

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

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President's Remarks

Kali Hess, MFT

Hello to all in the PINC community. This is my first communication to you as President (although as I'm writing, this I'm still President-elect). This is an inspiring and challenging time for PINC. Exciting because we are actively working to democratize psychoanalysis and challenging for the same reason. The struggles that we face echo the struggles in our larger community, country, and world. The atrocities in Ukraine, COVID, our barely functioning democracy, and overt racism are on my mind daily. In the smaller world of psychoanalysis I live in, I wonder what difference we can make. A more accessible and relevant psychoanalysis seems like a good start.

At PINC, the Board of Directors, and many committees and individuals, have spent the past two years working on making PINC a more welcoming, inclusive community. We continue to confront the conscious and unconscious ways we have protected and maintained PINC as a monoculture. We hope that by doing that we can better serve the needs of people of color who have felt excluded and marginalized by our traditional structures.

For those of you who have taken up this project in a personal and heartfelt way, thank you so much. To others who feel unnerved by this work, I welcome you to join us and tolerate the difficulties with us. One of the things that psychoanalysis offers is the idea that we grow by bearing discomfort while in the presence of accepting others. This is what I hope PINC can be for all of us.

In the time we've worked with our Visions, Inc. Consultants, Jim Turner and Sarah Stearns, I've been repeatedly impressed by the way they have internalized the tools they've brought to us. The first of these are the cross-cultural communication guidelines, which you would think would be second nature to a community of mental health professionals, but which get lost in heated situations. I want to keep these guidelines front and center as we move through the changes that are coming up at PINC. They are:

Guidelines for Effective Cross-Cultural Dialogue

- ◆ “Try on”
- ◆ It’s okay to disagree
- ◆ It is not okay to blame, shame, or attack, self or others
- ◆ Practice “self-focus”
- ◆ Practice “both/and” thinking
- ◆ Notice both process and content
- ◆ Be aware of intent and impact
- ◆ Confidentiality

We have made progress in our ability to articulate where we need to go, as represented by our Vision Statement, which has been under discussion by the Board and the community. When this is passed in its final form by the Board, we will have a statement of our direction going into the future. In the face of this difficult work, and after two years of being physically separated, we need each other more than ever in an open, inclusive community of shared values, love of psychoanalysis, and intellectual excitement. I hope you feel welcome to come along with us on the winding path in that direction.

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Editorial Notes

Carolina Bacchi, Psy.D.

On uncertainty, creativity and our inevitable humanness

“Today could be the day I die.” My teacher’s words resonate in the background as I sit in meditation. As waves, my thoughts come and go and I hold images of the changes in my body, happening since I was born. Life is by definition impermanent; its basic premise is uncertainty. I am reminded of Vuong’s (2022) reflection on his mother’s death, in which he beautifully describes “when a loved one dies, you experience your life in just two days: today, when they are no longer here, and yesterday, the immense vast yesterday, when they were here.” In his brief and spectacular take on grief and language, he reminds us that “death is the truest thing we have as it is the one thing we are all heading towards.” Between the day we are born and the unpredictable day on which we will die, we are left with this impossible task named life. Vuong teaches us that a sense of awe and joy makes living possible, in the most unthinkable circumstances. If living is worth anything, probably the best way to approach it is by finding a language to hold its small but precious moments of wonder. Vuong, in facing the blank page with the courage of inking one word after the other, describes his creative encounter with a possibility to traverse grief, pain, dislocation, horror, fear, destructiveness, and the precariousness of our fragile human existence.

What is left of our work as psychoanalysts

when the analytic dyad is faced with collective disruption? We are called upon to recognize uncertainty and claim its presence. We are called to bear its truth. Badawi (2011) reminds us that “When destructiveness is everywhere and we are faced with unpredictability, it is no longer a matter of holding on to the immutability of the setting; it is no longer a matter of developing a “thick skin” in order to “dominate ‘counter-transference’”; it is no longer a matter of “emotional coldness” (Freud, 1912e, p. 115); it is no longer a matter of interpreting and transforming. What is important is to be present. Present as a psychoanalyst ... and remain as one. Remain as one and create.” (Badawi, 2019, p. 408). As Badawi describes her encounters with patients while the war rages everywhere, and they are strapped out of almost everything to be left with their bare humanness, this is the exact truth from which she draws in order to maintain her analytic presence. When the pair is faced with unpredictability, they are left to think creatively.

In this issue, our editorial board invited musings on “Creativity and Uncertainty” in response to the deeply unstable social times we are all living in. From intense ecological manifestations to an ongoing negotiation of the myriad impacts of a Pandemic, war also calls attention and requires our reflection. Moving away

from a state of paralysis, we are called to engage with despair, desperation, and once more transformation. If there is hope, it lands on our human potential to gather pieces of what was once whole and create something new. Milner called this process “creative imagination”, as she drew our attention to the forces that “bring order out of chaos”(Millner, 1957, p.148).

As I embrace with wonder and awe the powerful certainty of death and the necessary uncertainty of life, I am left with the in-betweenness of my time on Earth and the blankness of a piece of paper in its waiting quality. Here we all were, when we took up the invitation to reflect, ponder, imagine, paint, and feel the deeply resonating uncertain fabric of living. As we cut through it, with an invisible thread of trust we sew the pieces into a hybrid vest that reveals and tells a story. This narrative will be alive much after we leave, moving through future generations and continuing to grow in unpredictable ways. Here we are, today, still living and experiencing the narratives of our ancestors and their impact on Earth and the textile of our social and cultural lives.

Our contributors offered us their narratives, their own way to receive, honor, and contend with their in-betweenness. Through their voices, our Editorial Board hopes you may find a place of landing, a floating anchor in a wavering sea.

As always, this issue was only possible with many volunteer hours of our actually ever-changing team. In the last few months, Rosalinda and Michael Taymor sadly departed our Committee. We have been deeply grateful to their contributions as editors, reviewers and consultants, and will miss their presence going forward. Rosalinda, however, will continue to offer her writing and painting contributions to our next

issues. We also welcomed three new committee members. Elizabeth Papagni brings attentiveness and respectful responsiveness to our editing process. A doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology at The Wright Institute, she has a great interest in psychoanalytic theory, and its interface with the fine, performing, and literary arts. Scott Perna is a post-seminar candidate at PINC, a great reader, and always interested in writing. He believes that working with Critica will allow him to think more creatively about the wider sense of moral and political uses of language that underscore our clinical assumptions. We also would like to express our deepest gratitude to the team at Imagink (Shirley Situ and Licole Zhang). They stepped in at the very tail end of our deadline to re-create our design and make this issue possible.

Their energy, enthusiasm, and vibrant presence will offer Critica many opportunities to grow. I am thankful to have such an interesting group of editors who are deeply committed to making Critica an inclusive platform for welcoming the uncertainty and creativity inherent to being alive.

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Editorial Notes

Luca Di Donna, PhD.

On “Uncertainty and Creativity.”

We are living in a state of chaos. The pandemic is still killing thousands of people and there is a war between Russia and Ukraine that could turn into a nuclear war.

This issue of *Critica* is titled “Uncertainty/Creativity” to reflect on these issues. Uncertainty describes the state of ambiguity, insecurity, and the improbable in our minds and in our communities. To counteract and oppose these uncertainties we resort to creativity, which has been a part of psychoanalysis from the beginning.

The literature on the arts and psychoanalysis is in full bloom. Concepts of music, the sublime, aesthetics, and the visual arts are currently the most discussed. As an alternative, I would like to submit a new conception of creativity from the work of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. He is one of the most important philosophers today, a scholar who is interested in aesthetics, law, and politics. Because of the complexity of his work, I have added works that can facilitate his reading in the endnotes at the end of this article.

My comment is based on a book published in 2019 *Creation and Anarchy: The work of art and the religion of capitalism*. I will attempt to discuss

the second chapter “What is the act of Creation? While this chapter is dense, obscure and extremely difficult to understand, his writing is elegant, creative, and innovative. In my analysis, I am drawing on Short’s (2010) reviews which are superb. I also draw on Leland de la Durantaye, who writes, in *The Idea of Prose*, “Agamben abjures conventional modes of an academic presentation in favor of indirect approaches to his subject matter, pursuing a fragmentary and elliptical style of writing. This style we are told is inspired by W. Benjamin’s attempt to write in fragments that conserve a potentiality to align with other fragments, presenting an image that ‘flashes up’ at an appropriate moment when its capacity to be read emerges” (p.1). Agamben believes that theories are always in a state of creation, in a state of flux, and the work or text is never finished, leaving space for ongoing development.

Using Aristotle’s ideas on no potentiality, the author believes that creativity is a force, an action, and a state of opposition from no potentiality to potentiality. From this process, something new is created. To clarify this very complex idea, let us hear the words of Agamben. He says: “... we then need to look at the act of creation as a field of forces stretched between potential and (im)potential, being - able-

to and being able –not - to, acting and resisting. Human beings are capable of having mastery of their potential and having access to it only through their (im)potential: but precisely for this reason, there is in the end no mastery over potential, and being a poet means being at the mercy of one's own (im) potential (p.19).”

I have read this paragraph many times. Sometimes I was in the dark, at other times I found some illumination for how this mysterious no-potentiality enters the psychoanalytic field. My conjectures linked Agamben's work with Bion's articles Negative Capacity and Notes on Memory and Desire. For Bion, the mind of the analyst must wait, should we say, between a state of no potential and a state of potential. The analyst has to resist, not intervene; stay in a state of suspense. Bion's creative work was to wait and ponder on the psychic material, creating a state of mind able “to move beyond” (my emphasis) the concrete and linear. We could expand on the idea of the negative using Andre Green's The Work of the Negative, an innovative book explaining his views on works by Bion and Winnicott. That negativity has a special force of creative resistance. Winnicott's work becomes very interesting when he writes that potential space “is the hypothetical area that exists (but cannot exist)”.

To summarize some of the complexity of this idea of potentiality I will quote Thanopoulos (2019): “Psychoanalysis occurs in a similar way: it allows those who make good use of it, a suspension of linearity, of the concreteness of acting, it creates an experiential space of our own original way of being, of our own actions, a space not enclosed in factual behaviors” (Translation by Dr Luisa Marino).

I urge the reader to read this issue of

Critica. The reader will be immersed in beautiful articles, photos, poetry, and more. The articles published are full of potential, containing the capacity to be developed, “something that remains— or has willingly been left— unspoken and that needs to be found and seized” (Adam Kotsko, translator of Creation and Anarchy”). It is from the unspoken and what cannot be written that a new vision of psychoanalysis could start.

I would like to thank Critica's editorial team, for their magnificent work and especially Carolina Bacchi, co – editor, for her innovative leadership and creativity.

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Untitled 35
Watermelons are Not Strawberries

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Berkeley Aquatic Park, March 2022

Alison McCabe, MFT, psychoanalyst

After Stanley Kunitz, a Golden Shovel
Ducks gather en masse bikers in
helmets tattooed toss bread jungle children murderous
Putin pink coated girl on tricycle how many times
Dad yelling keep up frisbee players swoon over the
Metal basketed route no slow heart
Here hear geese freeway traffic breaks
Up train's horn not far from here and
War happening every day news breaks
girl tired we all are walking now and
none look my way lemon rosemary tart lives
Lost, lost breathing hard all by
Fake lake garbage can't hear you're breaking

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Return of the Repressed

In conversation with Thomas Marcacci

Carolina Bacchi interviewed Thomas Marcacci about his essay "Line, space, time. Encounter between an artist and a psychoanalyst", published on Critica, issue 2, Fall 2021.

Carolina: In our current issue, we aim to reflect on the interconnectedness of uncertainty and creativity. You mentioned in your paper that your aim was "to meet an artist and play together through a dialogue of free associations". Your paper beautifully describes the flow of associations between you both in a way that mirrors the process of an analytic session. As a reader, I felt inspired by your dialogue. Could you tell us more about the experience of moving from formless to meaning in your conversation with her?

Thomas: I would like to start by saying that the foundation that makes possible an experience like the one described in the article is to share the trust in the possibility of seeing one's thoughts welcomed by the other as something precious, a stimulus to further thoughts. On this solid basis, for Esther and me the curiosity could have hovered freely toward both the other's experience and what would have come to our mind through our encounter. This shared trust sustains the negative capacity, preventing from the urge to reach any particular achievement.

Your question makes me better understand that on occasion of my encounter with Esther, my implicit expectation was to experience somehow a path which would have gone from formless to meaning. However, reflecting on this now, I realize that the point is not such direction but the process in itself. Of course the transformation from formless to symbolic and to meaning has its importance, but right as the opposite process has: to free from a

stated meaning, deconstructing precise symbols, contacting a formless vivid experience. It is like a swing between unsaturated experience and fullness of meaning, where the precious thing is the possibility to keep these two extremes moving and transforming one into the other, again and again. From this swing comes out creativity, before any creation.

Potentiality which finds form; form which resumes its move toward a new potentiality. Or, using a bionic theory, evolution through the oscillation ps/d.

Carolina: You reflect on the fundamental "touching skin to skin" that we lost during the many months of the Pandemic while describing your encounter with Esther. You talk about the emotional experience of this impossible touch while describing her painting as finding the essential form without detailed representation. You mention the "outline is not only the limit that separates but it is also the point of contact between two surfaces". I loved when you mentioned, in response to her work that "At a glance, it comes to me like a tactile sensation, right before perceiving any representation." This makes me think about Milner's ideas about creative imagination or Bion's description of reverie/alpha function. Interesting to imagine that happening in the midst of a Pandemic distant life. Do you think her work spoke to the precariousness of what we were collectively experiencing - an urge for connection in search of representation? How do you make sense of you touching each other so deeply as you engaged with her work?

Carolina: You end your paper mentioning that somatic and physical aspects of the

encounter “put us in contact with the environment in which we are immersed and influence it in turn, intertwining perception and symbolization, emotion and meaning, in a movement of mutual transformation.” Isn’t that the deepest nature of analytic work that relies on the constant movement and dialogue between uncertainty and creativity?

Thomas: These two questions make many thoughts come to my mind, which intertwine to one another. Therefore I’ll answer both of them through one whole reflection.

A work of art solicits in the subject a response that occurs at multiple levels, from the most profound and phylogenetically primitive, to the most complex, sophisticated and peculiar to the subject.

Your question prompts me to reflect in particular on the activation of the body in reaction to the piece of art with which it comes into contact.

Often the main channel of interaction with a visual artwork is, indeed, the gaze: a sensory channel that enters very quickly into connection with symbolic thought. On the other hand, when we have the opportunity to explore even a visual piece of art with other senses, touching it with closed eyes, smelling its surface, listening to the noise we can draw from it, or simply “observing it with the whole body”, we realize how much it elicits a corporeal activation, speaking to us directly through sensations without images yet, recalling presymbolic experiences, inscribed in deep and precocious layers of the Self.

This, in my opinion, can lead to a state of arousal where different layers of the person resonate together, opening up the possibility of a creative experience.

Reflecting on this now, it comes on my mind the great value that it may have had having touched Ester’s canvases, having felt the texture of the rough

surface under my fingers, the relief of the lines, fluorescent to the touch as well as to the eye, the stiff sound of the soft canvas unrolled, like the slow breathing of the water against the jetty. Perhaps these sensations created a fertile ground on which the image had the possibility to fully ripen its fruits, leading some thoughts to find a new symbolic expression.

From this point of view, the pictorial style of Esther’s series on Reed Hook is a balance of saturated and unsaturated. They are visual art but accompanied by a materiality that affects all the other senses, especially being able to experience them up close. The presence of the lines and of the shapes, distilled to their essence, gives an unobtrusive handrail, which then drives the observer to go on its own, like a pier that accompanies the gaze for a while but then opens to a free horizon.

The experience told in the article took place during the pandemic; however, the paintings that accompanied us were not made during it. Despite this, your question makes me reflect that our experience was deeply linked to finding again a skin-to-skin contact between us and our physical and relational environment, which we could only observe remotely for many months. The works that accompanied us have lent themselves very well to this.

Perhaps Esther had an unconscious intuition when choosing which works to bring to our meeting: a reverie. Perhaps, moreover, we can think that if a work of art intercepts a dynamic that pertains to something human, then it will be capable of speaking to different contexts and through different eras. It communicates the essential of the experience it represents, letting each observer contact that essence, connecting it to their personal lives and declining it into their own language. A fertile experience, as you said, a dialogue where the known encounters the uncertain, opening the space of creativity.



Title: Dark Days in Ukraine
Acrylic in Canvas

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Fragment

Anita Barrows, Ph.D.

Someone told a story of a man and his daughter
coming upon a fence made of human bones.
A fence? A wall? Something
more random, like bones
tossed on top of each other
because they were there, because
there were so many, because
there was a war going on and bones
were the remnant? They had been walking
through woods. Woods? Where?
We know these things happen. Whether from slaughter,
famine, thirst, disease. War
is the shorthand, but you could touch
any one of these bones – femur, humerus,
jawbone, cheekbone – and say war
was the reason. See this
child's pelvis. Perfectly arched and so
bare. The daughter
looks up at her father, who does not seem
to be startled. They have been walking
a long time. They are so tired, when they
pick up the bones they feel
their heaviness. (Are they,
too, fleeing?) Look! I can see the bones
of my own hands, the girl
says, but her father
says nothing. He has been staring up
at the trees,
the sky.

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Life or Theater?

Monica Bomba, MD

The war in Ukraine rages on. We are living a moment of great uncertainty and anxiety, days in which history seems to repeat itself and hope and trust waver.

Our society has thus become sick of the “war-disease”, of the dehumanization syndrome (Fornari, 1974) and has found itself trapped in the binomials: good/bad, weak/strong, life/death. While people fight each other, splitting multiplies. The closure of social networks, the propaganda, and the threat of internet suspension in Russia are just one of the many concrete metaphors of the interruption of dialogue caused by war - blocking intersubjective communication prevents access to the only “dichotomy” necessary for the mind to survive: the opposition between what is (affectively) true and what is not.

How to stay alive in this precarious state of the mind, of terror and uncertainty?

In the early days, in the face of the cruel violence and destruction of war, there circulated a sense of helplessness, a tendency to deny the danger of events or to be overwhelmed by the waking nightmare of an atomic war.

Like many other colleagues, I made contact with people from Ukraine. One particularly touching exchange occurred with a young woman, Nina, still living in Ukraine, 7 months pregnant with a baby boy. She writes to me that she and her husband have longed for this child and that now he will be born under the bombs, in a bunker in which “there is a gynecologist she doesn’t know”. The exchange between us is full of fear for the mother and for this birth, so precarious, so in danger.

The tension is reduced when I ask her what she would name her baby. I then tell Nina that the Ukrainian name is very similar to the analogous Italian one. She asks me “what does it sound like?” and I send her an audio of the name. Nina then records her voice as well: she tells me that she finds my language “unfamiliar to her but so very sweet”, then pronounces the baby’s name in her language; Nina uses a soft voice and communicates great tenderness to me. The sweetness of the music of her voice opens up the possibility of dreaming of a future for this little unborn child, and of consonance between us in which differences can exist without becoming threatening; the desire to communicate paves the way for the nascent relationship between Nina and me.

The words Freud wrote to Einstein in 1932 are echoing. Einstein asked him about the “why” of war and how to remedy it. In the conflict between Eros, creator of bonds and source of life, and Thanatos, the engine of division and death, Culture is the function-antidote to the “aesthetic degradations of war”. It guarantees the development of civilization and human communities, allowing us to overcome the natural propensity to “resolve conflicts of interest between men through the use of violence”. Freud concludes with the admonition that “we must rebel against it [war]”.

If we think about what Winnicott (1971) wrote about art and culture, stemming from the transitional phenomena and the child’s ability to play, even a simple exchange like the one with Nina can be an expression of dialoguing a new

culture. Would rebellion be to make space for the other, accepting to feel crossed by feelings that are sometimes violent? In today's panorama of atomic war, is this perhaps how a space-time can take shape in which the reality of life and its pressures can be transformed into a sustainable affective experience, even if only for an undefined and ephemeral time?

I would like to conclude with the testimony of Charlotte Salomon, a young Jewish artist who lived between the First and Second Great Wars and died in the death camps, in Auschwitz.

Charlotte, in about 18 months (between 1940 and 1942) painted more than a thousand tempera paintings with intense and bright colors, made exclusively with the three primary colors and white. The paintings are accompanied and complemented by texts that tell her story with poetic tones, sometimes ironic, even sarcastic, and supported by a musical vein. From this set Charlotte chose 781 tempera paintings that form, with the manuscripts, the novel of her life, her masterpiece: "Life? Or Theater? A Singing Play." Charlotte Salomon's immense work remains, full of feelings, desire for life, and hope, an expression of how strong and creative the listening for emotional truth may be.

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Title: Devastation in Ukraine 2022
Mixed media
Encaustic paint and found object
24" x 36"

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Thinking in the Real

Ciara Thomas Murphy, MA, PhD Student

“The imaginative realm is not limited to representation as images, text, dreams, or memory that confines its interpretation to object or subject. But when approached as a process or practice, as something relational and productive, imagination leads to new spaces of inquiry...with the potential to open up and to make visible the unknown.” (Culhane 2017, 15)

In a time of deep social trauma and disruption of so many rhythms and routines, many familiar ways of being in the world are simply not available to us. Being unable to safely meet in person tries our capacity to tolerate frustration; it also presents the possibility to explore new ways of being, and to cultivate a practice more deeply grounded both in reality and in imagination.

Pandemic life reminds us that any experience can be engaged as a medium for creative reflection, and disruption may open up generative encounters with the unknown.

In these encounters we may reimagine analytic topologies, since meeting online reconfigures which elements of experience are shared—such as the social trauma that affects us all—and which are no longer shared—such as physical co-presence. The inversion of familiar experience teaches us something new about it. The screen may be understood as an invertible surface that collects the residue of both internal and external affective intensities. Meeting through the screen is not disembodied, but differently embodied, and invites a playful refraction of scenes and senses.

The screen as invertible surface is a transitional space that makes visible unknown aspects of both individual and shared reality through contact between them. Winnicott (2005) observes that a child at play (and perhaps also an adult engaged in creative work) “manipulates external phenomena in the service of the dream and invests chosen external phenomena with dream meaning and feeling” (69). The alteration of familiar routines is a chance to turn simultaneously outward and inward in order to engage more deeply with reality. When approached as a dream-canvas to create something from the material of real experience, the screen potentiates an imaginative practice in being-alone and being-together at the same time.

A poignant challenge is how to make use of the full potential of objects and phenomena that are available, rather than longing for a fantasy of what is missing. Bollas (2009) suggests that “meandering in the real—moving from thing to thing—can in itself be a form of reverie that constitutes thinking in the real” (53). In this way, we may engage with events in the world as living material for personal and collective dream-work in action.

A practice of “thinking in the real” offers a way to dwell with all that is uncertain about life in this time. Following Stewart (2018), “the expressivity of a vivid, actively mattering world... both underscores certain kinds of thought and makes thought dense and oblique with labors, the constant scanning of possibilities, and an attunement to the amassed detritus of cruel or surprisingly gentle events” (23). This process of mattering may open up new forms of relationality and new ways of thinking/feeling. In this practice, reality and imagination are not opposed, but animate each other.

My first analysis ended before it really began, in part because the screen never materialized as a surface for imaginative contact with the real. One day, gazing out my window, I shared a dream-image of my garden as a couch. Perhaps I dreamed of the real garden as an imaginary couch, and the real couch—in an office I had never physically visited—as an imaginary garden. The analyst found it troubling that I would use the garden in this way, because it did not belong in the customary office frame. The screen between us was flat, and left no space to meander into the unknown or reanimate a sense of what matters in this disrupted time.

I recognize this trouble in my work as an educator, too. Embodied reality is fractured, and it is elusive to sense the contours of the matter we are learning and thinking together. A principle that grounds my practice is to consider living material as its own guide to engagement. Instead of comparing our current experience with a fantasied version of what could have been, together we explore how to use the objects that are available, including communicative technologies for multimodal engagement with texts, images, concepts. In this way we cultivate a practice of imagination in order to become more deeply present with reality, and cultivate a practice of engagement with reality in order to become more deeply imaginative.

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In the Space Between

Joanne Shurter, LMFT

I sit

You sit

it is quiet

the silence feels good between us

My mind is empty

there is nothing there

but resting in our quiet

resting in the waiting

I wait

And then you speak

And when you speak, it is lovely to me

from somewhere unknown, within you

a thought you had not thought before

And my mind takes up step

as we walk into

the no-longer-silence

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Title: String Ensembles with Piano
24x20 Acrylic

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We Don't Talk About Music (No, No, No)

Adam Blum, Psy.D.

When the prolific musicalist Lin Manuel Miranda did not become the 17th person in history to have won all four major awards for entertainment (otherwise known as “EGOT”) at the Oscars in March, it may have been because Disney neglected to submit the right song for the Academy’s consideration. That distinction surely belonged to “We Don’t Talk About Bruno,” the viral sensation from the film, *Encanto* (2021), that became the most successful crossover success in the history of the studio (eclipsing “A Whole New World” from *Aladdin* in 1993). It’s a curious achievement given that “Bruno” is essentially an homage to the ordinary familial collusion often discovered at the heart of intergenerational transmission of trauma.

The ostensibly ostracized Uncle Bruno of the song’s title is, in the cautious parlance of our times, “mentally ill,” though it will be part of the work of the film (as in the work of psychoanalysis) to redescribe this madness as the engine of his family’s transformation. (All of Miranda’s musicals ask who tells our stories, and how they tell them.)

Bruno, haunted by the past, talks eerily predictive prophecies of the family’s future; the family, in turn, “don’t talk about Bruno,” though of course they sing about him. And we, apparently more than ever in Disney history, sing along. Perhaps the infectious appeal lies in the way the rhythm of the chorus carries the four words of its title in what must be the most infectious cha-cha-chá lilt since Santana covered Tito Puente’s “Oye Como Va” in 1971 [or at least since Santana and Rob Thomas’ colossal hit, “Smooth” (1999), the number one single at the turn of the most recent century.]

Miranda wraps the line around a swaying half-step chord change (VI-V), and a hook is born. We are forever hooked by what we (our families) don’t talk about, what we cannot bear to say among one another. And yet we are enchanted by the gravitational pull of this elision. (The Spanish word *encanto* plays upon this very duality, the charm and the spell of something that exceeds language, for better and for worse).

In psychoanalysis, the invitation to say whatever comes to mind, which Freud called free association, reliably reveals this fascination. Freud realized that what we don’t talk about is always uncannily close, never far from one’s mind, from the tip of one’s tongue. (Bruno, it turns out, has been hiding in the attic all along.) The burial ground of what we don’t talk about in our families (“We Don’t Talk About Homo,” anyone?) becomes the fertile ground of psychoanalysis; telling me what’s on your mind, the analyst promises, will really give us something to talk about. (The same duality is at play in “No Me Diga” – lit. “Don’t tell me!” – from Miranda’s first musical, *In The Heights*; a beauty salon chorus resounds a beautifully Winnicottian appetite for surprise: “Tell me something I don’t know...!”)

In Freud’s psychical economy, it is more expensive to not talk about something than to talk about what comes to mind; in Miranda’s musical economy, this sunk cost is reinvested as an unforgettable hook. This hook is practically useless for meaning-making (the wild success of Miranda’s second musical, *Hamilton*, had less to do with tracing our collective history than with rhythmizing it), but entirely practical for structuring musical temporality, for

letting us be moved by the music of what we don't talk about.

If Freud built psychoanalysis around what we say (and more importantly, what we don't mean to say, what 'slips') when we are free to say anything, music builds conditions for feeling beyond the limits of what we can talk about. Herein lies the deeply musical logic of the psychoanalytic frame; it is only against its bound rhythm that anyone actually feels free to associate. And only through this unbound spirit can we discover or remember what we don't talk about. (We talk about anything to not talk about something.)

Music lets us play what we can't say, which is one reason we may be reluctant to talk about it. In psychoanalysis we say whatever comes to mind so that we can get on with our lives, to get something out of the way; but we only need to talk about music when we need help finding our way into it, which is a useful model for music education, and perhaps for psychoanalysis.

But of course the wrong words can ruin the music. So we (the family of Freud's familiars) must occasionally talk about when to talk about what we don't talk about, and when to let the music speak louder than words ever could.

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The Lost Mother In “ The Lost Daughter” - A Film Review

Ana Claudia Fossen

This year we had the pleasant surprise of watching the movie *The Lost Daughter*, an adaptation of Elena Ferrante’s book of the same name, directed by Maggie Gyllenhaal.

In this exquisite adaptation of Ferrante’s controversial reflections, the film focuses, not coincidentally, on the unspeakable anxieties and social pressures that motherhood and the feminine have always suffered. For Ferrante’s readers, it is known that the text explores much more than the endless struggle for a social position of the feminine.

In her work, the author reveals the complex relationship between mothers and daughters as well as the relationship between generations of women, while also considering the intricate interconnections between the feminine and the culture. She also explores female sexuality and especially the interrelation between narcissism, desire, and love.

Before we enter into the possible readings about the narrative of Leda’s life, it would be interesting, although risky, to differentiate between maternal desire and its function, as Jacques Lacan proposed to us, and maternal love.

Since the beginning of the 19th century, we observed an idealization of the maternal, which Colette Soller describes as the maternal “communitary utopies”, that led woman/mothers to be categorized as obsessive, possessive, oblivious or disconnected, adequate or not. The socially described maternal love is not, however, what defines the subject. Instead, the mother’s desire is at the core of the emergence of the subject - the woman who is incomplete and therefore will never fully satisfy her child’s desire leads to the operation that initiates the existence of a barred subject and an object that is the source of its desire.

Leda’s character and her harrowing journey show us this separation very well. What is not very clear about Leda in the film overflows in Ferrante’s book. Leda, much like the doll she abducts, was inanimate, empty of a maternal desire. Leda tells us in a recurring way that her daughters, her husband, and even the Neapolitan family, subtract from her something essential. She carries inside an ongoing experience of expropriation. Any desire, however minimal, that is addressed to her is felt as something that will rip her apart. In the film, we see several scenes of her agony as she struggles to take care of her daughters or her house as well as the discomfort she feels in the presence of other female characters in the plot.

Moments of comfort and joy will appear when her desire as a woman is prioritized and invoked by male figures. She conveys that being a desiring/object was easier than being a mother/castrated and therefore unable to sustain and transmit the position of a barred subject. In the film, Leda’s mother was mentioned briefly. In her book, however, there are abundant descriptions of how much Leda struggles to not follow her mother’s steps, which she does by trying to become only a woman while her dread for the maternal role arises, much beyond the difficulties that are real to this experience. Her desire may only exist in relating with men and books.

Maybe Leda never wanted to be a mother? It is possible. However, it is not clear whether there was hope in the desire to be a mother (Soler,2005, p.98) or if simply her

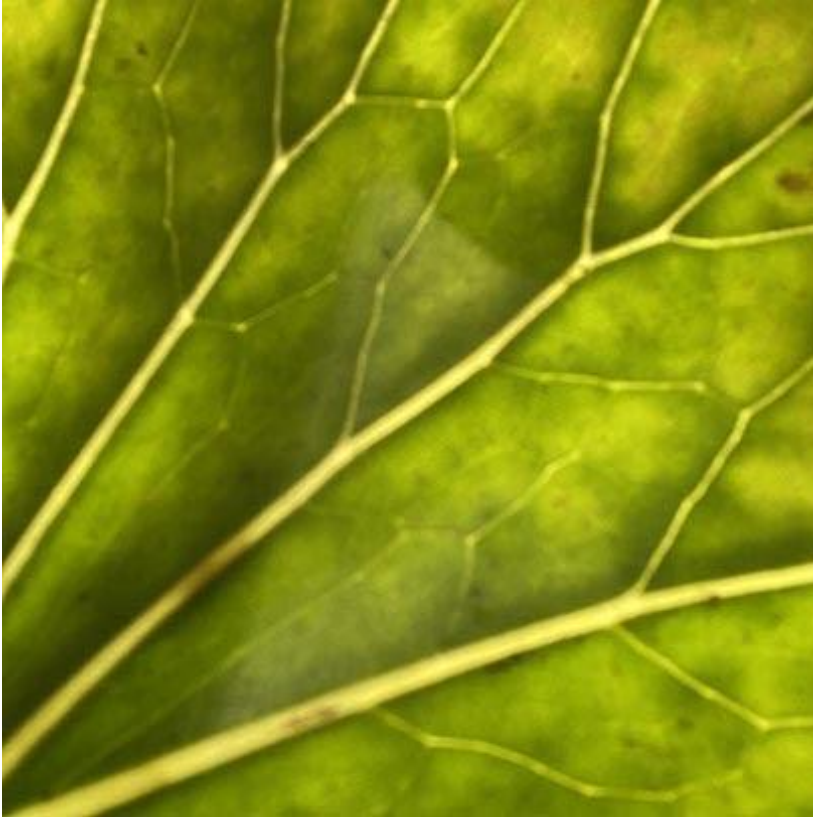
regrets and her anguish would throw her directly into social assumptions about maternal malice. What is evident is the constant emptiness she experiences. The author recounts beautifully that Leda spent a few hours wishing to hear their daughters’ voices over the phone, and when the daughters finally made a call, she felt dead. We understand more about this dilemma when we learn about Leda’s registering of her mother’s anguish and the ways in which she experiences herself in a position of object/waste. The horror of the maternal choices drop her into a void and prevent her to find other desiring ways of living motherhood. We notice her horror for the maternal position.

Leda was very envious and extremely competitive against everything related to the feminine. Single, married, attractive, ugly women, mothers or not, were annoying to her. She was deeply disturbed by her adolescent daughter’s attracting the male gaze - she did not want them to be participants of the women’s desire. Nothing related to the feminine escaped her, leaving the male characters as supporting actors in her endless narrative in which it was possible to desire, to be desired, or to be dead. But why could a woman only be either in the register of what is maternal or in the register of what is feminine? Could those two registers co-exist, even if bearing necessary struggle?

Leda could never work through the fact that desire and love are not the same thing. Desire is, by definition, the trace of a fundamental lack while love is the incessant experience of lack, again and again. After all, to love is the ongoing assumption of a desire which is always a desire for something else. Based on the Lacanian statement that the subject is supposed to be in love with what the other does not have, Leda would have been able to re-create this narrative and find another solution to her solitude. It is possible to offer what one did not have as long as one may find a way to make sense of what one received.

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Breathing

Terrance McLarnan, MFT, PsyD

A leaf
reaches out
for life
as it
brings
life
to
me
to
You.

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Reaching toward Meaning: Bringing Trauma Techniques to Psychoanalysis

Vivian Dent, PhD

In the early 2000s, I stepped outside the psychoanalytic world that had been my home for 20 years. By then, I had experienced the life-changing power of psychoanalysis, but I had also witnessed the analyses of many dedicated people, working with kind and skillful practitioners, founder abruptly, or shatter beyond repair. I saw that despite intense theoretical debates, no analytic school consistently negotiated these destructive eruptions of need and rage.

The impasses involved early trauma, often sexual. I thought about Freud's repudiation of the seduction hypothesis, Ferenczi's exile from analytic respectability, and how discussion of trauma, outside the mother-infant attachment bond, was stifled for nearly a century. (Kernberg's 1984 volume, *Severe Personality Disorders*, does not even mention trauma in its index.)

Searching for a wider scope and new approaches, I trained in EMDR, sensorimotor psychotherapy, and Internal Family Systems, among other modalities. The concepts "holding" and "containment" took on deeper meaning for me. A psyche that's held, and contained when holding slips, can reflect and connect. Traditionally, analysts use verbal engagement and attention to the therapeutic relationship to hold and contain our patients. We think much less about external containment. There's not much literature about the containing function of financial security, stable housing, adequate healthcare, meaningful work, supportive relationships, spiritual beliefs—or just

being free to leave home without fearing attack because you appear to belong to a targeted group.

In the classic mid-century presentations of psychoanalysis with severe disturbances, troubled patients engaged in profound, often inspiring, analytic work. Most, though, were young and white, and all were living in safe, privileged conditions. Margaret Little was a working analyst, but Winnicott could hospitalize her during a month-long vacation while she was deeply regressed, knowing she would receive attentive care. Rosenfeld's psychotic patient Mildred lived, financially secure, with her extraordinarily long-suffering mother. Marion Milner's famous patient Susan lived with the Winnicotts. Searles, Sullivan, and Fromm-Reichmann were often treating residential patients. These analysts could all assume that more intensive treatment, including an inpatient stay, offered genuine backup, not just a stopgap measure for acutely dangerous states. They offered their patients intensive, truly open-ended analyses.

We rarely work in conditions that approach these. Our patients may lack money, time, or both, and deep regressions, whatever their potential value, remain out of the question when folks have children to care for and rent to pay. Social safety nets are in tatters. Add in the internal minefields that severe trauma creates, and we begin to see how much we must navigate without the support systems renowned mid-century analysts could count on.

When there's too much to hold, you have to grow the container or shrink the contained.

Unheld or uncontained psyches resort to desperate measures, attempting to shrink the contained by splitting it off through numbing, distraction, denial, and projective processes. They challenge our desire to promote integration by clinging to the perceived safety of dissociation.

Work with these patients especially can benefit from the insights of trauma theory. Trauma affects not just emotions, beliefs, and fantasies, but also the nervous system, the hormonal system, memory, musculature, and perception. Such understanding can help our patients shrink the contained in more deliberate, useful ways, both temporarily and long-term.

They can use it to expand their psychic container, opening themselves to more and more of their experience.

A sophisticated colleague recently came to me for consultation on a difficult case. While discussing the dangers of intense dependent regressions with early trauma, she said, "Of course, that's inevitable at some point." But what if it's not, or it's far less inevitable than we've come to believe?

Trauma techniques share a set of core organizing principles that attenuate the risks.

Present-moment mindfulness encourages steadiness, even in the presence of intense feelings.

Attention to the body increases insight into the unthought knowns of procedural memory while helping patients use internal signals to pace their work. Cultivating self-regulatory capacities, and maintaining felt contact with present

safety, build confidence in the ability to handle formerly overwhelming states. Close attention to dissociative processes guards against frustrating repetitions and shocking reversals. Shifting emphasis toward patients' relationships to their inner worlds, and away from dependent transference dynamics, supports self-care and self-compassion in the face of mis-attunements and disruptions. [I discuss these principles in more detail, along with case examples, in two recent articles (Dent 2020, Dent 2021)].

None of these changes involves making the work mechanical or detracting from depth or insight. Trauma processing techniques can seem almost magical when conditions are right, transforming long-held fear and pain into equanimity within just a few sessions. But EMDR, IFS, and somatic therapies don't just process trauma, they create gateways to meaning. I'll end with a simple example, from work with an exceptionally kind woman in the midst of a painful divorce. I asked her to slowly and mindfully let her arm extend, as if she were reaching for help. She laughed uncomfortably. "It won't move. Wow. I can't reach out. What do you know." "You want to work on that?" "Absolutely."

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The Creative Inner Work Of Group Consultation

Hugh Grubb, Psy.D.

What would it be like if a group case consultation was more about consulting ourselves in the company of others: inner consultation? We would be exploring how we relate to our own experience, locating and interpreting our own particular inner responses as participants in the emotional field and then turning that inner resonance into a process of imaginative conjecture together. The group focus would include how we arrive at our ideas and formulations – how we turn underlying subjective responses to the presentation into creative ways of thinking and working. Time would be allowed to follow up on these formulations by inquiring into how the original stimulus presented itself to the participant – before it was organized mentally. What had the thought been triggered by; what associations resulted? The goal would be to discover more about what, and how, we think rather than exclusively what others think.

This idea comes from the view that what really underlies therapeutic change is the experience of being truly seen, in the sense of being known from the inside by another. That is, another person has been ready to accept the emotional consequences of knowing what it means to live my life. It is this willingness which underlies the actual influence of the therapist. Why couldn't a group case consultation mirror that process more? The authentic inner responsiveness of group participants can directly stimulate the presenter's use of their own subjectivity in deepening their understanding of their patient.

In this case a more appropriate spatial metaphor for the process would be that of a matrix or grid connecting everyone to each other, rather than a wheel with the presenter as the hub and the other participants as the spokes. The latter tends to collapse the conversation into a series of dyads losing the quality of a collective dream – the deepening dimensionality that a collaborative group discussion provides.

However, we are all familiar with how group discussions can collapse from this containing function into one of inserting our conclusions into the case as if each participant was treating the patient themselves. What pulls us back into this privileged attitude of impersonal advice-giving from a supposedly neutral distance from our subjective biases?

Presenters may wish to take refuge in the group's seemingly objective tactical solutions because of anxiety over loss of an intuitive connection with their patient. There is considerable pressure on the group to identify with this role. We seem to see things so much more clearly when we are the consultant. Perhaps because we see a less complex, more generic version of the patient, perhaps because we don't have to deal with the full emotional consequences of what we think. Yet consultation, and therapy, should not be seen as opportunities for the masterful exchanging of our ego solutions for the others'. Our motto should be: First, do no good.

Trying to do good obscures our view of our own conflicted feelings and

doubts and disconnects us from awareness of our potential to actually do harm. A participant who adopts a position of confident helper may, for example, distract the presenter from the realization that their insecurity mirrors that of their patient and actually undermines their confidence. It also impinges on productive consideration of anxiety in the parallel process. If an idea is to have a beneficial transformative effect it will not be based on seeking to improve the understanding or behavior of the presenter. Instead it will come out of a simultaneous realization in participants of our permeability to emotional resonating with others.

Inner consultation is not merely waiting to receive messages from within. It involves a willingness to consciously endure feelings of emptiness and inadequacy, and to tolerate the incoherence of our thoughts as we struggle to stay creatively present to our experience. A group ethos of respect for, and participation in, this struggle helps the presenter accept their own. The resulting freedom from the tendency towards heroic self-expectations and self-reproach may allow the presenter to regain their faith in the process and their curiosity about what is actually happening.

To facilitate such a group experience, humility and openness are essential. The rush to explanation and solution is slowed down and the reactions and perspectives of everyone are attended to. Time is allowed for a state of shared unknowing and immersion in emotional

experience. Subtle misgivings and fleeting associations are sought out. Participants reflect not only on what they hear, but on what they say. The preconceived assumptions that underlie opinions are brought to light as the group seeks ways of seeing into the ways of being another. This attitude towards group process would then more closely reflect the practice of psychoanalysis itself.

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Poem in March 2022*

Jennifer Davids, Ph.D.

Z

Z

Z

It used to be one of my favourite letters

No more

Z for Zelensky

Z on a Russian tank

How I hate this war

Z for Zebra crossing

Knocking Zs

The meaningless repetition

Everything feels extreme

Black Or White

Red or Green

Alive or Dead

Upside down

Z

Z

Z

The grave of uncertainty

.

.

.

.

*The letter "Z" is to be pronounced Zed not Zee.

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The Feeling of Real

Eric Essman, M.A.

Book Review:

Coming to Life in the Consulting Room

Thomas Ogden

New York: Routledge (2021)

175 pp.

Perhaps nobody is more equipped to theorize psychoanalysis (psychoanalytically) than Thomas Ogden. His beautifully written, oft-cited publications have had an extraordinary influence locally and internationally, while his avoidance of conferences and other public fora render him an esteemed but paradoxical figure: both ubiquitous and absent. One thus envies his patients, with whom he models the clinical evolution described in “Coming to Life in the Consulting Room,” his most recent collection of papers. In the Preface, Ogden champions the development of a new and generative analytic sensibility—toward new qualities of receptivity and responsiveness to what is occurring in the analytic session. (p. xiv.)

“Sensibility” denotes attunement to emotional, linguistic and sensuous nuances; in Bion’s (2018) terms, “sensitivity to the totality of the patient.” (p. 325). In Ogden such sensitivity is coupled with the analyst’s integral sense of his own distinct contribution (e.g., reveries) to the co-constructed “Analytic Third” (Ogden, 1994). Sensibility, a precondition of empathy and tact, is often characterized as “refined” or “educated,” which imply a capacity for development. Abetted by insight and dialectical ingenuity – Ogden’s (1989) proposal of the autistic-contiguous position, for example – these qualities provide the basis for considering an ontological psychoanalysis that aims to facilitate the *patient’s experience of creatively discovering for himself, of being and becoming more alive, more himself.* (ibid., italics in original)

In this collection, such development is not only evident from the abundant clinical material Ogden presents, but also in his readings of foundational texts for the ontological turn in psychoanalysis by Winnicott and Bion, for whom the focus is the range of states of being experienced by the patient (and the analyst) and the states of being the patient (or analyst) is unable to experience. (p. 21)

In this respect, they’ve moved from the Freud-Klein-Fairbairn conception of mind as a [processor] of experience to a conception of mind as a process located in the very act of experiencing. (p. 117, italics in original)

Accordingly, “mind” evolves from “a noun to a verb” (ibid.), one variety of which is alpha function in act, which makes experience possible. Ogden has few U.S. peers (Howard Levine comes to mind) in his explication of the work of classic authors. His deeply engaged reading is evident in Chapters 2 and 4, where he wrestles with the complexities of two of Winnicott’s most enigmatic papers: “Communicating and not communicating leading to a study of certain opposites” (1963 [1965]) and “Use of an object and relating through identifications” (1967 [1972]). Most admirable is Ogden’s admission of perplexity yet unhesitating

willingness to confront the ambiguity at the center of the object-use paper, where he ponders the meaning of “destruction”:

"Is Winnicott talking about the fantasy of destroying the object or the subject's really destroying the object as a separate entity? And what would it mean to actually destroy the external object?" (pp. 77-78.)

He thus poses the questions that we should ask if we read critically, without muting the contradictions that impact us. Ogden insists If reading is to be a real experience, the reader must *become the reality* of reading the piece of writing (p. 136, italics Ogden's) and he claims the necessity of “participating in writing the text” (p. 72) via a creative intervention. He turns our attention from the infant's/patient's unconscious destructive projections to the caregiver's analyst's consciousness of failure, tantamount to their identity-linked maternal/therapeutic function actually being destroyed, at least for a time.

Survival results in “the feeling of real” (p. 33) for both the infant/patient and the caregiver/analyst. Once (not once and for all!) liberated from omnipotence, the infant can proclaim (note the astonishing shift in the significance of “you”) his discovery of external reality: “I destroyed you. I love you. You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.” (p. 79)

Clinical discussion is beyond the scope of this review except to say that Ogden's incisive readings are here supported by case material that is both illustrative and with a narrative richness all its own. The relation of theory to practice in this volume is thus aptly captured by Bion's double arrow, .

As a double coda, Ogden offers psychoanalytic readings of poems by

Frost and Dickinson and a short piece, “Analytic writing as a form of fiction”.

With these, we experience the author's own becoming more alive as he “becomes” the poem he reads (p. 162), as he testifies to “the delight to be had in experiencing one's own creativity.” (p. 165) We can be grateful that he shares his delight.

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“Wordless Spaces”
20x24
Acrylic on Canvas

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Dreams Wide Open

Cláudia C. Antonelli

“We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep”. Prospero’s line in *The Tempest* (act 4, scene 1) by Shakespeare is striking. But, after all, what is this stuff that we are made of? Is there something at all that we have in common with the stuff of dreams, or is it merely our pretension? Are we that vast?

Our mind is that vast. Freud already knew this more than a century ago when he wrote the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). He left his neurologist colleagues high and dry when he affirmed that a dream was much more than a simple brain discharge - as his colleagues believed. His colleagues used the ruler of Cartesian logic over all the wealth of the deepest, most mysterious and uncontrollable human subjectivity.

Freud knew the importance of what he was saying. It took him a little over 700 pages (for his complete works, which finally awarded him the Goethe Prize for Literature in 1930)² to state it with all the words: the depths of our minds are boundless.

In regard to dreams, he understood that what they represented was closer to what laymen of the time thought, rather than contemporary scientists. In other words, Freud believed that instead of a cerebral discharge, the images in dreams revealed something more of the dreamer.

No size, no weight, no age, no name, no language bounds them – dreams are infinite products of a dreamer’s mind. In a few dreaming hours, the “outside life” gives in to this other dimension of ourselves, often so neglected³.

That said, dreams are not much more than we are. They are what we are, in all our raw and fair states. Yes, we are made of the same stuff.

Technically, their contents being not exactly the premonition that was once attributed to them (as in the Classical and Middle Ages but still today); but rather, a glimpse of knowledge into our own timeless mind (present, past and future all together): desires, fears, anguish and everything else that is ours, often unknown in wakefulness. After all, the dream is ours. The nocturnal mind, disconnected from the dictates and shackles of shared social reality, often reveals more to us than our rational diurnal mind, domesticated and restricted to certain levels.

A book entitled *The Third Reich of Dreams*⁴ explores the contents collected from the dreams of approximately 300 people in Germany, between 1933 and 1939, on the eve of World War II.

The result is surprising. What was not conveyed by public means of communication at day time (radio and TV), proved ‘detected’ by the human unconscious found in these dreams. Again, not because they were premonitory dreams, but because the truth, poorly camouflaged, was there, unannounced and tentatively hidden: the annihilation of individuality, the overwhelming totalitarian system, the threat and the horror that were to come, all together generating unconscious registers of fear and humiliation, revealed by these dreams at the very first years of the Nazi rise, while still advertisements of a powerful and

successful Germany went on at the time on their media.

Falling walls - according to a doctor's dream, in 1934, in which the walls of his apartment would fall during which a megaphone announced: "According to the edict on the elimination of walls..."; foreign invasion and foreign incomprehensible languages - as a dream in Russian of a German cleaning lady who did not speak the language; the terror that settled, distorted, masked, came to light in each one of these collected dreams. From the mind of common people: the milkman, the seamstress, the neighbor, the driver, even before 'reality revealed itself'. The extraordinary mind or – the psychic device – of common people captured and revealed the truth that, as the popular saying goes, always reveals itself. In this case, through dreams, despite all opposing forces.

In São Paulo, Brazil, a similar project has been going on since last year⁵ in relation to the COVID-19 crisis: hundreds of dreams have been collected for the project that is masterfully under way. Similarly, the researchers' intent is to study how people's mind absorbed and worked through the moments of generalized threat, uncertainty, fears and so many other and intense feelings that the Pandemic brought about.⁶

Undoubtedly, the current war against Ukraine will be summoning its citizens to elaborate the menace and horror with all their minds' capacity as well. One may not stop the war or save the political issues that barbarically go on in the world; but they may start to work through their own conscious and unconscious

anguish and conflicts that run through their lives and minds.

In a dream, we too may make war but also make peace, solve unsolvable conflicts, and in good outcomes, mitigate some of the anguish that invades us day after day. Ultimately, in an attempt to solve the most difficult conflicts of all, the duel between life and death, and our finitude.

This is what Freud admirably described, and what an analysis reiterates every time, with the traveler on board the couch where the Psychoanalytic dyad ventures now and then into the depths of a dream.

One might think we are only made of blood, muscles, bones and joints (so we are). Or that we are made of what we eat, nutritionists will say. "A little bird told me that we are made of stories", explains the poet Eduardo Galeano. "We are made of silence and sounds" sings the Brazilian popular singer, Lulu Santos.

1

² Freud, S. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (available in various languages).

³ Certainly, when dreaming is possible, which is not always the case. See Ogden, T. (2005). This Art of Psychoanalysis: Dreaming Undreamt Dreams and Interrupted Cries, The New Library of Psychoanalysis.

⁴ By Charlotte Beradt, Aquarian Press, 1985.

⁵ Carried out at the University of São Paulo (USP).

⁶ This sort of project is being done at other countries as well.

However, “we are made of the same matter as the stars”, the dear astrophysicist Carl Sagan informed us. We are made of all this...

It's already night, I write to you from a laptop on my bed and at this moment I'm sleepy. I'm made of the same cotton with millions of threads of these so-called Egyptian sheets. I'll embark into my own dreams, as my nocturnal mind begins to emerge.

For “The rest is silence” Shakespeare says as the final words in the lips of Prince Hamlet. In spite of these never stopping turmoil times, I wish you good dreams.

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Reading Ulysses Out Loud

Diane M. Borden, Ph.D.

On March 15, 2013, three colleagues and I, on a prophetic whim, decided to read James Joyce's *Ulysses* out loud. We finished on August 22, 2021. During this time significant events shaped our lives. One member sadly passed (*requiescat in pacem*). But we kept reading - between trips abroad, psychoanalytic study groups, conferences, the pandemic. Our voices developed different and unique patterns: quiet tone, precise articulation, Irish brogue. We usually met two or three times a month, sometimes accompanied by a glass of wine, green olives, sometimes Irish cheese.

So... "stately, plump" Buck Mulligan enters with a bowl of lather, and states with mock sacerdotal solemnity, "Introibo ad altare Dei." We enter to spend the day with Leopold Bloom; we will walk with him through the streets of Dublin. We meet bawds in the night, braggarts in the pubs, royals in their castles, pols with their polls, priests, bishops, cardinals - they all come.

So many verbal and rhetorical styles populate Joyce's unique use of language: Lists, catalogs, digressions, alliteration, stream of consciousness, portmanteau words, class-based brogue, fragments of Latin, French, Italian, Greek, German, and Gaelic!

As both an epic and Menippean satire, *Ulysses* reinvents conventions of the epic: invocations, myth, allusions, narrative immensity, gods and God, but it also answers the demands of the menippean form, composed in a way to put everything in the text—history, science, heroes and villains, old old stories, world religions—and just about everything else. Menippian satire is a hybrid fantasy. Joyce's fellow Modernists—the grand triumvirate of Pound, Eliot and Himself—revolutionized the language and structures of the new art in their friendship and collaborative endeavor. (Indeed, Pound even added more languages to *The Cantos*—Provencal, Chinese, and Egyptian hieroglyphics. *The Cantos* might be called Menippean tragedy. Eliot called *The Wasteland* mock epic.)

Both beginnings and endings were important to all three authors. Joyce's homage to Homer is sustained throughout *Ulysses*, rather than explicit at the beginning. Pound alludes to *The Odyssey*: "And then went down to the ship,/set keel to breakers." In the "Wasteland," Eliot refers to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* through a paraphrase of Middle English, "April is the cruellest month...." Pound's *Cantos* is an incomplete work, ending with fragments; but the repeated phrase, "I cannot make it cohere" is, in fact, the emotional ending. *The Wasteland* concludes with "Shanti Shanti Shanti". But Joyce's *Ulysses* ends with orgasm.

Joyce was a devotee of numbers, dates, details, and elaborations of these coordinates. In *Ulysses* Joyce obsessed on birth and death dates, on beginnings and endings. In that spirit: Joyce died on January 13, 1941 in Zurich; Pound in Venice on November 1, 1972; Eliot in London, January 4, 1965. We might elaborate. Eliot lies in the Poets Corner of Westminster Abbey, Pound in the famous cemetery of Isola de San Michele in Venice; but Joyce was buried anonymously, somewhere in Zurich. His wife, Nora, asked the Irish government to have his remains be buried in Ireland. But that was denied. Yet, his memorial may best be commemorated on the yearly celebration of Bloomsday, June 16, in Dublin, where the entire

novel is read out loud, the day (in 1904).

Leopold Bloom did his walk around the city. (On the day of Pound's death, in San Francisco, in North Beach, the entire text of *The Cantos* was read out loud.) Reading out loud has its aficionados.

We began our reading on March 15, 2013 and ended on August 22, 2021. It took eight years, five months, and six days. That means, 3,050 days, 73,167 hours, 4,390,020 minutes, 263,520,800 seconds. Latitude in San Francisco, 37.775 degrees, Longitude, -122.519 degrees. Latitude in Lakspur, 37.934 degrees, Longitude -122.535 degrees.

Once published, the novel received mixed reviews. A judge at its obscenity trial described it as "emetic...but not pornographic." Some literature professors didn't understand it, so they said, "Don't bother." Others made whole careers studying it. Snooty Virginia Woolf said "No, no, no."

But on this centennial celebration we say:
Oh Jimmie Joyce, you were a darlin' lad,
half blind as a bat, but you kept writing,
writing; your batty daughter, Lucy, kept
babbling, babbling, waking the voice of
Finnegan. Thank you for this masterpiece
of World literature! Thank you for the
citizens of Dublin. But most of all, thank
you for Molly Bloom's "Yes, I said Yes,
Yes."

At the end of our reading, in spontaneous
unison, we shouted in joyous voice
through the Zoomaspere. RE-JOYCE!

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Sun Bleached Pinks

Terrance McLarnan, MFT, PsyD



Nestled in the crevices
of nicely laid stones
life lives, I was
stopped & arrested
detained, by these
sun bleached pinks.
These two flowering beauties
snuggle, no relation
other than being alive &
mated by gusts of wind.
Their blooming affections
intertwine,
perhaps only briefly
petals, leaves, stems
tangled green,
what belonged to whom
was of no concern.
Surely to be torn apart
by hurried hands, yet
their seeds lay together
deeply buried
untouched
never seen.

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The Community Psychoanalysis Track and Consortium: An Overview

Rachael Peltz and Francisco J. González

A Pandemic Poem (1918)

Michael Korson, MFT

Cria Cuervos: Political And Personal Trauma In A Child's Mind

Mary T. Brady, Ph.D.

Aesthetic Psychoanalysis

Eric Essman, M.A.

Parasite - And The Parasitic Areas Of Our Mind

Cláudia C. Antonelli

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We welcome submissions:

- Essays, memoirs, papers, book/film reviews, reflections: 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. All manuscripts will be reviewed, and a notice of acceptance, revision, or rejection will be sent out two weeks after the submissions deadline.

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- Deadline for submission: 3/30/22 (May issue) and 9/30/22 (November issue)



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Title: Something is reborn after the destruction

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The Community Psychoanalysis Track and Consortium: An Overview

By Rachael Peltz and Francisco J. González

In 2019, the Board of Directors of the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California (PINC) unanimously passed a motion to offer the Community Psychoanalysis Track (CPT) to its candidates as part of their training to become certified psychoanalysts. PINC requires three supervised Psychoanalyses for progression (one case in addition to the two required by the IPA); the CPT would now allow candidates to complete a community project under a group supervision model we will shortly describe to count as the third case. We see this as a groundbreaking step in which the formal definition and scope of psychoanalysis is fundamentally transformed; it marks a sea change in what can be formally considered the domain of psychoanalysis, whom it serves, and what is deemed acceptable to be taught in a psychoanalytic Institute. It opens a horizon of recognition for the multiplicity of ways one can be a legitimate psychoanalyst and broadens the domain of psychoanalysis to include the forms it takes outside of institutes.

We are experiencing an extended moment of turmoil in the world and, therefore, also within institutional psychoanalysis: almost universally, institutes and organizations have been confronted with a host of concurrent social traumas, from the pandemic with its lockdowns and remote work to economic instability and political upheavals, coupled with greater consciousness about racial inequality and the ravages of the climate crisis. These floods of distress and anxiety have impacted analytic work globally, the

structures and frames of practice and training, and the psychic problems and material content of analyses, classrooms, and supervisions. We too are distressed by the relentlessness of these upheavals, but we also recognize here a window of opportunity. What feels different to us, in this moment, is a renewed and fervent interest in community psychoanalysis as a legitimate and even, dare we say, critical dimension of psychoanalytic training.

The notion of community psychoanalysis is hardly new. There have been many instances of innovative psychoanalytically oriented programs off the couch as well as a rich body of new and old theory in assorted corners of the psychoanalytic world. Indeed, community psychoanalysis has been a vibrant part of the discipline from early in its development, taking various forms and going by many names, but not formally recognized as a legitimate kind of training in contemporary psychoanalysis. By and large, institutionalized psychoanalysis promulgates a privatized form of practice, emphasizing the conventional set-up of the dyad in the consulting room. This has effectively resulted in a rigidification of what psychoanalysis is and concretized psychoanalytic theorizing around the analytic couple. Conventional psychoanalytic training structures depend on this privatized model: the candidate must have a fairly robust private practice from which to generate patients and sufficient income to pay for individual supervision. The concretization of this set-up as the

exclusive and obvious form of training is a symptom, we feel, of a larger split in psychoanalytic thinking and practice, one which tends to divorce psychoanalysis from thinking about groups and community concerns, that is to say, from the sociopolitical dimensions of psychic life.

It was not always like this. A less known, but increasingly recovered, tradition begins with Freud's (1919) Budapest speech issuing the call for a psychoanalysis "of the people," and extends through the early efforts of the many analysts who saw themselves as part of a movement and "brokers of social change" (Danto, 2005 p. 4). This tradition was carried forward in the pioneering work of a host of community-oriented analysts like Stuart Twemlow, Bruce Sklarew, Sally Wilkinson, Neil Altman, Vamik Volkan, James Barron, Kimberlyn Leary, Lynne Layton, Ghislaine Boulanger and many others, along with the vibrant traditions of social work and community mental health. And we happily recognize the current exciting proliferation of programs—far too many to name—of community-based interventions organized by psychoanalytic institutes and organizations. Emblematic of this wave of engagement, the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA), under the leadership of Virginia Unger and Harriet Wolfe, have promoted the development of psychoanalytic community initiatives around the world, fostering them through awards and international forums. (We are proud of the fact that the CPT was a runner-up

recipient for an IPA in the Community Award in 2018.) Like other paradigmatic responses to historical moments, the one we are championing was preceded by years of dedicated effort, both within institutional psychoanalysis and within community mental health, and is nourished in an environment of creative change. We build on this legacy and offer something new. Specifically, the innovation we offer is to bring community-based practice directly into the psychoanalytic institute as a part of training.

The CPT, then, aims to revive elements of a lost or repressed tradition in psychoanalysis in two ways: (1) bringing the theory and practice of community psychoanalysis more directly and systematically into the formal training of psychoanalytic candidates; and (2) advocating for a more active and collaborative relationship between psychoanalytic institutes and the vibrant world of community mental health. Both elements are essential for the evolution that is now possible and necessary. Such a move, we believe, will not only make psychoanalysis more relevant and accessible in addressing the urgent issues that press upon us today as individuals and collectives. As importantly, it will deepen and broaden our understanding of what psychoanalysis is, has been, and can become. We see this as a move toward one of the true horizons of our discipline, an exciting frontier that will call on us to formulate more profoundly what we mean by such ideas as framing,

containment, authority, the field, intersubjectivity, objects of analysis, and—key to our model—collaboration.

While we have been referring to the CPT—that is, the track as training component—the intervention also includes the Community Psychoanalysis Consortium (CPC). From the beginning, the development of this initiative was a work of collaboration between formally trained analysts from the institute and experienced, psychoanalytically oriented clinicians actively working in community organizations. The training track emerged from and was designed by this intensive collaboration; it did not spring from within the psychoanalytic institute acting alone. The foundational quality of collaboration between institute and community is an intrinsic part of our model; we do not see how it could be otherwise. Community practitioners actively shape its form, structure, and values. Like the CPT, the CPC developed from this collaborative group, and it comprises a network of representatives from community organizations affiliated with the CPT. CPC meets quarterly and serves as a think tank and support network for taking up the many problems inherent in the community sector. It also provides a seedbed for CPT projects, acts as a source for community faculty in the track, and has begun sponsoring annual conferences focused on community work. The CPC is a critical part of this endeavor, providing a bridge and portal between institutional psychoanalysis and the world of community analytic practice outside the institute. It is deeply invested in psychoanalytic ways of thinking and intimately linked to, but independent of, the training track.

We now turn to a more detailed description of the training track itself. The CPT Steering Committee oversees all track functions and reports to the PINC board. In order to provide a foundation

in community psychoanalysis for all candidates at PINC, the CPT offers a required first-year course, Introduction to Community Psychoanalysis. All candidates take this course, regardless of whether they choose to take part in the CPT. This curriculum requirement gives all candidates a broader sense of the diverse ways to practice psychoanalysis, while also integrating the CPT into the fabric of institutional life. After completing this course, interested candidates can apply to the CPT, with the approval of their personal advisors. Once accepted to the track, they are assigned to an established project in a community agency, typically working in pairs with another candidate. Rather than providing direct clinical service, candidates facilitate reflective groups for clinicians working in community organizations. The community in question for CPT projects is, then, the community of practitioners at the community agency. Through collaboration with the agency, these projects have included the intention to carve out space for reflection and solidarity, in the thicket of the complex contingencies which beset the social service sector. A reflecting group helps expand the capacities of the individual clinician and the agency as a whole. At least as important, however, is the creation of reflective space for candidates to consider how a psychoanalytic sensibility finds a home through community. This model also makes it easier to teach candidates ways of applying the skills they have been learning as individual analysts.

To date we have had projects in an agency providing mental health services to refugee and asylum seekers; in the justice system working with social work staff; and in a community mental health agency working with peer counselors. Candidates spend three hours per week at the community agency for the duration of the academic year, and typically work

in pairs. The experience involves three segments: co-conducting the group itself, meeting between the candidate co-facilitators to debrief, and meeting with a community liaison. The liaison, a senior member of the community mental health agency, helps teach candidates about the work being done at the agency through open, unstructured dialogue. The liaison does not supervise the group the candidates conduct. Instead, supervision for the project is the purview of the Core Seminar, which meets weekly for the duration of the project and operates on a group model.

Candidates present process material weekly to the Core Seminar; this material focuses largely on process from the project group they facilitate, but also includes reflections from the debriefings of working with each other and from the meeting with the Community Liaison. The Core Seminar listens and works as a group, consisting of the CPT candidate pair, a Community Psychoanalysis Supervising Analyst (CPSA) who is assigned to each candidate, at least one Community Consultant, and, for the time being, one of the CPT directors. The Community Consultants are senior clinicians working in community mental health; while specifically not trained as institutional analysts, they work analytically. CPSAs must be credentialed according to a set of specific criteria, which includes immersion in both conventional dyadic psychoanalysis and community mental health experience. Before supervising, they must complete a yearlong CPSA supervision seminar, and once they begin to work actively in the CPT with a candidate, they continue training in a yearlong mentoring program with an experienced CPSA. The Core Seminar is thus a multidisciplinary group in which individuals occupy various positions by virtue of their specific roles. It is the group itself—polyvocal, dynamic, pregnant with tensions

and moments of meeting—that acts as the supervisor to the candidate couple. This can be an overwhelming experience at times, much as starting an individual analysis can be overwhelming, but the Core Seminar develops its capacity to hear itself on a collective level, as a group. This invariably resonates with the complex dynamics that emerge in the project group that the candidates conduct. And as a further aid to digesting the complexities of such group supervision, CPSAs meet individually with their assigned candidate at least quarterly during the year, and more, if needed.

Institutional psychoanalysis is undeniably at a crossroads. The clamor for change can be heard from almost every quarter of the psychoanalytic community, in institutes, national professional organizations, and the communities that support and surround the analytic establishment. If psychoanalysis is to remain true to its ethic of growth, change, and development, it will need to give up its too-often defensive rigidity about what constitutes “real” psychoanalysis. This means it will also need to implement structural changes to its ways of training candidates. We believe the PINC model of the Community Psychoanalysis Track and Consortium offers one such powerful intervention for the future of the discipline.

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A Pandemic Poem (1918)

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SPANISH “FLU.”

“Listen here, children,” said Deacon Brown,
“There’s something new just struck dis town;
And it’s among the white and the colored, too,
And I think they all call it de Spanish Flu.

Dey say it starts right in the head;
You begin to sneeze and your eyes turn red.
You then have a tight feeling in your chest,
And you cough at night and you just can’t rest;
Your head feels dizzy when you are on your feet;
You go to your table and you just can’t eat.
And if this ever happens to you,
You can just say you got the Spanish Flu.

Now I got a brother and his name is John
And he went to buy a Liberty Bond.
And he stopped to hear the big band play
Upon the corner of Church and Gay;
But when he heard about the Flu,
It tickled me and would tickle you;
He bought his bond and went away;
Said he’d hear the band some other day.

But just as he got down on Vine;
He began to stagger like he was blind.
And a doctor who was passing by
Said ‘What is the matter with this country guy?’
But as soon as he asked John a question or two
He said ‘Good night,’ you got the Spanish Flu.

-- Joe Bogle (1918)

October 1918: World War I rages and another, even more deadly menace, the Great Influenza, threatens the world’s population. An African American man, Joe Bogle, a resident of Knoxville, Tennessee, writes the above poem and publishes it in the October 13, 1918, local paper, *The Sunday Journal and Tribune*. There is little known about its author and to my knowledge no other poetic works of his extant. What motivated him to write the poem and the paper to publish it? Was this a way to spread the word about the growing threat? At the time there had not been much clamor about the flu in Knoxville or, for that matter, throughout the world. The first phase had been rather mild, and World War I dominated the news. Wartime censors in many countries prohibited the publication of bad news, including reporting on influenza. Overall, there was a spirit of dismissiveness and “stoicism” (Honigsbaum, 2013) about the disease. This attitude is expressed by the

poet and soldier, Wilfred Owen, who in a letter writes about the flu: “The thing is much too common for me to take part in. I have quite decided not to!” (found in Honigsbaum, 2013, p. 166.) However, with Fall 1918 came the second wave, a much more virulent mutation. October 1918 saw the most deaths worldwide.⁷ In Knoxville, at the time Bogle wrote the poem, there was a growing concern. There were about 1,000 cases (mostly soldiers stationed there) and authorities had issued stay-at-home orders similar to what we have experienced.

The poem was published under the headline: “Negro Writes Poem On “Spanish “Flu,” with the introduction: “Joe Bogle, a Knoxville negro, offers the following lines on Spanish influenza.” Was the paper providing a voice for African Americans? A token voice? This is, after all, the Jim Crow South.

There is a joking, playful tone to the poem, given its sing-song rhyme scheme and nursery rhyme framework. It seems to mock the danger. This tone is not so different than other poems written about the pandemic. But nursery rhymes may contain hidden meanings and are often written about troubling times and events. While something meant to be read to soothe children with its happy ending and rocking cadences, a nursery rhyme contains trauma and tragedy, and, according to Bettelheim (1977), offers the child the lesson that such experiences are essential to development and resourcefulness. Beneath its light surface, this poem may be a clarion call to endure and overcome, especially for the more vulnerable.

Bogle’s poem is constructed from the words of Deacon Brown. It begins as a nursery rhyme (“Listen here, children...”). His name, Brown, seems a linguist signifier that he is African American. He heralds a warning: “...something new

just struck dis town...” Influenza was, in fact, not new at the time. In the use of the phrase “something new,” I hear an echo of what is old -- the legacy of slavery. Race enters the poem in the declaration that the pandemic impacts both white and people of color. Then, like now, people of color are particularly vulnerable given inadequate access to health care. African Americans in 1918 when admitted to hospitals were usually assigned “to separate wards, often shamefully located in attics or unheated basements” (Davis, 2018, p. 154). The voice of Deacon Brown draws on the vernacular of the African American people in the use of “de” and “Dey.”⁸ The author may also be playing with the Spanish preposition (de), one that connotes possession. In this way, the more serious nature of catching the disease, being possessed by it, may be intimated.

The poem reflects on how the body is possessed, with a list of familiar symptoms. Is the poem educational, a public service announcement? If you have these symptoms, “You can just say you got the Spanish Flu.” “You can just say...” comforting and matter-of-fact language. We know something these days of the anxiety that a sore throat and sniffles raise. Is it a cold, the flu, allergies, or COVID? Perhaps there was also this anxiety as this second wave hit Knoxville and the death count rose.

Although public meeting places had been closed, localities made an exception in Knoxville and in other American cities in the fall of 1918. A national effort was underway to raise money for the war by

⁷ By 1920, the disease impacted 1/3 of the world’s population.

⁸ I found the poem originally on a website published by the Knoxville History Project. Curiously, the poem presented there differs from the original newspaper publication in terms of structure of stanzas, punctuation and, most noticeably, alteration of the vernacular language.

buying Liberty Bonds. To bolster that effort, the Knoxville authorities allowed three days of celebration, the Liberty Bond Drive, featuring bands and a parade. A carnival, it drew large crowds. Bogle references this celebration: Deacon Brown's brother has "stopped to hear the big band play / Upon the corner of Church and Gay." The poem was written in the days immediately following the event, a super-spreader of its day.

Then there are the most curious lines: "But when he heard about the Flu, / It tickled me and would tickle you. / He bought his bond and went away; / Said he'd hear the band some other day." The threat of the disease hides beneath the surface nonchalance. There is a reference to the early indication of disease (a tickle in the throat) and bemusement (the Deacon is tickled) that John has abandoned the festivities for fear of contracting the disease. John has just "heard about" the disease. Why is that? Because he is uneducated and can't read the papers? The Deacon makes light of his brother's fear, yet cases and deaths rose sharply following the festival. It would be hard for anyone, especially a person of color, to criticize the decision to allow the carnival. Such criticism would have been regarded as unpatriotic. Yet the poem, perhaps written in anger following the event, may be doing just that.

At the end of the poem, a doctor has diagnosed "this country guy" (another reference that he is African American?) with the flu and sent him home to quarantine: "'Good night,' you got the Spanish Flu." Medical advice then, as now, was to stay home and quarantine. We hear the overt reassurance but feel the hidden darker truth. Knoxville General Hospital, the only hospital in the area, just after the publication of the poem had beds for less than 1% of those inflicted (Neely, 2020).

Stylistically, the poem also reveals its hidden meanings. comprised of couplets, a form associated with love poems and children's rhymes, the poem rhymes predictably, conveying both a sense of lightness, but also intimating what else is predictable (the highly contagious illness). The implication here stylistically may be (to riff on Winnicott) that there is no such thing as a person separate from the flu. The lines themselves have a predictable cadence (usually two phrases to a line) that propels the poem along as the ill body prods on.

Bogle's poem, at once deceptively simple, operates on multiple levels: a work of art, a historical record, an informational piece, and perhaps an act of protest.

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Cria Cuervos: Political And Personal Trauma In A Child's Mind

Mary T. Brady, Ph.D.

Spanish director Carlos Saura's (1976) masterpiece *Cría Cuervos* explores the interpenetration of the past and the present when time has been fractured by a traumatic loss. *Cría's* subject is eight-year-old Ana (played by Ana Torrent), who believes she killed her dead father and is frequently visited by hallucinations of her mother (played by Geraldine Chaplin). The interpenetration of reality and fantasy is brilliantly played out in the opening sequence. In a white nightgown, Ana descends a

dark staircase. As the camera focuses on her pale, expressionless face, urgently whispered adult words—"I love you "I can't breathe" are heard from behind a closed door. A half-dressed woman runs from the room. On entering the now silent room, Ana finds her father in bed, apparently dead. Impassive, she takes a glass to the kitchen and washes it in the sink. As she opens the refrigerator, her mother comes into the shot and addresses her tenderly. Only later do we learn her mother, too, is dead.

The psychological and the political are inextricable in *Cría*. The title refers to a Spanish proverb meaning "raise ravens and they will tear your eyes out." Ana's father was a Fascist military officer, so the title implies a legacy of political and personal violence. Saura shot *Cría Cuervos* in the summer of 1975, as Spanish dictator Francisco Franco lay dying. The film premiered in Madrid in 1976, forty years after the beginning of the Spanish Civil War and received the Special Jury Prize at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival. Saura vividly depicts the way children's fragile psyches are frozen in time by trauma. Children and adolescents are often the group most affected by cultural changes and

catastrophes. They are like the canaries sent into coal mines to signal the presence of gases, imbibing cultural, societal and economic changes in a rapid and powerful way. Ana has imbibed her father's individual brutality, yet also through him, the brutality of Franco's regime. At the same time, Ana seems a 'wise' child who has experienced personal, familial and cultural disasters, grasping the violence and beauty of life, (albeit infused by a child's magical and omnipotent thinking). Ana has tried to kill her father, whom she holds responsible for the death of her mother due to his cruelty and infidelity. Ana is not actually responsible for his death, nor is her father literally responsible for her mother's cancer, yet in Ana's child mind both are true.

The next IPA Congress title (to be held in Cartagena in 2023) of 'Mind in the Line of Fire', for me, recalls Bion's bracing suggestion that the analyst needs to be able to 'interpret under fire'. The analyst of a child or adolescent is under fire much of the time. We must participate in play and react to behavior, absorbing the feelings and roles conveyed in the analytic field. We must react to behavior inside and outside of sessions, particularly with adolescents. At times we might need to confront and set limits, while struggling to retain our capacity to think. Analysts of children, adolescents and adults must struggle to think in analytic fields dominated by non-thinking states engendered by trauma and splintered by dissociation and splitting.

Trauma overwhelms the psyche, while both psychoanalysis and artistic creations such as *Cria* allow us to grapple with it. Bion was heavily influenced by his traumatic experiences in the First World War, which he entered in his own late adolescence, at age 19. The devastation of combat affected him for a lifetime. Additionally, his first wife died in childbirth. After he married his second wife, Francesca, Bion had a remarkably fertile period, during which he developed many of his seminal ideas, such as container/contained, a theory of thinking and attacks on linking. This foment of theoretical development seems related, in part, to the refuge his relationship with his wife Francesca accorded him, allowing his return to the horror of his war experience (Brown, L.J., “Bion’s discovery of Alpha Function: thinking under fire on the battlefield and in the consulting room,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 2012). Bion’s personal experience of trauma, the painful difficulty of growth, and the containment that made it possible are essential to his thinking.

Bion did not treat adolescents or younger children, yet many of his inter-related concepts, such as container/contained, maternal reverie and the development of thinking through alpha function, are highly applicable to their treatment. Bion’s premise that the purpose of analysis is the growth of the mind is synonymous with the child or adolescent analyst’s goals of fostering development and understanding impediments to development. In *The Tavistock Seminars*, Bion comments:

... people say, “It’s no good to psychoanalyse a child of two or three or five.” I have even heard fantastic statements about not being able to do anything when “the fibres are not myelinated.” The trouble with the myelinated fibres is that the person who has them is often so rigid, so structured, that you can’t get another idea through their myelin. (2005: 15)

Cria’s Ana is a child of great sensitivity, who takes in her personal and cultural surround at a depth and judges it unsparingly. Saura said, *Cría Cuervos* is a sad film, yes. But that is part of my belief that childhood is one of the most terrible parts in the life of a human being. What I am trying to say is that at that age you’ve no idea where it is you are going, only that people are taking you somewhere, leading you, pulling you and you are frightened. You don’t know where you’re going or who you are or what you are going to do” (Stone, R., *Spanish Cinema*, p. 102, Routledge, 2001). I believe Bion would sympathize.

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Aesthetic Psychoanalysis

Eric Essman, M.A.

In a recent article recounting her grandparents' acquaintance with the Joyce family, the novelist Anne Enright describes how a reader can feel a special kinship with a text (in this case, *Ulysses*):

I am talking, I think, about what it means to be a part of a tradition.... There is a sense of being both inside and outside the text, and many different forms of ownership or recognition. These feelings are not just aesthetic, they are personal. (Enright, 2021, p. 45; italics added)

With respect to poets, T.S. Eliot prescribed a link between tradition and the individual talent (which implicitly applies to the reader as well, unfortunately "othering" those outside the tradition). But is Enright's differentiation between the aesthetic and the personal tenable when considering aesthetics in a psychoanalytic context?

Aesthetics, understood as identified with emotionally significant representations, is foundational for psychoanalysis. By his own admission, Freud was incapable of experiencing pleasure from music, because he resisted being affected when he couldn't understand why. Yet Freud was stirred by works of literature and intrigued by certain paintings and sculptures. Classical mythology and drama were at the heart of his account of the human condition, Rome inspired his archeological model of the psyche, the Parthenon aroused his imagination, and he professed appreciation for the beauties of nature, in spite of their finitude.

In the dream book, Freud wrote of conditions of representability. Translating abstractions as well as charged experiences, representations deploy imagery akin to figurative language:

[D]reams and poetry...share aesthetic devices: metaphors, oxymoron, similitude, alliterations, etc., resources that contribute to the transformation of the external object with sense qualities into a symbol with emotional meaning. (Pistiner de Cortiñas, 2009, p. 61-62)

But dreams, as lived, are first presentations, and contain uninterpretable elements, according to Freud's formulation "navel of the dream" – which I associate with a link to the maternal body.

Terminology related to aesthetics appears throughout the literature: reverie, sensibility (Ogden); representation (Levine); pictograms (Ferro); attunement and rhythmicity (Benjamin); "aesthetic conflict" (Meltzer); "the aesthetic moment" (Bollas); intensity, tone, movement (Markman). In developing many of these concepts, analytic writers link clinical interactions with analysands to early developmental processes registering moments of rapport and rupture between caregiver and infant. In such cases, aesthetic responses can never be separated from what is both personal and relational. But it doesn't follow that though clinical experiences motivate reflection on their genesis, such reflection is essential to therapeutic action.

Discussing the relation between aesthetics and psychoanalysis, Henry Markman (2006) makes the following distinction:

I am not using the term “aesthetic” to indicate notions of what is beautiful or to define...an aesthetic object. Instead, I want to focus on the subjective qualities found in aesthetic experiences.
(p. 18)

Markman thus reflects what has been called “the ontological turn” from epistemology to phenomenology in psychoanalysis, often formulated as the shift in emphasis from thinking (or better, knowing) to being. This results in a turn from explanatory formulations to descriptive language or narration, with close attention to a spectrum of feeling states.

Bion is perhaps the leading figure among analysts identified with aesthetics. Accordingly, the Argentine analyst Lia Pistiner de Cortiñas, musically titled her 2009 book *The Aesthetic Dimension of the Mind – Variations on a Theme of Bion*. On the cover of the (2018) paperback edition, a photo of Bion is inset in a reproduction of Magritte’s “The treachery of images,” the famous painting of a pipe-resembling object (dis-)identified with the legend *Ceci n’est pas une pipe* – provoking an association to Freud’s cigar which is sometimes not one, and a question: is the photo of Bion not Bion? (The suspension of certainty is the point.) Bion’s contribution is extensive, complex and well beyond adequate description here, except to say that as the Magritte painting encapsulates Bion, a representation is never equivalent to the thing itself, unless, we speculate, as exemplified in dreams, played out on “another stage” (Freud 1900) for the spectatorship of the unconscious subject.

To give an account of my personal aesthetic responsiveness, I recall the performance of a young figure skater at the Winter Olympics in Beijing, whose technically impeccable short program received a perfect score, universal acclaim, and exhausted the superlatives of expert commentators. Why didn’t it move me? What I missed was the uncanny; the poignant, the enigmatic, and the excessive sexuality (Stein, 1998; Laplanche); and the internal echoes of ghosts not yet ancestors (Loewald). Evoking such attributes, aesthetic experiences approach a fundamental human mystery that broaches the sublime, whose emotional derivative is awe.

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Parasite⁹- And The Parasitic Areas Of Our Mind¹⁰

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"An organism that lives from and in another organism (the host), obtaining food from it and often causing it harm", says one of the various dictionary definitions available. I propose: there are more parasites between heaven and earth than would identify our eyes, or recognize our vain philosophy.

The excellent homonymous Oscar-winning film portrays aspects of a family that lives in a mostly parasitic way: they live "in" another family – this one with "more nutrients" – which, in time, also becomes dependent on that first family (in reciprocal parasitism). Until they find a third character, also living in a parasitic mode, in the basement of this house where these complex dynamics take place. Each one is in search of maintenance of their own survival, until the parasitic bond is threatened, and chaos sets in.

Under analysis, there are important social aspects at stake – for instance, financial needs -, but undoubtedly psychic dynamics, inter and intra ones, of individuals and groups. The psychic dynamics are the ones that will be briefly approached in this text, which will be perhaps of particular interest to therapists who work with families and couples, but also in individual practices, once the most difficult parasitism to be recognized, seems to be the one occurring unconsciously in one's own private psyche.

Parasitic modes of living and being exist in all levels of life and society. That is to say that the 'outside world' that we see – such as in this brilliant movie – may be the practical expression of inner parasitic mental and emotional forces. Ultimately, one's own psyche may foster parasitic modes of living – even within oneself and one's psychic instances - be they conscious or not.

There are many scenarios in which the parasitic dynamic may settle in while mirroring inner functioning modes: professional relationships, affective relationships, one's own relationship with the others in general, as well as with the world itself.

Our relationship with nature can be highly parasitic: I take from it what I need, I give nothing back - neither care nor repair - thus seriously damaging it. The human species seems to have lived in this way for many centuries and generations. Awareness of this relationship, which arises from the visible damage done, seems to be awakening, even if late.

Some politicians or other governmental posts can establish parasitic relationships with the government and with the resources they receive: they suck the money and the benefits,

⁹ Title of the 2019 movie by Bong Joon-ho (Korea), Oscar winning in 2020.

¹⁰ The opinions and views in this text are my own.

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and do not give anything in return, be it to a country or an institution - neither projects, nor work, nor consistent participation in the construction and modification of the national political scenario, or that of an institution. Here too, there is serious damage being done.

Other professional relationships as described above may (quite often) happen in a more personal level: people housed in their post, in their function, in their career, earning their wages and carrying out the minimum necessary motion, sometimes even simulating work, with very little actual contribution or expansion – either of themselves, or again, of the place they ‘inhabit’ (country, house or institution).

By reducing the spectrum of these lenses, we may find parasitic relationships in individual professions, in houses and in affective relationships: we ‘lodge’ in the other, with little or no development of our potential, and with little exchange with the outside world.

There are couples in which one of the pair may be characterized as living in a parasitic mode – they suck money, affection, housing: little or nothing is given in return, except the repetition of their own needs. At times wives or husbands who depend exclusively on the other's money and resources spend their time only enjoying their own subsidized life. Sometimes this is harmful to the other, other times it is by common agreement – bearing the illusion of control over the one who is parasitized (as in relationships of allowed financial/emotional dependence).

But there are also situations in which someone, even alone, parasites themselves in his/her own life: for instance, in the house where they live, without caring (for) nor repairing it, which naturally will lead to deterioration.

Ultimately, the house here is a metaphor for their own mind (and their own parasitic relationship with their psyche).

Every so often it is difficult to see or recognize a parasitic relationship, as occasionally they are subtle. However, it is even more difficult to find these parasitic parts in ourselves, in our lives: parts of ourselves that settle in certain situations, only depending and receiving, waiting for what comes from outside - from luck, "from fate", or simply from the other, without autonomy, without movement, without transformation, without growth. Nearly inevitably, only an analytical process will be able to reveal it and to work it through, with the participation of the analyst's mind as an active host to this particular analytical situation.

Naturally, it is good to clarify, a certain level of dependence and need always seem to coexist in all relationships (professional, personal, educational). This text tries to shed light on more critical situations, in which this (parasitism) would be essentially the core mechanism in place, therefore, will be to some important degree limiting and restrictive.

Monarchs, exclusively, seem to have a certain authorized parasitic role in societies (although not surprisingly they have been diminishing). They are kept by their community, as in the United Kingdom, but in some way they return to their people a sort of cultivated dream, maintaining their admiration, their adoration for royal subjects, the king, the queen, princes and princesses, which may be the incarnated unconscious wishes of some. Although, it is also known, not everyone agrees with this sort of hierarchy.

Figueiredo, an author of Psychoanalysis, in his General Theory of Care speaks

of righteous sharing or reciprocal care. Giving and receiving; caring and being cared for: reciprocal dynamics that, states the author, would be conceived from very early moments in one's life.

More precisely, since one is still a baby or a small child, in the exchanges with the mother with whom, already by then, the baby or small child would have an important role in the exchange: being able to offer something of him/herself and not only passively receive the milk or food, but also placing themselves, their small actions, their gratitude, their affection, which are then received and valued, and not disregarded for their smallness, rejected or satirized, which would be a form of rejection.

This, according to Figueiredo, would become the embryonic mode of concern for the other, and later a matter of ethical stamp in the life of the adult person: the care that was/is necessary to me, is also necessary to the other, for the preservation of ourselves and of the other, and of what is ours - our heritage (private, national and cultural). The opposite would be "pure consumerism" – in the beginning, the baby only sucks the milk, while there is no affection exchanged and his small acts (as his love) are not valued or received. Later on, this may become a consumption mode: I buy, I benefit, I give little or nothing in exchange.

In the extreme, it would mean destruction: careless actions leading to the collapse of bonds, of heritage, of life itself and of the future. As we see happening in the film, and, very unfortunately, we see happening in life, in many dimensions.

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¹² Some people really seem to take themselves for kings or queens quite easily.

¹³ Figueiredo, L. C. (2012), *As Diversas Faces do Cuidar: Novos Ensaio de Psicanálise Contemporânea* [The Multiple Faces of Caring: New Essays on Contemporary Psychoanalysis], São Paulo: Editora Escuta [Escuta Publishers], 2nd. edition.