

Welcome to the online journal of the [International Forum for Psychoanalytic Education](http://www.ifpe.org). Other/Wise is an innovative, fluid and avant-garde journal that dares to go where other publications do not venture. We welcome contributions of scholarly papers as well as personal experiences of clinical work via stories, drawings, photos and music.

Check out the web version of the journal at <http://ifpe.wordpress.com> to leave comments.

What's in a name?

Encountering ideas in ways other than expected allows us to see things we might otherwise overlook. The word otherwise suggests that experiencing that which is different can make us wise.

With this in mind we created OTHER/WISE, an unconventional online journal that makes room for the familiar and the unfamiliar in understanding psychoanalysis.

Through observation, art, reading, thinking, day dreaming and ideas not yet thought our journal pursues psychoanalysis with a language of passion and desire.

This Issue's Contributors:

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- Paul Cooper
- Laura D'Angelo
- Michael Eigen
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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

"The secret of the psychoanalytic method is the very engagement of a discourse wherein the fixity and certainty of any proffered epistemic configuration are dislodged... what psychoanalysis offers, the subject is thus its discourse as Otherwise."

Barratt, B. (1993) *Psychoanalysis and the Postmodern Impulse: Knowing and Being Since Freud's Psychology*. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore (p. 42).

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Other/Wise*. We warmly welcome Susan Flynn to the *Other/Wise* Working Group.

Our two new sections, introduced last issue, continue, with engaging and original contributions. We expect "Entering the Consulting Room," featuring articles that focus on clinical material, and "Autobiographical Discoveries: Our Psyches, Our Selves," featuring articles that focus on the personal journey, to be an integral ongoing part of *Other/Wise*.

Other/Wise continues to feature artwork, poetry, and short stories that illuminate internal unconscious process or any aspect of the human condition that engages us from a depth perspective.

We believe that learning can be a pleasure. Learn, enjoy, and please participate in our ongoing dialogue by using the feature that allows you to respond to everything published in each issue of *Other/Wise*.

Articles, art work, poetry, and short stories should be submitted electronically to Richard Raubolt, r.raubolt@gmail.com.

Richard Raubolt, Co-Editor
Merle Molofsky, Co-Editor

INTERVIEW

MICHAEL EIGEN INTERVIEW, PART II

By Richard Raubolt, Ph.D.

This is a video interview.

Please visit <http://ifpe.wordpress.com/2010/09/15/interview-with-michael-eigen-phd/> to view.

Michael Eigen, PhD, practices in New York City. He teaches at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis and the New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. He has written twenty books, including *Flames from the Unconscious: Trauma, Madness and Faith*, *The Sensitive Self*, *The Psychoanalytic Mystic*, *Feeling Matters*, and *The Psychotic Core*. His latest book is a transcription of eighteen hours of seminars in Seoul, Korea, entitled *Eigen in Seoul*. He has given a private seminar over thirty-five years on his own work and that of Winnicott, Bion and Lacan.

Richard R. Raubolt, Ph.D. practices psychoanalytic psychotherapy and has written two books, *Power Games* (which was nominated for the 2007 Gradiva Award and Goethe Prize) and *Theaters of Trauma*. Dr. Raubolt is a board member of IFPE and was 2008's conference co-chair. He is also a member of IEA and NAAP.

ENTERING THE CONSULTING ROOM

THE PERFECT STORM

By Elaine Bridge, LCSW, Psy.D.

It is not always true that I do not want to hear what my body says to me. I usually want to listen to pleasurable experiences, like walking into a beautiful room or looking at a particular Matisse painting. Through a relational experience with those objects my body produces an “mmmmmm,” an excited crescendo, followed by a calming experience that talks to me and lets me know that I have been contacted by something that knows me. When I see particular color combinations in a room I get a “wheeee” feeling that makes me want to sit there and become part of the environment. I cannot walk away and leave it. I have to tear myself away. What could be more blissful? My eyes, my emotions and my sensibilities all blend-together in an exquisite harmony that speaks to me.

I can also get images in my mind, such as pictures or thoughts, which prod me more clearly to understand what is going on between a patient and myself. That is my mind speaking to me, as I discussed in my last paper, “Pictures that I Paint in my Head.” I usually experience this kind of internal communication as a pleasant experience, leading to an “aha” moment.

Yet there are communications I get from my body that make me want to run away. This happens more frequently since I have turned sixty and feel infinitely more vulnerable than I have felt in years, maybe since childhood, and since I have been told by my health professional to listen to my body.

Recently, I had a patient who engendered messages from my body that were particularly horrifying, and which I could not regulate. A perfect storm: a patient who played out the rage she experienced emanating from the involvement with an important person who she could not control and this therapist who was hyper sensitive to rage, screaming, and grief, following the death of my own mother, the most current of several recent deaths of close loved ones.

This paper explores wanted and unwanted communications between therapist and patient, and how the unspoken becomes spoken through the therapist. As the therapist, I became the vessel through which my patient’s major dissociative communication (her inability to grieve resulting in rage) became spoken. In the communications that led up to the “Perfect Storm,” the patient’s insistence on my experiencing the exact state and psychological position was her “life or death” requirement for the work to remain vital. Any verbal or nonverbal communications that did not perfectly resonate with her led to a self-righteous rage, which became the climax of her experience in treatment.

Helen was an OB/GYN, 30-year-old, divorced woman, with a young child. She came to me in a great deal of despair over her recent divorce and how unjustified she felt it was. When she entered the room, her body was set on the ‘ready for fight’ switch. She sat down, bending the top of her body and head toward me. The rage gushed like an oil well that had just hit the wellspring. “Well, things have not gotten any better.” She looked at me with a demand in her body and eyes that clearly wanted something, a need for exact mirroring that forced me into a hostage position. Any of my soft or welcoming signs were disregarded, and she made an uncompromising demand to make things better and that meant now, kiddo. She barraged me with all kinds of comments and reactions that seemed

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shocking. We went from zero to ten in an instant, and there was no time for me to feel anything but her requirements: I had better do something right or else. I was then deprived of my own autonomy, unable to experience myself in either a verbal or nonverbal sense.

My body started to move into fight/flight mode. I could not get her to calm down, to have some sense of letting me take this in and help, but there was no mercy. Do it now, get it now, or else. As I showed a slight surprise at a statement she had never expressed before, she turned toward me with the heavy artillery and began blasting: "You have done this, and you have done that," and she proceeded to characterize me as if I were directing a play and she had no part in it, and there was no room to talk about it. I had to be slandered, hogtied, and shamed, and that was that. I felt the fear and panic.

I could not take on her attributions and explore them calmly with her even though I attempted. She now became the director of the scene, and she wanted to be rageful, and I had to defend myself, and I did. I found myself finding reasons and rationales for my behavior. I so wanted to calm down and be rational, but she or my internal state was not having any of it. I was cold and frightened. I wanted to tolerate this rage of hers and not retaliate, but she would not relent.

The consequence of this is that we moved into an emotional life and death struggle. If I did not comply with her demands to join her in the destruction she was crafting, she then wanted to destroy me in a way that I sometimes feared my body might want to destroy me. I had been taken from rage to the underbelly of my grief. I did not want to go there, but she had to kill me off in order for some part of her to live. I could feel the approach of her death blows, and I became very sad, the deep kind of sadness that accompanies efforts to save someone that are rendered futile.

In our next session, I was even more acutely aware that if I did not address her exactly the way she required, she would become increasingly destructive of the therapeutic process. To avoid this, I told her that I thought my words were disrupting her too much and that I thought she was actually in an acute state of grief. She relaxed and momentarily went into a calmer state. In the following session, I found myself asking a question that I immediately regretted. She had never been able to talk about the signals and sensations her own body produced in her emotional life, and was not about to now, propelling her flight. In response to my question, she said she had to leave.

I never heard from her again. The perfect storm had happened. I had expressed a hope and held it for safekeeping. The hope was that we could stay connected through the storm, but she had to abandon it at the door. I spoke the hope, and she could no longer dissociate from her own hope. She wanted to attack it in me as well as within herself and everywhere else.

I felt as if I had been sitting with Medea, a patient scorned by her husband, a patient who tried to exact vengeance at my expense. Her only solution was emotionally killing him, since the actual act would be too dangerous for her. She not only wanted me to join in this emotional murder, but also to underwrite it. All of my understanding of her rage, her justification for despair and sorrow was to no avail. The only solution was emotionally killing something, and since I could not be a satisfactory accomplice, the victim would be me.

I must add that we had had other incidents of her protests against me, which I not only tolerated but internally experienced in a painfully affective way, as well as times when I willingly expressed my vulnerability in not understanding her correctly, or knowing the pain she experienced. She had

gratefully accepted these exchanges. We repeatedly needed to return to a configuration of her knowing more than I, with me submitting to her knowledge.

The unspoken became spoken through our bodies, and I was left to pick up the trash. What happened to the blissful state of affairs that characterized the beginning of her treatment and took also took place through our bodies: the ease and flow of the good enough mother responding to the catastrophic baby through a very attuned state? Somehow when we most needed to, we lost the baby because we couldn't talk about the baby as a self-state who carried catastrophe inside of her.

As she demanded that I join her in her self-righteous rage, I was fighting to restore my vitality through a different channel, not rage. I did not want to repeat a lack of repair, which appeared to be a trauma in my patient's history, as well as my own. Instead, my mind was attempting to let in what I call my "muse" to help us, and that attempt became unforgivable. I detailed in my previous paper, "Pictures that I Paint in my Head," how my muse, this creative capacity, leads me to think about one person, situation, object, or experience that then leads me to see clearly the struggles being played out in the treatment. In this case, I searched for my muse instead of saving the baby her way, by murderous rage. My patient's caring self was dissociated and ended up disconnecting from me.

Thomas Arizmendi (2008), in his "Nonverbal Communication in the Context of Dissociative Processes," described how a patient's subsymbolic information may be converted to the verbal symbolic via the analyst's use of evoked images. Jody Davies and Mary Frawley (1994), quoted in Arizmendi's article, stated that, "Dissociated experiences are not symbolized and communicated by ordinary language (p. 444). Arizmendi also cited Bromberg (1996), saying that dissociation paradoxically allows for the intactness and coherence of one's self. Arizmendi quoted Bromberg, "Under extreme conditions, such as those associated with trauma, however, it can evolve from a normal process into a defense in which the person becomes, not me" (p. 444).

As an analyst who continues to develop a more autonomous and authentic voice, along with my growing empathy, I was caught in the crossfire. My "autobiographical self" could not abide (see Vida, 2005, p. 255-278). For me, the process of dealing with dissociated affect is a complex endeavor and involves the use of my muse. In such a situation as the one with this patient, my muse directs me away from a dissociated piece of experience toward a way of understanding what has been transpiring in the process between us. Yet, this time, I was doing it alone.

What might my muse tell me now? It seemed awful, ugly, and thoroughly unpleasant. I thought about the work that the poet Naomi Lowinsky (2009) described in her new book, "The Sister from Below." I found my muse for this case in Lowinsky's description of one of her possible muses as being a "Banchee" (p. 3). A screeching monkey that is relentless. A different kind of muse, a negative catalyst reflecting despair. The "Banchee" in my patient was telling me to mirror her self-righteous rage and carry it. If I didn't become *her* muse in that way, she would leave me. What a contrast to my previous muses who were so decorative and pretty, particularly not screeching, who enhanced the bonds to my patients because they directed me back from what I had dissociated.

This muse, the "Banchee," expressed my patient's grief and loss in relationships in order for her to survive. On the other hand, her "Banchee" also seemed to be directing me forward. Which road could I take to support my continuing processing of this work I was left to do on my own? I began by falling back on the comfortable road of theory to explicate my thoughts

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My mind turned to Daniel Stern (1985) and his "Interpersonal World of the Infant." Stern directed us to the notion that developmental tasks are not experienced in the linear way Freud, Klein, and Mahler have stated, but that they are dynamics held in a dialectical tension **across** a lifespan (p. 10, 18). Stern stated that rather than autonomy being a process of individuation emerging from conditions of merger, developing infants can assert their independence and say a decisive "no" with gaze aversion at four months, gestures and vocal intonation at seven months, running away at fourteen months, and with language at two years.

Following Stern's ideas, I noticed that my patient expressed her displeasure with me by showing her profile. I was particularly struck by the way she turned her head away from me at certain junctures, exhibiting her aversion to me when she wanted to disagree with me. She also shifted her tone of voice in a recognizably emphatic manner. Her intolerance of my remarks not matching hers was poignant. She used her posture and stance in order to assert herself. Her entire body was involved in explicating her negative experience or her need to differentiate from my remarks.

Connie Lillas (2009) in her new book, "Infant/Child Mental Health," discussed the dance between responsive (mirroring) behaviors and directive (rupturing) behaviors between parents and children: "The child experiences distress as he or she bumps into the boundaries set by the parent...A 'dance' now emerges between directive behaviors,

which are needed to assert the self and guide the other, and responsiveness behaviors, which are needed to connect and reconcile with the other. The give and take of responsive and directive behaviors leads to more secure relationships that can negotiate a full range of emotions within the self and other" (p. 276).

As my patient attempted to elicit responsive behaviors from me in her attempts to connect, she bumped into my unconscious and conscious directive behaviors, but the give and take of both behaviors could not be achieved. We were clearly not going to transform into this more highly developed cycle, but only to repeat specific historical and defensive dynamics that could be left only with me. I could not understand this with her, because she cut off any historical exploration. Talking was too disruptive, yet silence and exploration were too abandoning for her. My muse is still screeching at me and pushing me forward toward further thoughts about autonomy and mutual recognition.

Jody Davies (2004), in "Whose Bad Objects Are We Anyway," referred to Jessica Benjamin's description of mutual recognition as a difficult, unconscious, potentially hurtful, collision of two subjectivities. Such parties collapse into a self occupied territory despite any desire to do otherwise. This collisions alerts one or both parties on a visceral level of body heat, chest pounding, face flushing, way of feeling annihilated. The hope is either the patient or the analyst can find the language and the play so that they can discover each other anew. The process of becoming a "we" broke down with my patient when I could not, and would not, join in the literal manifestation of her murderous rage state.

Benjamin's description of a tortured struggle to create a two-person experience exemplified the struggle my patient and I lived through. Working in the context of this collision is a difficult place to work from and quite tricky, with unforeseen consequences, such as the patient's profound resistance to grieving and the presence of the analyst's necessary grieving.

To have a mutual recognition that is more benign, becomes more conscious and facilitative, and is smoother in its emergence, what is required is a tolerance for difference in order to trust in an emerging dialogue. If an analytic couple can shift to this creative, playful state, a new opportunity may be created without the experience of re-traumatizing both partners and recreating the damaging aspects of early parent/child

experience.

Such difference can lead both to autonomy and reciprocity, and growth for each partner in the analytic dyad. As painful as it has been for me to process this analytic experience alone, what could not be processed together with my patient, I have been able to process with colleagues, consultants, and in the writing of this paper, and so I have still learned and grown.

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THE POWER OF PERSONAL VOICE IN THE HEALING OF UNRESOLVED TRAUMA

By Gwyneth Kerr Erwin

Julia was a natural storyteller. Her use of language was articulate and sensory-based. Throughout her eight-year, five times a week, analysis, she could be engrossing as she verbally linked together the people of her world and their stories, creating metaphors to communicate her understanding of their experiences. But when it came to the traumatic times of her own life, she not only had few words for such experiences, she had no voice within them.

The personal truth of Julia's inner and outer life was initially revealed through a three-year long terrifying reliving of the relationship with her father, played out with an orderly who worked at the hospital where Julia was an emergency room nurse. Eleven months into our twice a week treatment, Julia agreed to a dinner with Raul, who had pursued her insistently for weeks. Up to this point, she had managed to put him off, demurring because of their age difference, because of her teenage children, or because she was not ready to start dating after her divorce, but, trying to appease him, she finally gave in to his forceful requests for dinner. Drinking too much wine that night, he got drunk, pressuring her to go home with him and have sex. She sought assistance from the host at the restaurant, who called her a cab.

The next day, Raul called Julia, apologetic and asking for another chance. When she rebuffed him, he became desperate, begging her to meet him, explaining his actions by how depressed he felt, even suicidal. He promised no drinking, just a walk, maybe a cup of coffee. She found his neediness irresistible. The walk was extended by his lengthy monologue, and as the sun went down and his agitation increased, Julia began to feel panicky. Trying to extract herself from their prolonged time together, she worked to convince him that they could talk other times, but that she was not going to date him, and she needed to leave. Under the darkening sky, Raul pulled her down an embankment and raped her. Her impulse to scream for help was silenced by a flood of emotions and sensations she could not even name. I learned of this experience the next morning when she was scheduled to begin her full analysis. As she told me about the rape, she trembled, her eyes darting, her head often bowed. Then, I watched in some horror as her eyes began to dance, her skin flushing, as she stammered, "I'm in love with him."

Throughout the next three years, Julia was swept up in the emotional roller-coaster of terror and excitation enacted with Raul. Often, I became frightened for Julia, but no sooner would my fear for her physical and psychic safety rise than she would move to a manic state, insisting how in love she was with Raul. His skin particularly was irresistible to her, tanned, smooth, and, especially, because it was hairless. Whatever internal protests began to form when she was with him, evaporated with his touch, his lovemaking rough and exciting.

Her vivid descriptions of these provocative experiences were mingled with those that were painful, for instance, how she had felt in her body every day of her life: as though a knife was plunged into her back, and she was made to live with it there, twisting. In her childhood, her father was the responsive and enlivening parent, charismatic to those who knew him socially and inspiring to his surgical patients and colleagues. At home, he showed a much darker and chaotic side, vacillating between violent outbursts and depression that put him to bed, drinking, weekend after weekend, only to resurrect himself by Monday to perform his medical duties. In his rages, he might throw a television through a plate glass

window, or shatter a prized possession of his wife's, or walk around the dining table drunk, pointing a knife at family members' throats, including his children's, while exhorting them to sing.

Julia was convinced her father had incested her, though her memories were more like shards of sense impressions. She alternately felt enthralled by him as he taught her, engaged with her, believing she could do anything, and trapped by him, alone in the requirement to please him, entertain him, soothe him. She struggled to tell me more about the kind of degradation she experienced, even into her adolescence. In an all too typical interaction, she would be in her bedroom — begging. Her father would have a belt or a hanger. Her supposed 'mistake' or 'infraction' was infinitesimal, unknowable. She was to take off all her clothes, bend over naked, so he could beat her until she welted and bruised. No one at home or school appeared to notice or intervene, even though the bruises clearly showed. The beatings felt sexual to Julia. She felt vial, her father literally salivating. Finally, in emotional paralysis, she could feel herself join him: "I'm in worse than hell — falling in black space. I'm in shock, trapped eternally, having to stay alive to experience it — timelessly, endlessly."

After a year of analysis, Julia could tolerate glimpses of how quickly her terror or revulsion had converted into craving from either a crumb of affection from her father or his forcing himself upon her. No longer could she feel rage or fear; instead, she became consumed with fervor and insatiable need. She could also begin to tolerate my drawing the parallel to Raul. Drama and trauma continued to haunt their relationship. One night, Raul toyed with a steak knife, as had her father, arrogantly talking to her of the joy and power of holding life and death in his hands. The next weekend when her children were with their father, Raul caught a hummingbird, killed it, microwaved it, and ate it, all in moments, in front of her, as she stood immobilized. Doubled over in pain in our next session, she cried, "He will never let me go." She was startling awake nearly every night, seeing a faceless person watching her. Her feeling of degradation was profound: "I will never be human again." Bodily sensations flooded her. The shadowy faceless figure standing over her was playing with himself. She was tingling, vibrating, feeling panicky. Cornered, she would lay still, play dead. She wanted to kill him, but instead internally she was "scurrying around like a terrified mouse, scrambling for my life." Telling me this, she felt nauseous, crushed under abject shame, writing me an agonized letter:

My attachments should begin to weaken to these people as I feel the pain they bring me. But it doesn't happen ... There are explanations, I know ... I attached to my mother's emptiness ... I attached to the terrifying and oceanic experience of my father's sexuality. And I experienced it all as love ... I come from bad people, but I want to return to them. I come from a desert. I dig and scratch at the dry desert floor, and I find a trickle of water. This is thrilling. This keeps me going. Today, that has become life's meaning, finding the water ... That is what feels real. That is how I am hooked up. Nothing else excites me. I do not speak another language.

In working with Julia, I faced daily raw evidence of my research, through which I had delineated the several factors that determine how traumatic experience remains unresolved:

1. There is no attuned, empathic, and acknowledging adult partnering the child in validating his/her experience or in processing the physiological and emotional repercussions of such experience, and who, in fact, may deny, disavow, or belittle the traumatic experience.

2. The traumatizer is the very person who should have been a safe island for the child, that is, the parent(s) or a trusted caregiver.
3. There is no one available to the child to intervene in the trauma or in its repetition.
4. This collection of realities leaves the child in a profound dilemma, what Hesse and Main (2000) called “fright without solution” (p. 1117).

One of the most poignant consequences of unresolved trauma is the tragic outcome for children where their personal voices are preempted from coming into being, or silenced in their development by neglect or abuse. Language development, however, is another matter, beginning with the activation of Wernicke’s area, which is the site for language comprehension, and Broca’s area, which deals with the articulation of speech, two areas of the brain that are set in motion during the second year of life. Rita Carter (1998), in *Mapping the Mind*, pointed out that, “Language gives the child the tool it needs to form a concept of itself that it can then place outside its own experience and regard in relationship to others” (p. 156).

In the language era of Brown and Herrnstein (1975), people believed in what Brown called the “storage bin” theory of learning language, that children learn language by storing large numbers of words and sentences in their heads, and retrieve them on an as needed basis. Noam Chomsky (1980) changed all that through his groundbreaking work, coming to the conclusion that children do not build language and grammar primarily from what they hear but because of a genetic design. The environment can support and activate, or suppress, distort, or limit a child’s development of what he calls Universal Grammar.

Julia developed language as most children do from this innate genetic design and from the enlivening engagements with her father. But without the attunement and respect of the adults in her life, who were actually her perpetrators, and who did not intervene in the repetition of her trauma, her personal voice could not develop to communicate her traumatic world of experience.

A year and a half into treatment, Julia anguished, “I have always lived an exemplary life. I had to. I tried never to make a mistake. I tried to make my father and mother happy. I tried to appear normal, like the children of families who cared about each other ...” Her mind then formed a picture, one she could give words to:

My father is ‘tanked’, fucking my mind, torturing me. He seems ten feet tall with fangs, claws. I desperately need someone to help me. I need a ‘very big thing’ to help me. Oh! [she noticed] there’s this creature – like an abominable snowperson. Furry. The abominable snowperson bites my father, makes him backup, won’t even let him stand in the doorway. It makes him leave. I am trembling all over. (a long pause) Oh, the snowperson is you! You pick me up and hold me in your big furry arms. We time travel away, to safety.

I felt the arrival of an opening in her psychical space of trauma. I talked that day, sharing with her how her trauma, implicitly encoded and encapsulated, split between terror and craving states, had not ever been able to be used for learning. As such, when it was triggered, it could only be used for reliving. I told her of my research and original findings of how to work with implicit memory to intervene in its repetition. Was she ready to see if we could find the ways?

Over the next month as we worked analytically on the procedural process of what I call her “implicit memory banks,” we planned for the working through steps of changing her current experience. But in

an act of desperation, she quit her job late one Friday, without notice. When she did not arrive for work on Monday, and there was no word of why not, Raul turned dark with malevolent scorn. In a flurry of phone messages, all of which she listened to, he told her she would never get away, that, in fact, he would ruin her life, or kill her, that she would never know where or when — it could be today or tomorrow. For the next *three days*, Julia lived inside of abject terror, curled into a fetal position. She hid in her home, not coming to sessions. At the end of the third day, she called me for help, telling me she was unable to eat, even to keep down water. She felt she was falling into an endless abyss, where the torment would never end. I told her I wanted her to come in for our session, even in her pajamas, but if she absolutely couldn't, I would come to her. When Julia arrived in person for her session, she was gray, lips chalky, and her face expressionless. Deep circles accented her pale and staring eyes. Her mouth was parched, her lips cracking. I got her a glass of water, and a spoon, encouraging her to accept small sips throughout the session. I fed her as I would a dying baby bird with a medicine dropper. She was able to keep down the water. My chair close to hers, I clasped the hand she reached out to me, as I told her that this was not going to be the end of her life. I hoped silently that I was right.

Raul knew where she lived, of course, and began months of stalking her, even to and from my office. His phone messages were unrelenting. She listened to each of them, in panic, but was equally terrified not to track him. She still couldn't bring herself to call the police, but she was able to resist returning any of Raul's calls. Finally, she confided in her ex-husband, Greg, gathered up essential belongings and moved herself and the children into his home. Greg was upset, angry, and scared, but came through. He ferried the children back and forth to school and friends. He installed a security system, complete with panic button. He bought her a new car. And Julia went into hiding. For the next six months, Raul's phone calls moved into a cyclical pattern, but he could not find her.

With some modicum of relief, Julia and I reached a point where a palpable shift occurred in her focus upon her relationship with her father to that with her mother. She asked me: "How am I ever going to recover from not having a mother?" She looked deeply into my eyes, and said, "I have you." Very quietly, she then said, "There is so much inside me about my mother, but I have no way to talk about it; I am mute." After several minutes of silence, she said she wished she could draw — if she could, she could draw all the pictures in her mind. As an artist myself, I considered offering a concrete avenue. Years of teaching writing and unfolding the artist's voice prodded me forward. In about ten minutes, I taught her three basic principles of drawing and gave her a mini-demonstration.

She arrived for her next session with a small box of colored pencils and some large sheets of drawing paper folded in half. Settling herself on the couch, cross-legged and intent, she sat still for several minutes, staring at the paper, pencil poised in her hand. Then slowly, she began to draw. That day, she drew and paused, then drew again, sometimes her brow furrowing, sometimes her eyes squinting. Neither of us spoke a word. I did not move in my chair.

Some thirty minutes later, she chose a colored pencil and began to color, then another. When she finished with the coloring, she returned to her black pencil, and I could tell by the way it moved that she was printing. Then, she put down her pencils and handed me the paper.

The drawing took my breath away. It had the look of a six- or seven-year-old's, except that it captured her affect. At the top and bottom of each drawing were a couple of simple declarative sentences, telling the story in the picture. She asked me to read it aloud to her.

For nearly six months, each of our five sessions a week was spent the same way. After coloring in her newly drawn picture and printing the few sentences top and bottom, Julia would hand the accumulating sheets to me. I would go back to the beginning, and read her “story” all the way through. The feelings in the drawings washed into me in waves. As Julia drew, she was totally concentrated. Not only was she feeling what she was drawing, but she wanted me to feel it too. And I did, with her able to be in the involved but unobtrusive presence of a caring other.

Sometimes, I would need many minutes to look, study, and absorb what was on the page. We didn’t even talk very much about what was happening — it was far too important for Julia to find her ‘voice’ than to make mine the one to speak. By now, as I read her story at the end of our sessions, it gained momentum and potency. The tragedy of what had happened to her permeated the room, yet simultaneously, I felt quite peaceful in the unfolding of her innermost narrative. The experience was exquisitely moving, a mix of respect and awe. In Julia’s life, she had been consigned to surviving inside her father’s chaotic traumatization, while trying to grow in the unremitting desolation of her mother’s rejection and neglect.

From early in Julia’s life, her mother told her in a singsong, high-pitched little girl voice, “You were an albatross around my neck.” Trying to present the “proper” image of a young resident’s wife, Julia’s mother nursed Julia in the first days of her life, quickly dispatching her to the hospital nursery once she was finished, and intending to switch immediately to bottle-feeding upon arriving home. Julia refused the bottle. Her refusal ushered in a battle where her mother continued actively but unsuccessfully to wean her from the breast, including spacing feedings many hours apart in an effort to force-feed her through hunger.

When Julia was six weeks old and failing to thrive, her mother took her to a new pediatrician, describing Julia as a hysterical baby with a terrible temper. Without knowing Julia’s brief history, he diagnosed her as having “an immature nervous system,” prescribing Phenobarbital as a soothing agent. The mother gave Julia the first dose in the parking lot of the doctor’s office, recounting to Julia in later years what a relief it was to have her stop crying and doze within moments. When the medication wore off, Julia’s frantic attempts to nurse and her refusal of the bottle resumed, her crying escalating. Days later, her mother “accidentally” overdosed Julia on the Phenobarbital, sending her into a coma, without feeding, for three days. The father, toward the completion of his medical training, avoided culpability by keeping Julia home, wondering aloud whether she had contracted polio. Toward the end of the third day of her drugged state, she began moving, and he exclaimed, “Look, she’s working her jaw!”

After Julia emerged from the coma, her father regulated the dosage himself, administering the Phenobarbital until she was three months old and had “learned to stop crying.” For Julia, there was no mother to whom she could attach as a caring and regulating other, delighting in her or helping her calm and find pleasure in her earliest states. There was only the mother who wanted to relieve herself of the “albatross around her neck,” even to the point of nearly killing her baby. By six months, Julia’s mother told her, Julia “miraculously” fed herself solid food, following her self-feed with her first languaging, spoken just weeks later, “Me do.”

Her mother seemed a phantom to Julia, menacing and creepy. Affectively blank, passive, her mother came to routinely hand off Julia to her father to keep him “in control,” or to calm the father down, but then blamed and scapegoated Julia for failing to do so. While the mother was quite beautiful, a model originally and a “model-looking” mother, she was unable to nurture any of her children. Julia was vocal

in her hatred for her mother, yet yearned for a mother who would know and love her, having found the only approximation of that in her lively, but cruel, father.

Many months into this process and drawings rendered, she said one day, “I feel like I am finally getting all of this that I have had to carry inside, outside of me.” I considered what was getting outside of her. I realized it was more than her toxic and painful experiences — it was also her introjects. She came in another day telling me that she needed more colors and the day following carried in a new set of pencils — a veritable rainbow of choice. She had finished the stack of loose pages and arrived with a drawing pad, spiral bound. Her story was evolving into a coherent narrative for the first time in her life.

Finally, a session came when drawing another picture in the series of being inside a black hole as an infant, Julia said, “I can feel today that maybe this blackness was really my mother’s — not mine. I think in the next picture I am going to draw it around her.” When the time came for that drawing, she shouted, “No! It was *in her*, then she put it *in me*.” Julia was finding her voice.

What I call *personal voice* is the vocal and written expression of our unique and indispensable *essential* self. Personal voice represents our ability to think while feeling and feel while thinking in our inner world, and then, to reveal our internal world without defensiveness and to receive such communication from a trustworthy other in an *elaborative* dialogue of meaning making. Personal voice is complex: specifically made of *emotional language* arising out of sensory-based imagery, symbolizing a spectrum of affects within a flow of states as we build non-verbal and verbal bridges between categories of experiences, while differentiating what is ‘me’ and what is ‘you’.

What supports the on-going development of an infant’s personal voice from her first cries, gurgles, tiny squeaks, and gestures is the attuned responsiveness of the mother and father, the resonant propositional (Whitmer, 2001) ‘naming’ by the parents of the baby’s/child’s experience until the child is able to do that for herself, and the elaboration of the child’s communication through the parents’ respect for the child’s growing mind, perceptions, and affective experience, what Dennie Wolf (1990) called the child’s “authorial self” (p. 185). Understanding the process of personal voice development, we can imagine how devastating is its preemption or loss and the cost a child must carry in the face of such loss. Without personal voice, the child cannot name or ‘give voice to’ his or her experience, consigned to becoming mute, and to become only the kind of self that others project onto.

When this loss of personal voice occurs, even during the acquisition of language, there is a double cause-and-effect result: the essential self of the child becomes hidden, and personal voice is silenced. With such silencing and the continued absence of the interpersonal, elaborative communication so needed to nourish the growth of the essential self, the child’s adaptation reinforces a wounded self at the expense of authentic living.

During the nine months of Julia developing her personal voice through her narrative drawing, she had no direct contact with Raul. He still called several times a day and heavy breathed, or left brief, menacing messages, or just hung up. One day, as she was drawing, the peaceful energy in the room vanished in an instant, the air becoming charged. I could hardly sit still. Julia’s feet were moving, she was restless, tears streaming down her face. I had never interrupted her, but this time I asked, “What are you drawing?” The unfinished picture showed her father standing in the doorway, watching her. She looked at me with pleading and helplessness. I said, “You do not have to be a hostage all your life.” Her brow furrowed, as though the thought had never occurred to her.

Catastrophe arrived within an hour. As Julia pulled up to Greg's home, she saw Raul parked nearby. In her panicked phone call to me, she agonized, "How did he find me?" She was stunned, but now had the strength to act. In a flash of good fortune, Julia received a call from a friend who had heard about a fund-raiser dinner featuring the officer responsible for setting up the police department's anti-stalking team. Julia spoke to the speaker afterwards, and they met the next day. A police phone trap was set and within the week, Raul was apprehended. The anti-stalking expert and his deputy accompanied Julia to court to file a restraining order against Raul, finding three other restraining orders in place from women Raul had harmed and stalked. One of them now filed charges, with proof. Raul was given substantial jail time. Julia moved into a new home with the children, beginning a new life. She told me in a later session, "The knife is no longer in my back. For the first time since I can remember, it's not there." While our dedicated analytic work continued for another five years, Julia and her voice were free.

Peter Shabad (1997) poignantly captured, "The traumatic theme causes the child to transform his strangled communications into the belated effects of posttraumatic symptomatology. A person's unique constellation of psychological symptoms reflects the lonely, nonverbal journey of the repetition compulsion (what I conceptualize as implicit memory relivings), to bring out proof of his sufferings" (p. 355).

One of the analyst's significant contributions is to come to know the essential self of the patient enough to be able to assist the patient in finding avenues for the voice that represents such experience, often for the first time in the patient's life. For our patients to risk being found, the analyst must be willing to speak, *not* in professional jargon, or at a safe remove through what Ivri Kumin (1989) called "incorrect interpretations" (p. 141), but in the brave and revealing atmosphere of her own personal voice and affective language. Leo Kovar (1994) said, "[The analyst] must *en-vision* the words spoken. Bare by themselves, they must be clothed pictorially, not with stills but with movies. The therapist of the word, at his best, gives his patient a gift that cannot be purchased ... The talking therapist must have the desire and the aptitude to talk to his patient in such a way that this intangible gift-giving becomes ... palpable" (p. 566-569).

Such is the creative process at the heart of the resolution of trauma, the attachment nature of the analytic relationship, and the narrative process in which analyst and patient engage to weave together, understand, and repair the patient's lived experience. As in the beginning of life, with the birth cry of personal voice, so, too, do we have the opportunity for a new birth in the analysis, which *breathes* respiratory life into that personal voice emerging from the wounding our patients carry. When personal voice recovery and previous language development go hand in hand, we find an individual who can develop "an authorial self," an essential self with a coherency of being and the efficacy to live and speak an authentic life.

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The Power of Personal Voice in the Healing of Unresolved Trauma

By Gwyneth Kerr Erwin

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DISCOVERIES

AHA, I'M AN ASP

By Stuart Spence

Preamble

This paper is substantially in the form in which it was presented on November 7th, 2009 at the 20th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference of the International Forum for Psychoanalytic Education (IFPE) in Seattle, Washington, titled *Daring to Speak: Languages Spoken and Unspoken*. The talk was introduced with my comment that when presenting papers on subjects in my comfort zone, originally research physics, I had spoken from bullet points on a single 3 x 5 inch card: but I was reading this because it was such new territory for me. However, one third of the way through, I was invited to expand on the detailed diagnostic criteria which had been only in footnotes, and this took so long that I was forced to put down the paper for the rest of the talk. This was apparently well received, and I won't try again to read a paper.

Introduction

This presentation: "Aha – I'm an Asp" relates to an "aha" moment late last year when I heard myself precisely described in an NPR program on Asperger's Syndrome.

I had experienced a life-long difficulty recognizing faces – not so unusual in itself. But my case was so severe that if I spent an hour talking with someone that I expected to meet the following day, I would put a sincere effort during the hour into studying their face, and quite likely *still* would not recognize them when we met again. I had learned to brush it off with "I'm sorry, I can't remember faces and I always forget names"; and I also have a quite tolerant wife with an excellent memory, so managed quite reasonably. It wasn't a consuming interest, but I was aware of it as a difficulty and wondered how it came about. In 70 years, I'd gotten as far as realizing that as a child I'd always had difficulty looking at people's faces; maybe that was related?

And then, listening to NPR, I heard a talk which described how a significant number of scientists and engineers and mathematicians could be very good indeed at their chosen fields, but not good at all at recognizing or relating to people. As the radio program went on outlining the characteristics of Asperger Syndrome, I heard myself described with surprising clarity. "Aha!" I said "I'm an Asp". (Since I wrote the abstract in June, I've learned that we're generally called "Aspies", and that the condition is often called AS or Asperger Syndrome rather than Asperger's). As soon as I got home, I asked Google for help, and found the AQ test which was online in Wired Magazine. This Autism-Spectrum Quotient test was prepared at Cambridge University's Autism Research Center under the direction of Simon Baron-Cohen (a cousin of Sacha Baron Cohen of Borat fame). But, it's really easier to ask Google for "Wired Asperger Cohen"

<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/9.12/aqtest.html>

The test scores for neurotypicals (the name we Aspies use for everyone else) averaged 16.4, and Baron-Cohen found 80% of those diagnosed with autism or a related disorder scored 32 or higher. By now I wasn't surprised that I scored higher than 32.

So, I started buying books and researching Southern California support networks. The Autism Research Institute in San Diego gave me a referral to a psychologist, Dr. Kyle Pontius, who specializes in Autism Spectrum Disorders, and whose office was within driving distance (for Californians, that's 65 miles, easy if it's not rush hour). In less than a week I was in that office. The appointment had to be set up quickly, because a week after that my wife and I were taking off for two weeks in Ireland and England, and I really wanted something to chew on during the trip. And it was also at this time that I finally shared my six months of investigation with my wife, having hesitated because it was important to me to have a better idea of what was involved before beginning to work on it with her.

It had also become clear to me that my difficulty in speaking up for myself – those of you who know me may not all recognize this, because it's sometimes overcompensated – was related to AS; and that I would never have a better opportunity to break free from this difficulty than by presenting at IFPE's conference "Daring to Speak". It was from an internet café in Donegal that I submitted my abstract. In the rest of this paper I'll review the known characteristics of AS; my personal background and how the diagnosis was made; and then review the continuing work with Dr. Pontius. I've also, thanks to a tip from Katherine Schwarzenbach, just made initial contact with an extensive research program at CalTech.

Characteristics of AS

Most readers of this journal have some familiarity with Asperger Syndrome; but I'll give a brief summary so we can be sure we're all on the same page. I had only superficial familiarity with it before I was swept into this research, now find that it has been one of the hotter topics of the last decade, and has even spawned a number of films and TV shows.

In the late 1930s Hans Asperger began writing about a particular kind of Autistic Personality Disorder which he observed in several children at his clinic in Vienna. They were not intellectually retarded, instead had significant deficits in social interaction – and he may have had an early recognition of this condition because he shared many of the same symptoms. Interestingly, another Austrian, Leo Kanner, was in the United States writing about similar observations at about the same time, and a Russian, Ewa Ssucharewa, some twenty years earlier had published similar work which fell into obscurity.

In the 1980s, after Asperger's death, Lorna Wing in England reported on 34 cases of what she named Asperger's Syndrome. At the First International Conference on Asperger's Syndrome in London in 1988 Gillberg & Gillberg presented the first operational diagnostic criteria: Out of many books, Christopher Gillberg's *A Guide to Asperger Syndrome* (Cambridge, 2002) is for me the most precise presentation of AS. More easily available in the US, and useful in many ways is Tony Attwood's *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome* (Jessica Kingsley 2007)

General characteristics of AS include:

- Impairment in social interaction
- Repetitive patterns of behavior
- Clinically significant impairment in functioning (social or occupational)

- No clinically significant general delay in language
- No clinically significant delay in self-help skills
- Criteria are not met for another specific developmental disorder
- (one author's set mentions clumsiness)

The broad criteria for diagnosis are based on meeting a number of the above. As I checked off each of my diagnostic matches, I was surprised at the emphasis on repetitive movement patterns, and said "but, I don't have any". After several weeks of puzzling over this, I realized: "Oh goodness, of course I do" – I'm doing it all the time, but do it without vocalizing or moving. In the background, I'm continually *thinking* a series of patterns or counts *up – down – down – up* or 1-2-3 1-2-3 or equivalents.

I would like to provide the complete diagnostics: ? ^{[1]. [2]}

By the 1990s Asperger's papers had been annotated & translated and in 1994 the condition was included in the fourth edition of the APA's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) – where it was referred to as Asperger's Disorder. More recently, there has been a strong trend to remove AS from being classified as a Deficit or Disorder – it's a *difference*, with value as well as difficulty. Gillberg writes that, in view of all the remarkable people, from Einstein to Wittgenstein, who almost certainly had AS:

"Maybe one could even speculate that historic progress has quite often been made by people with autism spectrum conditions. The perseverance, drive for perfection, good concrete intelligence, ability to disregard social conventions, and not worry too much about other people's opinions or critiques, could all be seen as advantageous, maybe even a prerequisite for certain forms of new thinking and creativity."

And many with AS function quite well in society – I did – but Attwood warns that the Asperger kids are working twice as hard as anyone else at school and afterwards, because of having to use their intellects for learning the social curriculum as well as the academic.

Prevalence:

Prevalence: Because of the imprecision of the diagnostics, there's great variability in estimates of prevalence of AS. DSM-IV finds less than 1 per 1000; according to the more generous Gillberg criteria, there are between 3 and 5 per 1000, with several times more males than females – although this ratio could be due to greater difficulty in identifying AS in girls. And then, on just before my presentation of this paper, the New York Times reported that DSM-V plans to drop the term Asperger's altogether, and simply group it within the range of Autistic Spectrum Disorder – which may or may not prove useful. In 2002 Gillberg had written:

"Currently, it seems to me that Asperger Syndrome is often preferred over autism in cases meeting both sets of diagnostic criteria. Autism still has a 'pessimistic' ring to it, whereas Asperger Syndrome, to many, does not carry equally negative connotations. This may change in the future, once it becomes generally accepted that autism spectrum disorders are not extremely rare, and that high-functioning cases, contrary to earlier beliefs, by far outnumber those that are very severely affected and low functioning" ...

I'll continue to use the term.

Studies have suggested that AS may be related to a different wiring in the brain, and it definitely shows a genetic component. For example, Baron-Cohen et al. in 1998 looked at the following six conditions in the families of students: Language Delay, Schizophrenia, Anorexia, Downs Syndrome, Manic-Depression and Autism Spectrum. The study compared about 600 Math, Engineer, Physics with a similar number of English or French Literature students and with their relatives out to first cousins, almost 10,000 in each group. The numbers adjusted to be per 10,000 were

- (sciences vs. language)
- Language Delay: 34 vs. 44
- Schizophrenia: 18 vs. 20
- Anorexia: 25 vs. 21
- Downs Syndrome: 6 vs. 4
- All these numbers are essentially equal; but
- Manic-Depression: 50 vs. 100 in families of sciences vs. literature, and
- Autism Spectrum: 6 vs. 1 in sciences vs. literature specialties.

My greatest interest in entering the CalTech study is to find out if I process my sympathy, empathy, affection, etc. in different parts of my brain from those regions used by NeuroTypicals. It is worth noting that most Aspies definitely experience strong emotions – it's just that we have more difficulty communicating them. In fact, it's been noticed that many with AS have exquisite sensitivity to the emotional state of those around them – but, again, may have difficulty understanding or using that knowledge. My introductory interview at CalTech is set for Nov. 16. The other continuing work is to use this new information to try to understand and overcome the interpersonal difficulties that I've experienced throughout my life.

My Story

I was born in the North of Ireland, to an aggressively self-assured father, and an American mother who, I believe, may not have walked or talked until she was four – but who then caught up to earn the highest academic honors in college. Mine was an easy delivery, a month premature, but over six pounds. At the outbreak of the war in Europe, I was eighteen months old, and was evacuated to the US with my mother and older brother, while my father – too old for service in that war – stayed in Belfast. I've heard that my early language was extremely precise, but otherwise I seemed a normal kid, bright but somewhat reserved. My mother told the story that as a child I would not join in others' activities, but rather, start my own play with such intensity that pretty soon all the others had come over to join me. Fiercely independent, I was called. For various reasons we moved many, many times, and I blamed our moves for the fact that I didn't have any friends outside of the family. And I had as many battles as good times with my brother. California was the only place we stayed long enough for me to grow attached – that's probably why I'm living here now. At the end of the Second World War, we went back to be with my father, and I started elementary and high school and college in the United Kingdom.

Already in grade school I was given the nickname 'Dormouse', because I slept – or, rather, hid – in the back of the class, and did not dare speak up even though I knew the correct answer. I felt as if I were getting on adequately at school, academically, despite having difficulty doing things the way the teachers wanted, and with the other kids. But, it's interesting to remember an occasion when my

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parents asked me if I'd like to have a friend join us at a touring opera performance, and I invited my headmaster! (who accepted). Then I went on to high school at Winchester, a boarding school in England that attracted academically gifted students from throughout the United Kingdom. For a time, there, I was identified as a dummy (their term was 'thick'). And in the unforgiving atmosphere of an English Public School, my interpersonal difficulties were even more apparent, but here were explained by my "American-ness". And, now, Irish-ness.

I can now look back and recognize several AS traits. Clumsiness such that in ROTC drill the commands were always "Quii..ck March – Late Spence" and "Lee..ft Turn – Late Spence"; and single-mindedness (no multi-tasking here) so that when called on to umpire I could never maintain the counts if I so much as looked at anything else, or even watched the play. And I was constitutionally unable to dissemble, to tell a 'white lie'. I even have difficulty saying "I'll see you tomorrow" – I have to use a provable statement "I'm looking forward to seeing you tomorrow". Hardly guaranteed to endear me to my peers, especially when combined with my awkward social responses. It was expected in the vicious boarding school atmosphere that there would be kids identified as 'the most unpopular' for a term or two: but I was ostracized for three years. I wasn't skilled at sports, but I was strong and an uncomplaining hard-worker, so that finally brought me out onto the fringes of the accepted.

When it came time to compete for an academic scholarship to university, I was terrified that I would be 'found out' by failing the exams. Instead, on the basis of an interview, I was awarded a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, to read physics. The fear of being unmasked by an exam was not, in fact, so far-fetched. I have always had a terrible memory for facts and figures, and didn't develop work-habits to compensate. In an exam I was painfully slow: since I could never remember a formula, I had to go back and derive it from first principles.

After high school I had a few months training at a family business, and then university where I had a wonderful time, albeit with continuing poor organization of my studies – fortunately, just good enough to get me into graduate school in the US. I had only applied to two graduate schools, Berkeley and Stanford: again I chickened out by selecting Stanford – I'd heard that a lot of grad students were thrown out of Berkeley, but at Stanford, once you were in you stayed in. And in: half my class still had not completed their doctorates when I finished after 6½ years. At age 11 I had decided I was going to be a scientist, and didn't even question that until I had a PhD twenty years later.

Possibly as a way of compensating for not reading people intuitively, I had found myself consciously looking for their psychological motivations, rather than objective ones. I would often explain people's actions as based on unconscious processes, much to the consternation of those around me, particularly in the North of Ireland. It had become clear to me that I needed to get away from that country, a land that doesn't have a great deal of sympathy for people with differences, let alone an interest in psychology. My father exemplified this when he'd say "you don't really feel that". His other favorite phrase was "Don't bother me with facts, I *know*", hardly an invitation to try to work out interpersonal difficulties. Now I know these motivations I'd identified were called unconscious processes: at the time I was merely relying on my scientific discipline by offering the simplest explanation I could find for an observation. and, of course, reviewing and revising it if the hypothesis didn't fit.^[3] I didn't have any formal background in the field of psychology, but was definitely interested and ready to learn when I met a young M.D. named Judy Vida.

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When we met, she was in a psychiatry residency at Los Angeles County USC medical center (a program still valuing dynamic psychiatry in those days) and I had a physics post-doc at Stanford. We immediately found a tremendous overlap in interests – and in values – and still do. But, we had lots of differences, too – she could remember and organize effortlessly, while, at school I used to take four hours effort to memorize a sonnet; she was definitely a morning person, and I could only get down to something when everything had quieted at night. Attwood tells us that

“sometimes the person with Asperger’s syndrome appears to have created a mental ‘job description’ for a prospective partner, searching for a suitable ‘applicant’ that can compensate for recognized difficulties in life. Once a candidate has been found, that person is pursued with determination that can be hard to resist. One of the ‘job requirements’ is having advanced social and maternal abilities. Thus, an attractive partner will be someone who is at the opposite end of the empathy and social understanding continuum.”

I need hardly tell you that Judy scored significantly on the other side of the average from my AQ test results.

Over the first few years of our marriage, when we were starting a family, Judy was starting psychoanalytic training, and I started a high-tech business to take advantage of the newly-invented microprocessor. Looking back, that company made some great technical advances, and some not-so-great management decisions, including my taking on a partner who didn’t respect my contributions. The company’s eventual bankruptcy proved that starting in your garage doesn’t guarantee your becoming Hewlett-Packard or Apple. Judy couldn’t understand our technical problems, and I had a hard time explaining my much greater difficulties with personnel relationships, my tendency to micro-manage, inability to work within a group. Instead we talked about everyday stuff, or Judy’s work. Unlike the high-tech field, I understood the words Judy and her colleagues used (or at least I thought I did!) so it was much easier for me to talk with her and her friends. But, even here I found an awkwardness, despite ample goodwill, where I often realized that I couldn’t find the right moment to join a conversation, too many times having to say “I’m sorry, I thought you’d finished”. Listening for a logical completion of a presentation is the Aspie’s way, but I’ve learned it doesn’t work in the nuanced give-and-take of the NeuroTypical marketplace. And our kids? They seem to have avoided most of the classic Asperger symptoms, and are doing quite well, although they had plenty of difficulty with mine. I’m hoping that this new understanding will help us resolve some of the outstanding difficulties with them.

So, Judy and I muddled on – both working pretty hard at it – and we spent much of what little spare time we had in exploring a shared passion for contemporary art. It was a talk by Judy subtitled “What One Psychoanalyst Learned From Contemporary Art” that brought her to IFPE in 1999, and I took advantage of IFPE’s generous membership criteria and have been a member since 2000. My participation in IFPE was welcomed, and I slowly began to take part in discussions, even though it was obvious to me that having a non-analyst participate made a few of the members acutely uncomfortable. This is the first time I have *Dared to Speak* on my own account – but this recent investigation has given something essential to me for me to speak about. Now that I – we – have this understanding, we are beginning to make sense of so much that was unexplained in the past. We’re avoiding the resentment that might come because of the delay in diagnosis – the wasted opportunities – but we’re also making sure we do not lump any and all difficulties into a blanket “Oh, that’s because of AS!” We’re just beginning to work on it. And the work is turning up unexpected treasures. Gillberg

compares four primary diagnostic tests for AS, and warns “don’t ignore co-morbidity”. A few pages later, he lists the DSM-IV criteria for Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder:^[4] requiring a match of four out of the eight. I scored at least seven out of eight on that one.

Conclusion

One of the things Tony Atwood has written:

“The reader will be interested to know that I have discovered a means of removing almost all of the characteristics that define Asperger’s syndrome in any child or adult. This simple procedure does not require expensive and prolonged therapy, surgery or medication, and has already been secretly discovered by those who have Asperger’s syndrome. The procedure is actually rather simple. If you are a parent, take your child with Asperger’s syndrome to his or her bedroom. Leave the child alone in the bedroom and close the door behind you as you walk out of the room. The signs of Asperger’s syndrome in your son or daughter have now disappeared.”

This is a valid observation – I teared up when I read it – but, I began to think more and more that it misses an important element. The Aspie intellectually recognizes the social isolation, and doesn’t regard it as optimal, but doesn’t know intuitively how to correct it. At least, this is true for me, and, I believe, for others. I was struck by the difference in my response to two books related to AS that I read. One is *Look Me in the Eye*, an autobiography by John Elder Robison, who became the staging creator for the rock group KISS’s pyrotechnic extravaganzas, and then was too scared to follow up an invitation to LucasFilm – where he clearly belonged; and the other is *the curious incident of the dog in the night-time*, a novel by Mark Haddon about an AS kid’s voyage of discovery. In that first book I have an underline or post-it on almost every page noting similar experiences, resonances, even though Robison and I are not very much alike. The second left me cold, even though it’s a finely observed portrait of an Asperger’s kid. The difference is that the dog incident kid knows how he is, and doesn’t show any interest in being any other way. The KISS kid was and is all the time struggling to find a better way to get on in the world. Probably, that’s why I can’t seem to get interested in reading anything other than autobiography. And, that’s why I’m starting on this journey of exploration. At IFPE presentations interactive dialogue following presentations is typical and in fact essential, and I stated that I hope that in our discussion you can help me with further insights into the AS-NT interface.

[1] Table 2.1 Diagnostic criteria for Asperger syndrome (according to G&G1989, Gillberg 1991)

Social impairment (extreme egocentricity) (at least two of the following):

- (a) difficulties interacting with peers
- (b) indifference to peer contacts
- (c) difficulties interpreting social cues
- (d) socially and emotionally inappropriate behaviour

2. Narrow interest (at least one of the following):

- (a) exclusion of other activities
- (b) repetitive adherence
- (c) more rote than meaning

3. Compulsive need for introducing routines and interests (at least one of the following):
 - (a) which affect the individual's every aspect of everyday life
 - (b) which affect others

4. Speech and language peculiarities (at least three of the following):
 - (a) delayed speech development
 - (b) superficially perfect expressive language
 - (c) formal pedantic language
 - (d) odd prosody, peculiar voice characteristics
 - (e) impairment of comprehension including misinterpretations of literal/implied meanings

5. Non-verbal communication problems (at least one of the following):
 - (a) limited use of gestures
 - (b) clumsy/gauche body language
 - (c) limited facial expression
 - (d) inappropriate facial expression
 - (e) peculiar, stiff gaze

6. Motor clumsiness
poor performance in neurodevelopmental test

[2] Table 2.4 Diagnostic criteria for Asperger syndrome (according to DSM-IV = APA 1994)

1. Qualitative impairment in social interaction (as manifested by at least two of the following):
 1. marked impairment in the use of multiple non-verbal behaviours such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures and gesture to regulate social interaction
 2. failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level
 3. a lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with other people (e.g. by a lack of showing, bringing or pointing out objects of interest to other people)
 4. lack of social or emotional reciprocity

2. Restricted or repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests and activities (as manifested by at least one of the following):
 1. encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus
 2. apparently inflexible adherence to specific, non-functional routines or rituals
 3. stereotyped and- repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g. hand- or finger-flapping or twisting, or complex whole-body movements)
 4. persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

3. The disturbance causes clinically significant impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning

4. There is no clinically significant general delay in language (e.g. single words used by age 2 years, communicative phrases used by age 3 years)
5. There is no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or in the development of age-appropriate self-help skills, adaptive behaviour (other than in social interaction), and curiosity about the environment in childhood
6. Criteria are not met for another specific developmental disorder or schizophrenia

[3] After the presentation, Patrick Nalbone, an analyst who has studied Theory of Mind from a systems point of view, made the very helpful comment: "you had created a *model* of the person you were observing, and used the model to predict their actions". That was exactly what I'd been doing. I further noted that I had always been most interested in exploring any discrepancies that I observed from the predicted behavior: that was how I learned. I have often been disturbed that neurotypicals have a tendency to accept only the data that *agree* with their hypotheses.]

[4] Table 2.6 Diagnostic criteria for obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (DSM-IV)

A pervasive pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism and mental and interpersonal control, at the expense of flexibility, openness and efficiency, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts (as indicated by at least four of the following):

1. is preoccupied with details, rules, lists, order, organisation or schedules to the extent that the major point of the activity is lost
2. shows perfectionism that interferes with task completion (e.g. is unable to complete a project because his or- her own overly strict standards are not met)
3. is excessively devoted to work and productivity to the exclusion of leisure activities and friendships (not accounted for by obvious economic necessity)
4. is overconscientious, scrupulous and inflexible about matters of morality, ethics or values (not accounted for by cultural or religious identification)
5. is unable to discard worn-out or worthless objects even when they have no sentimental value
6. is reluctant to delegate tasks or to work with others unless they submit to exactly his or her way of doing things
7. adopts a miserly spending style towards both self and others; money is viewed as something to be hoarded for future catastrophes
8. shows rigidity and stubbornness

Stuart Spence has a PhD in physics, and has a long-term interest in psychoanalysis: he has been an active IFPE member since 2000.

ARTICLES

DEATH/LIFE: FERENCZI, LIFTON AND KIEFER

By Lane Gerber

Beginning to read Ferenczi's correspondences with Freud, his Clinical Diary and some of his papers, especially "The Unwelcome Child and His Death Instinct," was a powerful experience for me. From the first, there was something about Sandor Ferenczi that struck me as I began reading his letters with Freud and then some biographies of him. His emotional presence and outwardly "needy" nature (as compared with many of the other early as well as later analysts), his warm, affectionate presence and his lack of pretense drew me to him. And yet, as I read his correspondence with Freud, I wanted to say to him "stop asking for what you're not going to get from Freud. Stop making a pest of yourself. Stop being so needy." Then I looked at my own reactions, more specifically my reaction to what I read as his "neediness". Am I talking to him, I wondered, or am I talking to myself? "What is it about this shushing of him and/or of yourself? Who are you protecting and what are you afraid of?"

With these internal conversations in mind, I read on. Something shifted in me. I found myself saying, "that son of a bitch keeps speaking his truth. This is someone who speaks from his heart as well as his mind, and has such great courage. Take a lesson."

After this conversation with myself, I allowed myself to realize again Ferenczi's, Eastern European Jewish background which is so similar to my own (although we were more Russian/Romanian). This drew me even more strongly toward him. And, his relentless emphasis on the therapeutic, on what might help his patients (and himself, of course), rather than on just the theoretical was striking to me as a candidate, as an experienced therapist and as an analyst who hopes for more for myself not just for my patients.

But then I came to his paper "The Unwelcome Child and His Death Instinct". The idea of a death instinct, that Freudian biological given, has always been repugnant to me. It has seemed like a handy excuse to invoke for inaction and passivity in the face of war and human violence. The death instinct, as I have understood it from Freud and Klein, seems to offer little hope if one assumes that all of us have this genetic predilection to destruction. I have been more persuaded by Kohut's response that violence is a response to injury to the self and as a response to frustration, shame and/or fear of annihilation. This gives a little more room for being other than a bystander to inevitable human violence. So, this was my mindset as I picked up Ferenczi's article on "The Unwelcome Child and His Death Instinct." I was drawn to the man, but wary of such an article.

But before discussing the article per se, a short perspective on Ferenczi might be helpful in understanding a bit of the person who authored writings that were/are both personal and powerful. Ferenczi was born the eighth of 12 children. His father died when he was 15. It is probable that he was a survivor of early emotional and sexual abuse. Despite his many talents and lovable qualities, he did seem to suffer from a need to be accepted and loved for much of his life. It would seem that because of this need (and Freud's accompanying need for a confidant, then a scribe, then a clone of

himself), Ferenczi subsumed his independent thinking for much of his life in his efforts to be loved and respected by Freud. One could say that his own independence and original thinking was impeded by the nature of his relationship with Freud— by his need for more from the relationship, and by Freud's fear or unwillingness to give more. We also know that over the later years of his struggle with Freud, he became more and more outspoken and independent of Freud. In the end this led to his rejection by Freud and Jones and the ostracism of the larger psychoanalytic community. Given Ferenczi's more recent "rediscovery" by the analytic world and his acknowledgment as one of the father's of the Interpersonal (and Relational) School (to be described in more detail below), one might say that his later independence and original thinking was born out of his perseverance, courage and faithfulness to his own ideas and clinical experiences.

It is also interesting to think of him as being one of the father's of Interpersonal and Relational Psychoanalysis while at the same time being regarded as a more maternal figure in psychoanalysis. His abandonment of the neutral and sometimes aloof stance of the analyst, which he felt often duplicated his patients' (and his own) childhood experiences of deprivation and/or abuse, and his possessing and demonstrating in his work with patients a genuine sympathy for all human suffering, gives this "father" a distinctly "maternal" aspect as well.

Another association goes off in my head. It is Robert Bergman's review of Celia Brickman's Aboriginal Populations in the Mind, and more specifically the issues of paternal and maternal. Bergman writes, "A white man, especially an atheist scientist, becomes the standard to be aspired to... Primitivity, Freud believed, implies the failure of a desirable repudiation of the maternal, and so women are almost by definition primitive"[p.4] So Ferenczi who is described as maternal in his care of his patients and whose ministrations were felt by Freud to be "less than" analytic or appropriate (perhaps primitive?), had the courage to be "maternal" in the face of beliefs that were so degraded at the time. In fact, Freud would not shake hands with Ferenczi following Ferenczi's reading to Freud his paper on "The Wise Baby". Ferenczi was speaking truth to power, a frightening and courageous act that has life-giving power.

Perhaps this way of being was due in part to a combination of his restless curiosity and his imaginative thinking, linked to his own experiences of being abused and "unwelcomed". Perhaps this "maternal" care was what he longed for. Whatever the causes, he seemed to identify with the pain of his patients and experiment with how to utilize his empathy and his abilities in the service of the treatment of others (L. Aron and A. Harris, eds., 1993, The Legacy of Sandor Ferenczi. The Analytic Press, Hillsdale, N.J.). Clara Thompson said, "He was never willing to admit that some mental diseases were incurable, but always said, 'Perhaps it is simply that we have not discovered the right method.'" (Maurice Green, ed., 1964, "Interpersonal Psychoanalysis: The Selected Papers of Clara M. Thompson." Basic Books, New York.) Or, perhaps this being "maternal", this identification with the pain of his patients is like Kohut's concept of "twinship" and recognizing and yearning for a "soulmate"—a kin with whom to share experiences of trauma, and thereby come to feel less strange and outside the human community. (Judy Vida, "At the Frontier of Psychoanalytic Understanding", Contemporary Perspectives on Trauma, Pasadena, CA., September 23, 2000).

There are so many contributions of his work that I cannot do more than briefly note them in order to give a bit more of a picture of the legacy of this pioneer who wrote in 1929 on "Unwelcome Child and His Death Instinct". It should be noted that it was his emphasis on patients as having experienced early trauma— not so much on the child's struggle with their instincts, but rather the child's struggle with the

neuroses of their parents and their need for a more corrective (and examined) emotional climate, including the real and sincere presence of the analyst in order to do the needed work without retraumatizing the patient— that is so important to remember before thinking about his 1929 paper. As well it is important to note his focus on the real relationship to the analyst, a movement toward experiential work and away from an exclusive preoccupation with theory and the more distanced, intellectual understanding of the person who comes to analysis. His paper on the “Confusion of Tongues” emphasizing the powerful, traumatizing effect of incest and the collusive silence of families (and some analysts) is likewise a powerful, and of course at the time was, a daring piece of writing.

* * * *

There are many, many more aspects of Ferenczi’s work that are noteworthy, but as noted above, when I saw the title of the paper “The Unwelcome Child and His Death Instinct”, I wondered if he in this paper was somehow capitulating to Freud’s will. As I started reading the paper, however, my views changed. The paper spoke to me in a very immediate and personal way that I could not have imagined from its title.

I have felt over the last eight to ten years of struggling with bodily pain and chronic illness that not living would in some way be a relief. So, I was both put off by the title of Ferenczi’s paper and also strongly attracted to it. As I began reading the paper, I remembered again feeling as a child the sense that the world is too messed up, that human kind needed to start over, that the lives that I saw people around me living were not the kinds of lives I wanted to live. Perhaps this was part of a legacy of being the first born grandchild of people who escaped Russia after witnessing first-hand pogroms against Jews there and who fled to this country to leave all that behind and “become American”. Perhaps this was also the experience of growing up as a young child during World War II and the Holocaust where such hatred and death seemed to be intensified in the world. I wanted to escape this life— a life that seemed unstable and all too predictably dangerous and sad. Yet I also carried the rebellious Yiddish humor of my great uncles and aunts who resisted becoming “Americanized”—a split off part of my family’s heritage that I found life giving.

* * * *

In his paper “The Unwelcome Child and His Death Instinct”, Ferenczi writes of his experience as a physician in charge of a war hospital with soldiers/patients suffering epileptic manifestations. In this setting he notes that he could examine the expressions of the death instinct more closely. His work with patients who suffered circulatory illnesses and asthma further led him to speculate that these patients’ symptoms were attempts at suicide by self-strangulation. These patients were also ones who “came into the world as *unwelcome guests of the family*... All the indications show that these children had observed the conscious and unconscious signs of aversion or impatience on the part of the mother, and that their desire to live had been weakened by these” (pp. 103-104). He continues, “I only wish to point to the probability that children who are received in a harsh and unloving way die easily and willingly. Either they use one of the many proffered organic possibilities for a quick exit, or... they retain a streak of pessimism and aversion to life”(p. 105).

Ferenczi then contrasts his views with the notions of others who state that children come into the world with the largest amounts of life instinct, and that death instinct becomes more manifest with advancing age. In contrast, he states, “The child has to be induced, by means of an immense expenditure of love,

tenderness, and care, to forgive his parents for having brought him into the world without any intention on his part; otherwise the destructive instincts begin to stir immediately... Slipping back into this non-being might therefore come much more easily to children. The 'life-force'... becomes established only when tactful treatment and upbringing gradually give rise to progressive immunization against physical and psychological injuries... the innateness of the sickly tendency is deceptive and not genuine, owing to the early incidence of trauma" (p. 106).

Thus, Ferenczi writes of "aversion to life" as a consequence of environmental or psychological trauma/deprivation/turning away by the parental figure. His therapeutic/analytic response in such cases was to move to an "elasticity" of analytic technique that characterized his attempts to work with his patients, especially his traumatized and/or "difficult" patients for whom he was the "doctor of last resort". He describes his work as one in which "the patient had to be allowed for a time to have his way like a child, not unlike the 'pre-treatment' which Anna Freud considers necessary in the case of real children. Through this indulgence the patient is permitted, properly speaking for the first time, to enjoy the irresponsibility of childhood, which is equivalent to the introduction of *positive* life impulses and motives for his subsequent existence" (pp. 106-7).

Ferenczi continued his writing about "aversion to life" and death in his Clinical Diary (Judith Dupont, ed., *The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1988) through numerous examples. His entry of 8 March 1932, for example, has the ominous title of "The analyst as undertaker". In it he describes an analytic process in which he unknowingly responds to his patient in a way similar to that of her abusive, poisonous father. He, Ferenczi, does not of course "like being accused of being a murderer. In case B., I have finally come to realize that it is an unavoidable task for the analyst: although he may behave as he will, he may take kindness and relation as far as he possibly can, the time will come when he will have to repeat with his own hands the act of murder previously perpetrated against the patient... In my answer I openly admitted the inadequacy of my assistance, not making any secret of my own painful feelings on the subject... But, I said, there is nevertheless a difference between our honesty and the hypocritical silence of parents... This is why I do not give up hope and why I count on the return of trust in spite of all the disillusionment" (pp. 52-3). And, importantly, he adds, "In the case of B., in view of the mutuality, the reaction naturally went much deeper. This gave me an opportunity to penetrate much deeper into my own infantilism: the tragic moment in childhood when my mother declares: You are my murderer" (p. 53). Thus, he is talking about death or "aversion to life", and how an analyst even with the best of intentions is liable to behave/be seen by the patient as a murderer (as repeating some of the actions of the original perpetrator), but how an analyst's courageous honesty differs significantly from parental denial and hypocrisy. And, finally, in these comments he speaks to how his own abusive background was stimulated in the counter-transference, enabling him to understand and heal himself and his patient more effectively.

Two last examples also continue his working with this struggle of "aversion to life" and living. The first comes from his entry of 18 June 1932, "A new stage in mutuality" states, "Trauma is a process of dissolution that moves toward total dissolution, that is to say, death... Neurotics and psychotics, even if they are still halfway capable of fulfilling their functions as body and also partly as mind, should actually be considered to be unconsciously in a chronic death-agony. Analysis therefore has two tasks: (1) to expose this death-agony fully; (2) to let the patient feel that life is nevertheless worth living if there exist people like the helpful doctor" (p. 130-1).

Ferenczi's last entry in his Clinical Diary, on 2 October 1932, is one he writes in failing physical health about his relationship with Freud and about his own health. "Further regression to being dead. (Not yet being born is *the danger*.)... In my case the blood-crisis arose when I realized that not only can I not rely on the protection of a 'higher power' but *on the contrary* I shall be trampled under foot by this indifferent power as soon as I go my own way and not his... is it worth it always to live the life (will) of another person— is such a life not almost death?" (p. 212). To me he is speaking to the continuing necessity, and the difficulties in doing so, of speaking truth as we experience it. When the horrors and fears of life are acknowledged, paradoxically there is life. When they are denied, then there is an "aversion to life", a death in life.

Death in life... another association goes off in me; this one to the writing of Robert Jay Lifton. Lifton, a psychiatrist who interviewed Japanese survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as Vietnam vets with PTSD and Nazi doctors who performed heinous so-called "medical experiments" on concentration camp victims during World War II, has stated that after that war we all realized that we had the capability to destroy the world, and the will to use that capability. His themes, similar to those of Ferenczi, are of death and of the continuing death in life that results when we do not speak out about trauma, pain and violence. Learning to heal ourselves involves listening to survivors, not being deaf to their cries, permitting them to be our teachers. Failure to listen and speak out against the horrors of our time as well as the real sexual abuses of Freud and Ferenczi's time, means that we can not heal others or ourselves. That is, we turn away from life to death.

Ferenczi's pursuit of techniques that would be most helpful to the analyst, and his pursuit of his own healing to the end of his life is also a reminder that psychology (and psychoanalysis) is an event. It is not a thing that is finalized and can be written in stone... My associations now lead me to my experience of seeing some of the works of the German artist, Anselm Kiefer. Kiefer, born in Germany just before the end of World War II, was one of the first German artists to recognize, not back away from, but call attention (ala Ferenczi's listening) to the atrocities committed by the Nazis before and during the war. His first works were scorned by Germans and art critics alike, but he persevered, and working in a variety of media (analogous to Ferenczi's "elasticity" of technique) has become an artist emblematic of our contemporary age of dislocation and destruction. In facing and speaking out about such matters, he paradoxically turns from death toward life.

Like Ferenczi and like Lifton, Kiefer's work deals with trauma. He searches for different artistic media (again analogous to Ferenczi's search for the most effective techniques for the patients who had come to him as a last resort) with which to express both the forces aversive to life as well as the transcendent in life. Among the media in which Kiefer works is lead, a so-called base metal on which the effects of time, weathering and the imprint of anything that touches it affects its color, surface and shape. Lead is malleable and is different depending on its locale, treatment and history. Lead is also something that can be transformed, not only in the mystical, alchemical wish of turning it into gold, but in the real sense of making it into different shapes and forms. So perhaps Ferenczi, in experimenting with and revising analytic techniques over time, recognized or hoped that what could be said of art could also be said for psychoanalysis and healing.

Kiefer and Ferenczi also seem to share a feeling of melancholia. Here I mean melancholia in the sense that one can strive for what works best with a particular patient in a particular context and historical setting yet know that any "true" knowledge is ultimately beyond one's reach. One of Kiefer's pieces is a large lead book that is opened on a bookstand. It has very large lead wings coming out of each side of

the book. It is a very striking and evocative piece of sculpture leading one to associate to reading and learning that can stir the imagination of the reader beyond themselves, while at the same time reminding the viewer that this leaden weight may change its patina over time, but is all too firmly and heavily anchored to the ground. So what do we know? What can we know? Yet, it was in the nature of Ferenczi's strivings, enactments, nudgings of Freud to mimic our basic human reaching out for more for ourselves and for our patients despite the knowledge of our own and others' limitations, hurts, and conflicts. To look away, to fail to speak is an "aversion to life".

Likewise a very large oil canvas, "Sternenfall" (Falling Stars) depicts the artist lying down on clods of broken, barren land. His eyes are closed in sleep or meditation, and he is naked from the waist up. His arms are at his sides. There is the vast panorama of a starry, night sky above him. And, there is a very, very thin line that runs from his eyes to the vastness of the heavens. He seems both vulnerable to and in communion with the vastness of the heavens above. In art, psychoanalysis and life there is always the very realness of death and one's wish to die, to stop, to be silent, to avert one's face from what we have done to the world and to each other. In this regard it should be noted, that the light from the stars in the heavens that we see now actually represents light that originated many light years ago. The stars we see are not the stars as they are now. So then what are we seeing? What do we know? What can we know? This is our existential position in the world. Yet we have an ancient longing to try to imagine, to try to see and speak what we see in the face of our ultimate "unknowing".

The battle between aversion to life and facing life apparently went on throughout Ferenczi's lifetime, but he nonetheless did stand out and speak his truth. And Lifton and Kiefer chose life in calling attention to death, to what had been ignored, denied by the United States and by Germany. On a personal level I and I think all of us, like Ferenczi and Lifton and Kiefer are faced with this choice not once and for all, but all the time. There is an "aversion to life" in all of us as we keep still, give ourselves up in the hope that another will like us or that we won't stand out as being different. We fear how others may react to us if we speak our "truths". There is the risk, if we speak, of being separated out from the others, being found wanting or not good enough, of feeling that what we sense is our own neurosis not "reality". Perhaps if we are quiet, we will make it through our analytic training. Yet averting our faces and our voices means choosing "death". Can I, can we, act/speak toward life in the face of not knowing? In his own way and through his own pain and struggles, Ferenczi and his paper on "aversion to life" is a guide.

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THE EVOCATIVE MOMENT

By Matthew Fishler, J.D., Ph.D.

IFPE Presentation November 6, 2009, Seattle, Washington

Introduction

*"The event is there, shining."*¹

When I first presented this paper at the IFPE 20th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference I was aware of being in the moment as I began to speak about a particular kind of moment. While I had the sense that this moment would speak to the topic, the question of being and not being, I wondered *how* it might speak as the discussion evolved.

Last spring I completed a long study called *The Evocative Moment*. There is so much I would like to say about this Moment. But as a Moment that is essentially kaleidoscopic and ungraspable, there will be aspects of it that necessarily remain unspoken.

So what do I mean by the Evocative Moment? Let me begin by saying I am not referring in any general sense to religious, numinous, mystical, or aesthetic experience. Rather, I am speaking to a particular stirring, uncanny, evanescent, nearly inexpressible psychological event.

Perhaps I can say something about how I came to this idea of the Evocative Moment. For much of my life, I have noticed these elusive psychological moments, moments that call and search for, but never quite find, their home in language. The early struggles I faced in my study were really a continuation of a longer struggle to find the language that would differentiate this Moment from other moments, and that would hold but not confine its inchoate, shape-shifting quality, its phenomenological complexity.

The word, *evocative*, turned out to carry the greatest resonance with the experience I had in mind. Briefly, *evoke* suggests a calling something forth from obscurity (as in memories or feelings), a calling to mind by suggesting something, an imaginative impression of reality, and perhaps most importantly, a sense of voice, of vocation, of calling. These latter meanings came to echo not only the way in which the moment spoke, but also the way in which it spoke to me, as a calling.

The word, *moment*, also became significant. It suggests a brief interval in time, in presence; an aspect of a logically developing process; and the tendency to cause movement. So just by naming it in this way we gather an initial sense of the obscurity, the feeling, the calling, the time, and the poetry of the phenomenon.

As I gave the presentation, I indicated that I wanted to let the Evocative Moment into the room. I wanted to do this so that the Moment, even in the space of a brief presentation, did not slip away through the cracks of abstraction, so that it could come forward as what it is – a kind of sensuous, aural shift in the mood of Being. This is one of many pieces I wrote during the poetic-phenomenological phase of my study. It is called "A Flower Already in Bloom:"

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In the midst of waiting
for the cold wind to rain down
from the cold grey sky,
and for the wind fluttering through green fields,
I notice the faint, violet gleam veiled
behind, within, all that I see and feel.
And like waiting on a flower already in bloom
comes the turning . . .

It is to sense yourself in bloom.
It is to return to your dwelling,

glowing with the incandescent world
and remembering your last breath,
the one that brought you to shudder, and smile,
knowing this place,
the home you are building
each time you return.

But you cannot outlast the darkening hills,
the far-falling chill of sky
falling nearly, to you now.

Be patient with the flower
that closes in
on the night
in the wind.

To frame a study around such moments, I was confronted with the need to find a scholarly way into an evocative, shadowy subject that itself remained evocative and shadowy. What emerged was a process that took shape by assembling an organizational structure around a central clearing for an unstructured, unknowing exploration of the Moment.

Homing In: A Survey of Literature

The metaphor that ultimately grounded the study's search for its own theoretical grounding was to conceive it as a process of surveying and then homing in along the landscape of literature to the place where the Moment might be found to dwell. The journey of homing in (and here I will shift into present tense) attempts to place the Evocative Moment, to gather intimations of its mood and atmosphere, and having found its bearings, to found the Moment by building for it a conceptual home. I would like to offer just a few examples of ideas that provide accounts of the kind of moment the Evocative Moment might be:

- Like Freud's (1919/2003) understanding of the uncanny, the Moment reveals a peculiar convergence of a feeling of home that is also a vertiginous feeling of not-at-home. It is both familiar and strange, apophanic, known and unknown.

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- Like Bachelard's (1960/1971) poetic reverie, the Moment carries an ambience of patient receptivity, sensuous awakening, and ontological resonance. It holds a gentle gleam or halo of being, the mood and freedom of poetic existence.
- As a sensuous and soul-stirring mood; as an atmosphere of air and mist, sound, speech, calling, and wind; as a bearing of confusion and complexity; and as a consciousness that paradoxically bears *unconsciousness*, the Evocative Moment belongs to Hillman's unique conception of the *anima* (1985).
- As an emotional experience of becoming the unknown, and as a process of transforming the unknown through language, the Evocative Moment may be understood as what Bion (1983) calls a moment, in faith, in reverie, of becoming of O.
- And the Moment is perhaps most deeply enriched by Heidegger's thinking and language. I would like to just touch on a few regions of Heidegger's work that uncover aspects of the Evocative Moment²:
 - Heidegger's philosophy is rooted in the ontological difference, the difference between beings as entities and Being as that which allows us to see beings in the first place. Being is like the very lighting that reveals what is while it, itself, remains in shadow. Heidegger's calling was to return to what he considered the utmost unthought in the history of Western metaphysics, the oblivion and remembrance of Being.
 - The mood of such a moment of calling Heidegger names *Befindlichkeit*, our pre-reflective, embodied attunement to Being in which we first discover ourselves as being-in-the-world. This is the mood of uncanny wonder in the presencing of Being, a (re)calling to lift such embodied understanding into the clearing of language and thought.
 - It is also a moment in which *Dasein* (Heidegger's term for human existence) is ushered into a felt awareness of its *own* thrownness and finitude, and brought before itself as both being-in-the-world and being-toward-death. In being-toward-death, *Dasein* comes uncannily but authentically before the nothing at the heart of Being, that is, into the embodied awakening that it carries non-being within its being.
 - In what Heidegger refers to as the Moment of Vision, *Dasein* becomes open for Being by entering into the whole of its authentic temporality, experiencing time not as a linear succession of moments but as a primordial unity.
 - In his later writings, Heidegger understands primordial time not as outwardly ecstatic but as approaching from the horizons, with the future constituting but withholding itself from presence, the past constituting but refusing itself to presence, and even an a dimension – presencing – that conceals itself from the present.
 - Following the controversial *turning* in his thinking, Heidegger addresses Being by allowing Being to address him, by receiving the gift of the truth of Being. Language becomes a speaking of Being; thinking becomes primordial poetry.

Becoming the Question; Thinking along the Way

So having founded the Moment, placed and built for it a conceptual home, have we yet found the Moment? Have we yet become the Moment? If not, what is the way from here?

Our approach might be guided by Heraclitus, who advises, “[F]or the known way is an impasse” (2001, p. 7). We might find a way that embraces knowing as a radical openness to the unknown, and that thinks of truth not as correspondence to reality but as what Heidegger calls *aletheia*, or

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unconcealment. Aletheia is a truth of reflection, ambiguity, and paradox, one that reveals what David Levin (1988) describes as “the enchantment of the sunset hour, the uncanny lighting of twilight” (p. 351). For Heidegger, to be open to truth as aletheia calls for meditative thinking, a gentle, non-calculative thinking that is radically open not so much to the mystery of beings but to the mystery of Being.

So we might begin by questioning Cartesian metaphysical assumptions, and by taking a faithful leap into the fruitful complexity of a phenomenon that is not clearly inner or outer, not evidently an object or a subject of inquiry. We might consider the Moment as occurring within transitional space, within a symbolic, animated field that would describe not an evoking object or an evoked subject, not a fusion of object and subject, but only an Evocative Moment (Winnicott, 1975).

Listen, for example, to Merleau-Ponty (1945/2002) behold the sky:

As I contemplate the blue of the sky . . . I abandon myself to it and plunge into this mystery, it ‘thinks itself within me,’ I am the sky itself as it is drawn together and unified, and as it begins to exist for itself; my consciousness is saturated with this limitless blue. (p. 249)

But ultimately, we unresolve the question by returning to a position of radical phenomenological openness to a moment, prior to parsing its metaphysical status – just to let it be.

Taking our cue once again from Heidegger, we might invoke a hermeneutic phenomenology that responds to the call of the phenomenon by allowing it to come into the very shining and shadow of its own language; by allowing it to reveal itself as both a mood and a mode of Being; and by ultimately leaving itself behind in favor of the way of the unknown. We return to the idea of a structure – a psychoanalytic frame, an alchemical vessel, a central clearing – to host the possibility of not representing but presenting, evoking, even becoming the Evocative Moment.

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So let us (re)turn more openly to the possibility of the Moment becoming itself. This is a poem of mine, called “Shining:”

The winds are coming in all directions
gathering here by the force of light.
What is the difference between shining and singing?
Together, they bloom.
The shining singing is sent down from green hills.
The foliage convulses in a hail of wind.
Turbulence blooms and breathes
before the watchful hills,
beneath sky translucently blue,
though if you look into it deeply enough
crystalline traces appear then blend back into veil.
A light, vaporous surge
shakes off the density of memory,
bears evanescent freedom.

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There is no feeling to what is happening, rather,
the birth of a gleaming field,
the coming stirring of primordial elements,
though one does not understand such a moment
but is left, only, to linger,
to love the strange music
of its stirring shining.

Gleanings

Stepping back again, I would like to reflect on just a few of the ways in which the Moment comes to be, how it speaks, how it gathers meaning(s). One might hear that the Evocative Moment has an aural and moving evanescent quality, and that it stirs and suffuses elements like wind and light, scent and sound, time.

Speaking of time, as suggested earlier, the Moment bears an unusual temporal quality. Whereas there is value in thinking of it as an experience of our transience, its temporality is really more an uncanny conflation of time horizons than a linear passage of time. Returning to Heidegger, there is a sense in which the horizons of time offer themselves to presence and yet withdraw from these very offerings – that is, a complex remembrance into presence of something that carries a remainder of absence. This may account for the way in which the Moment appears as a paradoxical, strange kind of homecoming, a coming home to what is not-at-home.

I would like to share another selection of poetry, one that will take us closer to the particular phenomenology of Moment. This is called “The Wind is a Dawn:”

In the nearness
of the shimmering reflection
of the muted gray radiance
of the distance
lives the moment.

In the glistening darkening,
in the wind that breathes and leaves,
and with the wind, comes awakening
of silver gray radiance
gleaming, shadow falling.
The wind is a dawn
of what has already dawned.

It speaks from its own wake;
the sound of its voice
is its very trailing away
breathing what has already been
emptiness.

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In the images of wake and wind, we can sense something elemental about the Evocative Moment – a presence known only on the cusp of its absence, in the residue of a mist it leaves behind. Both visceral and eviscerating, the Moment appears as a sensuous absence, a shining hollow. As a homecoming, it dwells radiantly, poetically, out of its own dark ground. As a moment of twilight, it is a faintly stirring experience of that which, like Being itself, lingers on the cusp of thought, language, and oblivion.

As a process of becoming, each Evocative Moment is a unique phenomenon that brings with it a way of being and speaking that is unforeseeable. It is not possible to describe *the* process of the Evocative Moment, only observations of the possible ways a Moment might unfold. There are times when the Moment comes unbidden, while sitting on the grass, or even walking along a noisy boulevard. Other times, it unfolds in way that begins with a cultivation of psychic space and presence; an immersion within surrounding elements; an experience of tension or anxiety in waiting before the unknown; then, a pivotal point in which anxiety takes on a quality of anticipation, a felt sense of being on the verge of something meaningful; faith that the Moment will come in letting go; and finally, the turning and arrival of the Moment as it presents its strange, still veiled gift in the faintness of a shudder, in the gleam hovers around nothingness.

One becomes the Moment, and one becomes the world. Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) has said that unconsciousness is not to be found “at the bottom of ourselves, behind the back of our ‘consciousness,’ but in front of us, as articulations of our field” (p. 180). As a *depth of field*, one becomes the Moment not by descending the slope of unconsciousness, but by surrendering to its reverberation within the depth of the world. It is not that the Moment lacks a vertical dimension but only that it stirs *here*, in the body, in the heart, and also *there*, across the field, in the movement of the clouds, at the horizon.

Finally, each Moment is already lined with its own loss. The Moment never remains, or never fully arrives. And it exceeds the possibilities of language. But this is its beauty, its fragile remainder. The Moment leaves itself behind as an echo, as a haunting, as an afterglow.

An Offering to Psychotherapy/Analysis

What might such a Moment mean for clinical work? Some of the most vital moments in therapy bring a felt, intersubjective shift in the quality and field of presence, a feeling of becoming drawn into a more profound experience of being (alive). And it is often the “smallest,” most fleeting impressions and feelings – the atmosphere of a memory; the feeling of the wind in a dream – that are most transformative. Perhaps the central feature of a therapy that would honor such moments would be one that begins by noticing them when they emerge. And because such nascent experiences tend to be linguistically remote, it also means a therapy that is e-vocative (that lifts into voice), that expands the possibilities of language and therefore psychological experience.

But I do want to acknowledge that the vast majority of the Evocative Moments I encountered in the course of my research occurred outside the consulting room. Thus, in the tradition of archetypal psychology, we might consider the place of such psychological work as being both within the consulting room and within the broader field of the world. We might reflect on ways of metaphorically opening the doors of our consulting rooms to the larger world, including its smaller, twilight moments.

An Offering to Depth Psychology

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At heart, the Evocative Moment stands as a small offering to the further development of a depth psychological poetics that draws nearer to unthought, unformed experience than is often permitted by conventional forms of inquiry.

I do wonder if our field, at times, allows itself to become too seduced by theoretical abstractions that are unwittingly (and literally) mistaken for the elusive (and metaphorical) realities they are supposed to signify. In Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2002) terms, secondary speech, which translates (re-presents) existing thought, too often displaces primary speech, which accomplishes (presents) the thought itself. Thus, potentially meaningful but elusive moods and states slip through the cracks of conventional awareness; we fail to receive their gift.

I think there are moments – like the Evocative Moment – that can be accessed only by way of a *via poetica*. These are untranslatable moments the understanding of which comes forward necessarily in the language of a poetic act, symbolically, the way a dream comes forward necessarily as a dream. Thus we might consider more fully embracing poetry – and by poetry I mean *poesis* – not as an adjunct, not even as an art form, but as an essential form of phenomenological inquiry that speaks not by denoting or translating, but by carrying, its meaning. We might venture an evocative language that senses and hosts moods that gleam along some frontier of the unknown; that speaks both as a calling from what is most remote, and as a whisper into nearness. Perhaps, depth psychology might find its way to such a place, and there come to dwell, having found what has always been its home.

Conclusion

With this thought in mind, I would like to conclude with an Evocative Moment, a poem I have called "Homecoming to Twilight:"

I.

The wind comes from the sea.
The sea hangs like a cloud in the distance.
The sun sings its descent, melts into the treetop.
Ground shadows are quivering in their changing.

II.

There is tension in the twilight.
There is sadness in its prescience.
The hour is strange, solitary.
The time of soft vision and wind melodies.

III.

The sea is a melting sky.
The wind calls the sun homeward.
It carries in the shadows left behind.
Home is strange the way it dwells, also, with what is strange.

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IV.

A bluebird is beautiful
the way it knows when to land, and when to fly.
The crows head for the trees.
Twilight is the glowing emptiness it leaves behind.

V.

In twilight, what is near—the green fields,
the rustling of shadows—grows more radiant.
The distant is cast into greater distance.
One becomes stranded in the valley between.

VI.

Look into a kaleidoscope to see what is changing:
chromatic light, slow shifting in patterns, vibrant.
But stillness lies closer to ground.
Twilight is the calling wind.

VII.

It knows leaving behind belongs to home.
We stand watchfully, anxiously between worlds,
witness to the parting and passing of seas.
This place is our home.

VIII.

At last, even blades of grass, quivering, point to the east.
We give way to the sun,
turn from its journey of making and remaking the world.
We begin a strange homecoming of our own.

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Notes:

1: James Hillman, *A blue fire: Selected writings by James Hillman* (T. Moore, Ed.) (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), p. 66.

2: What follows is a highly condensed summary that represents my version of Heidegger. It is an understanding that has been shaped over time, based upon a reading of works too numerous to identify. However, it is possible to acknowledge generally the authors who have been foundational to my thinking, including: David Abram, Bruce W. Ballard, John Caputo, Eugene T. Gendlin, David Ferrell Krell, Dermot Moran, Richard E. Palmer, Richard Polt, William J. Richardson, George Steiner, and of course, Heidegger himself.

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THE LAST TABOO: ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD

By Laura D'Angelo

Amy, a secular Jewish psychoanalyst in her 40s, was negotiating pedestrian traffic on Fifth Avenue made thick by a visit from Pope John Paul II. She looked over at the Pope Mobile, and saw the Pope standing in the street about six feet away. Then, the instant that changed Amy's life. Billows of light – textured like silk – began flowing from the pope's robes toward her. "The light was brighter than white, beyond color and clearly light itself," Amy recalled. The ethereal fabric gathered in folds at her feet and filled her with joy. That moment awakened her spirit and divided her life into before and after. The "after" was marked by visions that flowed like celestial silk, inspiring Amy her to seek out spiritual teachers for direction (Interview, 2009).

A gifted student of the psyche, Amy knew she had been addressed by something outside herself. The experience opened up her life. Amy converted to Catholicism and in her newfound church heard similar stories of mystical experiences. The details were different: the similarities, striking. "There is a sense of joy and peace. A sense of surprise – having found an answer to a question you didn't know you had to ask... It's always a wonderful moment of communion," she said. "I feel that I'm unbelievably fortunate to have had a God experience."

Amy is in good company. Throughout history human beings have reported experiences described as spiritual, transcendent or mystical. Amy's experience is like that of Saint Paul, St. Teresa of Avila, Martin Luther King, Allen Ginsberg and Dostoevsky. Yet Amy is sad that her life-altering encounters with God remain closely-guarded secrets in psychoanalytic circles. Sharing her experience with analyst-friends has been painful, like the time when one friend proclaimed over lunch: "You had a psychotic break."

Interest in the dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion has surged over the past decade. This paper examines that burgeoning relationship through interviews with psychoanalysts transformed by their own mystical experiences but made uneasy in their professional lives by an abiding derision toward religion. Still, their divine encounters have informed their convictions – backed by research – that when religious experience is not welcomed in the consultation room the patient may be harmed.

In Amy's case, she keeps quiet about her conversion, even in forums dedicated to psycho-spiritual dialogue. She wryly observes that analysts tend to be open to Buddhism – particularly Buddhism stripped of past life doctrines or pantheons of gods. But curiosity about Christianity is absent. "Try even mentioning Jesus at one of those meetings!" she said laughing.

During two separate analyses, Amy watched her analysts fumble with their own counter-transferences and confusion as she mined her mystical experiences for meaning. "Both analysts were courteous and polite," she said "But ultimately treated my conversion in a patronizing way. One listened respectfully and the other tried to reduce it to nothing. It's most painful when analyst's intentions are good, but they don't believe God is active in everyone's life. It desecrates the experience."

As a psychoanalyst, Amy welcomes spiritual inquiry from her patients. She recently helped a patient integrate a powerful mystical experience. "Not only did I respect it and affirm it, I knew how to enter into it. I had enough of a sense of recognition that I could tell him yes, God had spoken to him, but that

it didn't mean that he could sit back and do nothing and let God do everything. There was still work he needed to do psychologically, but God had promised to help him," she said.

Making psychoanalytic use of spiritual material makes Amy an exception in a field born in opposition to religion. For Freud, religion was a grand illusion, religious belief "a lost cause," a "childhood neurosis" (1927, 1961: 53). Freud believed that God is a projection of our fears and longings for a father. Religion fosters obsession and escape from reality, said Freud who wanted to throw it out altogether. Freud envisioned a future where psychoanalysis would replace religion – curing people of the need for powers mightier than themselves.

Ironically, his chosen successor and "crown prince" – Carl Jung – became his chief challenger. Like Freud, Jung was a medical man. But unlike Freud, Jung was drawn to spiritual matters. Jung believed that we have a religious instinct and when we neglect it, we suffer a loss of meaning and fall ill (Ulanov, 2007: 61). Jung criticized Freud's concept of libido as too narrow. For Jung, libido is more expansive than sexual energy; it is spirit or life force.

The fallout between Jung and Freud split psychoanalysis into practitioners who denounce religion and those who find value in it. Psychoanalysis, for the most part, followed in the footsteps of Freud. And Freud's descendants have kept Jung in exile, barring the doors of their classrooms to Jung's theories. One instructor at a psychoanalytic institute responded to a candidate's question about Jung's omission from the curricula by waiving her hand and saying, "Jung? He's too hard to integrate."

Jung's unintegrated ideas have created a hole in psychoanalytic discourse. According to the 2009 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), 85 percent of Americans believe in God. A recent study by the Pew Forum showed that 75 percent of Americans pray at least once a week. Religious patients often turn to Jungian analysts or therapists who openly welcome spirituality. Even then, it is often easier to talk about feelings of shame around incest or money than to talk about spiritual yearning or transcendent experiences. Worried about exploring the unconscious dimension of their spiritual lives with their analysts, many people simply check that part of themselves at the door.

Prior to the Freud/Jung split, religion and psychology were united in their quest to heal the wounds of the heart and soul, says Jungian Analyst and Theologian Ann Belford Ulanov. "Ages ago psychology and religion were in the same riverbed. Care of souls was the precinct of psychology and religion. The pastor, the abbot or the nun gave a great deal of psychological advice," Ulanov said. (Interview: 2008) "In the 20th century, depth psychology became its own discipline with many different schools and points of view. It became differentiated from religion and two rivers formed: one ran into psychology and the other into religion."

Like spouses in a marriage gone sour, the two disciplines grew hostile toward one another. Psychoanalysis accused religion of being self-idealizing, pathology feeding, and encouraging people to pray away problems. Religion charged psychoanalysis with reducing the divine to a father complex, and then inserting itself as the pathologizing father. Each discipline staked out its territory and remained vigilant for signs of the other creeping over.

Like warring ex's, they were more alike than they cared to admit. Psychoanalyst John Sloane writes: "Both offer ways of understanding and healing human suffering, conflict, alienation, and self-destructiveness. Both have their own fragmented, conflicting, and competing forms. Each has idealized

founders, zealous disciples, scornful detractors, and heretical outcasts. Each school of psychoanalysis and each religious sect can be used to harm, as well as to help. Both believe that truth, whatever that is, can set us free" (2002: 444).

There has been a growing recognition that psychoanalysis and religion need each other. Religious leaders – bewildered by their congregants' projections onto them – have become interested in the tools of psychoanalysis. Clinicians – intrigued by the mutative agent in analytic work – are rethinking the boundaries of the unconscious. Ulanov asks, "What is this mysterious presence in the work of therapy that allows the analytical couple to behold something new that releases healing? What is it that makes for aliveness?" (2007: 65)

The dialogue between psychoanalysis and spirituality grew urgent in the United States after 9-11. Horrified, people turned to psychology with questions about how religion drives people to kill. They asked theologians about good and evil, suffering and God, and agonized about ultimate meaning: What am I called to do in my life? What gifts am I not using?

In the dawning of this age, one practitioner sees herself as the love child of religion and psychoanalysis – not the offspring of a feuding couple. Paula was actually on the couch when she had the first of several mystical experiences (Interview: 2009). In analysis for two years, Paula had railed against the Catholicism of her youth, deriding it as chauvinistic and repressive. During one session, after her analyst accompanied her to the deep layers of her psyche, she had a transformative flash. "I had this sense of a light, a warmth radiating from my solar plexus. It was so powerful and I thought "Oh my God. That's God! I felt this amazing sense of unbinding, becoming free. It was a huge liberation. It felt inside me, not external," she said.

Her analyst remained silent as Paula described what had happened. "He didn't need to say anything. I could tell that this not only made sense to him, but that it was really wonderful," she said. Then she blurted: "I AM NOT having a religious conversion." Her analyst finally spoke. He said, "God Forbid."

Paula's spiritual path unfolded over the next several years. She practiced Yoga, meditation, sought out Buddhist teachers and swamis. "Basically, anyone who wasn't Christian," she said. She brought bizarre images that arose during meditation and prayer, to her teachers who helped her work with them. "I never thought I was supposed to figure it out by myself," said Paula.

Years later, Paula earned a doctoral degree and a psychoanalytic license, but the split between psyche and soul never tracked. "It made sense to me that a mystical experience would happen in the context of psychoanalysis. This is a process of clearing away all the stuff that binds you and keeps you immobile. I saw for the first time that I'm a free being. I saw all the crap I had done to myself and how it all got constructed. And that it didn't have to be that way. It was a huge liberation and light and it was God.

"I didn't know it at the time, but my analyst was a deeply religious person," she said. "I know that if I had ended up in the offices of many of my analyst friends, they would have thought I was out of my mind and had no idea what to do with this."

Out of one's mind? One mind?

Gary Ahlskog, a Freudian psychoanalyst in New York City, said that a mysterious, unknowable core at the center of humanity is consistent with Freud's theory of the psyche. Freud described the unconscious as a place of otherness, beyond the grasp of the ego. "The central point of psychoanalysis is that within each individual psyche there is a non-rational truth that is invisible to the naked eye. So why wouldn't that non-rational truth exist at the center of humanity as a whole?" Ahlskog asked. "It's not provable, but it follows from psychoanalysis' own premise. Core truths are not visible – individually or in the collective."

"What is most basic in our nature remains unknowable," writes Psychoanalyst Michael Eigen in *The Psychotic Core* (2004: 15.) Eigen says Freud's unconscious center reads like a description of the psychotic's world. The id – "a volcanic upheaval, the seething caldron" – has the structure of madness: distinctions vanish between you and me, then and now, inner and outer. (Ibid:7). For Freud, psychosis is an "irruption of the unconscious, a weakening of ego ties with reality" and dreams are nightly psychotic events (Ibid: 6).

Jung envisioned a not-so-scary unconscious, a source of healing and transformation for the ego. The unconscious houses a pool of ancient wisdom that emerge as archetypes. Its boundaries are limitless, stretching beyond the confines of the individual ego. The individual and the world are deeply connected in ways that science now corroborates, but religion has always insisted upon.

Hans Loewald also anchored religious experience in the unconscious. A source of creativity and healing, the unconscious is a place where the self and the world are experienced as timeless and unified. Other theorists have explored the permeable nature of the unconscious, the blurring of inside and outside, self and other. Thomas Ogden says the "intersubjective analytic third" is like a pool of unconscious waters into which analyst and analysand plunge, and from which they contribute and draw. Ulanov goes further, saying that the mutative agent is not constricted by the dyadic frame. It is the "fourth" dwelling outside the analytic couple, as well as within each person, and between them.

For Jung, we participate with divinity through the part of our psyche made for transcendence. "God has never spoken to (us) except in and through the psyche, and the psyche understands it....(as) the eye beholds the sun," Jung said (Ulanov, 2007: 59).

These experiences are not always blissful, warns Ulanov. "Spirit is not a cozy presence but brings a sword, cutting through our joints, laying our heart bare....As clinicians, we ask what a person's experience is of Spirit breaking in. Does it lead to health or illness? How does the person house this visitation?" Ulanov said. "As a religious person, I look at the psyche and manifestations of Spirit through such questions as Where does this Spirit come from? Who authors such events? Who is calling?" (Ibid: 59)

Testing the Call

A recent dialogue of psyche and spirit at a New York City analytic conference devolved into a shouting match between atheists and a believer. "I don't care what you say. There is a God! I know," shouted a woman, near tears. Others shot back, accusing her of intolerance. The verbal brawl reflected a linguistic bridge, dismantled by Americans who have eschewed the language of tradition. Wounded by their own religious pasts, many Americans revolt against a deplorable God image that they unconsciously uphold. Often, it is a score-card God, punishing sinners, saving saints, galvanizing magical thinking, genocide and

terror. For them, words like “Jesus” and “grace” evoke images of private and wide-scale atrocities done in the name of religion.

In reaction, some psycho-spiritual dialogue has split off from tradition, creating a counter-language, dipped in chocolate and rolled in rainbow sprinkles. At the center is a soft-core spirituality, a feeling that anything other-worldly is good. Unhinged from historic lines of exegesis, this spirituality does not subject itself to the time honored traditions of scrutiny. “There was a movement that said spirituality is a good bandwagon to get onto,” Ahlskog said. “From there emerged some fuzzy and semi-poetic thinking like ‘I believe in the great unknown, the indefatigable one.’ It is semi spirituality. It is invented spirituality. The vast majority of newagers run from text and tradition that has been bonafide throughout centuries of human existence. It’s easier nowadays to get educated and sensitive people to look twice at the Mayan calendar or astrology than it is to get them to look at Hebrew scripture.”

Uncritical acceptance rebuffs centuries of theological discernment and the “finding out” attitude of psychoanalysis. In his book, *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief* (1994), Theologian Christopher Morse makes a biblically-based case for faithful skepticism. He cites the New Testament (John 4:1). “Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” Proposing 10 tests, Morse calls on the Christian community to discern the will of God in every generation, time, and place. Test the ecstatic experience and the church’s teachings, says Morse, to ensure they do not contradict relevant data or force people to act against their own consciences (1994: 61).

Depth psychologists have their own tradition of testing the spirit. “By their fruits you shall know them,” said Psychologist William James (1902: 292). A leading intellectual before Freud, James opined that we should judge the authenticity of spiritual experience by its consequences, not by the standards of medical science. “Medical materialism finishes up Saint Paul by calling his vision on the road to Damascus a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic. It snuffs out Saint Teresa as a hysteric. Saint Francis of Assisi as an hereditary degenerate,” he said. (1902: 13, 14). A believer in religious pluralism, James said no one faith can claim absolute knowledge, just as no one person could know the many faces of God.

Communities of faith welcome but do not uncritically accept the “ecstatic experience” of potential leaders. In the Reformed Protestant tradition, a call from God – which may include an ecstatic experience – is discerned by the larger community. An “inner call” must be endorsed by an “outer call” from a church community that oversees years of seminary preparation and rigorous examination. Faith traditions understand the power of religious experience to help build the psyche and the community. They also know that when the psyche is unstable, religious experience can be weaponized.

Saved or Shattered?

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said his Gethsemane experience happened one night when he was 26 years old. (1958: 134-135). The phone rang and angry voice said, ‘Listen, nigger, we’ve taken all we want from you, before next week you’ll be sorry you ever came to Montgomery.’

Agonizing over the dangers to which he had exposed his wife and baby, he wanted to bow out without looking like a coward. He said: “In this state of exhaustion, when my courage had all but gone, I decided to take my problem to God. With my head in my hands, I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed

aloud. The words I spoke to God that midnight are still vivid in my memory: 'I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I've come to the point where I can't face it alone.

"At that moment I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced him before. It seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice saying: "Stand up for justice, stand up for truth; and God will be at your side forever." Almost at once my fears began to go. My uncertainty disappeared. I was ready to face anything." (1958: 134-135)

The next day, addressing a packed congregation, King said: "If I had to die tomorrow morning I would die happy, because I've been to the mountain top and I've seen the promised land and it's going to be here in Montgomery. The old Montgomery is passing away and segregation is dying."

Not everyone can tolerate, let alone and make use of such a powerful encounter with the transcendent. Some collapse under its weight. Joseph Campbell, America's leading mythologist, said that the psychotic and mystic are in the same deep waters only the mystic swims and the psychotic drowns. (1972: 216)

In his book *The City Within the Heart*, (1981) R.C. Zaehner argues that Charles Manson had a bona fide religious experience – akin to enlightenment described by Zen Buddhists. Manson had walked 45 miles in the desert. "The sun was beating down on me and I was afraid because I wasn't willing to accept death. My tongue swoll up and I could hardly breathe. I collapsed in the sand. I looked at the ground and saw this rock out of the corner of my eye. And I remember thinking in this insane way, as I looked at it, "Well, this is as good a place as any to die.' (Then) I began laughing like an insane man. I was happy.' Then he got up `with ease" and walked ten miles to safety (1981: 40). Manson's brush with Transcendence combined with reading of the Bhagavad Gita that says "on the absolute plane...killing and being killed are equally unreal" (Ibid: 37) became a justification for murder.

Don't Ask Don't Tell.

In many psychiatric hospitals, it was considered a basic violation to ask patients about their religious experience for fear of fanning the flames of psychosis. But subsequent research has shown that forcing people to keep their religious anguish and ecstasy locked inside can actually make them ill.

Nancy Kehoe, a former Catholic nun and a psychologist doing postdoctoral work at Cambridge Hospital in 1975, was shocked at how religious material was ignored. She wondered: Didn't a person's religious belief effect their psychological profile, sexual life and belief? "I mean, if someone is suicidal wouldn't it be natural to ask, "Where do you think you're going to go when you die?" Kehoe asked (Shorto, 1999:129).

Her colleagues confessed that patients regularly brought religious material to therapy. This made sense to Kehoe because people living on the margins of society tend to constantly contemplate the meaning of their lives. They wrestled with thoughts such as, "Somehow I brought this on myself. God is punishing me. I'm not just an inferior person – I'm an inferior soul." (Ibid: 132)

Kehoe said: "The therapists were afraid to ask about religion," she said. "I thought that was very intriguing given the fact they would ask the most intimate details about a person's sex life, finances, politics and abuse history, but it felt too invasive to say 'Do you pray?'" (Maxon: 2009)

In 1981, Kehoe started a spiritual discussion group called "Spiritual Beliefs and Values" at Cambridge Day Treatment Center. Staff was astonished at how people suffering from depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder wrestled with spiritual beliefs. Jews, Christian fundamentalists, Muslims, atheists, aged 20 to over 60, wondered aloud about God. They talked about whether its OK to be angry at God and about the meaning of their beliefs.

Her hunch was born out by the group that continues today – 28 years later. Research too has supported her findings. In the early 1990s, an Oxford study analyzed 5,000 psychotic and religious experiences for features of psychopathology and spirituality. Researchers concluded that the way an experience was treated by others influences how the person dealt with it. British Pastoral Counselor John Foskett said: "If they were listened to and accepted, individuals found ways to integrate even the most disturbing ideas and emotions. If they were ignored or pathologized by others, the trauma was aggravated." (Ibid: 17)

Conclusion

Mystical experience – when it heals- can challenge an assumption that only analysis can cure the unmothered self, starved of the holding needed to grow. People who have encountered God say it's more than a peak experience, or a one-shot jaunt with timelessness and unity. Rather, it is a structure-building experience – a transitional space that one can enter and re-enter as a source of aliveness. Living in the "after" of a mystical experience, is living with gauze pulled from one's eyes in a co-created third. So much so that the original in breaking of God – the visions, the voices – become beside the point. One analyst-in-training said: "It's like I walked through this door and experienced these amazing, mind-blowing places, Africa, Asia, Iceland. I had the most incredible adventures, met the most unforgettable people. ... And then someone like you wants to know: `So, what was the door like?'"

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The Last Taboo: Encounters with God

By Laura D'Angelo

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Embodied by Word-Music
By Merle Molofsky, with input from Gene Alexander,
Paul Cooper, Karen Morris, and Les Von Losberg (the IFPE Poetry Posse)

EMBODIED BY WORD-MUSIC

By Merle Molofsky, with input from Gene Alexander, Paul Cooper, Karen Morris, and Les Von Losberg (the IFPE Poetry Posse)

Over a period of several years, a group of people attending IFPE conferences discovered our poetic affinity with each other. Enjoying the luxury of cyberspace communication, allowing us quick and easy access to each other via email, we began to informally exchange poems, and as we responded to each other's poems we realized we were responding not only to the artistry, but to the deepest concerns of our lives. We were engaged in a free associative process, resonating with each other's words, music, vision, history, conscious and unconscious material constantly surfacing. We answered poems with poems, playfully, mischievously, seriously, compassionately. Our process strengthened our friendship, strengthened our poetry, strengthened us.

At some point in our email exchanges, Merle Molofsky addressed the others as Dear Poetry Posse, and thus the epithet originated, and lasted. The Poetry Posse poets are Gene Alexander, Paul Cooper, Merle Molofsky, Karen Morris, and Les Von Losberg. All of us have an abiding love of poetry and psychoanalytic process, and the first four named are practicing clinicians. Barbara Blasdel is often included in our mailings, and she is a "presence."

The epithet did not establish itself unchallenged. At one point Gene Alexander, in his inimitable blend of humor, precision, and restless confrontation, wrote: "poetry posse is a descriptor, not a name. how about the bi-coastal fabulists? the psychic unrealists? post sixties returnists? savage mentalists?" When a poet challenges a dubbing, the result is poetry. Perhaps indeed we are all of the above – and more.

Karen Morris says, "For me, our poetry link has sustained the expressive, dynamic unconscious aspects of psychoanalysis that is part and parcel with my ongoing personal and self analysis. Working in this way with poems inspired by the links/dreams of others, keeps the dynamic unconscious very much alive, both technically and creatively in psychoanalysis."

We would like to share with the IFPE community, and all else who visit the IFPE on-line journal *Other/Wise*, aspects of our correspondence and our poetry that best illuminate the emotional and intellectual engagement that underlies our devotion to psychoanalysis and poetry.

Gene Alexander invites the reader to join the adventure: "As you read the process of call and response, we would be interested in what you see as the unconscious themes and feelings, the derivative material, that binds our work together."

Other/Wise has an interactive dimension, paralleling our IFPE conference style of presentation and dialogue. Each article offers the opportunity for readers to comment on what they have read. We welcome you to join the dialogue of our process through the *Other/Wise* commentary opportunity.

Paul Cooper sees our process as "commitment" rather than "devotion," a significant distinction which raises the question of the dialectic between commitment and devotion, and again, the reader is invited

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to meditate on that distinction. Paul Cooper and Karen Morris's countertransference workshop using the Japanese poetic form of waka, offered at an IFPE conference in Pasadena, emphasized "unconscious aspects of creative process in relation to transference/countertransference dynamic." The Poetry Posse commitment led us to unconscious processes, involving both our creativity and our intersubjective relationships with each other, with all the attendant feelings paralleling the transference/countertransference dynamic of clinical experience.

Poetry is not as widely read as newspapers, blogs, magazines, Wikipedia.... Images of poets in the popular imagination may include a fantasy of a reclusive Emily Dickinson, hiding her poems in a desk drawer; a fanatically ranting poet, with unkempt hair and unkempt mind; political movers and shakers, inspiring an uprising and chronicling oppression; rap stars; dweebs and nerds; dreamers and lotus eaters.... Each poet faces the challenge of self-defining as a poet in what sometimes seems an impenetrable world, a world of cereal box readers and cell phone addicts, a world where people will not read the poems being written. Poets seek community, and create their work in solitude. I'd like to acknowledge up front that the Poetry Posse does provide validation, we validate each other as poets, we validate for each other the value of poetry, through response.

CALL AND RESPONSE

The call and response that Gene identifies and emphasizes arises in one voice, one heart, and is answered by a resonant voice, a resonant heart. Technically, call and response is both a musical and communication sciences term. In music, a phrase, or riff, is offered, and is answered by a phrase or riff that relates to it in musical terms, that is, harmonic, rhythmic, tonal. Forms such as verse and chorus, and antiphonal choruses, are call and response patterns. In human speech, call and response can be a back and forth dialogue, a Q and A, any other form of interactive give and take (in contrast to lecture and oration). To apply this to psychoanalysis opens up a host of meanings – beginning with the process of evenly hovering attention, listening without memory or desire, creative listening. The analyst enters an analytic relationship searching – that is the call – and the analyst responds, and interacts. The process can be described in classical analysis terms as free association and interpretation, or more broadly as unconscious meets unconscious, or subjectivity meets subjectivity, or pilgrim meets wilderness guide, or voice and heart calls, and voice and heart responds. The call and response takes place in language, gesture, bodily experience, emotional response (including experience of emotional deadness), and much more.

Poetry does the same. The poem, language organized into music, feeling, and thought, calls, seeks a reader/listener. The reader/listener receives, responds, and in that reception and response something new is created, as it is in psychoanalytic process, as two subjectivities engage in creating new modes of perception and understanding, through engagement with unconscious process.

What did we, as poets immersed in psychoanalytic encounter, create with each other?

VALIDATION AND BEYOND

To respond to a poem, either with an informed literary critique or with another poem, is a validation of the existence of a poetic self – and beyond, to an encounter and dialogue that says, we exist in a language-rich, imagery-rich, symbolic world, where we can understand each other and feel understood,

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an essential craving that the most self-confident, actualized being would continue to experience – and which we as poets all admit to feeling – without worry as to whether we are indeed self-confident, actualized beings, or just human beings with emotional needs.

After a period of silence, Karen Morris offered this poem December 10, 2009:

SO LIKE THINGS

Is it like those shoes
that you would never think
of leaving the house in?
Is it like kid,
or glove leather
when caught by accident in the rain–
spotted, stiff and cracking?
And what of those chic, black taffeta folds,
in the highest couture ecclesiastical modes
you've kept bagged and boxed beneath the bed,
take out to admire then slip back in.
And still the day comes
so much sooner than thought,
practically on the heels,
near points of pure marvel–
these are no longer new.
Is it really like that?

– Karen Morris

Merle comments:

On reading Karen's poem, I found myself riveted by the way Karen evoked a sense of privacy and loss, a part of the self that yearns to be expressed, a part kept hidden, yet cherished, a part that needs to be brought to light and used. I resonated with the images, responded within by considering my own repression, my own yearning, my own vanity. Within the intensity of my own memory and my own emotional state, caught up in a fantasy of what Karen's poem meant to Karen, I responded to her with a poem of my own, saying "Welcome back, barefoot ballerina! I danced with your poem, and wrote this for you."

SHE LEARNS TO DANCE

Toes squishing in mud, she burrows, then twirls,
Mud splatters taffeta, but onward she whirls,
Copper hair glowing in bright sun-lit curls,
Little girl playing.

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Toes grip flat rock, then rock back and forth,
Bare arms stretch upward, toward magnetic north,
Body springs forward, knows she is worth
The price she is paying.

Now she is cat, and downward she's crouching,
Now she is way hip, hip forward she's slouching,
Now she is reed, her water-roots touching.
Young maiden swaying.

Fingers entwining, two hands together,
Kneeling and bowing, not knowing whether
Her words are heard. Among wild thyme and heather
Woman is playing.

– Merle Molofsky

In a poem to poem response, we take liberties we would not take in a psychoanalytic session. Merle took a fragment or two of Karen's imagery, and feet and shoes, taffeta, and leapt into her own imagery. She moved from bagged and boxed shoes in a bedroom to the outdoors, and re-imagined the confined feet, the confined shoes, as mud-squishing naked toes. Merle says,

For my own purposes. And to give a gift to Karen, a response to her call, hearing her call in own way and responding to my own interpretation of the meaning of her poem. In a session I would have stayed more experience near, more closely echoed the language the analysand used. I would have played with the images I conjured up, and possibly converted them to something more like what the analysand would say. Or I may have more tentatively offered an image of mine, from my own response, more as a question than a statement. Perhaps, in a long established analytic relationship, I may indeed have wandered as far in a call and response as I did with my poetic response.

On the cusp of the New Year, Karen assured us of a healing New Year to come, writing,

“Peace and the softly pealing bells of midnight for a Happy New Year to All...Love, Karen,” and offered this poem:

In final moments—
imagined rough spots appear
and disappear in white drifts.

–Karen Morris

In response, Gene greeted us, called to us with a lovely, lilting, yet dark poem:

illusion

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there's no beginning.
this falling rain, fell yesterday.
what do I imagine?
the year at its end?

—Gene Alexander

In an even darker vein, still on the cusp of the 2010 New Year, Gene further called:

new year?

when I point out dark clouds
my friends remind me
of the sun
on the other side

when I complain of winter storms
they talk about
the jewel like glow
of icicles

when I note the constant rain
they point out
the small bursts
of sunshine

where, oh god,
are the pessimists
who'll offer me
my schadenfreude?

—Gene Alexander

In this poem, Gene does not settle for his own misery. Insisting on “misery loves company,” at least for the duration of the poem, Gene declared his desire to take pleasure in the misery of others, with the tacit implication that only by enjoying another’s suffering can one’s own be slightly mitigated. His courage to acknowledge this all too true, all too prevalent internal experience gave us a clever, charming poem, and one, we might add, useful to have at one’s fingertips to cite in an analytic session. This is the sort of emotional experience everyone shares, but not aloud.

Merle’s response to Gene kept up the “light touch” in exploring screaming pain, writing, “Okay, Gene, you got it.”

Life sucks.
Buncha fucks

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Keep cheering me up
Whassup
With that?
Life ain't phat.

—Merle Molofsky

And closed the e-mail message with “Life sucks. Lotsa love.”

Les had the last word in this interchange: “Damn, I was gonna volunteer to bring him down!”

The banter does not disguise the anxiety of an old year ending and a new year beginning, of psychoanalysts and poets, some of whom were encountering either their own health issues or the health issues of those beloved to them, pondering issues of aging and the many ills that flesh is heir to, feeling free enough to acknowledge the issues and to channel their anxiety into art. And, in so doing, feeling free enough to be aggressive regarding their own discomfort.

Does channeling anxiety into art mean sublimation? Is there unconscious process at work here? Perhaps neither the anxiety nor the aggression was unconscious, and therefore, conscious guiding of impulse into craft is not sublimation. Then what is it?

Karen, with her cultural frame of reference that includes being raised Roman Catholic and with a deep knowledge of Persian and Middle Eastern poetry and contemporary history (the turmoil in Iraq), both shook and soothed our savage breasts with this New Year “Gypsy Meditation”, gypsy being neither Persian nor Middle Eastern, but the poem evoking Persia nonetheless, with sand, gardens, and eroded city walls:

Gypsy Meditation

Through the doorway of your imagination
enter the green rectangular meditation.
Mother Christ, Pomegranate, Pelican,
move the sky around once more
inside your cosmic womb—
two turns west to east – shake loose
the guns surrounding Baghdad.

I'm just a gypsy poet who can't soak enough
blood into sand to make one plastic bloom
as the desert bursts into flames.
Lapels remain unbloodied, without orange, paper poppies
that will never be worn for Baghdad.

Time, sand, erode city walls, as dictators do.
Keep these garden walls intact as satellite beams

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or prayers that stream missiles to other's houses—
shot through with mortal holes and mortal fire
around the world containing Baghdad.

Keep the paths straight inside my Gypsy garden,
and the pear trees blooming.
Keep one thorny stain at the center
by the wall still standing, by the well;
where we sit, mute and amazed as Lazarus
awakened from his dream of Hell.

Karen Morris

Karen took our dialogue and transposed it, took us to a new situation, not our own, and let us imagine trials and tribulations afar, let us empathize with those whose gardens were peaceful oases destroyed by the hell of war, and offered us an image of resurrection, that like Lazarus we can awaken from a dream of Hell. Even in the depths of despair we discover hope and come back to life.

On New Year's morning, Paul Cooper fed us:

New Year's Morning
Fresh coffee;
Yesterday's bread.

Paul is a master of haiku and waka, both Japanese forms, and maintained his own haiku web site for many years. He and Karen have conducted waka countertransference processing workshops, including, as previously mentioned, at IFPE conferences. In the dead of winter he offered us coffee and bread in the garden. And in the tension between the freshness of morning coffee and the remainder that is yesterday's bread, he integrated the sorrows which burden us with the potential of new awakening. Wake up and smell the coffee! And be sustained by bread. We may not live by bread alone, but we feel alive in poetry.

Gene got hungry. And shared his appetite, his gusto, his joy in life, with us:

full fridge

we start the year
with leftovers,
the fridge
full of last night's dessert.

putting away
the silverware,
i'm already
debating:

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chocolate cookies
or gingerbread?

—Gene Alexander

In this poem, Gene reminds us that yesterday's leftovers make sweet eating, that we can savor the past, not knuckle under the pain of what's gone before. He acknowledges the debate is within and without and ongoing, with the colon at the end of the second verse inviting ongoing discussions – what is being debated? Anything, everything.... The poems give value to the struggle. And the choice between chocolate and gingerbread opens us to ongoing pleasure.

Karen responded with a poem with religious referents, religious overtones, "God at New Year's 2010," with a last verse that reads:

Is this what you meant?
What's wrong with us?
Are we so confused, with too many choices?
Tell us, when it comes to you,
should we order
Gingerbread or Chocolate?

The "y" in "you" is not capitalized, but the "G" and "C" in "Gingerbread" and "Chocolate" is. Karen offers us Eucharist, a mystical transformation straight out of Gene and Barbara's leftovers in the fridge.

Merle felt compelled to strike an upbeat note, a defense against midwinter melancholy and New Year/Old Year intimations of mortality, by writing:

Choose Life

Snow settles like dust,
Dusk settles like winter coats,
Out of such cold, warmth.

Three thousand miles, so
Far from our snow-drifted cave,
Scent of gingerbread.

Tropical cacao
Growing bitter in sunlight—
Sweet warmth in winter.

Pray for something else
This way, that way, or my way,
Or not. The world is still round.

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Pass the cookies. Yum.
Thank you. Amen. We are one.
Are poems round as the world?

—Merle Molofsky

Although Merle was riffing on food, she was riffing with a continuous series of verses each of which was in itself a haiku.

To which Paul responded with a series of haiku of his own.

Gone,
the thinning snow blanket:
up-heaved roots

Scent of gingerbread,
growing stronger, sweeter
with each step.

Sweet winter warmth
seeping through frost-etched panes:
waning sunlight.

Morning coffee:
the taste of cookies lingers
with the poet's thoughts.

— Paul Cooper

His verses were written to be interspersed with Merle's, truly call and response, truly a sharing of a perception of perceptions.

The call and response continued with e-mail commentary, such as this excerpt from an e-mail, sent to the group, addressing Karen:

Your response to Gene sent me back to this poem. It is so you! You touch on the richness of a whole world of religious tradition, in this poem and others. You really address deity, and then you bring it so back to what matters, the us of us, who people are, what people do, back to chocolate and gingerbread, which in our secret language means friendship. Alas that it is a language available only to us, those of us who know what Barbara and Gene had left over after an evening of friendship and communion a coast away. But maybe not so secret, not so arcane, because chocolate and gingerbread are so emblematic of the sweet things in life, and they touch so on childhood delights. Pass the hot chocolate while we chant, "Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man." What an emblem of safety! The child-heart identifies with the swift gingerbread man, who is gleefully safe. Chomp.

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As the first few days of the New Year continued to unfold, and we exchanged more poetry and more commentary in our call and response pattern, Merle sent this e-mail comment: "Gene, you have a God-sent reader in Karen. Karen, you so get Gene. But then again, you so get all of us. Gene, you make us aware of how precious each moment, each event can be, if we are mindful. And how necessary it is to be mindful. Thank you for all your second glances."

Being seen helps the newborn experience her/his own existence. We are born into our existence as poets when we are read. Yes, a mature self is aware that our core self is our center of being. And yet — validation matters.

WHY EMBODIED?

"The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego." — Sigmund Freud

And the id is first and foremost a bodily id.

We learn about the essential aspects of life through our bodies, the five and more senses, the drives, our encounters with others as bodily presences with inner lives of their own. Poetry does not have to exist on a page, as a tangible object that lasts as long as it can without moldering or burning. Yet it can exist only as a momentary sound wave, performed, recited. Yet someone has to see or hear the poem, or read it with fingertips as Braille. The poem exists for a human body to perceive it. The poem calls to our heart and soul through our bodies. Thus in our sequence of New Year's emails and poems, we spoke to each other from coast to coast, from varying geographical locations, from our secret gardens, to content ourselves with chocolate and gingerbread flavored with essences from foreign shores, flavoring our food and our poetry.

When Gene sent an e-mail describing an event he was at, a gathering of poets at an upscale restaurant, Paul responded with a poem,

The table is set and unsettled, food eaten,
wine drunk —burp—oops, serious discussion spilling out
meandering among magic words....oh, what fun...my envy rises,
get me to a Kleinian, fast...oh no, it's the weekend.

— Paul Cooper

Winnicottianly playful with poetry, Paul transmuted his Kleinian envy, and all of us could share the envy and the delight.

The good breast of poetry is always full, even as the wine bottles empty.

We also are able to identify the psychosomatic foundation of our food fantasies and how they relate to our need for safety as we contemplate the wholeness of a world, a world with cacao and ginger, a world with wars.

Embodied by Word-Music
By Merle Molofsky, with input from Gene Alexander,
Paul Cooper, Karen Morris, and Les Von Losberg (the IFPE Poetry Posse)

As people in our 50's and 60's, we are acutely aware of signs of aging, physical changes, and physical challenges. Much as the feminist handbook *Our Bodies, Our Selves* created a new self-awareness in women, aging creates an opportunity for new self-awareness in all of us. Many of our Poetry Posse poems reflect an acute awareness of the struggles we have had, or our loved ones have had, with health issues, pain, and mobility. And many of our poems celebrate what poets through the "ages" (block that pun! Punt!) consistently celebrate: love and sexuality.

after our vision of the gods

supported by half a moon above our naked bodies,
i entered you, pleased with the knowledge
our union was blessed.

and after the vision of a thousand silver tears
flowing like the ganges down between your breasts,
i withdrew, shamed with the knowledge
that i had trespassed.

and after the vision of the hundred armed goddess
carrying the swords that cut illusion through
i lay myself down beneath the mower of souls
knowing that a sacrifice was due.

and after my blood had soaked the star filled sky
bristling with light and illuminating hearts,
i turned towards you with my last breath
and only said i'm sorry,

and after you rose and walked away
held together by the evening's breeze
you turned back to take one last look
at what you deigned to leave behind.

– Gene Alexander

Merle says,

Imagining along with Gene a desolate, dying, and guilty soul, and the rueful sexuality embedded in the narrative, the fictional "I", I craved an image of redemption, and offered a poem I wrote for a friend recovering from illness. Drawing on Hindu mythology, I envisioned a sacred sexual dance with Shiva, deity of destruction and restoration. Nataraja is a primal form of Shiva, or Shiva is an avatar of Nataraja. Zohar means radiance in Hebrew. Parvati is Nataraja's consort.

Zohar Dancing the Eternal Cosmic Dance with Nataraja

Embodied by Word-Music
By Merle Molofsky, with input from Gene Alexander,
Paul Cooper, Karen Morris, and Les Von Losberg (the IFPE Poetry Posse)

Nataraja Dances for You, and You for Nataraja

Part I: The Burning Ground

Dance the eternal dance on the burning ground,
walk on coals, discover your cool and silken feet
smiling their own rhythms as you safely cross unbound
by any dread. The rhythm is eternal, and you keep the beat

Knowing that red hot coals, indeed, all fire
will burn away illusion, bringing sweet release
as you swirl and whirl and turn in your widening gyre
in touch with homeland earth, so clarity will increase.

Nataraja dances. Energy in motion,
the stars, the cosmic dust, the spinning earth,
the tugging love of moon for surging ocean,
the ceaseless pulse of insight and rebirth.

Part II: Nataraja's Offering

Nataraja as Shiva embodies the dance,
Every step and gesture a gift to Zohar,
Abhaya-mudra, protection, do not fear,
Foot uplifted, release, your uplifting perfect chance

To beat the drum with Shiva, to create and recreate
eternal rhythms of the first pulse of becoming.
Your heartbeat, every breath, a magic thrumming
of your energy, your always emerging state

Of being held within the dance of being.
Nataraja points to earth with his lowered hand
and as you watch him point you understand
his gift of freedom, for it is refuge that you are seeking.

Part III: The Perfect Union of Parvati and Shiva

When Shiva dances, everything becomes possible, because he imagines
the eternal flame.

The cosmos whirls with the infinite energy of the dance,
and in that flame Kali yields and cannot dance, and Parvati wins.
To dance with Shiva is liberation and romance.

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By Merle Molofsky, with input from Gene Alexander,
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Shiva lets his wild curls flow, crazy and free,
and Parvati too has hair just as free and wild.
Dance forever, dance with glee,
dance as you did when you were a child.

Shiva caught the Ganges in his hair
softening the impact as she fell,
so she could offer the waters of life, to share
with all who wished to drink. We tell

These stories forever and anew,
of Shiva, destroyer and restorer,
so all could know the wonder that is you,
brilliant star, brilliant dancer, brilliant Zohar.

Shiva crushes the dwarf of ignorance beneath his foot,
releasing the wonder of knowledge, truth, grace,
reborn as you, sweet Zohar, are reborn at the root
as Parvati, yet still Zohar, all aglow,

Your face alive with wonder, loved by all
Who know your soul.

– Merle Molofsky

In animal awareness, Karen Morris celebrated the body electric:

Heart Again

Neither sweet nor vicious.
vicious nor sweet,
infant mind
awaits the whorl of senses—
tastes, tears down, discovers,
then implodes—
a worn look shot
to a deformed
personality,
arched or bent or bowed.

I sit,
then stand, teeter
into new first steps.
Heel rolls
in search of lost arches,

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By Merle Molofsky, with input from Gene Alexander,
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the balls in contact with earth again.
Tiny bones engage in
the spread of lowly toes
over tongue and groove—
tottering
headily,
at full steam tilt,
on-coming, on-coming,
through the crystalline air,
the sun-burst spikes,
the heart-felt heat,
that banishes cloth and skin,
to find my core.

I am alive.
I am so alive.

— Karen Morris

Paul commented,

Discovering and experiencing one's aliveness is a beautiful and extraordinary experience. You capture it here beautifully in the microcosm of each step in the minute awareness of sensations, as for instance, in the movement and sensations of your feet touching "tongue and groove"... as I as reader, "groove" as you speak in the "tongue" of your own heart.

Such commentary engages body to body, takes the metaphor embedded in the carpentry language of tongue and groove back into the body and the mind. The reader responds to the bodily call of the poet's translating sensation into imagery through language. And the bodily ego sustains.

**BODILY EGO PERSONA, REPRESENTATION OF EMOTIONAL STATES AND OBJECT
REPRESENTATIONS THROUGH THE METAPHOR OF BLINDNESS AND MUTENESS**

Les Von Losberg had been working for quite some time on an extended poetry sequence, "The Blind Inamorato," exploring the desperate gropings toward relationship of a lover who is as emotionally blind as he is physically blind. Les presents us with the agony of not seeing what one yearns to see.

Excerpts from "The Blind Inamorato" poem sequence:

The blind inamorato
searches for his heart's
desire by feel, by
inference, by scent,
by intuition. At the
rising of the sun, he

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genuflects to luck;
at sunset, to persistence.

* * *

Like a criminal condemned
or a perpetually old man,
the blind innamorato
contemplates death, dying,
grief and bereavement
constantly, as if it were
the study of a novel or a play
that had a happy ending.

* * *

The blind innamorato enters
the blind maze as he emerges:
no wiser, no more skilled
or sure-foot in the dance.
Elegance eludes him, grace
as well. He cannot tell:
his longing may belong
to heaven, may engender
hell. All he knows surely
is that the beat goes on
and rings in his heart like
Hosanna!

* * *

The Blind Inamorato lives
in a black whole, which you
wouldn't expect seeing him
perambulate in daylight,
hopping off curbs and cutting
corners like a kangaroo/kid
on-a-secret-mission pro;
even his aura won't show
to what depths he's sunk:
from his perspective, a chill
spelunker trapped in the
clammy, damp cavern of
himself with nothing but
the sound of an icy rill
to warm his wildly beating

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heart and a steady drip, drip,
drip, drip as his life wears
away.

—Les Von Losberg

Les sent more than a dozen blind inamorato poems, and the Posse responded with full hearts. Paul warmed to the second batch of poems Les sent, resonating more completely than he did at first:

Something about the emotions coming through here with more intensity...and I begin to feel the result of the ongoing build up as Blind Inamorato gradually becomes more real for me. I think my failure to respond previously was somehow related to feeling that I was not able to make contact with Blind Inamorato, very elusive, perhaps. But now exquisitely real and in contact, even in the depths of his dark whole [was this spelling intentional?]. Interesting paradox hole/whole.

Karen responded,

It's very dangerous to enter these poems—even entering the reader is pulled in, drowned into his dreaming—gasping for escape from his world. In answer to the question “what is it to be human”, I can say I feel it differently after reading these poems. He is what it's like to be human, this is what it's like—and that.

Merle was moved by Les's poems and Karen's response, and remembered other poetry exchanges between Karen and Les. And wrote:

Karen and Les, your readings of each other's poems are poetry! Your comments caused me to re-read each of the poems to follow along and discover what you discovered,... Our Poetry Posse has led to so much treasure. Sympathetic, resonant, affirming responses to poems we entrust to each other.... Wonderful poetry games as we bounce off each other's poems....

But it was Gene who brought a whole new dimension of response to Les's poetry, and reminded us of how truly interactive as poetry exchange could be. Gene wrote:

dear les, started looking for a girl friend for the blind inamorato and came across this woman standing about on a street corner. sorry to play match maker without his permission, or yours, but loneliness always gets me. i probably didn't do him a favor however because she's a sort of dangerous type and he's such a lost soul. oh well, they don't have to get it on if it doesn't work out.

the mute ammorata

one.

the mute ammorata
is deftly thwarted
by the voice left

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in the depth of her throat
you depend on her eyes
for truth and desire.
this woman whose song
won't ever be heard.
she is only a moth
in the cave of dream.
you cock an ear
and she opens her mouth
where you hear only wind
crushing desire.
the longing of silence
in the tides of her breath.

two.

The mute ammorata
hates her silence, but of course
she loves it when she's with you
no requirement
to quench your wanting.
no request to which she must assent.
all that she offers
is the quick of nothing,
the thrill of an absence
perverse and depraved,
the kill of nothing,
and deprivation,
the taste of her sex
and what's not said.
and what you discover,
and what's unspoken,
unspoken but felt instead,
a missing word
an unthought thought
like a butcher's knife
inside your head.

—Gene Alexander

In that one e-mail Gene sent nine mute ammorata poems. Karen responded:

Les and Gene—Finding a perfect match in real life should be so seamless—in this sense I find this pairing startling. What a perfect match, a perfect love, I had so much hope for them except for that little problem of sensation and danger, or regression to the primitive, for lack of a better way. The tongue in the ear as a rasp [editor's note: referring to an image in a poem not reproduced here] is just amazing,

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incredible—right out of the psychotic metaphysic of the isolated infant’s world. I don’t find her desire dangerous; it is the membrane encasing him that makes her so. Her feminine desire is awesome-mythological, thereby vulnerable and destructive. My mind began to unwind as I tried to follow possibilities for connection between these two. It continually led me to black, no contact zones. Gene, you are the port of aliveness in these places. I don’t know how you did it. Oh, not being a woman probably helps.

Gene’s answer brought us even closer to the shared experience of danger, of the tensions of desire and the repudiations of self in the symbolic blindness and muteness between these emblematic two, Man and Woman. He wrote:

not being a woman, i imagine a kind of hunger no man can understand. unlike a penis which sticks out and goes in, i imagine a vagina that gets filled and in the filling goes in itself and penetrates while being penetrated. pretty different from being a manpenis. but then, not being a woman, i have no real idea. thus the mute ammorata.

Merle caught her breath and wrote, “Gene, I am startled into a new way of understanding Les’s poems because I am so startled by yours. You both are exploring a dark terrifying aspect of love, a yearning to love and be loved and envisioning only the bleak lonely yearning.”

In a second e-mail she wrote:

And now for the main event, on not being and on being a woman. Yeah, sure, right, hey, it’s different, kinda.... Hungry search is hungry search.... I imagine a penis saying embrace me, and a vagina seeking to embrace. But both seek out of hunger, equally greedily. And then, both penis and vagina are attached to a particular person, and any gender/any person can embrace and hold, can penetrate, can long, can give, can take, can plunder, can exploit, can nurture, can imagine the unfathomable other, the accessible obvious other. Doncha think? Where the wild things are, the rumpus is always beginning.

The intimacy of the poetic exchange fostered the intimacy of direct conversation, the willingness to address the nitty-gritty physical reality of sexuality.

THE RE-EMBODIED BODY – BODY AND SOUL, WE ARE BODIES

In another poetic exchange, Gene focused our attention on how we experience and address illness, pain and suffering, not flinching, not idealizing, not denying:

who did this?

who shaved this body made of light
down to hard white bone
and sinew, left to hobble,
filling essential space with pain?

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who stole off with my dancing spirit
stored in joy within my limbs?
who left me counting, rock to rock,
across these rivers of wretched days?

unfair body! didn't you listen?
didn't you hear the songs my breath embraced?
in dreams i skipped across the field
while gravity forgave me all my weight.

no blade of grass broke beneath me.
no wind that wasn't at my back.
the sun returned me to my self,
lifting me up from a mass of years.

—Gene Alexander

Les, too, encounters what we all dread, as he imagines emotional pain associated with suffering and loss
of a loved one to death:

jagged as glass, the best we can hope for

i

I want to make this hard,
to make it rasp you raw,
to hurt and gall until
it ripens like a hard,
young apple, tart
with loss, this love
I want to leave behind,
this legacy limned
anew in pain, in anguish.

ii

an easy death for me, my
selfish hope and dread—
to go first, go fast, totally
unconscious of what
transpires—while you remain,
halved in the aftermath,
hollow as a pitcher poured
out on sand, enriched—
such an awkward stone

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to roll around reason—by
emptiness, by loss of hope.

iii

and if not you, then me.

—Les Von Losberg

On May, 11, 2009, Merle underwent surgery for a brain tumor that on being biopsied was diagnosed as a metastasis of lung cancer, which she had been treated for January through June 2007 (as of this writing, June 2010, she remains cancer free). This period engendered a flurry of poetry interchanges, with commentary, which reveal the intensity of our personal connection with each other and the power to communicate deeply by turning to poetry.

We began on May 8, the day of Merle's brain scan, just before her surgery, with a poem from Paul musing about the meaning of his daughter's birthday, unrelated to Merle's medical condition, of which he was not yet aware, yet serving as a springboard for an extended poetic communication.

Another Moon

Another moon rises
and with it a daughter's birthday passes
catching me by surprise
and in the fullness of both, I realize
my emptiness.
Or, is it some sort of denial,
my neglect of passing time.

—Paul Cooper

Merle responded,

New Moon

Each new moon
is a baited hook to catch a human heart
each full moon a mirror in which we seek self knowledge
each dark moon is the rejecting gaze of a beloved.
We are moon haunted.
Perhaps the moon dreams of us.

—Merle Molofsky

Karen answered our calls,

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Here I am playing
Hide and Seek
with the Moon again.
Last night she
played White Goddess—
then disappeared.
If there is a thing
to give I would give it
for one grain
from her bowl.

—Karen Morris

Paul danced with us beneath the many possible moons, riffing,

“the baited hook catches hearts,”
reflecting on midnight walls,
casting images of dancing curtains,
lovers’ shadows in the moments
between waxing and waning.

—Paul Cooper

And Gene, who resonates with darkness whether the darkness is his, or someone else’s, perhaps in this instance, Merle’s,

There’s nothing
like a
dead sphere
looking down
at
desperate humanity.

They are
making up stories
about her
just because
it’s Friday night
and
loneliness prevails.

—Gene Alexander

In many mystical and mythological traditions, perhaps revealing potentially an archetypal truth embedded in the human psyche, the moon symbolizes deep metaphysical knowing, a knowledge born

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of reverie and dream. Were we linking unconsciously with our awareness of a crisis of life or death? If we were linked in this way through a night-sky musing, we had an opportunity to be awakened into a rising sun of possibility.

On Sunday, after the Friday moon festival of the Poetry Posse, Paul celebrated the rising sun in a waka:

Slowly,
the dawn begins to rise
shrouded in mist—
perched in an unseen limb;
the songbird.

—Paul Cooper

Merle comments, “What cheered me in this poem was not only the dawn, the songbird, both harbingers of renewal and possibility, but that Paul saw not the songbird as unseen, but the limb. There is an unseen support to count on as we greet each day in joy.”

Gene sent two new poems, one dark, one, in his e-mail subject heading, “happy”:

father

he is
a vehicle for shadows
tracing homeward
against the self serving wind.

his unsteady house
is a polio of fragile windows
and cracked shingles,
with a door lock
of stuttering mechanisms

—Gene Alexander

what makes me happy
despite the crazy gardener,
purple magnolia blossoms
cover the porch.

i give thanks
that his ladder
is too short
to reach
these high

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and illustrious
branches.

—Gene Alexander

Merle's e-mail response on Friday May 15 was a joyous response, because she identified with the "high and illustrious branches," feeling like death and the ravaging of brain cancer, represented by the crazy gardener, was "too short" to reach what was "high and illustrious" in her, that is, her brain, and hence, her mind. Merle wrote, "May all happily growing purple magnolia blossoms stay safe from crazy gardeners. Bless the exuberant blossoms, and bless Gene for seeing them and preserving them in words. How inspiring." Reflecting on this now, Merle says,

I had the distinct sense, which I could call a fantasy or I could call truth, that Gene was mystically in touch with my body/soul experience, and his creativity enabled him to represent my blossoming back into health. I assume all of this was unconscious process, not conscious. And yet, this unconscious process was shared by all of us, and transmitted by the Muse or some such energy.

Karen's e-mail response that same day seems to share a similar understanding as Merle's, that is, an acknowledgment that somewhere in Dream Time we are communicating from powerful unconscious connecting forces.

She wrote, "This is a very mysterious poem! I'm so grateful to enter the high fields of purple magnolia's illustrious branches, coupled with shortness and insanity after a long night [of work]. May we all dream in Magnolia time."

Gene wrote on Thursday, May 21, to Les, "I loved your poem and think of all of us writing as a kind of prayer woven about Merle and all of us as well." Below his message was a short poem:

the moon
back from behind the clouds
so much light.

—Gene Alexander

Friday, May 22, Merle wrote,

Winter's buds tighten
in snowy gusts, in blizzard.

Green within, waiting,
the soul of leaf and flower
awaken yearly
in the light.

—Merle Molofsky

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Paul responded,

only a fragment,
that stretches infinitely
flower and root—
beyond inside and outside
heart and sky....

—Paul Cooper

Gene responded,

a thousand dead blossoms at the foot of the cherry tree
next year sweet stone fruit

—Gene Alexander

Gene sings to all of us:

on receiving your poems

crowding
the magnolia branches
magenta blossoms.

i wake up
with your lipstick
covering my neck and face.

my envy
of the blooming tree

—Gene Alexander

This does not read as Kleinian envy. This reads as deep soulful yearning for beauty and well-being to prevail, a yearning rooted in admiration of whatever delights the eye.

Ultimately, Les poured out his heart, his fear, his love, in a poem celebrating the mundane, because quotidian reality is life:

She sits propped up
In her hospital bed
Eating dinner with all
The oblivious
Concentration

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Of a child set
Like a jewel in a
World still all right:
Consommé, a small
Green salad, an apple,
Apple juice, a roast
Beef sandwich that
I watch her slowly
And methodically
Devour. Another
Of life's impossible
Lessons: how a roast
Beef sandwich can
Break your heart.

—Les Von Losberg

When Merle returned home, during her convalescence she sorted through piles of papers and came up with several poems she had written during the first IFPE conference she had ever attended, the conference in Lago Mar that took place shortly after the traumatic 9/11 attack. She comments,

Reading the poems, which I had thought of as “fragments,” not yet crafted, I remembered the shock and turmoil and agony of the attack, and the incredible feeling of security and acceptance created by the IFPE conference atmosphere. I was grateful that the people with whom I had formed such affinities during that conference and subsequent IFPE conferences were so sensitive. And I was grateful for the sustenance of the Poetry Posse during my immediate ordeal.

The day the gods returned remained unnoticed.
We lived mundanely; you know the details.
On the streets of commerce the dead walked among us
In our homes, golden light saturated our homely goods.
The known world pulsated with the heartbeat of the unknown.
Om rolled from the clouds to the bottom of the sea.
We bought and sold among the shadows of our great-grandmothers,
we cooked and ate drowning in the light of the divine.
We quarreled and waged war, we disdained, we tortured,
we gave birth, we taught, we made love, we told stories,
we lived and died and Om pulsed from the ocean floor to the clouds,
and the day the gods returned was no different from the day they left,
or the days they lived among us.

—Merle Molofsky

Mirror-Gazing

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Fixed and fluid images of you in your prime,
without the god-view,
the arc of your life,
the flame of your incandescent being
as beautiful in your dotage as in your dawn.

The tender ache of age spots, crumpled jowls
as elegant as when you danced the tango, age 27,
in your funny valentine briefs across the unmade bed.
Terrors of memory and of the mirror,

Unremembering mirror of the emphatic now,
sagging jaw line, wrinkled brow,
while eternal youth dreams in the roadhouse of an abandoned past.
Imagine a swimmer with a nose bleed.
Imagine sharks.

—Merle Molofsky

Cryptic message: do not translate unless instructed to do so.
Do not decode without faith.
Leaves falling, drifting past the tree of life.
Krishna playing the flute, melody breath floating the fallen leaf
back to life.

—Merle Molofsky

She tells us, “I recovered, cancer-free, sustained by love, friendship, poetry, and the depth of call and response arising from the Poetry Posse.”

Toward the middle of June, some of us found ourselves lamenting that we were in a dry period, not writing. Merle sent poems she had written in the 1970’s, to affirm her sense of herself as still alive, a poet with something to say, and in response to what she calls “my somewhat desperate call,” Paul wrote, “I find it wonderful to be invited into your 1975 self and poetic voice. You move in so many different directions between language, feelings, insights, questions, such a sense of wonder seems to pervade even the dark moments.”

Merle responded to Paul’s response,

What is so special about our affinity group is the depth of response. Thank you so much. I feel seen, heard, understood. We share with those who don’t write poetry and who indeed may not have a mode of expression, the need to be known. And also, because we do have a way to express ourselves, we want response not only to our deepest selves, but to the forms with which we express that deep self.”

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So – please – friends – keep sending poetry, keep sharing, keep responding An oasis of transitional space in a world too often rigidly bounded by “fantasy” and “reality.” Let us continue to stand at the water’s edge, watching the shifting outlines of sea and sand, of fantasy and reality, of “inner” self and self in the “world” and “laissez les bons temps roulez.”

Les bons temps rolled. Gene called with a passionate, intense poem, and Karen responded.

desire, fallen to earth

this is the wanting that washes down the bone;
the eye of the owl, the deer’s great horn,
and I am dancing in a wheat filled field
my arms like willow branches in a storm,
my voice a rush in the fingered leaves.

which feather, which flight marks the place
where I have wanted,
which silent circle
above the field mice’s nest will bring a feast
to the starving heart?

i am dancing the red tail’s spiral, turning soles
to the dusty earth, head thrown back
to view the her rounding, she folds her wings
and i fall too
without a sound
upon this careless earth,
my wanting
coming up
empty
hard.

a woman to earth breaks into children,
a man, clay, stone, and shattered shale,
falls into a rushing stream.
some never rise again,
their souls too much this heavy earth,
they recede like flood waters,
brown muddy bodies,
dark, indistinguishable
from the river of men
who drown in turmoil
beside them.

in my years i am still young
and fall between

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the earth and stream,
between the hawk
and sleeping bass,
between the cavern
and the cloud,
and down along my bones
desire
burns and weeps
and still goes on.

—Gene Alexander

Karen commented, “Gene, your poem ‘Desire’, particularly the trope at the end, “and down along my bones, desire...” is breathtakingly beautiful. The sense of a fall, which is internal, is palpable and mythic. So good to hear your voice again.”

“So good to hear your voice again” is the essence of the Poetry Posse experience. We hear each other, we hear the essence of voice.

Plainsong

In lost season—
the twin behind
the Iron Curtain
did not hear the antiphon
of velvet antlers’ song.

What kind of beauty is this—
fails to recognize
the beauty opposite?

On the ant hill
in criss-crossed agon,
how comely-mundane
the sense of rapture—
just feeling along the way.

—Karen Morris

What is striking is that in our interwoven call and response each voice is so unique, so recognizable. We have common concerns voiced each in our unique way, each with our own imagery, vocabulary, rhythmic sense, each with our own emphasis. And we have individual concerns as well. As we struggled with life and death issues, with surgeries and disabilities, with fear for ourselves and our loved ones, we comforted ourselves with each other’s resonances, and with the unending richness of language. We reveled in our affinities with each other. We played....

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By Merle Molofsky, with input from Gene Alexander,
Paul Cooper, Karen Morris, and Les Von Losberg (the IFPE Poetry Posse)

Paul calls,

How full of whiteness
this empty page at dawn,
between bird songs—
how full of possibility
the empty day ahead.

—Paul Cooper

Paul frequently writes upon arising, waka or other forms, so that dawn is frequently a Paulish poetic trope. His dawns awaken dawns in the reader, and response.

Merle's response:

How empty the days feel
looming like blank pages
in a poorly written life.
Radiance of sunshine
awakens the hours
when Paul's poem fills my heart.

—Merle Molofsky

Paul chirps on,

Emptiness, fullness
infinite spaces between
blank or written—
robins sing from dawn's first edge,
sun light spreads from the cliff tops

—Paul Cooper

His zen sensibility evident in his exploration of, his identification of, emptiness and fullness, Paul gives the potential of dawn to all of us.

And we play....

We play, not without acknowledgment that bodies ache and minds sometimes totter and splutter.

yoga lesson

such stark recitals
along the bones

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the lament
of muscle and joint
the definite protest
of ligaments
forced to stretch
to fit my image of this asana
as if
my body
was a cowering dog
instead of being
my master

—Gene Alexander

Paul, fully in empathy, writes, “Yikes...! Those ligaments and bones. I was just fitted for one of those boots you wear when you injure your foot.” And continues, with a poem

I started a poem,
but changed my mind
muscles and joints scream for themselves
I wonder who hears them?
Not you, my friend, their cries
muffled by the screams of your own joints
...a little yoga? Some relief? Perhaps?
a bit of a stretch, as if to defy that imp of imps,
Impermanence.

—Paul Cooper

And since we all have achy breaky bodies, of course there would be more response:

Once I was human, then suddenly
a tumble of rubble, a collapse of stone,
a cairn overthrown,
broken to bits and kicked into a ditch.

(Footnote: what a bitch.)

Once I could dance, leap, run, twist, walk.
Twist and shout. Now it's all talk. Can't get about.
Unless, of course, I fly.

Sky-mad hawk soars, rips through weeping rain clouds,
tears through weeping,
sinks talons into ecstasy of flight.

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Sky-mad hawk has no ligaments or bones,
no flesh, no joints. No delineation of shape,
no outline, no form. The disembodied
scream
molds prey into ligament and bone,
launches an avalanche of stone
stretches like a yogini into a favorite rhyme
and screaming silently, defies time.

—Merle Molofsky

The reality of aging, of pain, of limitation, of injury, of a life-time of occasional or frequent mistreatment of Brother Ass, is acknowledged, and then defied, in the last two words of the poem, “defies time.” Yes, it is the sky-mad hawk defying hawk, the sky-mad hawk that symbolizes the dangers and ravages of life itself, but if that sky-mad hawk can defy time, why not poets? Why not all of us, at least sometimes? How does the human spirit sustain itself in the face of what it knows, the inevitability of death, the knowledge of suffering? We could practice Buddhism....

And we could play....

So we played:

Paul writes, “But you are ‘flying,’ soaring crane, just in a different realm.” And sings,

riverside park,
the squeals of distant children,
skipping through clover.

—Paul Cooper

Gene sings,

a tumble of rubble

the trouble with rubble
and yesterday’s stubble
when you live on the bubble
is everything bursts

but a tumble from stumbling
although it is humbling
is better than mumbling
when everything’s cursed

—Gene Alexander

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DEATH MEDITATIONS CONTINUE – WE PLAY WITH DEATH

What the Poetry Posse continued to provide for us was a community in which to play with death, to explore fantasies about death and dying without excessive “morbidity” or distracting fear. We sang and danced with Death singing and dancing along with us.

Les wrote, “Hi, Crew, thought I’d pass these along out of the past couple of months,” the “past couple of months” referring to his abiding terror that his wife, Merle, would suffer and then die of her brain malignancy. This awareness led to a focus on his own mortality.

The dance

The dance, like so many dances
Fraught with choice and dilemma;
Often and again, he thinks, what
are the chances?
What makes this sweet is just the fear
His only death is always near.

He thinks, why not, he would, he should,
And then again, not yet, he shouldn’t;
Learning the only lasting rule of breath
There is no disappointment left in death.

—Les Von Losberg

Hallelujah and Amen

Hallelujah!
I will not pass, pass
on, cross over, move
up, move on to a better
place, be gathered to
some bosom, get
promoted, graduate,
be raised up, or be
made one of the flock,
the saved, select,
anointed, chosen or
elect, embrace eternity,
enter into the mystery,
melt into the twilight, be
absorbed into the light,
be welcomed into any fold
or simply fade away—for

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all and I will be beyond
me then.
Amen!

—Les Von Losberg

Paul responded, “Your dance with impermanence is right on!” He cited the line, “What are the chances?”, saying, “You seem to make it clear, at least in my reading, that ultimately, there are no chances.” The fact that Paul emphasized, “at least in my reading,” underscores the individuation involved in a call and response, and the respect for all possible readings, all possible responses. He then quoted, “What makes this sweet is just the fear/His only death is always near,” and continued his commentary with, “This seeming paradox between sweetness and fear is beautifully expressed. I find the zest for life, often a subject of Tibetan literature, a result of realizing that one’s death is always near!” Paul concludes, “Lovely! My only question: why the third person?”

Were this an analytic session, Paul would be addressing the needed defense of depersonalization in the face of contemplating one’s own death. Yet he also would be acknowledging the immediacy of the analysand’s experience, the imaginative encounter with the unimaginable, the end of being.

Karen wrote,

Les, you have a knack for making the subject of death somehow delightful. It’s like the Harry Potter movie when the kids learn how to make the potion for “Living Death”—their energy lights up with new feelings of aliveness and wonder. These poems are really lively and funny. Is it because they are experience distant in the third person? I wonder what would happen if “Dance was in first person. “What makes this sweet is just the fear/My only death is always near.” I often wonder for me, if things are only funny, or real like death, when they happen to the other person. ‘Hallelujah and Amen’ is perfect! Did you work something through by dancing in the third?

Paul wrote back, “Good question, Karen, I’m wondering the same thing.”

Karen addresses Les as a poet, inviting him to tinker with the narrative voice of the poem. And in so doing she addresses his feelings, his defensive structure, respectfully, playfully, non-intrusively. Les’s answer is non-defensive, truthful, yet acknowledging Karen’s insight. He writes, “I think all poetry aims for the same depth with the same unerring accuracy, and with the same intensity that the poetic ‘I’ engenders.” He identifies the “I” of a poem as much as a construct, as much as a fiction, as any third person persona would be. By writing about our deepest feelings, in symbolic form, we self-reveal and distance ourselves simultaneously.

We recognize in each other’s poetry that we are “working things through” ceaselessly, playfully, seriously playing with the most serious of life’s concerns.

A year later, returning from vacation, Karen sent us a long poem that embodies a profound sense of trauma:

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Experiment 1882, Discovery of the Unconscious

In Nancy, France, it was raining.
I'd wished I'd had an umbrella,
I'd wished I'd had a clue about the will
And magic power.

In Nancy, France, it was not raining.
The doctors placed an umbrella on the table
And told me I was sleepy.
Feeling all wet,
I opened it up inside the auditorium
And with the red question mark
Of the parasol, covered my head.

Mother I'm hungry. I am starving.
This green grass looks good to eat.
Mother, I am a goat.

Allow me to explain, it is not raining.
Herren Doktoren did not say why
I should open the umbrella,
But there is one on the table.
How I would love to open it
And pray for the shedding of this down-pour.
I love its canopy and the sheltered pocket,
Among all the wetness, no one seems to see.

II

The kindly face of God
Became the face of the huge
Gin-berry priest.
Let me tell you how he made Mother dance
And how he loved his beer for its piss.

"Open the umbrella". "Is it raining here?
How did those clothes get on the floor?"
"Open your mouth." He pours in another beer.

I will tell you his foul name
And the names of our churches
He celebrated in.
There is the university where he taught your sons.
I can show you each house where he buried the bones

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Of the boys he tricked.
And how I sat down to table with him
And how I have hated every meal since.

In the name of the Father,
Here is my tongue, Amen.
I may even tell you his small shoe size.

I'm told he's buried among brother Jesuits,
At peace in echoless palaces.
I would dig him up to kill him again.
I will drag him behind me, like a crazed, mourning Somalian,
Past the grave yard of my mother and father.

One last explanation, Herren Doktoren—
My name is not Nancy, it is Cassandra, prophetic daughter.
My eyes are reservoirs for pain.
I am not a goat.
I have lost Time's flexibility—
Time, which invented me.
I live en garde, neatly insane.
As you leave the auditorium,
Please, turn off the rain.

Karen Morris

Les's response to this poem of madness, trauma, and core of perceptive, realistic sanity, was rich and deep and detailed. He began, "This is a very powerful poem and, with the number of interweaving threads, complex. One of the most powerful aspects of the poem is the way you've used these elements to weave what I can't characterize better on first reading but as the outline that alludes to what the poem is about." He questioned some of the imagery, particularly the use of Cassandra, saying, "Cassandra, the prophetic daughter of Priam...resonates with prophecy that goes unheeded. My initial impression is not that this poem is about prophecy so much as about revelation." The distinction he makes is not merely a fine semantic delineation as it is about recognizing and valuing the internal state of thinking the unthought known, rediscovering the repressed, and needing to acknowledge the kernel of trauma and its' aftermath.

Merle responded to Karen's call by sending a short poem about Cassandra that Merle wrote years ago, and then entering the "body" of the poem through her own body. Merle wrote,

To this woman's ear, eye, body, sensibility, [the poem] has the impact of trauma to a female body. Even though there is a story within the story of boys abused by

a priest, there also is a sense of something physically dangerous to the "I" who is remembering rain, and mother, and piss, and beer, and umbrellas, and boys, and gin-priest.

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Karen heard the call in our response, and responded,

I appreciate every word you have shared in your responses. I meant for the poem to utilize the “analytic invention”, or discovery via primary processes. It was fun to use displacement, condensation, reversals, symbolization, etc., in the way an analysis works, to show the way trauma is reconstructed. Merle, you read it just like an analysis—that’s really satisfying to me.

AGGRESSION AND PLAY

When psychoanalytically informed poets fight, the fighting makes for cheerful friendship and good poetic pickin’s. During a somewhat innocuous exchange of poetry, Karen sent a poem called “Stop Being a Head,” clever, witty, playful, with the lines, “No one suggests that cooking these books/might be like some crooked wig/at the end of a party where you wake up/smiling *a la* Loren, smiling Lollabrigida–/which you ain’t.”

Paul wrote,

Be one of the eight million,
Saturday night at the movies,
lard-soaked popcorn, pop-rock, pop-zen,
chop wood, carry dog food. Nothing special.
Friday night:
over weight women in pick-up trucks,
case of beer, carton of cigarettes,
one in each arm.
Fast food for the kids, stench of salt and french fries.
I’m good to go,
the neighbors do it.

–Paul Cooper

Merle, appreciating the joke, wrote, “Hello, neighbor, Tarnation, you know I only use the pick-up truck to transport hogs to their play dates with the other Harleys. Eight million neighbors! That would make some posse!”

Gene loaded his sawed-up shotgun and his sensayuma, and sent off a friendly – but loaded – diatribe “To The Coastal Denizens” from “The Redneck Institute of Beer Drinking Good Ol’ Boys (NIRNDGB)”

Dear Poetry Posse,

Although y’all will find this difficult to comprehend, we at the NIRBDGB are

sorely hurt by your characterization of us. Not all our women are skinny little martini sippin’ pot smokin’ gals in skinny black dresses with a volume of Emily Dickinson under one arm and the commie manifesto under the other, but we do love and cherish them. And even though our kids don’t go to after school

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ballet classes or sit cross legged and chant some ungodly worship to Hindu gods that carry swords and snakes and severed heads in their many hands, they do practice safe sex and football and not, as we imagine your children do, at the same time.... We do offer a diversity course for poets. Please let us know if you would like to sign up at least 23 hours in advance (the 24th hour is reserved for six packs).

He signed his rant "Joe the Six-Pack Nebraska."

Merle felt obligated to defend the moral righteousness of the east coast Posse members Joe the Six-Pack Nebraska was flagging as the martini-sipping east coast elite, and wrote a poem, knowing she wasn't anywhere near skinny and was never going to wear a skinny black dress nor sip a martini:

Big leg gal writing poetry
Seems there's something she's trying to see
but she can't see it yet.
Maybe she can get
a glimpse of heaven
searching in the scattered graven
images of words.
Or maybe she will see the birds
flocking in the nearest tree
then soaring off together in poetry.

Big leg gal wears black for mourning
Knows the skinny about the borning
of what comes next. Ain't no safe sex.
Ask Oedipus Rex.
Down, Rex.
Don't bite the commies.
Some of them are daddies and mommies.
Some of them chant country songs—
With Harry Krishna you can't go wrong,
ain't I right, cowboy?
God is love message ain't no toy.
God loves both the east and west
coasts. Ain't no best
coasts. Only what we try to see
in poetry.

Merle Molofsky

Merle knew Gene was playing, and Merle felt Gene landed a hard playful punch. And came out swingin'. And amused Gene. He wrote back, "figures. I write some crap and you turn it into poetry! sometimes the muse is an idiot who needs correction and not some lofty inspiring promise of enlightenment or love. merle, you are a shit kicker par excellence." Gene is a high-flying, high-octane poet who loves lower case.

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Gene reminded us that we were going to convene at the Seattle conference, to share a drink, saying, "Can't wait to knock back a few with you." Merle responded, "We all practice alchemy, Gene, and knocking back a few will alchemize all of us in Seattle. You keep talkin' shit, darlin', shit is its own poetry. The Muse definitely appreciates a few laughs."

The level of aggression fueled more love, more libido. The poetry, and the poetry-allusive e-mail comments, epitomize the truth that libido must be stronger than aggression. In this group of poets, there is a lot of available id impulse, a lot of aggression, tamed by powerful libido.

Paul, most likely recognizing the aggression might need a little love oil, wrote, "Anyway, here's a traditional waka amidst all this contemporary talk...."

raindrops wet my path,
this sunless autumn morning,
or are they teardrops?
Who will know the difference
as this long deep chill sets in.

—Paul Cooper

Karen, Paul's waka partner, waka-ized back,

who notes the difference
contemporary talk...
shit or shinola—
amidst the ceaseless, writhing,
thoughtless known, these wet leaves.

Karen Morris

Merle could not leave well enough alone. Fired up and feisty, she wrote,

Now look what Gene hath wrought. Karen is talking shit or shinola! "The autumn leaves drift by my window, the autumn leaves of red and gold." 'Tis the season to notice the season change. Happy autumn equinox to all my eternally transforming friends.

Gene created a bridge:

contemporary raindrops
all decked out in ralph lauren
while the leaves, still wearing prada,
can't deal with life's inequities.

—Gene Alexander

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Merle heeded the call:

The tracks of my tears
mingle with the leaves ground into the earth
by the frenzy of Motown dancers with no dearth
of Pabst Blue Ribbon beers.

—Merle Molofsky

And then, in a tribute to the pop music that subtly unites our sensibilities, Merle conceded that peace was possible:

Raindrops keep falling on my head
Woke up this morning with blues all in my bread.
Autumn leaves getting ready to fall
And all I can do is weep and bawl.
Let's rake up the words and build us a fire
And when it stops raining we'll all be much drier.
Break out the beer and grab yourself a pig's foot
And drink a toast to anyone who can make this line scan while finding a rhyme for pig's foot.

—Merle Molofsky

Well, maybe peace is not as alluring as fightin' words wordplay.

Karen continued the fight: "And drink a toast to anyone who can make this line scan while finding a rhyme for pig's foot." What relief to have been given a meaningful task for the day...thank you!.... Gene, it's easy to mock Prada from the West Coast, but you clearly don't understand!!! What are they wearing there these days, "Feral Child"? – wait, I think that's New York." And with the phrase beginning "Wait," she kissed and made up.

Les took us to a whole other dimension:

Water of Life

Between shit and shinola
Hangs a row of raindrops,
Ovoid as a string of cultured
Pearls, some say; dewdrops,
Others; others still, tears shed
And yet to be shed: such is
The Invisibility of wisdom,
The transparency of truth.

Les Von Losberg

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Perhaps the last word can come from the Israeli musician/composer/songwriter/keyboard player, Idan Raichel (2006), who founded the Idan Raichel project: "Our ability to live in peace with each other depends first and foremost on our ability to accept all that is different between us."

Poetry is one of many forces that enable us not only to accept what is different among us, but to celebrate the differences. And psychoanalytic process is one of many forces that lead us to that insight as well.

NOTE: The poets who contributed their poems to this article retain the rights to their own poems, including re-publishing rights.

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Merle Molofsky, psychoanalyst and poet, serves on the board of directors of IFPE, is chair of the IFPE Ethics Committee and co-editor of IFPE's e-journal, *Other/Wise*. Editorial board, *The Psychoanalytic Review*. Advisory board, Harlem Family Institute. Member, NPAP, IEA, and HFI. Articles in *Other/Wise*, *The Psychoanalytic Review*, *Journal of Religion and Health*, and elsewhere. Her play, "Koolaid," was produced at Lincoln Center.

Gene Alexander is a poet, playwright, and psychotherapist practicing (all three) in San Francisco, California. His plays have been read in Los Angeles and New York City and have also been presented at previous IFPE conferences. He is editor of the poetry journal *Nine Times Down, Ten Times Up*, a collection of poems written by students living in townships in South Africa. His poetry and plays can be found at Lulu.com.

Paul C. Cooper, L.P. has served as Dean of Training at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis where he is a senior member, training analyst, clinical supervisor and on the faculty. He is an award-winning author and poet. He serves on the IFPE Board of Directors and is chair of the Spirituality & Psyche Committee. His publications include: *The Zen Impulse and the Psychoanalytic Encounter* (2010: Routledge); *Into the Mountain Stream: Psychotherapy and Buddhist Experience* (2007: Jason Aronson) He maintains a private psychotherapy practice in Manhattan and in Westchester, NY.

Karen Morris is a NYS licensed psychoanalyst in private practice in Manhattan. Her paper 'Torture and Attachment: Conscience and the Analyst's World-Seeing Eye', has been nominated for NAAP's 2010 Gradiva Award for best published paper. An earlier version of this paper was read at IFPE's 2008 conference held in Boston, MA.

Les Von Losberg has been a poet, songwriter and conceptual artist for more than 40 years. His poetry has been printed in small press publications and his artwork exhibited at the Katonah Museum of Art in Katonah, New York. In October he will be making a presentation entitled "Not Your Daddy's Murder Ballad," in which he will both explore traditional murder ballads and sing a number of more modern

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("psychoanalytically-influenced") murder ballads of his own. Les has earned his living as an estate, business and retirement planning consultant for the past 29 years.

DEVELOPING COMPETENCIES IN THE DESTRUCTION OF PSYCHOANALYSIS: POLITICAL,
PEDAGOGICAL, AND PRACTICE PHILOSOPHIES

By Patrick B. Kavanaugh, Ph.D.

(History and Context: An earlier version of this essay was first presented at the 27th Annual Spring Meetings of the American Psychological Association's Division of Psychoanalysis (39) held in Toronto in April of 2007. The organizing theme of the spring meetings was: *On Clinical Momentum: Time, Process, and Complexity in Psychoanalytic Engagement*. From the program brochure, *Clinical Momentum* was understood as...

(t)he multiplicity of perspectives now entertained by psychoanalysis can generate a cornucopia of views on what we might call "clinical momentum." Attempts to give expression to complex experience challenge received understandings about what, in our ways of being with others and with ourselves, propels the forward motion of clinical engagement. The contemporary affinity for uncertainty, interest in complexity, and the appreciation of each treatment's unique flux, -moment by moment and through protracted time-, seize our attention. (Program Brochure)

In this context, a panel was formed to speak to the question of... *Competency in Psychoanalysis: State Regulation, Self Regulation, the Integrity of the Profession, and Who Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis*. This essay is a more elaborated version of the thoughts presented at the conference.)

***Who Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis?
Philosophy, Culture, and Competency in Psychoanalysis***

In the emerging worldview of the 21st century, the world is seen as operating in a random fashion about which we can only speak in terms of probabilities, potentialities, and possibilities. The fixed, stable and predictable world of modernity has transformed into a world that: exists in a state of continuous flux; consists of a fabric of invisible relations; and in which world, the events of everyday life are understood as irreducibly complex phenomena. As we enter the 21st century, we find that the *natural order of things* is not as *natural* as we had once thought, nor is it in the *order* we had so readily assumed for so long. And in the analytic culture, we have come face to face with how little we know about that which we have been so certain for so long. Indeed, we gather together this year to challenge our received understandings about what *in our ways of being with others and ourselves* propels the forward motion in the analytic engagement; that which brings about changes in the analytic engagement is not as obvious as it once seemed to have been. And our purpose in gathering this year invites the question: *Are we not compelled to also challenge our received understandings of competency in bringing about -or, in participating in the process that brings about- such changes? Is it not time to call into question both our concept and measures of competency?*

Although philosophy is generally thought of as the antithesis of psychoanalysis, recent years have witnessed certain foundational questions – philosophical in nature – encircling the analytic community: Shaken out of our traditional ways of thinking, we are compelled to rethink such metaphysical questions as: *How do we know what we think we know?, Just what is it again that we think we know?, What is the nature of reality?...of human nature?;* and, as suggested by the theme of this year's meetings, *..of time, process, and complexity in the analytic engagement?* Philosophy converges with psychoanalysis in

challenging our assumptions about the nature of *time*, *process*, and *complexity* and bears quite directly on how our assumptions influence: how we might listen, understand, and respond in the analytic moment; our notions of science and process research; and, how we think of competency in psychoanalysis. The medical model of psychoanalysis best illustrates, perhaps, the significance of our underlying assumptions regarding *time*, *process*, and *complexity* in our ways of *being*, *presenting*, and *knowing*.

The medical model assumes a linearized and sequential *time* flowing like a line independent of the events it supposedly contains and along which line events of the past occur, *then* those of the present, *then* those of the future. Indeed, all scientific processes of the modern era are assumed to occur along this invisible 'line' of linear time (Slife, 1993; 1995). Such linearized assumptions of *time* and *place* lay a deterministic foundation in analytic thinking in which past trauma psychically determines, of necessity, present symptoms. In the positivist tradition, temporal succession and spatial proximity are axiomatic assumptions in arriving at *causal explanations*: what *happens* in the present and what *will happen* in the future results largely from what *has happened* in the past. As our assumptions of a linear and sequential time are brought into question, the *non-linear* nature of *time*, *place*, *logic*, and *causality* are foregrounded as we consider the incredible complexity of the psychoanalytic process in which experiences of the *past* and *future* might coexist, co-determine, and co-structure the *present* moment of the *future-past*...

Our concept and measures of competency are deeply rooted in the worldview of the early 1900's in which view: *the world* was seen as fixed and stable; *reality* unchanging and predictable; and, *adaptation to the status quo* was the contextualizing value of both psychoanalytic education and treatment. During the 20th century, adaptation to the natural and self-evident world was part of the natural order of things in psychoanalysis. And in the fixed, stable, and predictable world of the Industrial Age, the evaluation of competency in psychoanalysis centered on the candidate's *mastery* and *application* of received knowledges. More specifically, *educational competency* consisted of evaluating the candidate's mastery of knowledges received through their coursework, supervision, and training analysis which often times was the central method of teaching and learning, ...longstanding whispers of discontent in the analytic community notwithstanding. And *practice competency* consisted of evaluating the effectiveness of the candidate's *application* of this knowledge via supervision and the successful outcomes of control cases. Outcome-based education and treatment have been the demonstrable evidences of both educational and practice competency since the founding of the Berlin Institute in 1922. And they still are as we enter the 21st century.

One cannot travel too very far in considering the question of *Competency in Psychoanalysis* before entering the intersection where the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the clinic and culture interface, if not collide. And in this intersection, the question arises, *Who Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis?* ... Is competency determined by state regulation?... or, by self-regulation? ... And, ...How is the integrity of the profession impacted if it is the state – as opposed to the individual- that decides? Significant as these questions are, they seem to stand in the shadows of an even larger question: Do the meanings and measures of *Competency in Psychoanalysis*, originating in a late 19th century worldview, continue as the unchallenged templates for evaluating the analyst's competency in the 21st century? If so, the concept of *competency* remains situated in the mechanistic conceptions of people and life prevalent at the turn of the 20th century. If our educational and political institutions continue into the 21st century with 19th century measures of *competency*, do we not continue to fail to match our understandings of

competency with our more contemporary psychologies of psychoanalysis, many of which rest on different understandings of *time*, *process*, and *complexity* in the analytic engagement?

In my measure of time this morning, I would like to call into question the question of *Competency in Psychoanalysis* in the industrialized cultures. My premise is that *culture* and *psychoanalysis* are inseparable; my thesis is that our highly technocratic and industrialized culture produces: the *image of the analyst*, the *version of psychoanalysis*, and the concept *and* measures of *competency* most needed by the culture. And further, that each, e.g. the *image*, the *version*, and the concept of *competency*, is changing as we transition from the Industrial to the Information Age. As my contribution to our consideration this morning, I would like to: first, focus on the question, *Who Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis?* from several different perspectives: 1) our institutional definitions of psychoanalysis; 2) the role of the state in a culture of consumerism; 3) the positivist ideology and assumptions underlying our concepts and measures of competency; and, 4) the socio-political ideology most currently dominant in the analytic culture. And second, I would like to suggest a different understanding of *Competency in Psychoanalysis* which, I believe, is more in keeping with a 21st century worldview and the spirit of this year's spring meetings. More specifically, I suggest that we develop competency in challenging and questioning our received psychoanalytic wisdoms, knowledge(s) and truths as an integral and ongoing aspect of our education and practice. And in so doing, engage in the process of destruction *-and renewal-* of psychoanalysis as epistemology, theory, ethics, education, and practice. To do otherwise, I believe, is to remain frozen in time and, in so doing, passively participate in a gradual process of the atrophication and destruction of psychoanalysis...

Who Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis?

Institutional Definitions of Psychoanalysis and the Question of Competency

An historical perspective of institutional definitions of *Competency in Psychoanalysis* begins in the winter of 1923-24 with the training committee of the Berlin Society imposing standards and regulations on the learning activities and experiences of the candidates (Safouan, 2000). In so doing, psychoanalytic education became subject to a Competency in technocratic rationality in which the institution's wisdom, oversight and discourse replaced everything in the realm of the candidate's individual choice; uniform, objective and scientific methods of assessing, evaluating and making decisions were applied to each phase of the candidate's education. And the responsibility for determining the analyst's *competency* shifted from the individual -where it was situated in the earlier Vienna model- to the Institute in the Berlin model. And psychoanalysis became institutionalized. And further, the precedent was established in our pedagogical philosophy that an institutional rationality and oversight are needed -indeed, ethically required- to ensure that the *good* and the *right* takes place in education and training; a sovereign entity must develop the rules and evaluate matters of competency in each phase of the candidate's education and training. Otherwise the candidate, it is assumed, would be totally incapable of developing a responsible and reasonable mode of self-instituting analytic training. Thus, in the best interests of psychoanalytic education and training -and also, to protect the public-, it is necessary for the Institute to decide what counts for psychoanalysis. And a triumph of triangulation prevailed between the training analyst, the institute, and the candidate; the other-as-third became an integral aspect of institute education and training. ...And the beat goes on as we enter the 21st century.

In the summer of 2001, the Consortium, – a group of, arguably, the major players in organized psychoanalysis – advanced the most recent institutional definition of *Competency in Psychoanalysis* with their adoption of national health-care accreditation standards for education and training. In so doing,

they defined a rather narrow, circular, and restrictive definition of psychoanalysis. *What is psychoanalysis?* Psychoanalysis is a healthcare profession, or a specialty thereof. *What is psychoanalytic education?* Psychoanalytic education is the demonstrated competence of those educational experiences taking place in an institute that meets healthcare and accreditation standards; and, *Who is a psychoanalyst?* A psychoanalyst is a mental health professional who successfully completes the educational and training requirements and graduates from an accredited institute. And despite the celebration of diversity in contemporary psychoanalysis, all graduates must demonstrate their mastery of core competencies as a *mental health professional* who has acquired "... a 'culture of evidence' perspective about behavior based on scientific inquiry and reasoning, replicable methods of observation and measurement, and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative evidence" (The APA Educator, 2005). A science and pathology-driven model of understanding people continues to: provide the standards for education and training; produce the psychoanalyst as a *mental health professional*; and, prescribe the core competencies to be mastered and measured in order to receive a government-issued license to practice. And, the triangulation between analyst, analysis and institute legitimized in the winter of 1923-24 interweaves with an equally complex triangulation of the training analyst, the institute, and the government legitimized in the summer of 2001.

The question of *Who Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis?* was answered very early in the history of psychoanalysis. By history and politics, the Institute -as opposed to the individual- decides what counts. And more recently, the Institute in partnership with the government. As an *institutional system* of the modern era, psychoanalysis stands as a modern scientific framework for the discovery and learning of practices of effective therapeutic intervention, the efficacy of which is determined by empirically-based outcome studies. As an institutional system, psychoanalysis is made up of a series of 'models of the mind' such as those developed by Freud, Klein, Bion, Sullivan, Kohut, Winnicott, Fairbairn, Balint, and Lacan. Such models can be taught and learned as a law and ordering of *discursive rules* from which a lattice of psychotherapeutic interpretations may be generated, exchanged, or posited (Barratt, *Psychoanalysis and the Postmodern Impulse*, 1993). As an *institutional system*, psychoanalysis rests on the learning of received knowledges, the rules of which are applied in the service of improving the individual's adaptation to a fixed and stable world. And as an *institutional system*, psychoanalysis is reducible to measurable sets of core competencies as exemplified in the education and training of the analyst as a mental health professional.

It should be well-noted that institutional systems of psychoanalysis are rooted in linearized assumptions of *time, place, logic, and causality* and provide the foundational assumptions for our: educational and practice philosophies; research and science methodologies; theories and techniques; and, assessment strategies for evaluating educational and practice competency. And such institutional systems and definitions of psychoanalysis mock the very spirit of the analytic process which, nonetheless, continues to gently rise outside the walls of our educational and political institutions.

Who Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis?
The Role of the State in a Culture of Consumerism

During the 20th century, psychoanalysis developed in the industrialized cultures of the west as they were transforming into cultures of consumerism characterized by the mass production, -distribution, and -consumption of goods and services ranging from automobiles to televisions, Big Macs to Viagra, and financial planning to consulting services. And these industrialized and technocratic societies relied on governmental standards and regulations to manage the *Quality, Competition, and Fairness* in such

diverse sectors as the *Economy, Foreign Trade, Education, and Business*. Governmental standards standardize and their regulations regulate in the service of protecting the public in their consumption of the goods and services produced. Under the social contract, the state has both the right and duty to assume the role of protecting the public -if necessary through such measures as: legislation and regulation, developing industry-wide standards, and the licensure of service providers. In this way, the state assures that minimal standards of quality are met in each phase of production, distribution, and consumption. If and when the consumption of goods and services in any sector of the society reaches a certain percentage of gross national product (@16% GNP), that sector is declared to be an Industry and, in the interests of protecting the public, principles of industrialization and commercialization are applied.

In the United States, the most industrialized, technocratic, and consumer-driven of societies, the costs of healthcare have reached 16% of GNP and are rising. Healthcare is now known as The Behavioral Care Industry; healthcare professionals are now known as vendors; and -wrapped in the cloak of protecting the public – the state now requires: evidences of *competency in the education* of healthcare vendors (the production phase); evidences of *continuing competencies* in the delivery of their services (the distribution phase); and most recently; evidences of the efficacy of the services provided (the consumption phase). In the current era of assessment and accountability in healthcare, the issue of competency is ultimately determined by evidence-based strategies linking outcome and cost-effective research (Keisler, 2000). In order to be sanctioned and legitimized in our industrialized culture, the psychoanalysis produced must be organized around time and cost efficiency in producing its theoretically anticipated outcomes; measurable and predictable outcomes are the standards of competency in psychoanalytic education and practice.

An industrialized culture produces not only the understanding of *psychoanalysis* most needed by the culture but also produces the image of the *psychoanalyst* and the understanding of *competency* most needed. And the image of the analyst as a scientific practitioner is now in the final stages of being industrialized. That is, the analyst is now produced through the scientific management of her or his education and practice. And this management takes place through: the *increased centralization of information, authority, and decision-making* power in various educratic entities; and, an ever-increasing *uniformity of policies* and procedures that define our standards of education and training and of care and practice. In education, competency is concerned with the question, *Has the candidate actually learned what the training program says they are teaching them? Educational competency* is, thus, demonstrated by the intellectual mastery of received knowledges as measured by written and oral examinations. *Practice competency* is concerned with such questions as, *How effectively do we do what we say we do?* and, *Does the treatment we offer bring about the theoretically anticipated outcome in ways that are both time- and cost- effective?* After receiving a governmentissued license as evidence of one's competency to practice, evidences of *continuing competencies* -or, *continuing professional development programs*, as they are most recently referred to- are demonstrated by fulfilling mandatory continuing education requirements for license renewal. ...*Who Decides What Counts in Psychoanalysis in a culture of consumerism?* The State. And *the State's deciding* is deeply embedded -and, endorsed- by the dominant socio-political-ideologies of the analytic culture.

***Who Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis?
Socio-political Ideologies: Liberalism Blended with Positivism***

Any given ideology contains its own distinctive worldview, forms of rationality, and set of core beliefs and values by which a political group or social movement might understand and interpret itself. In the United States, the liberal and conservative ways of thinking are two of the most prominent socio-political ideologies. They represent "... two distinct conceptions of moral authority, ... of apprehending reality, ...of ordering experience, (and) of making moral judgements" (Redding, 2005, 304). And further, they differ on their respective understandings of: human nature, the effective remedies for social problems, and the extent to which individuals are responsible for their own life and life circumstances. As opposed to a political conservatism, *liberalism* is usually seen as representing progressive values, an emphasis on community, and as *supporting* government-sponsored programs designed for the larger good.

In the liberal tradition the freedoms and responsibilities of both citizens and professionals are defined *exclusively* from within the social contract; individual freedoms, rights, and responsibilities ultimately derive from the collective interests. The liberal tradition assumes that without the elevation of the collective's interests over the individual's, the social contract would break down and there would be a generalized collapse of society into amoral chaos. The liberal's worldview structures the relationship between the individual and the state; the State has the legal authority and moral responsibility to oversee matters as they pertain to the individual. In the liberal's worldview, the State is the *Who* that *Decides What Counts in Psychoanalysis*. The State's regulation of the analyst is: authorized by the social contract, defined by the interests of the collective, and embodied in the codification of law and ethics. And in the United States, a liberal ideology has been the most powerful voice during the 20th century in developing those policies that *Decide What Counts for Psychoanalysis*. And further, this ideology continues into the 21st century as part of the natural order of things in the analytic culture.

In their recent book, *Destructive Trends in Mental Health: The Well-intentioned Path to Harm (2005)*, Rogers Wright and Nicholas Cummings argue for a re-evaluation of the practices and policies of professional organizations in the mental health field. Wright and Cummings are two self-described life-long liberals with distinguished careers as psychologists and leaders in the American Psychological Association (APA). In their book, they assert that the socio-political views guiding the research, advocacy, *education*, and *practice* of the mental health professions are most often liberal. They warn that psychology, psychiatry and social work have been captured by an ultra-liberal ideology, the agenda of which has trumped science at the highest levels of decision-making in the APA. And Richard Redding, an associate professor of law at Villanova University and associate professor of psychology at Drexel University, elaborates...

Although psychology celebrates diversity, which has come to be one of the profession's core values ...and strives to be inclusive by recognizing the value and legitimacy of diverse beliefs, the profession lacks socio-political diversity. Most psychologists are politically liberal, and conservatives are vastly underrepresented in the profession. (Redding, 2005, 303)

The lack of ideological diversity in our leadership and governance bodies persists despite the ideals clearly espoused in the APA's ethical code urging psychologists to be sensitive to those cultural differences and biases that contribute to perpetuating a sociopolitical point of view that might exclude or oppress the perspectives of others. Operating in opposition to the profession's core ethical principles regarding diversity has had devastating consequences for the profession and practice of psychology.

It biases research on social policy issues, damages psychology's credibility with policymakers and the public, impedes serving conservative clients, results in de facto discrimination against conservative students and scholars, and has a chilling effect on liberal education. (Redding, 2005, 304)

A liberal ideology has biased research on social policies that are at the forefront of the culture wars specific examples of which include: exploring the relationships between: authoritarianism and conservatism; political psychology and restorative justice; and, adolescent competence in making birth control and abortion decisions. Other areas of a liberal bias in social policy research, they assert and document, includes: racism and affirmative action; welfare and school busing; individual v community rights; and, gay and lesbian parenting (Wright and Cummings, 2005).

Wrapped in a 'radical and extreme form of political correctness,' a supposedly empirically- based professional organization -the APA- has been taken over by an ultraliberal agenda. And often times, this agenda is advanced in ways damaging to psychology's credibility with both policymakers and the public. Dr. Louise Silverstein, for example, writes in the *American Psychologist* (1991) on conducting research on day care for children, ...

'...psychologists must refuse to undertake any more research that looks for the negative consequences of 'other-than-mother-care.' The traditional conception of motherhood is nothing more than an 'idealized myth' concocted by the patriarchy to glorify motherhood in an attempt to encourage white, middleclass women to have more children. (Goldberg, 352, 2007)

And Sandra Scarr, a past president of the American Psychological Society, adds her comments on "other-than-mother-care" when she says,

However desirable or undesirable the ideal of fulltime maternal care may be, it is completely unrealistic in the world of the late 20th century. We need to create the new century's ideal children. Multiple attachments to others will become the ideal. Shyness and *exclusive maternal attachment will seem dysfunctional*. New treatments will be developed for children with exclusive maternal attachments. (italics added) (Goldberg, 353, 2007)

Is the characterization of an ultra-liberal agenda having "*devastating consequences*" with policymakers and the public a bit extreme? I don't think so. The APA carries the distinction of being the only professional organization in this country to be censured by the House of Representatives *and* the Senate of the United States for publishing in one of its journals a meta-analysis and interview study of college students who had been molested as children. The article challenges the notion that experiences of molestation are deleterious to children. As cited by Cummings, not one of psychology's traditional friends in the House or Senate voted against the resolution of censure, including the two psychologist members of the House who abstained rather than vote in opposition to the resolution. Cummings notes that several members of Congress confided in private that the APA testimony was so ambiguous and vague that voting *against* condemning the APA would have given the appearance of endorsing pedophilia! Citing other instances of equally damaging consequence, Wright and Cummings conclude that a misguided political correctness has tethered our intellects and has led to a political diversity so absent in mental health circles that, "... most psychologists and social workers live under a bubble, a bubble so encapsulating that psychologists were shocked when the APA was censured. Such negative

political consequences and professional shock follow from a total disconnect from mainstream society” (Cummings, xv, 2005).

A series of very difficult question awaits the analytic community: *Have our psychoanalytic organizations -including Division 39- been captured by an ultra-liberal worldview? And if so, How has its agenda impacted our professional standards in education and practice? As a political ideology, conservatism is usually seen as representing traditional values, an emphasis on self-reliance, and a fierce opposition to government-sponsored programs. A conservative ideology, however, is vastly underrepresented in psychology — our ethical commitment to diversity notwithstanding. Those of a conservative ideology probably oppose the state’s oversight in matters of Competency in Psychoanalysis while those of a liberal persuasion probably expect, endorse, and support the state’s oversight in Deciding What Counts in Psychoanalysis. And there is something more about socio-political ideology and the analytic culture... the blending of an ideology of liberalism with that of positivism.*

A positivist ideology... Birthed in a culture of positivism in the latter part of 19th century Germany, Freud’s psychology was understood as a natural science of mind. Infused with its medical ideology and rooted in evolutionary biology, psychoanalysis sought its validation in the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences. More than simply an epistemological doctrine, however, positivism is a potent form of ideology that grounds the institutions of the westernized cultures. As an ideology, positivism constructs a reality in which there is only One God, One World, One Logic, One Essence, and One Science producing One Truth at the .01 level of confidence. For most of the 20th century, the analytic culture embraced this positivist’s epistemology and seemed blinded to the ideological nature of its socio-political frame of reference so that, in the analytic culture, there was only One Reality; One Science; One Human Nature; One Logic; One Truth; One Theory; One Technique; One Transference; One Counter-transference; One Interpretation; and, One legitimate Institute from which to receive knowledge and experiences. And further, there was only One form of social formation for the political and educational institutions in the analytic culture: those organized to support principles of hierarchy and control and in which institutions the political and ideological hierarchies of power and knowledge were grounded in medicine, biology and the natural sciences.

Ethics, power, and knowledge are inseparable in the intersection where the State and Institute meet to issue the license to practice. The Institute’s understanding of Competency in Psychoanalysis mirrors the State’s ideology of social control: both are interested in bringing about the patient’s conformity and compliance with a normalizing doctrine. The interests of organized psychoanalysis in predicting and controlling human behavior as a natural science interface with those of the political sciences in the larger culture; both psychoanalysis and the political sciences share the positivist rationality that seeks the technical mastery of people through the scientific production of knowledge, its acquisition, and its applications.

During the modern era, the historical discipline of psychoanalysis has rested on a knowledge-base that is, at once, *ahistorical* and *atemporal* in nature.

Underlying all the major assumptions of the culture of positivism is a common theme: the denial of human action grounded in historical insight and committed to emancipation in all spheres of human activity. What is offered as a replacement is a form of social engineering analagous to the applied physical sciences. It is this very denial (of historical consciousness) which represents the essence of the prevailing hegemonic ideology. (Giroux, 1997, 12)

Positivist knowledge is understood as: scientific, bounded, cumulative, and context-free, far-removed from the individual, political, and cultural traditions that structure meaning. And the scientific fact is the foundation for our received knowledges, the mastery and applications of which form the basis for demonstrating competency in education and practice.

As we enter the 21st century, we do so with a noteworthy lack of diversity in: our intellectual and conceptual foundations; our pedagogical and practice philosophies; and, the socio-political ideologies of our leadership and governance bodies. By history and politics, the State and the Institution -as opposed to the individual- is the *Who* that *Decides What Counts for Psychoanalysis*.

On Developing Competency in the Destruction of Psychoanalysis: Moving Into the 21st Century

Our traditional ways of perceiving, thinking about, and coming to know the world have been changing profoundly and irreversibly over the past century. The intellectual upheavals of the twentieth century have led to what Barratt describes as a collapsing of the master discourse that has regulated our human affairs over the past four centuries (*Psychoanalysis and the Postmodern Impulse*, 1993). And this irreversible process of collapse has been seeping into the epistemological fabric of the analytic culture, forcing us to reconsider our largely unquestioned assumptions about the *nature of reality*, *...of human nature*, and *...of time, process, and complexity in the analytic engagement*.

Over the past thirty years, a synergetic process of challenging and questioning our received educational and practice philosophies has generated the rich diversity of psychologies that characterize contemporary psychoanalysis. These psychologies premise different understandings of human nature, posit different methods of knowing about people, have very different understandings of the unconscious; and, assume very different purposes and outcomes of the analytic discourse. The core competencies of *a mental health professional* do not match, however, with what would constitute competency in many of these psychologies: the assumptions of a healthcare model simply do not apply. By acting as if they do, the illusion is created that the demonstration of competency as a mental health professional is somehow related to – or, is the equivalent of – *Competency in Psychoanalysis*. And representing this illusion of competency to the public seems rather disingenuous, at best. As the monolithic psychoanalysis of modernity slowly fades into the archives of *Times Past* so, too, do our positivist's understanding and measures of competency.

Our measures of competency in psychoanalysis do not match -and, never have in my opinion- with the defining concept of psychoanalysis: *the unconscious* which, in contemporary psychoanalysis, is perhaps more precisely thought of as... *the unconscious* as conceptualized by: ...the Freudians, the Jungians, the Kleinians, the Lacanians, the Kohutians, the Winnicotians, the relationists, the intersubjectivists, and those who speak from an existential, phenomenological, or other philosophically based paradigms — to name just a few. If it is the individual therapist or unique relationship and *not* the mastery and application of received knowledges, techniques or procedures that propels the forward motion of the analytic engagement, are we not ethically compelled to match our educational philosophy and objectives with our respective theory of *the unconscious*— however it is understood to be? And given our conceptual diversity, does not the definition and measures of *competency in psychoanalysis* necessarily depend on the particular understanding of *psychoanalysis* in question, be it Kleinian, Lacanian, Freudian, or ...whichever?

In the time remaining, I would like to consider the following proposition: psychoanalysis as an *institutional system* is to the modern era as psychoanalysis *as process* is to the postmodern. In this consideration, I will speak to: some of the characteristics that differentiate a *process* from an *institutional perspective*; a process view of psychoanalysis that rests on Freud's initial and intuitive concept of the unconscious as *representation's other*; and lastly, the question of *Competency in Psychoanalysis* given a process understanding of psychoanalysis....

Psychoanalysis as Process: In contrast to an institutional system, psychoanalysis *as process*: stands outside the linear and sequential assumptions of the natural sciences; exists in a non-linear matrix of *time, place, logic, and causality*; and runs counter to – indeed, defies- its own institutional systematization. *As process*, psychoanalysis is positioned to continuously question its own received assumptions, knowledges, and socio-political ideologies; its discourse is a discourse on discourse which includes questioning the underlying assumptions and formations of its *own* discourse and requires the analyst be 100% outside the process while, at the same time, be 100% inside the process. And at the same time, be neither inside nor outside as there is no inside or outside. This rather mysterious process leads to unimagined and unpredictable outcomes, limited only by its 'possibility of possibilities.' *As process*, psychoanalysis is filled with conflict, dilemma, and the paradoxical and...

runs contrary to everything we are taught is the logical, rational, 'scientific' way to acquire knowledge. Yet it is only through using such an apparently illogical and subversive method that the patient's psychic truth can be articulated, a breakthrough not only in the treatment of pathological structures of thought and character, but a revolution in the mind's access to its unthought forms of knowledge. (Bollas, *The Mystery of Things*, 1999)

Indeed, Bollas likens the analytic process to a subversive activity – a kind of counterculture activity as opposed to conformity and compliance- in that an invitation is extended to the other to speak whatever is consciously experienced in her or his *bodymindthinkingspeaking*. In so doing, the process involves relinquishing the demand on both participants to be logical, rational, and coherent. And this strange process is illogical and subversive for *both* participants with its only goal being to further the associative process. The associative-interpretive process: undermines the intellectual sanctity of analytically acquired truths; sustains generative forms of destruction that break disturbances of thought and character; and, subverts the authority of both participants. And most importantly, this is the way it should be.

In very differing ways the method of free association and the act of interpretation are forces of destruction that decentre the analyst's psychic hegemony and the repeated sensibleness of the analyst's interpretive grasp. (Bollas, 27, 1999)

As the two participants create hermeneutic entities, they are immediately dispersed by the very associations they inspire. And in this strangely intimate and irrational process of *being, speaking, and knowing* a rather mysterious and sacred unfolding of the *unknown known* somehow occurs as 'the natural order of things' is called into question in ways that are both scientific and emancipatory, freeing the *knowing and being* of the enunciating subject. Participation in such a process requires, however, that the analyst trust the process, herself, and the other (of self). And uncertainty, unpredictability, and the unknown are constant companions in this process in which liberation comes through destruction..

As *process*, psychoanalysis radically challenges the accepted and acceptable criteria of judgement, the entire tradition of 'right-minded' or 'appropriate' thinking, and does not posture as a modern science; that is, as professionalized, standardized and technocratic (Barratt, 1993). As process, psychoanalysis speaks to a way of *being*, *presencing*, and *knowing* that envelopes an emotional, intellectual and ethical attitude that guides its unique ways of thinking and speaking and has as its only purpose the furthering of the associative-interpretive process (Kavanaugh, 2004; 2005). Psychoanalysis *as process* radically influences how we might listen, understand, and respond in the analytic moment; shapes our notions of science and research; and, suggests how we might think of *Competency in Psychoanalysis* in the 21st century.

The Question of Competency from a Process Perspective: Understood as...a venture into communication via the associative-interpretive process in a contextualizing metaphor from the performance arts, e.g., the psychic theatre of the mind, psychoanalysis is resituated in philosophy (of phenomenism and language), the humanities (history and literature), and the arts (the transformative and performance arts). And this understanding of psychoanalysis structures very different implications for what constitutes *Competency in Psychoanalysis*. In this understanding, *competency* centers on the question: How well can the analyst be with *self* and *other* as the other (of *self*) speaks from the stage of their private theatre? And, How well can the analyst step out onto that stage and speak the inexplicable in ways meaningful to *the other*? Thus, from this perspective, *practice competence* is understood as,

...the implicit internalized knowledge of a language that *the speaker (the analyst) possesses* and that enables the speaker to *produce* and *understand* the language (being spoken by the other).
(emphasis added, Webster's College Dictionary, 1999)

As a performance artist in the theatre of mind, the analyst performs her or his interpretive act in which *competence* is inextricably linked to the wording of the *unthought known* in ways that are, at once, meaningful for the client and furthers the associative process. In so doing, the analyst fulfills the mutually agreed upon purpose for meeting: to understand and translate the language of *the unconscious* of *self* and *other* in ways meaningful to the other (of self); such translations are spoken from the analyst's ways of being with *self* and *other*. Thus from this perspective, the central question regarding competency is: *How well does the analyst venture into communication via the associative-interpretive process in the work-play of the theatre?* And this understanding of *practice competency* may or may not have anything to do with other contemporary psychologies of psychoanalysis. It has nothing to do, however, with the core competencies of a mental health professional. And further, competency from this perspective is not synonymous with bringing about a theoretically anticipated outcome as outcome is unpredictable and unknown...

In this synthesis and practice of psychoanalysis, *practice competency* is inextricably linked to the complex process of *listening*, *understanding*, and *responding* to the language of *the unconscious* of *self* (of *other*) and *other* (of *self*), a language which is, at once, the primary source of knowledge in and the primal linguistic of the analytic discourse. This synthesis of psychoanalysis rests on Freud's initial and intuitive understanding of the *unconscious* as *life*, *affectivity*, or the *life force*, an understanding that did not -and, still does not- fit with our received philosophical, scientific, or medical paradigms (Henry, *The Genealogy of Psychoanalysis*, 1985). Their underlying assumptions simply do not apply. In its radical phenomenality, the *unconscious understood* as the *life force*: cannot be stated, taught, or learned within our more traditional worldviews; hearing and speaking its language cannot be mass-produced in the classroom, mass-distributed in supervision, or mass-consumed in the training analysis. Understood as

life, the conceptual singularity of *the unconscious* places psychoanalysis outside of the classical worldview and the scientist's symbols, Freud's later declarations to the contrary notwithstanding (1937).

How is *competency* measured if *the unconscious* is understood as an ontology of life that emphasizes the process nature of our lived-experiences in which *unrepresentability*, *invisibility*, and *formlessness* are core characteristics? ...What are the implications for competency if the defining aspect of psychoanalysis, e.g., the unconscious as process and dynamic, is understood as *representation's other?* or, *the life force?*... If it is the individual therapist or unique relationship that speaks to a knowing, being, and presencing of self with other then what are the meaningful measures of competency -if any? ...Irrespective of one's particular understanding of the unconscious, however, the more immediate question remains: Do we continue into the 21st century conceptually tied to our received notions and measures of competency that trace their genealogy to a 19th century mechanistic view of the world and people?

The reexamination of our notions of *Competency in Psychoanalysis* involves the question of freedom and the freedom to question the natural order of things in the analytic culture and the analytic engagement in our educational and training programs. Developing competency in the ongoing destruction -and renewal- of psychoanalysis is premised on the questioning and challenging of our received assumptions, knowledges, and wisdoms in psychoanalytic epistemology, ethics, education, theory and practice. And there is a pressing urgency to do so. Our institutions remain rooted in a 19th century worldview and structure; our pedagogical philosophy, model and strategies have remained virtually unchanged since 1922; and, our standards of practice and care are organized around theories that gratuitously assume that people are the helpless passive victims of their life circumstances.

If, as Douglas Kirsner suggests, psychoanalysis is "...a basically humanistic discipline that has conceived and touted itself as a positivist science while organising itself institutionally as a religion" (*Unfree Associations*, 2000, p.233), then is it not time to unabashedly acknowledge to ourselves and the larger community that we form our own community of practice; hold our own distinctive views of human nature of which *the unconscious* is central and defining -*however it might be defined*; that we hold our own distinctive views of science and research methodology; and, that -in agreement with feminists and systems theorists- we hold a process perspective in which relational phenomena are fundamentally irreducible. And further, is it not time to advance psychoanalysis as an incredibly complex, non-linear *process* and, as such, is not premised on assumptions that can be measured by traditional natural science criteria, however modified to appeal to business, governmental and educratic entities which think in medical model terms (Bohart, 1997). As a humanistic discipline premised on a non-linear metaphysics and postmodern constructivist epistemology, the mechanistic assumptions of a natural science model simply do not apply. And from a humanistic perspective, *outcome* is highly ideothetic, the value of which is best judged by the participants in the process who are, ultimately, the *only ones Who Can Decide What Counts For Psychoanalysis...Thank You*

Dr. Kavanaugh is a former president of the Forum and served on its Board of Directors for fifteen years in various capacities. He is the founding president of the Academy for the Study of the Psychoanalytic Arts and a former president of the Michigan Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology. He has presented and published on psychoanalytic education, theory, practice, ethics, and epistemology. His book, *Stories from the Bog: On Madness, Philosophy, and Psychoanalysis*, is currently in press (Rodopi. 2011). He is private practice in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

POETRY

EXPERIMENT 1882, DISCOVERY OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

By Karen Morris

In Nancy, France, it was raining.
I'd wished I'd had an umbrella.
I'd wished I had a clue about the will
and magic power.

In Nancy, France, it was not raining.
The doctors placed an umbrella on the table
and told me I was sleepy.
Feeling all wet, I opened it up
inside the auditorium, and with the red question mark
of the parasol, covered my head.

Mother I'm hungry. I am starving.
This green grass looks good to eat.
Mother, I am a goat.

Allow me to explain, it is not raining.
Herren Doktoren did not say why
I should open the umbrella,
but there it lies on the table.
How I would love to open it
and pray for the shedding of this down-pour.
I love its canopy and the sheltered pocket,
among all the wetness no one else seems to see.

II

The kindly face of God
became the face of the huge
Gin-berry priest.
Let me tell you how he made Mother dance
and how he loved his beer for its piss.

"Open the umbrella!"
"Is it raining here?"
"How did those clothes get on the floor?"
"Open your mouth." He pours in another beer.

I will tell you his foul name and the names
of our churches he celebrated in.

Experiment 1882, Discovery of the Unconscious

By Karen Morris

There is the university where he taught your sons.
I can show you each house where he buried the bones
of the boys he tricked—
and how I sat down to table with him,
and how I have hated every meal since.

In the name of the Father,
here is my tongue, Amen.
I can even tell you his small shoe size.

He's buried among brother Jesuits,
at rest in echoless palaces.
I would dig him up to kill him again.
I will drag him behind me, like a crazed, mourning Somalian,
past the grave yard of my mother and father.

One last explanation, Herren Doktoren—
My name is not Nancy, it is Cassandra, prophetic daughter.
My eyes are reservoirs for pain.
I am not a goat.
I have lost Time's flexibility—
Time, which invented me.
I live en garde, neatly insane.
As you leave the auditorium,
Please, turn off the rain!

-Karen Morris

***Karen Morris** is a NYS licensed psychoanalyst in private practice in Manhattan. Her paper 'Torture and Attachment: Conscience and the Analyst's World-Seeing Eye', has been nominated for NAAP's 2010 Gradiva Award for best published paper. An earlier version of this paper was read at IFPE's 2008 conference held in Boston, MA.*

ART

THE COLOR OF MONEY



Les Von Losberg has been a poet, songwriter and conceptual artist for more than 40 years. His poetry has been printed in small press publications and his artwork exhibited at the Katonah Museum of Art in Katonah, New York. In October he will be making a presentation entitled "Not Your Daddy's Murder Ballad," in which he will both explore traditional murder ballads and sing a number of more modern ("psychoanalytically-influenced") murder ballads of his own. Les has earned his living as an estate, business and retirement planning consultant for the past 29 years.

FORM CREATES BOUNDARIES/CONTENT BLOWS THEM APART



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SHORT STORIES

NIGHT OF THE RADISHES

By Brenda Webster

The central square in Oaxaca is bright with Christmas lights strung in the trees. Flocks of multicolored balloons strain against the light strings that hold them back from the fading sky. It is the Night of the Radishes and even at this early hour—it is barely dusk—the line curls snake-like around the square. Women holding infants tied to their backs with cloth slings of brilliant red and blue, old men's faces worn under sombreros, all of them, including Rachel, the grandmother, stand patiently waiting for the gates to be opened and the viewing of the radishes to begin.

While they wait, the two boys—they are five and seven—play catch with their balloon and the little girl sits patiently on her father's shoes sucking on a lollipop and resting her back against his legs. The grandmother is grateful that she gets to see them like this, natural and relaxed, simply living their lives. Living and working in another city as she does, her visits to them in Santa Monica are always too short and there aren't enough such moments. But on this trip she is happy because they are together day and night.

She shifts her weight from one foot to another to ease a cramp and thinks about their visit to the church that afternoon. None of them is religious. Neither her scholar husband, nor her artist children. They visited the church because it was supposed to be the oldest church in the area with its decoration intact. Its facade had blue and white flowers that played a duet with the blue sky and there was a white bench in front, overhung by bougainvillia that gleamed in the noon sun. A sign in Spanish said "Please tell your children not to climb on the bench." Her daughter-in-law explained the Spanish words—she was just beginning to study the language seriously—and the boys, soaking in the words like little sponges, happily chanted "por favor." A second sign said "please do not piss in the church." The grandmother noted that her daughter-in-law didn't translate that one but instead, beckoning them to follow, went into the church. The three children followed her inside shyly and walked up the aisle. Tommaso, the oldest one stopped in front of a wooden figure of Christ crawling on his knees, his head twisted to one side, blood dripping into his eyes from his crown of thorns. "What is happening? What is this?"

"It's Christ, he's suffering" their mother said quickly, urging Tommaso forward with a gentle push. Brought up a Catholic by her Mexican grandmother, she remembered how much these images once frightened her.

Then she scooped up her little girl. "I'm taking Frida outside," she said, as the little girl snuggled against her, hiding her face. "It's a bit overwhelming."

"But with all that blood, how is he still alive?" Tommaso asked, riveted to the spot. For a minute the Grandmother sensed that he saw the image as vibrantly living as himself.

Eli, the younger boy, continued silently up the aisle, sat facing the crèche. The figures were gorgeously dressed, the virgin in blue satin with a gold crown, angels flying above, tinsel wings outstretched. The

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By Brenda Webster

little boy leaned forward and stared at the manager with the tiny Christ child, at the mother bent tenderly towards him, at Joseph standing guard. His face took on a far-away look. Then suddenly he seemed to grasp something. His body quivered. He bowed his head and put his hands together in a gesture of prayer.

The father seeing this, shrugged his shoulders...bemused. The Grandmother remembered her son saying that Eli was passionate about church music. And once, on the way to the airport she'd heard him and Tommaso arguing about God. She had missed the beginning of it, but then the boys' voices rose and she'd heard Tommaso insisting that God doesn't exist.

"Spaceships went up, and there's nothing there, really, Eli, nothing but planets and stars."

"Tommaso you don't understand," she heard Eli say calmly, "God can be there and not there at the same time."

"Oh no!" Tommaso said and she could hear him flouncing on the seat, turning away. "You're a religious fanatic!"

Tommaso had always been a rationalist. When he was three, he'd heard some people singing gospel in the park and had asked his grandma what they were singing about. Little by little it had come out that they were singing about God and that some people—"though probably not your Mama and Papa,"- believe that God created the earth. Tommaso was intrigued to hear that God made people—maybe even the birds— from clay. The Grandmother had been very nervous about telling him all this without checking with his parents.

"Grandma," he'd asked her finally, "What's the matter? Is God dead?"

"I just don't know if your Mama and Papa would like me talking to you about this."

"Don't worry, Grandma," he'd said. "We'll just go home and tell them what we know and if they don't like the subject, we won't talk about it again."

Tommaso now, at seven, was just the way her son had been at that age. He too used the image of the space ship when he argued with his father. The only difference was that her first husband had insisted on giving their son a Jewish education, and after telling his father that there was no sign of God in outer space, her son had refused to pray to a God that didn't exist.

Now, they walk single file, the parents, the children and grandparents along the narrow wood platform. Each village and small collective has its display. The radishes are fed special nutrients so they are enormous, bigger than footballs. These become demon heads with open red mouths and eyes against the white skin or suffering Christs with red radish blood. Bigger figures, shamans or fertility gods are made by adding radish limbs. The skirts of the radish women are filigreed; they have the lightness of real lace. There are mangers and bicycle races, huge white radish cathedrals, markets with real dirt and tiny cornstalks heaped in radish carts.

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The Grandmother is thinking: how patient the women look, the Indian women with their long black hair braided with red ribbons and their callused feet, some without sandals. How harsh the land they till, how hard. She thinks of all the effort it took to carve these roots, how by the next day they will be dry and withered. Even now the women are spraying them with water to keep them alive until the prize-giving later that night. She finds herself thinking against her will of black soil piled beside an open pit quietly waiting. She wonders how many Christmases she will see—it hurts to be able to number them. So much life around her, instead of sating her, makes her greedy for more. She wants to see her great grandchildren's faces, smell their warm flesh the way she does these children now.

The girl, the smallest of the grandchildren, sees a radish carved like baby Jesus. "I have a baby in my tummy," she tells her grandmother. "It's very tiny now," she holds two fingers apart an inch. "very very tiny."

"Is it a boy or a girl?" the grandmother asks.

"A girl baby," she says strongly, and "then I'm going to marry the prince." The Grandmother smiles down at her. Marrying a prince and having a baby have been her obsession since she turned three. Recently, the story became more complicated with the introduction of a witch who cuts the Sleeping Beauty's head off requiring the prince to glue it back on before the ceremony. Christmas Eve at the Cathedral will be perfect for this child. If she can stay awake she'll see the trucks decorated with flowers lumbering to the Cathedral with their crèches. Then inside the cathedral she'll see the somber men with their mustaches and the women in their embroidered dresses all sitting with infant Jesuses on their laps. Baby doll after baby doll, all dressed in white woolen suits and knit caps against the cool night air. All waiting to be blessed and taken back home carrying the blessing to their villages. Going home to be born again, like the tufted white flowers dotting the hillsides, on Christmas morning.

The morning after the radishes, they all go to the museum to see the statues of Zapotec Gods. Her daughter-in-law, a painter, is fascinated by the simplicity of the forms, the powerful bluntness. They are made of terra cotta with heavy lidded eyes and full lips. Most of them are sitting or squatting quietly. They have elaborate headdresses and symbolic ornaments that show their status. To the Grandmother they seem disappointingly vulnerable—ungodlike—though she imagines that the one with the blatantly exposed penis is a fertility god. The boys regard him seriously.

"He's nakee," Frida observes and giggles. Tommaso, the eldest shushes her. He is looking hard at a figure with enormous round ear ornaments.

"Grandma, look, he's got blasters right over his ears."

"He's a Super hero?"

"Yeah, they all are. They hide their blasters and rays in those disks on their heads, or their belts, or even in those weird things under their feet." He runs around excitedly showing the Grandmother what he sees.

Later, in a run-down taxi, they go, children on their laps, to visit the great Zapotec ruins, Mitla and Monte Alban—the white Mountain. The ruins look as if they've grown out of the stone of the

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surrounding mountains. The Grandmother is strangely moved by the elaborate patterning of the small stones and the perfect symmetry of the temple leading step by step up to the pale sky. The two boys are walking round and round a small flowering tree, arguing fiercely. They seem unaware that she is moving closer, and under guise of taking a picture, listening.

“No, no,” the elder says, his face inflamed, nothing can hurt Diamond Alien , remember.”

“But Black jet threw...” begins Eli walking faster around the tree holding up his hand. His brother stops and faces him.

“The lightning bolt went through Diamond Man’s cloud. I know, but it closed right up again. It’s just like mist remember, nothing can hurt him.”

“Not even if the Black Ruby Race and the Crystal race got together with Black Jet and piled up all the mountains in the world and threw them at him, not even then?”

“No, No,” the elder says, not even if they piled up their black planets and threw them.”

“Not even all the planets in the universe?” asks the younger struggling to grasp the magnitude of his brother’s idea.

“No not even all the planets”

“But what can I do?” Eli asks. “Can I be Volcano man? Can I pour molten lava on them?”

“ No, silly, they could overpower you. Even as Star boy or Jaman the magic worker, they are more powerful than you. Only Diamond Man is strong enough to fight them. He will form a diamond wall around them and hold them like bugs frozen in amber.

“But what can I do?” asks Eli plaintive now, and the grandmother wonders whether she should intervene before he starts to cry. But there is no need, his brother values him too much as an audience.

“Remember you can imitate the powers of the others,” he says soothingly “you’re just not quite as strong. If the Black Race tries to turn people bad, Jaman the magician can help. You can sneak onto their planet and confuse their plans.”

Just then their father comes up and overhears the last bit of their conversation. “Hey, how about Snack Man?” he asks, holding out boxes of juice and a bag of pretzels.”

The younger brother giggles. “That’s good, Papa.”

But the eldest is mortified. “Papa, stop it,” he says fiercely.

“Or skillet man,” the father laughs. Then seeing that his son is about to cry, he puts his arm around his shoulder. “You’re hungry, Toma,” he says. “that makes you weepy.” The Grandmother thinks about the

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jewel man moving in his misty landscape studded with precious stones. Are the stones like beacons, bits of certainty in the child's still uncharted world?

"Tell me more about your heroes" the Grandmother whispers to him. "I'd like to hear everything about them—how they were born, who their children are. What are their powers? I could even write it down for you, but it might be a little different." The child's face clears.

"That's all right, grandma. "It would be your version. I wouldn't mind another version. We could even give it to Eli. He'd like to have his own version.

They are passing an ancient Zapotec burial pit and he grabs her hand and pulls. He wants to climb down the rough steps and go inside. They will have to walk through a tunnel bent over in the semi-dark but the grandmother makes herself go forward. She doesn't want to admit that she's afraid of hitting her head, afraid of the dark. She holds tight to his hand—feeling for a moment that she is the child. Tommaso gives a yell and bursts triumphantly into the burial chamber. He points to a hollow in the earth.

"There it is, Grandma, there's the place where his head went," he says, proud of his knowledge.

The Grandmother looks. The hollow doesn't seem so fearful. It seems more like a gentle cradle, or the place for a seed to be buried, than like a grave. She crouches down next to it and rests her hand softly against the dirt.

Brenda Webster is a novelist, critic and translator who lives in Berkeley. She has written ten books which include *Yeats: A Psychoanalytic Study*, *Blake's Prophetic Psychology*; a memoir, *The Last Good Freudian* and four novels, most recently *Vienna Triangle* She is serving as President of PEN West and is on the Board of directors of the Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis. (Her novel *The Beheading Game* was a nominee for the 2007 Northern California Book Awards in fiction.)

BRIEF BOOK NOTE

UNDERSTANDING OUR ANCESTRY: A BRIEF BOOK NOTE ON A BRILLIANT, CONCISE BOOK

By Stuart D. Perlman, Ph.D.

A Dream of Undying Fame: How Freud Betrayed his Mentor and Invented Psychoanalysis (2009), by Louis Breger, Ph.D. New York: Basic Books, 146 pages.

For someone who has not read Dr. Breger's brilliant long biography, *Freud, Darkness in the Midst of Vision*, (John Wiley, 2000), this new short book is a gift which presents, in a condensed and readable form, many of the ideas spelled out in more detail in the earlier biography. Dr. Breger's present book is an extremely intelligent overview of the complex contributions of one of the giants of the 20th century, Sigmund Freud. Breger, Professor Emeritus of Psychoanalytic Studies at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, and the Founding President of the Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis in Los Angeles, pulls together decades of scholarly research, with threads from many fields, to weave an original tapestry of Freud, his life and influence. This book is an easy read with fascinating content which pulls the reader into the context and process of psychoanalysis, presenting all the case studies from the *Studies on Hysteria*, the historical backgrounds of these first patients, and delineating the many conflicting relationships within the psychoanalytic movement. The book educates, entertains and deepens our understanding simultaneously. It gives the larger community access to a plethora of ideas and scholarly research which otherwise would be laborious to obtain. The book – short and very readable – is ideal for college courses at many levels.

A Dream of Undying Fame, in a sense, loops back, using contemporary psychoanalytic ideas such as Attachment Theory – which had its beginning in Freud's 1926 essay *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* – to understand Freud's life in a way that he himself, and his loyal followers such as Ernest Jones, did not. Breuer, Freud's older mentor, benefactor, and the real inventor – along with his first patient Bertha Pappenheim (Anna O. in the *Studies on Hysteria*) – of the talking cure, and a number of the central ideas that Freud later elaborated into psychoanalysis, was at first credited with his accomplishments and later slandered by Freud with a rumor – later proven untrue – that he fled from his patient because he was frightened off by her erotic transference. This was the first co-worker that Freud turned on when they did not give total agreement, did not support his quest for fame. Our current perspectives – relational, self-psychological, intersubjective – can be better understood by examining the history of the psychoanalytic movement that Freud began and controlled with an iron hand. While Breuer did not directly anticipate all these modern perspectives, his focus on trauma, catharsis, and openness to the contributions of many others, is compatible with general contemporary approaches and stands in sharp contrast to Freud's "pure gold," "shibboleths," and insistence on the centrality of sexual drives and the Oedipus complex.

Dr. Breger's portrayal of Freud's difficult childhood, filled with traumatic losses, and how it created an ambitious, driven man who had to succeed to feel acceptable, is central to our understanding of him. Freud's fearfulness of people and his need for total agreement, as well as his need for love and adulation, drove him to betray his mentor Josef Breuer; he took psychoanalysis deeper but, sadly for all of us, also took it off track. Some of what went wrong for Freud was his need to be the all-knowing and

Understanding our Ancestry: A Brief Note on a Brilliant, Concise Book
By Stuart D. Perlman

powerful analyst, pushing his brilliant insights and interpretations even when the patient disagreed. For all his wrong turns, his ideas have had a profound influence on Western culture.

Stuart D. Perlman, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst in private practice in West Los Angeles where he specializes in helping people who have experienced trauma, difficult childhoods, and relationship issues. He is a training and supervising analyst at the Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis in Los Angeles. Dr. Perlman received his first Ph.D. from UCLA in Clinical Psychology and his second Ph.D. from the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute, and has been a faculty member at both. He has published numerous articles in psychology and psychoanalytic journals on topics such as: trauma, sexual abuse, countertransference, and supervision. His book, *The Therapist's Emotional Survival: Dealing With The Pain Of Exploring Trauma*, was a Psychotherapy Book Club Main Selection.