinking is to open words that were never used or afraid to be used. But words are not the only way to reach the unconscious. It was Freud who mentioned many times that psychoanalysis could learn a great deal from poets, artists and philosophers. Inspired by Freud

we are moving in creative areas exploring the many shades of the unconscious using poems, paintings, photos, music, collages, literature, philosophy and humanities. Furthermore, we are writing on culture, racism, whiteness, police brutality, and immigration, anti-Semitism, gender, sexuality, politics and following the emergent themes in psychoanalysis around the world.

In response to Fernando Castrillón’s assertions that a psychoanalytical journal must stay open to new ideas, we would like to expand “Crítica” as a place where perceptual relationships and thoughts intertwine in the dynamic movement of intimacy and opacity of the “Self” and “Other”. The presence of the “Other” leads the perceptions of the “Self” and allows for “reflection, elaboration, clarification and messiness”. It is a place that Merleau- Ponty calls a “Chiasmic exchange” a site where we can better try to understand each other.

It is a place of creativity aimed at the genuine and spontaneous expression in a shared cultural experience. We are interested in Politics, Culture, and the Arts.

We are eager to open a dialogue with our colleagues and community members about the future of psychoanalysis.

Critica editorial team



Dawn Shifreen-Pomerantz, MFT
Title: Otherness

A meditation on Otherness And It's Opposite.
In my painting "Otherness" I took an inchoate and shaming experience about feeling "othered" and made it manifest. When I paint this way from the inside out, I do not feel othered from myself. I feel found. I am currently working on a pandemic self-portrait which forces me to look from the outside in. What does the part of the face that is exposed express even when it is masked? What does the mask leave out? When one really perceives another's face (or in this case my own face) with curiosity and interest, they become complex and specific. To my mind that is the opposite of "othering". There is a taking in of the other's being.

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My Octopus Teacher

by Judy Hess, Ph.D.

Last night I saw a movie called, "My Octopus Teacher", about the relationship between a man and an Octopus. The man, a burned-out documentary filmmaker, who is looking for healing, decides to return to the place where he grew up in South Africa and go on an underwater voyage in the Kelp forest near Capetown. Thinking he would start to film the beauty of the fish and the vegetation in these beautiful waters, he found himself intrigued by one particular Octopus. He visited her every day until they began to form a relationship and experience all the emotions that go with that. He was very gentle and did his best to attune to her movements, and look into her eyes, until their meetings began to occur seven days a week. They took place at her favorite spot under a rock where she could feel safe from the many sharks and other predators for whom she would be an excellent dinner. The man was fascinated by her intelligence, her ability to be strategic to protect herself from shark attacks. One of these strategies was to cover herself in shells and roll up in a ball so she could camouflage herself as a rock, when her predators began looking for their prey. The man

became fixated on the octopus and woke up every day with excited anticipation of seeing her again. The Octopus too, began getting closer to the man and even landed on his chest with her eight arms and legs spread out in various directions. The trust between them was palpable. On one occasion, a shark followed her into her cave and bit off one of her arms. For a while she hibernated so she could heal the wounds while the man continued to visit her every day. Eventually, her arm began to grow back, and she was back to her normal life once again. Needless to say, the man was very broken up when he saw how she had been injured. Both of them were in a very vulnerable state, and the love between them was flowing more than ever. As Octopus' only have a life span of one year, she eventually became weaker until she passed on. A shark came along and grabbed her remains, as the man began to feel the extent of his grief. This continued for quite a while but in the process of this relationship, the man, too, healed the pain, depression and hopelessness that he had before he began this journey. His outer relationships, particularly

with his son, began to grow as he started to teach his son about this underworld, and they began to journey together. In addition, he founded a project where he took many children out to this underwater mystery and introduced them to the magnificent kelp forest. It was clear to me how much this film was symbolic of the analyst/analysand relationship. It is hard to say who is the analyst and who is the patient since they were both able to share this deep intimacy together which led to healing for both of them. As different as they were when they started this relationship, they learned to see their similarities, to feel this precious interspecies bond, and to open to love. There was consistency in their meeting every day at the same time and place. They created a safe container for themselves, where love could be fully expressed. When the relationship ended, which they both knew was going to happen, they each carried the other with them in their hearts, and there was no doubt that both of them had been changed by this experience. The man suffered enormous grief when their relationship came to an end, but he was able to integrate this loss into his deepest being, and could transfer this love and excitement to his son, and the many people he subsequently took on these journeys. The experience of the man and the octopus is also relevant to the bonds that form in groups, and the way the members help each other grow at the same time as they are growing themselves.

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My Dear Friend

By Terrance McLarnan MFT, Psy.D

I am thinking of you just now
as I take to the woods
to meander among
the birch, aspen and maple,
their leaves a flurry, in
effortless silence.
I thought perhaps,
you too would enjoy this
moment.
I'll bring you to my spot,
a place where I once sat,
in the space
between a gravel lane
and sweeping scene
of growing greens.
To get to this place,
we'll go at the end
of the day and travel a trough
to a solitary stop
and set ourselves aside.
We'll go together
through the furrow
to the field of
crops renewed
to wait the winds
that brush our cheeks
tousle our hair.
In this hour of time
we'll lower our heads
to lower our eyes
to the level of the field
as the wind arrives
in light puffs of
stuttered breath

from the exhaling sky.
In this place
you'll be wedded,
as I have been
to the horizon
the sky
the wind
the birches
the green
fluttering leaves.
I want our imprints to remain
but it is not likely so,
the rain will fall
the leaves will drop;
crusting over the ground
the snow
will melt us away.
So, now I sit here
as you sit there
far from the north
far from the trough
far from the field
the crops long gone
it lays fallow
fallow,
unswayed.

A Person First

By Hugh Grubb Psy.D.

When asked Who was his favorite musician, Yo-Yo Ma replied: Pablo Casals. He said it was because Casals was a human being first, a musician second, and a cellist third. To me this is the model for a psychoanalyst: a human being first, a therapist second, and a psychoanalyst third.

Neville Symington’s book *The Psychology of the Person* was published in 2012. It epitomizes this attitude. In fact Symington customarily referred to himself as simply a psychotherapist. Reading the book led me to take my occasional contacts and consultations with him to an in-depth personal study and relationship. I want to briefly describe what this term “Person” meant to him and how it may shape one’s attitude to psychoanalysis.

Background: Symington was raised in a conservative Catholic family and as a young man, became a priest practicing in the poorer parts of London. His experiences brought him to the conclusion that orthodox

Catholic teachings about one’s relation to a “received religion” were in fact an obstacle to a personal relation to a “natural religion”, which he defined as “reflection upon the nature of existence” (2004). He entered psychoanalysis and decided to leave the priesthood – and his exalted role in his family. His becoming a psychoanalyst was, as for many of us, driven by the need for new principles by which to live.

I describe this in order to underline his subsequent vigorous arguments in favor of personal moral courage, acts of inner emotional freedom and outer candor, and liberation from conventionalized thinking and language (including the “received” wisdom of our institutional selves).

To be a person first is to embrace the role of therapist and the traditions of psychoanalysis within an attitude which spans both being and doing. Symington was inspired by the mystery of how, if our lives are finite and our understanding limited,

we may still participate in the infiniteness and eternality of the universe. The person and the analyst meet at a place of simultaneous surrender to experience and ownership of our intentionality. To him, we reach to the universal through our immersion in the emotional truth of the particular.

In my experience he was completely personal with me at all times: unpretentious, generous, highly curious, and alive to his intuitive responses. He once said that the only tools and analyst has are his thoughts, why do we not share them more? And in practice, it never seemed that he was offering me a useful idea that hadn’t already been useful to him. I would often leave our meetings feeling quite unsure about what he thought about my issues, but then I would gradually realize that I had become much more sure about what I thought about them.

Mental illness is partially a high degree of sensitivity to the emotional states of mind of those around us. It is key therefore that the analyst is both conscious of and authentic about his or her own feelings. An analyst should mean – and feel – what they say. To see oneself as the object of others’ emotional states is to not be a person.

Seeing oneself as a “me” is to be stuck in a static image of oneself as an object governed by whether others satisfy, frustrate, or approve of us. Those others may be external or internal and they challenge the analyst to make an “act of freedom” from them.

The “I” (or the “person”) on the other hand is a moving embodiment of personally discovered truth, infused with a sense of one’s continuity and interconnectedness. This differs in some sense from the concept of a subject? The concept of subjectivation in psychoanalysis is about self-differentiation and freedom from intrusive superego injunctions; I believe Symington adds a spiritual dimension. That is the aspect of the emotional assimilation of one’s experience of, and awe at, the mysteries of human existence.

He thought that the hidden damage caused by traumatic events is that they mask the absence of the necessary developmental experiences that should have been taking place – including a feeling of gratitude for one’s existence. This absence is replaced by a substitute negative self-evaluation which takes on a rigidity and certainty that prevents the nourishing of the self. Therefore he saw the aim of psychoanalysis as not

the repair of what is damaged but as the building of what is not there. This starts with emotional congruence in the analyst.

He ended one consultation saying: “I don’t think I have been able to help you very much today.” Later, as I reflected on the session, it came to me that his statement was exactly what I had been unwilling to admit to my patient.

Symington, N. (2012) The Psychology of the Person. London: Karnac Books.

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By Tom Ogden M.D.

M You must have been out. Where were you?
W I got a great deal on it. You’ll see.
M What did the doctor say?
W Pick up something for dinner on your way home.
M Well, if that’s the way you want to be about it.
W Don’t be late again.
M How long should we wait?
W For God’s sake.
M You’d better go lie down.
W It’d be a rest for you.
M Pigeons back on the window ledge.

W Where you going?
M Fifty-four years now.
W How could that be?
M Susie came ‘round today. Thin as string.
W Still with that guy?
M What were we watching last night?
W A mystery.
M You can still get a grin out of me.
W Go on.
M Yeah, I mean it.
W Three or four months.

M He didn’t say that.
W Let me be.
M How long?
W I’m not sayin’ it again.

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Siblings, Psychoanalysis, and Otherness

By Sue Haas-Lyon Ph.D.

According to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultation at PINC by Visions, Inc., many members, even some who are highly involved, experience a feeling of being on the outside. A feeling of better than/ lesser than appears to exist, along such dimensions as PINC graduate or not, personal/supervising analyst or not, longevity of involvement, gender, and economic status. A feeling of an unspoken hierarchy at PINC was also cited. Additionally, some non-member attendees at PINC events report feeling unwelcome. There is a strong desire at PINC to cultivate a more inclusive and welcoming environment, and the culture

at the Institute has been evolving in that direction. However, it appears important to better understand the experience of feeling “other” at PINC, as we continue to try to become a more welcoming place for BIPOC individuals. I would like to bring attention to one of the more unconscious forces that may be involved in othering, which is sibling rivalry. That is, one may wish to be in the position of chosen, special, and on the inside.

Sibling relationships mark the beginning of finding one’s place laterally in relation to an “other.” Siblings are like one another, in being children of the same parents. We intensely love and hate these similar beings – the longed-for soulmate, and the threatened replacement. Juliet Mitchell (2000) states that the threat of being displaced causes annihilation anxiety, due to dependency upon the mother for survival. According to Mitchell, whether a new sibling is born, or a younger child realizes that an older sibling is valued in ways he/she is not, it is the experience that the sibling “replica” has a place or position that one cannot occupy that evokes annihilation anxiety. As we know, in response to the threat of displacement, children want the maternal object to themselves, and wish to get rid of the sibling. Mitchell theorizes that if the threat becomes a trauma, hysteria results. The wish to be the only one cannot be relinquished. However, the underlying wish is not to possess the parent, but to be recognized as a unique subject. Parental favoritism is among the circumstances that I have found often result in sibling trauma and hysteria (Haas-Lyon, 2007). Both chosen and unchosen children develop the belief that the only options are to be “in” or “out,” the “have” or “have not” (Bieber, 1977). Favored children suffer guilt, but may also guard their positions because the only other option appears to be “out.” Unfavored children feel guilty due to envious, murderous wishes to displace the sibling into their position of second-class citizen. Dynamics of “in” or “out” are of course also common in and among groups, organizations, nations, ethnicities, and religions. Christians, Muslims, Jews, White supremacists, and America have all wished to be the only one in God’s eyes. There are particular aspects of psychoanalysis that may involve wishes and fears of being chosen. Psychoanalysis is an elitist field, financially formidable. Candidates share analysts and supervisors, potentially exacerbating competitive feelings. Further, psychoanalysis has a history of fratricide, probably partly due to Freud’s sibling trauma. As we know, Freud was his mother’s chosen child, and he experienced his little brother’s birth as

a betrayal. Intense jealousy was followed by guilt when this brother died in infancy. Sibling death concretizes the fantasy that one will be either annihilated or annihilating. Psychoanalytic “sons” were likely more tolerable for Freud than more collegial “brothers,” who disagreed with Freud’s privileging of the Oedipus complex. For myself, becoming a psychoanalyst evoked wishes and fears of being chosen by my father, who favored my younger sister. She was the star, and a replacement for his sister, who was killed in the Holocaust. When in training at PINC, the arrival of new candidate siblings evoked the dread of being surpassed and relegated to the margins. When a fellow candidate was asked to join a committee, feelings of being unchosen were elicited. At PINC events, I have genuinely embraced beloved colleagues, while at times feeling like I was performing for outsiders – also versions of potential sibling replacements – that I belong to an elect group. On the other hand, coming forward to make a place for myself has felt tantamount to murdering my sibling peers, due to inheriting my father’s survivor guilt. Writing this essay has itself felt fraught. I have played a part in feeling like an outsider at PINC, and at times wanting to make others feel so as well. Recognizing how annihilation anxiety related to siblings may affect us individually, at PINC, in psychoanalysis, and beyond, is not easy. However, it may help us progress toward the diversity, equity, and inclusiveness we seek. We are all alike and different. We each have value. There is a place for all of us.

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Mitchell, J. (2000), *Mad Men and Medusas: Reclaiming Hysteria*. New York: Basic Books.

Sue Haas-Lyon, Ph.D., will be presenting her paper *Murder on the Couch: Sibling Rivalry, Transference, and Countertransference* at the 2021 IPA Conference.

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**PINC Symposium:
“Authorship & the Role of Journals
in the Life of Psychoanalysis”**

By Fernando Castrillón Ph.D.

Excerpt from the book **“The Authority of
Tenderness – Dignity and the True
Self in Psychoanalysis”**

by Paul Williams Ph.D.
(Routledge: in press).

**The Million Children
of Yad Vashem**

By Rachael Peltz Ph.D.

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We welcome submissions:

- Essays, memoirs, papers, reviews: in English/ Max. 750 words
- Poetry - formats: written, video, and/or mixed media
- Artists and Photographs - by invitation. For photographs and paintings, the images submitted should be bigger than 1700px by 1700px (pixels), and have enough light (not too dark or too bright).

Papers should **not** include clinical material and have no more than 4 references. Authors are responsible for organization, clarity and conciseness; for all statements made in their work and for obtaining permission from copyright owners.

- Email your submission to critica.newsletter@gmail.com
- Include the author’s name, title, and name of the piece to be submitted.
- Deadline for submission: 3/30/21 (Spring Issue) and 9/30/21 (Fall issue)

PINC Symposium: “Authorship & the Role of Journals in the Life of Psychoanalysis”

By Fernando Castrillón Ph.D.

It is quite a thing to inherit the editorship of a journal, especially a celebrated one like the European Journal of Psychoanalysis. Many of the leading lights of our field have been published in its pages. We enjoy a wide and diverse readership, and many highly regarded psychoanalysts, philosophers, and academics continue to publish their most vital works with us.

But this quickly brings to the fore an important and unavoidable question. One that I aim to speak to today. Which is: what exactly is the point of a journal? What is its aim? I am confident that many of us here today could give a ready and sufficient response to this query. Clearly, a journal functions to publish cutting edge work, to facilitate an elaboration of trends and movements in the field and to keep its readership current with contemporary developments. In the best of cases, a journal also works as a nodal point of sorts, sparking the creation of networks and practices of correspondence that bring psychoanalysts together

thereby sustaining theoretical and clinical exploration.

Evidently, then, journals occupy a crucial place in our field. They are a kind of lifeblood for our practice and thinking. They sustain us, and in that way, journals work as a kind of social good.

However, all goods of this sort exist in a field of polarity. In other words, there is a shadow that is ever-present in the world of journals. Namely, how to chart a course for a journal such that it does not devolve into celebrity? This is especially true for celebrated journals like EJP. Or to put it another way, what is to be done such that a psychoanalytic journal steers clear of the glitterati strivings that have so taken a hold of the social field and the world of publishing in our moment (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)?

As I see it, the only real way of accomplishing this is to focus on what brought psychoanalytic journals into being in the first place. That is to say, a journal

functions as a psychoanalytic journal by hewing closely to two sets of practices: psychoanalytic transmission and mychorrhiztic catalyzation.

Early on in the psychoanalytic game, particularly in those moments where the movement found itself growing and expanding beyond its Central European roots, a problem arose. Namely, how to keep everyone connected and how to transmit to each other both the core teachings and the novel developments that were arising. Mind you, we are speaking of the early 1900’s. There was no internet or widespread air-travel. There had to be a medium, a conveyance that carried these twin functions on its back. The psychoanalytic journal was that thing. But even now, I would argue, the psychoanalytic journal, if charted properly, is still that thing, even if it exists as a nodal point in a larger network of conveyances.

But what am I speaking about when I say, psychoanalytic transmission? Surely, I am not suggesting that one is “trained” or is formed into an analyst or therapist by reading journal articles. To be clear, no, I am not implying that. As we well know and experience has amply demonstrated to us, psychoanalytic formation is the result of one’s own personal analysis and supervision. For these, there are no substitutes.

And yet, the better journals do transmit something. Stay with me here, since this is difficult to decipher but it is the difference that makes ALL the difference. In the best of cases, a psychoanalytic journal functions as a sort of palimpsest; that manuscript or piece of writing material on which the original text has been effaced to make room for later writing but of which traces remain. Which is a way of saying that a psychoanalytic journal embodies the potential for a transgenerational conversation within the field. Not necessarily between more seasoned analysts and neophytes, although this too is important. I am referring more precisely to an engagement between the many generations of analysts that have arisen and fallen between Freud’s day and ours.

Please forgive me for making appeal to a now somewhat trite and overused quote of Heraclitus: “No person ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and they are not the same person”. Although I would hasten to add that traces of the previous iteration of river and person remain. Traces. In the case of a journal, we name these traces “previous issues and articles”, and they act as steppingstones between the generations. An author in the now, writing over an effaced text from the past, thereby making it into a history

available to us now. To put it another way, a journal is a site or contested terrain wherein traces of the past are reworked in the now such that it is made available for the sensibilities and realities of the contemporary moment. Put succinctly, it is a re-transmission made possible by the exigencies of the moment; a re-working of the elements of psychoanalysis that sustains our current theorizing and clinical practice; a re-inscription that brings psychoanalysis to life again and again.

In order to accomplish this, any journal worth its salt must work against the establishment of dogma or the dismissal of the marginal, the inconvenient, and even the laughable. And in our social moment, it must also work against the seductive power of celebrity, which in the end is only one more way of inhibiting discourse and establishing a doxa or type of conventional wisdom deemed correct and unassailable. Those who know me, know that I am not fond of establishing imperatives, the “it should be this” or the “this must be done”. However, in this case I make a strategic deviation from my studied neutrality on this score to be able to say that in the case of a journal, it must stay open and heterodox, facilitating the transgenerational re-transmission that I spoke of earlier. Any other position makes it into an ideological organ of a school or cloistered grouping.

That my friends, is not a journal. It is a newsletter of a political party.

This transgenerational set of conversations that we have named the psychoanalytic journal comes to serve us in yet another critical manner. In the tried-and-true method of Freud & Lacan, I will pull from another field, in this case mycology, to elucidate the point I am attempting to make here. Specifically, I would like for us to focus on mycorrhizas or mycorrhizal associations.

A mycorrhiza (from the Greek *mýkēs*, or “fungus”, and *rhiza*, or “root”) is a mutual symbiotic association between a fungus and a plant. The term mycorrhiza refers to the role of the fungus in the plant’s rhizosphere, its root system. Mycorrhizae play important roles in plant nutrition, soil biology and soil chemistry.

In a mycorrhizal association, the fungus colonizes the host plant’s root tissues. The association is sometimes mutualistic. In particular species or in particular circumstances mycorrhizae may have a parasitic association with host plants. For those of you familiar with the work of Deleuze & Guattari, you will see where a good portion of my debts are held. I find mycorrhizae fascinating in that they allow for relationships. Most of us have the mistaken

notion that a plant is rooted directly in the soil and that it finds its sustenance from that unmediated relationship. For the vast majority of plant life on Earth, nothing could be further from the truth. In all but a few cases, there is a mediating function, namely, mycorrhizae, which break apart the soil, allow for aeration, and execute a kind of botanical curation that allows for the plant to actually root. There would be no real plant life on Earth were it not for mycorrhizae. In point of fact, there would be no human life, nor psychoanalysis for that matter, were it not for this symbiotic association! But mycorrhizae are covert, subterranean (literally!), and unassuming. They go about their task with little to no fanfare. Facilitating connection, catalyzing life and growth, mycorrhizae are everywhere. They are the hidden organizers of Earthly life outside of the oceans. And yes, you guessed right. This is the model that comes to mind when I consider the psychoanalytic journal. Present, but unassuming; covert yet making its mark by enabling the work of others.

Going a bit further, however, we can envision the psychoanalytic journal cum mycorrhiza operating like a nexus wherein its readership, editors, peer-reviewers, and networks of correspondence are brought into engagement with each

other via the texts that act as their moorings. This is vital, especially now in our echo-chamber social field.

When I first started my work with EJP as an editor, nearly 7 years ago, it struck me that few psychoanalytic journals operated like it did. Fiercely independent, non-aligned, heterodox, unwilling to act as organ of any one tradition or lineage in the field; during its 26 years of existence, EJP is one of the few psychoanalytic journals where no one captures the flag. A tricky balancing act, to be sure. But that constant movement away from orthodoxy and towards an unknown always out of reach has a catalyzing effect. People are brought together. Analysts and writers from across the broad spectrum of our field come to read each other, without filters nor disclaimers. New voices emerge by virtue of the quality of their work, not their affiliations. Via sustained engagement over the years, established figures come to elaborate and articulate the finer points of their theory in our pages. The subversive and destabilizing sensibilities of the clinical practice of psychoanalysis itself come to life with each issue, each article, each curated conversation. To quote Sergio Benvenuto, we aim to be a “journal without a soul”.

And this is all the more important now. As our social-

media/echo-chamber of a social field grows in power, dividing people and capitalizing on the narcissism of small differences, spaces like those afforded by EJP become that more vital. It is essential that we listen to each other, that we listen to and read those we do not want to engage with because of some perceived disagreement or dis-alignment. Any healthy terrestrial eco-system owes its generative power to its diverse mycorrhizal associations. Psychoanalysis, as theory and set of practices, does not fall outside of that frame. The more we can foster diverse and vigorous exchange between often alienated sub-fields and areas of inquiry, the more we work against the frenetic market-place juggernaut intent on censure, division, and silencing. It is in this way that journals remain firmly rooted in the radically inclusive sensibilities that brought psychoanalysis into being many moons ago.

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Excerpt from the book “The Authority of
Tenderness – Dignity and the True
Self in Psychoanalysis”

by Paul Williams Ph.D.
(Routledge: in press).

Below is the opening essay from ‘The Authority of Tenderness’, the third and final book in a trilogy. The first book was ‘The Fifth Principle’ and the second ‘Scum’. This third book differs from the first two in that it is written by the adult self of the individual previously written about and takes into account five ensuing decades of experience. Its content varies between types of experiences needed by a disturbed individual to recover, and the actual experience of the recovery. Although concepts, theories and ideas are important

in psychoanalysis, and play a part in all clinical work, ‘The Authority of Tenderness’ is neither theoretical, nor does it seek to teach anything. It is a glimpse into processes of change - actual, lived experiences which, if respected, address a fundamental concern facing psychoanalysis today, and the most urgent preoccupation facing tormented and confused individuals; this is the question of the dignity of the True Self. We possess a unique and inexplicable authentic or True Self which, as commentators from Meister Eckhart to Winnicott have emphasized, is hallowed ground requiring seclusion and lack of interference for mental and psychological health to develop. Paradoxically, deference to this psychological condition permits the individual’s personality to connect, develop and prosper with others. The implications for the practice of psychoanalytic therapy are considerable. Psychoanalysis might be likened to restoring a painting. Patient and analyst attempt together to lift the grime and wear of the years without damaging the original beneath. Where damage appears, repair is carefully undertaken in accordance with, so far as possible, the intentions of the creator – the Self of the patient. The process may have qualities of a science but it is definitely an art. A distinction is made between the developmental Self of the

individual, in need of assistance, and the True Self, in need of solitude and dignity. Failure to respect this distinction causes harm. This was conveyed to me by a late friend in a way I have not heard put better. He began a training analysis when he was much younger with an eminent analyst who, after five years’ work, died. In grief and in need of help, it was suggested he see another, not quite so eminent, analyst but someone revered for her clinical skill. He told me: “My second analyst was a better analyst in some respects, but she pulled out my psychopathology by the roots. My first analyst knew me too, but she was more kind.” He felt damaged by the second, more ‘accurate’ analysis. Perhaps science had taken precedence over art. His first analyst had had a sensibility to his core vulnerabilities and strengths – his True Self – and had respected these. His second analyst had failed to respect the dignity of his True Self. For seriously disturbed individuals, the dilemma of how to live reflects the scale and nature of internal damage. The origins of disturbance are many and varied, but the individual’s response to it is what brings the person into psychoanalytic therapy, to save his or her life and with some hope for meaningful change. My respect for individuals who undertake such work remains undimmed. The gravest consequence of having suffered

serious disturbance is exposure of the True Self. The dissolution of personality is imminent when this arises and it presents the clinician with the greatest of responsibilities. Assessing the degree of integrity of the personality, including the True Self, is necessary in order to grasp what can or cannot be expected of the individual. To overlook this form of assessment incurs the risk of riding roughshod over the vulnerabilities of the True Self, worsening the patient’s condition and inducing adaptation to the defensive needs of a damaged self. In this third book I speak to the need to attend to the privacy and dignity of the True Self. If this is accomplished, both parties are free to pursue as much analysis as the personality needs and wants, especially the experience of outrage in response to impingements on the True Self.

[1]When asked to explain short-story writing, Flannery O’Connor replied: “Asking me to talk about story-writing is just like asking a fish to lecture on swimming.” (O’Connor 1969 p87)

The Million Children of Yad Vashem

By Rachael Peltz Ph.D.

A sunlit day
in a somber
place
Walking through
the doors
you encounter
darkness
A flicker
Another flicker
A voice
sounds a
name
Ushered along
the periphery
at a slow
steady pace
Each visitor
is guided
by a hand rail
on the left
Each step
accompanies
the announcement
of the name
of another child

Each
name alights a
single star
Each destination
sounds the end
of light
in the step
by step
movement
One after
another
Each flickers
Each
wonderous
Name
We three
join
the mass
of movement
and utterances
Holding the
handrail to
steady us
Joining the
single being
Of this breathing
flickering
chamber
When the
path of the
handrail

ends
its course
And the door
to sunlight
stands ahead
The sound
and the
flicker of
Sonia.....
Mjdanek

And the small voice of our child who wonders

Is that me?

A sunlit day
In a somber
place
Walking through
the doors
You encounter
darkness
A flicker
another flicker
A voice
sounds a
name
.....

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