



BPSI BULLETIN Spring • Summer 2017



Resistance

Psychoanalysts live in the world of resistance. We understand and respect its meaning and protective role. It is built from the experience of life: expectations, fantasies, disappointments that become embedded and defy change. Resistance is hard to give up, and it takes a version of faith, a slow erosion of fortitude until defense is no longer necessary. Familiarity with resistance allows us to appreciate its origins—we analysts are used to considering its value, even when our efforts are thwarted. We understand that it can be life or death.

Every day in the analytic process we feel the force of no, of protest, of silence, and of disbelief. The narratives of individual stories are filled with assertions of truth and secrets long hidden. Dismissals and denials are often present in traumatic histories and painful intimacy. Theories regarding conflict and the constants of psychic reality intersect with family dynamics, affective splits, and memory differences. But in the postelection months, the external world has entered my office space with dramatic regularity. Bans, executive orders, tweets, and breaking news reports punctuate the process. My patients, galvanized, immobilized, anxious, and angry, try to find the meaning in the new context, one that is intrusive but also familiar. The present is imbued with memories of threat and vulnerability. The inner world has been intensified by daily bombardments, leading to feelings of turbulence, frustration, and fear. To resist the desensitization that comes from overexposure is a daily challenge. Sometimes safety feels like a nostalgic memory.

A visit to one of the current shows at the Museum of Fine Arts is a stark reminder of what is possible. Memory Unearthed is an exhibit of photographs and mementos of life in the Lodz Ghetto, which Henryk Ross, a Polish Jewish photojournalist, documented from 1940 to 1944. As part of the Jewish Administration's statistics department, Ross was tasked with taking photos of ghetto residents for their identification cards and to document sterilized views of work activity for propaganda. But Ross found ways to save precious film and use his camera as a witness. In defiance of the Nazis, he took shots of the starving, the orphaned, and the desperate. He hid in a building and, through a hole in a wall, took photographs of thousands on transports to the death camps. One of the last ghetto residents to be transported, he buried his negatives, hoping that his documentation of reality would survive the war. Of the more than 160,000 people sealed off in the ghetto, only 877 survived. Ross was one, and when he returned to Lodz, he was able to recover 2,000 negatives that had also, somehow, survived.

As I walked through the quiet gallery, I felt a chill of recognition. Yes, the faces looked familiar: the musician with dark eyes holding an accordion; the parentless children being fed; the man carrying a Torah in the rubble of a synagogue. My DNA is there. It could have been my family. But also recognizable is the powerful presence of those who inflict pain, immune to guilt or remorse. The arrogance that defines someone as "other" to bolster power and superiority, the smug self-righteousness that seeks to separate and withhold, the stark absence of

continued on page 4

In this Issue:

BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

Letter from the President.....	3
Letter from the BOT Chair.....	5
Continuing Transformation and Integration: Psychotherapy Training.....	6

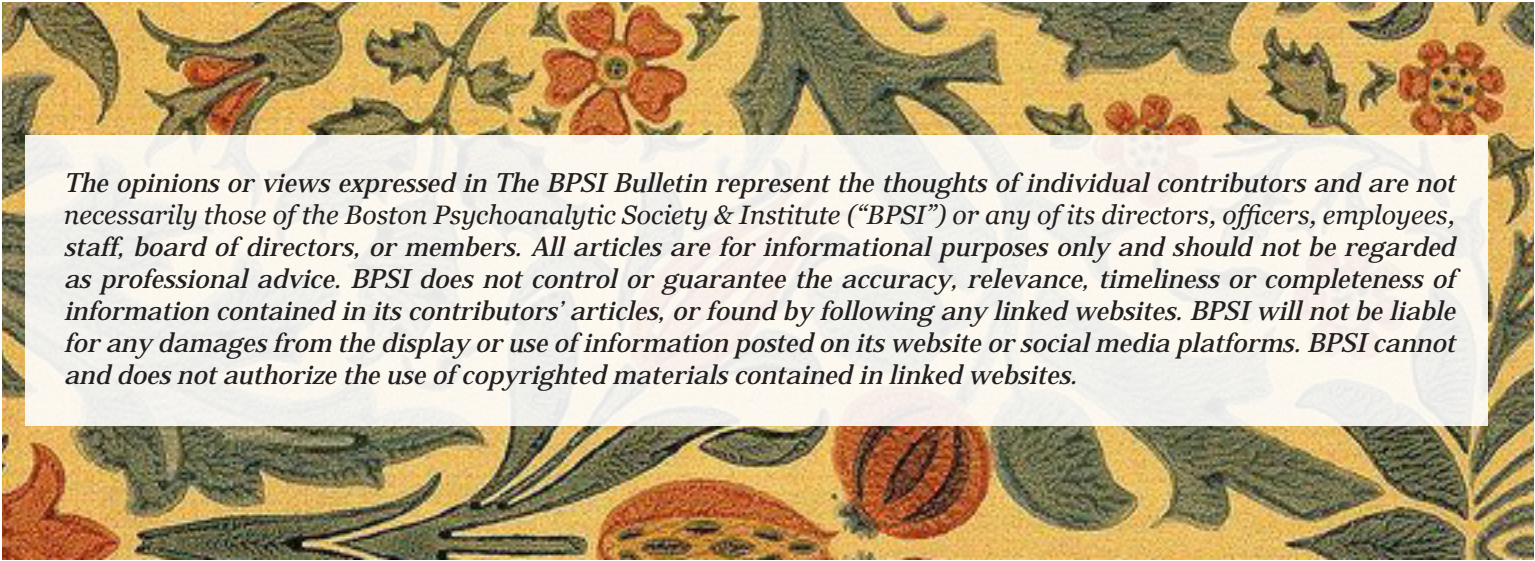
BPSI Reveals: Reception and Response

Family Values.....	9
Free Association.....	12
Self Disclosure and Unknown Passions.....	15
Dispatching Gum.....	22

BPSI Explores: Dialogue and Discovery

Community and Public Programs.....	24
Outreach.....	26
Off the Couch - I am not your Negro.....	27
Tribute to Judy Yanof.....	30
Kravitz Award Announcement.....	32

Front cover painting: *Psyche Opening the Golden Box* by John William Waterhouse (1903)



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BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

Letter from the President

I am writing this on a March “snow day,” to allow time for all that goes into getting this bulletin ready for you to be reading as the academic year comes to an end. In other words, I am only pretending to be President as I write the President’s letter, so I’m finding the task a little daunting. The easy place to begin is in thanking Jim Walton for his generous, thoughtful leadership during these past two years. Jim’s patient devotion to our organization has been something to behold. And much appreciation to Catherine Kimble, Joe Schwartz and Carole Nathan, who, along with Karen Smolens, Olga Umansky, Paul Brennan, Drew Brydon, Lauren Lukason, and Tony Viti—truth be told—do the real work of keeping us up and running.

In many ways, I take on this position at a simpler time. We are at home in our new building, the organizational structure is in place, and our PINE neighbors are now our colleagues. We have a rich array of programming available to us and the larger community. Most important, our training programs are increasingly robust and sturdy, and the majority of us feel quite positive about our experience at BPSI.

When I reread the contributions to this bulletin made by the last few Presidents, what comes up again and again is a concern about community. We are a large organization steeped in history and tradition—much of it to be valued, some of it not so admirable. I am someone who has benefited from the extraordinary changes we have undergone over the years, starting in the ATP at a time when social workers were not yet allowed to do analytic training. I have felt welcomed and encouraged during my journey here, throughout the ATP and my candidacy, then as a participant on numerous committees and as a member of the faculty. And now here we are: a female social worker as President of BPSI, the largest psychoanalytic institute in the country. I feel a bit like a “poster child” for how we have evolved as an organization, and my hope is that we will continue to be more inclusive and transparent in our decision making, that all of our members will feel free to engage in open debate, and that our trainees will feel welcomed and fully integrated into our committees and our programs, confident that they have a voice in their experience here.

Last Saturday I had the pleasure of attending the annual Alan Pollack Nature of the Transference Conference. Ann Kraybill, an ATP trainee, presented a lovely, sophisticated paper describing a twice-a-week psychotherapy case. It was eloquently discussed by Ann Epstein and Larry Brown, two of our senior child analysts. The morning ended with some lively discussion between the audience and the presenters. Pretty perfect—the luxury of sitting with colleagues, talking about the work we love. BPSI at its best.

Throughout these next two years, I invite you to share with me your ideas and concerns about your BPSI experience. You can reach me at watts.julia@gmail.com or 617-795-1790.

— Julie Watts



BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

Resistance continued from page 1

empathy—these are there, too. And the hate. In the last room, lost lives are represented with a few symbolic relics and a large sign, whose text, from “The Dance,” by the Armenian poet Siamanto (Atom Yarjanian), says:

I must tell you what I saw so people will understand the crimes men do to men

The whiff of that time is in the air for me now, revived in the bans, family separations, and denial of facts that define the stranger as the enemy, the unknown who must be kept away. These calculated acts, assertions that require callous indifference to our common humanity, are not history anymore, but the life that is unfolding before us. Right now. So I am nurturing my resistance, the power to defy, and cherishing its presence and utility. In my office, I will protect my empathic immersion from incursions, as best I can. To explore perspectives that do not match my own is often easier than the exploration of sameness and the slippery slope of assumptions. But too many values that are important to me and those whom I love are under attack: equality, justice, freedom of the press, equal protection under the law, protection of the environment. Psychoanalysis is relevant in this time of unrest, alienation, and fear. We have studied the motivations for cruelty and hate, and have heard many stories of pain, inflicted in ways that defy the imagination. I am searching for my role in this moment. To be a witness is not enough for me. I will find my way to resist.

Stephanie Brody, *BPSI Bulletin Editor*
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GALLERY TALK AT THE MFA

Trauma, Resilience, Resistance, Photography, and Memory of the Shoah

Saturday, June 17, 2017

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Visitor Center
(130.10)

AUDIENCE

Adults

Free with Museum Admission



Henryk Ross, *Man walking in winter in the ruins of the synagogue on Wolborska street (destroyed by Germans 1939), 1940*. Gelatin silver print. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Gift from Archive of Modern Conflict, 2007. © Art Gallery of Ontario, 2017.

Members	Free
Nonmembers	Free

Join guest speaker Dr. Harold Bursztajn, BPSI Psychoanalyst Member, and clinical and forensic psychiatrist and professor at Harvard Medical School, for a gallery talk on Henryk Ross’s photographs of the Lodz Ghetto. Dr. Bursztajn has a long-standing interest in the relationship of art and the artist to the representation of massive psychic trauma. He is the son of Abraham and Miriam Bursztajn, two of only 877 recorded survivors of the Lodz Ghetto in Poland. In the face of oppression and the Nazi program to use Jews as slave labor, humiliate, and destroy via mass murder, Ross captured the dignity, beauty, resistance, and resilience of the Ghetto’s inhabitants. These artful portrayals of hope in the midst of suffering, life in the midst of death, love in the midst of hate, vitality in the midst of entropy, move this exhibition from photojournalism to art in the tradition of Rembrandt, Goya, and Bloom.

Organizing for the Future

Joseph Schwartz, *Chair, Board of Trustees*

As I complete my first year as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other members of our leadership team—Jim Walton, Catherine Kimble, Carole Nathan, and Julie Watts—with whom it has been a delight to collaborate. I also can't emphasize enough my gratitude to our dedicated staff, Karen Smolens, Drew Bryden, Lauren Lukason, and Olga Umansky, with a special thank-you to our newest staff members, Paul Brennan and Tony Viti. As our new Finance Officer, Paul is already bringing a greater sense of clarity and order to our financial management system. And, of course, let me express my appreciation to all of the members of the Board of Trustees, who continue to provide wise oversight in all areas of BPSI's activities.

In 2007–2008, I was a member of a working group organized by then-President Randy Paulsen and Board Chair Richard Schwartz. Eighteen BPSI members met over that time period to review all aspects of BPSI's functioning as an organization. Out of that process came a number of changes that have transformed our organization, including a new organizational structure, revised bylaws, the sale of 15 Commonwealth Avenue and the purchase and renovation of 141 Herrick Road, a new mission statement, the creation of the Executive Director position, new financial accounting systems, and a more robust staff commensurate with the needs of our organization. Perhaps the least well recognized and understood outcome of that process was the adoption in 2009 of a Strategic Plan for BPSI that outlined goals for our organization and strategies for reaching those goals. This plan has been a guide for our leadership as important decisions and choices have needed to be made. A link to the Strategic Plan can be found in the Members section of the BPSI website under "Frequently Requested Materials." I encourage each of you to take the time to review it and judge for yourself in which arenas we have had our greatest successes and in which arenas we have fallen short.

The consulting group that advised the working group recommended that we revisit the Strategic Plan every five years. It has now been seven years, and selected members of the leadership team are instituting a new working group to oversee the process of reviewing and revising the 2009 Strategic Plan. The members of that group are myself (Chair of the Board of Trustees), James Walton (Immediate Past President), Julie Watts (President), Daniel Mollod (President-Elect), Catherine Kimble (Executive Director), Carole Nathan (Managing Director), James Nemetz (Community Trustee and Treasurer), Catherine Mitkus (representing Psychotherapy Training), Stephen Kerzner (representing the Institute), Jan Seriff (Development Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees), Paola Contreras (Candidate), Tanishia Choice (ATP student), Janet Noonan (representing Training Outreach), and the Board Chair-Elect (as yet to be elected). We will be meeting during the upcoming academic year, and our goal is to present a revised Strategic Plan to the membership by the fall of 2018. In the meantime, as members you will be asked for your thoughts, aspirations, and concerns, so that the updated Strategic Plan can appropriately guide the important decisions that will help BPSI become an even more successful psychoanalytic home for all its members.



Transformation and Integration: Psychotherapy Training

Richard Gomberg, *Chair*

Since the adoption of our new bylaws in 2011 and the implementation of our Strategic Plan, the Advanced Training Program in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy has become more and more fully integrated into BPSI's life and structure. ATP graduates are now full voting members of BPSI. ATP graduates and current students serve on and make wonderful contributions to numerous BPSI-wide committees, from the Board of Trustees and the Coordinating Committee to the film, library, website, and Ethics Education committees. The Institute's Psychoanalytic and Psychotherapy Training programs now work to coordinate our efforts and to keep policies consistent across all of BPSI's training programs when possible, while recognizing that different programs sometimes have different needs. People at every level of the organization are striving to make sure our training programs are all working together to further BPSI's missions and make the most of our limited resources.

In light of all of this, we have recently decided to completely overhaul the system for supervision payments that we have used in the ATP for many years. We have had a system in which every student pays whatever they are able to afford for supervision and all supervisors get paid the overall average fee. This system has allowed many people of limited means to get training at BPSI. But the payment system has been challenging for BPSI's administrative staff to oversee, taking many hours of their time and thereby making it expensive to run. Supervisors are paid only quarterly, and students have to fill in paperwork monthly. There has never been great guidance in terms of individual supervisors negotiating a reduced fee for their supervisees, and there has been a diffusion of responsibility.

In order to address these problems, the ATP will have a new payment system starting July 1, 2017. Making sure that every student can afford supervision remains the top priority. We are deeply committed to equality of opportunity. We also wanted to make the system more parallel to the Institute's and to make sure that supervisors in the ATP are paid the same amount as supervisors in the Institute (which has not been the case in the past). In the new system, supervisors will be paid the standard \$100 fee directly by supervisees, relieving BPSI's administrative staff of the burden of managing an unwieldy system. Students who have financial need will be able to apply to the Scholarship Committee for aid with their supervision fees (Candidates in financial need have received support for supervision for many years). Scholarship applicants provide details of their finances to the Scholarship Committee, which is thus in a good position to make informed choices about how to allocate our limited funds.

This new system will be much less expensive to administer, but the scholarship support may be a significant financial commitment on BPSI's part. As part of the decision to go forward with the new system, a proposal was brought to the Coordinating Committee, then shared with all current ATP students and Faculty for comments and suggestions. BPSI's Executive Director (Catherine Kimble), President (then Jim Walton), Board of Trustees Chair (Joseph Schwartz), Managing Director (Carole Nathan), and other administrative staff were all consulted,



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The Campaign for Psychoanalysis



to think through how the system could work, to make sure there would be funds available for scholarships in the immediate future, and to begin to think about how to make the system sustainable in the long term.

It is clear that the ATP's new system for supervision payments is a further step in making sure that outstanding training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy will remain available to a wide range of students. Our large Fellowship and robust ATP classes have helped hundreds of clinicians learn about psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Some of these students get the training they want in the psychotherapy division and then find fulfilling careers, immersed in either the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy or related pursuits now informed by their exposure to psychoanalytic ideas. For others, the psychotherapy training provides an entrée to psychoanalytic training (our current first-year class of seven Candidates includes five students who started in one of the psychotherapy training programs, and overall about a third of our Candidates started in a psychotherapy training program). For psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy to thrive in today's world, both training and treatment need to be available to as wide a range of people as possible. BPSI's investment in the psychotherapy training programs (including raising more scholarship funds) is an important investment in the future of psychoanalysis and of BPSI.



BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

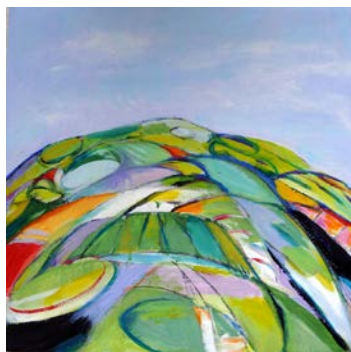
BPSI Family and Friends, II

The Spring 2017 Art Exhibit

February 27 - July 14, 2017



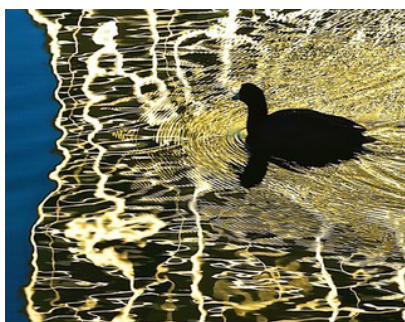
Allen Palmer



Jane Hanenberg



Edie Raskin



David Van Buskirk



Diane Fader



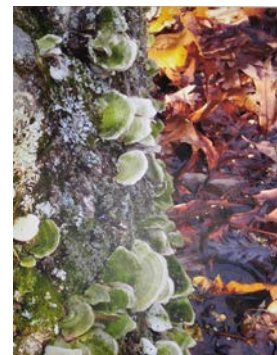
Judy Tsafir



Deborah Shilkoff



Anna Boden



Elsa Ronningstam



John Baker



Lewis Kirshner



Paul Roeder

Family Values

Alexandra Murray Harrison

After the election, I was moved to write a blog post for parents and other child caregivers to support them in talking to their children about the election. Many parents at the preschool where I consult were angry at, or in tears over the election results, and there was a natural concern that their children would feel frightened and insecure and wonder what the world was coming to. A preliminary search turned up a number of excellent essays and blogs that stressed what I agreed were the primary points for child caregivers to consider: First, regulate yourself; then, reassure your children that they are safe and that the world will go on.

A week later, I had other thoughts, largely in response to the efforts of then-President Barack Obama and many other liberals to reach out to Donald Trump in a constructive way and to extend themselves to his supporters. In some respects, I thought this was a good thing. Yet I also felt that there was something not quite right about it, that there was something missing or being lost, and I reflected on it.

I realized that in addition to helping child caregivers reassure their children of their safety, there was something else I wanted to say, and it involved one of the familiar subjects of my blog: “family values.” The election and the new Trump administration have provided parents with a unique opportunity to teach their children about their values and reinforce the ones they want their children to carry into adulthood. I will suggest only four here: truth; responsibility; respect; and protest, or the constructive use of anger.

Truth There is value in telling the truth. Many of us stress this with our children. Sometimes people stretch the truth; they even occasionally deny the truth when they are frightened or ashamed. We teach our children to try not to do those things, because honesty is an important value. However, stretching the truth or occasionally denying it is very different from having no regard for the truth, from saying whatever you think will serve your purposes without any evidence of conflict or shame. This is what Trump did during his campaign. It is not what we want to teach our children.

There is another aspect of truth that has to do with what is true. People are often quick to accept simple answers that make them feel good or that affirm their beliefs. That is understandable, but it is not the best we can do. It is hard for all of us to push beyond our cherished beliefs, to challenge ourselves by exploring what is foreign to us. Extreme elements of the press tell their audience half-truths or falsehoods in order to promote a set of beliefs. That is not only bad journalism; it also undermines the value of honesty. It is important to teach our children that we must always search for truth, no matter how unpleasant, frightening, or confusing the search, and no matter that we can never actually reach “truth.”

Responsibility One must take responsibility for one’s actions. That includes the words one speaks. It is not OK to say hurtful, insulting, or false things at one time and later say, “I didn’t say that” or “That was then and this is now.” It is insulting to hear Trump’s cruel remarks and lies being referred to as “campaign rhetoric” or “distortions of the liberal press.” Videotape evidence exists to show that he did say these things. The people who maintain that Trump did not say them are either avoiding that evidence or knowingly denying it. If we accepted it when a child said, “I lied and said hurtful things to get what I wanted. Now that I have what I want, I ‘take it back,’” we would not be teaching our child good values. Actions must be accounted for, and speech is action.

continued on page 10

BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

Respect The belief that all people were created equal is an important part of who we are as Americans. Attacking groups of people and devaluing them or mocking them—Muslims, women, African Americans, disabled people—is wrong. Again, it is not something you can “take back.” To say, as we have heard some Trump supporters say, “That is not the Donald Trump I know” is hardly reassuring. Do we want to teach our children that we will ignore their bad behavior if sometimes they behave well? Do we want to teach them that if they are bullies sometimes, it is OK if other times they are not? No. We want to teach our children respect for all human beings.

Protest Anger is not in itself a bad thing. It is what you do with your anger that counts. If in response to your anger at feeling like a loser you attack someone weaker, you’re being a bully, and that is wrong. However, using your anger to motivate constructive action—peaceful protest, searching for answers, fighting for the rights of others—is what civil rights workers, suffragettes, and reformers across the ages have done, and that is good. That is what we want to teach our children.

It is distressing to hear the claim that it is “unpatriotic” to wish for Trump’s presidency to fail, as then-*Wall Street Journal* columnist Bret Stephens wrote a week after the election, on November 16. I agree that we should respect the electoral process, something that Trump did not do when he refused to say that he would accept the results of the election if he did not win. I agree that it is good to hope our country grows in a healthy direction for all its people; I do have that hope. However, to celebrate a government that won by insulting the values of truth responsibility, respect, and constructive protest—not to mention generosity, humility, and compassion—would to my mind be essentially unpatriotic. That is not what we want to teach our children. The values that guide our behavior toward others and that help us know ourselves—these are precious. If the country we belong to elects a leader who scorns these values, we lose something. Many of us feel that loss. We must now grieve the loss and try to learn from it. That will be something good we can do for our children.

I would like to add another piece to my original blog essay. It is related to truth, but what I am actually referring to is pretend. A March 27 *Harvard Gazette* article referred to a panel at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University during which the discussion touched on “fake news.” The panel noted the difficulty of defining the term with clarity, since it can encompass anything from an opinion piece cited as news to state-sponsored propaganda. What I found most interesting about the article was the focus on panelist Xiao Mina’s idea that fake news has a “cultural logic” that appeals to a particular audience. Another scholar on the panel, Sandra Cortesi, suggested shifting the focus from the question of whether something is “true” or “false” to the question “What do you value?” It seemed to me, reading the article, that this speaker was onto something.

In the past half century, our society has experienced a disorganization that has included a fracturing of traditional values. Maybe some of that fracture is due to the radical change in the way we communicate with and even relate to one another: often at a distance through screens. Maybe it has to do with the related effects of globalization and the breakdown of the comfortable boundaries that affect our sense of safety. Maybe it also has to do with changing economic factors such as the loss of certain reliable jobs and the pressure to innovate. I am sure that economists, social psychologists, and sociologists have many more answers than I. However, it does bring me back to my emphasis on family values and how important they are. If societal changes create a strain on traditional family values, what do we do? Living together in a civilized society requires certain rules; can we afford to give up values like truth?

I had an even more sobering thought. Being a child analyst, I am fascinated by and committed to the value of pretend. But pretend depends on truth for its existence. How many times has a child reassured me (or himself) by announcing firmly during a play session when the mother doll was getting skewered, “Don’t worry. It’s just pretend. It’s not true”? The difference between fake news and pretend is that pretend is a creative act representing a meaning that is intolerable in its original form, such as a murderous wish. A pretend murder in play has fanciful elaborations, and—most important—it has the flexibility to be undone. It can be transformed to allow new possibilities. Whenever a child plays “good guys and bad guys,” I wait for that wonderful moment when one of the good guys switches over to the bad-guy side. Then I might say to the child, “Hmm. If that good guy switched sides to become a bad guy, I wonder if a bad guy could switch to become a good guy.” In his play, the child is creating a space for dynamic transformations that make possible positive change.

That is not true for fake news. The political untruths and fake news spread by the Trump administration and some of its followers have none of these features. They are rigid, stark, and reductive. The false equivalency between the accusation that Obama wasn’t born in the United States (the “birther” controversy) and Hillary Clinton’s misremembering a glorious but false event (the helicopter-under-fire incident) should have been evident, even without the continued restatement of the former and the embarrassed retraction of the latter. Fake news makes a mockery of the idea of positive change.

We as parents and supporters of parents, which should include all of us, now face the challenge of reviewing our family values and growing them into the contemporary world. In many ways we need them more than ever. **Truth:** Lies spread over the Internet have provoked anguish and even suicide among our youth. **Responsibility:** A refusal to take responsibility for one’s actions—exemplified by Trump’s accusations that Obama wiretapped him and by inactions such as the poor preparation for replacing Obamacare—has degenerated into infantile assigning of blame. **Respect:** Lack of respect for the beliefs of others, such as immigrants of other faiths and even those with different points of view, makes dialogue impossible. **Protest:** Taking a stand against offensive government actions, on the other hand, can invigorate us and force our elected representatives to behave according to our values. And I must add compassion, for those who would lose their safety net if certain government policies were enacted, and for those suffering the unimaginable horrors of war in other parts of the world. Yes, now is a time when it’s more important than ever to strengthen our family values—to live by them and to teach them to our children.



Dispatching Gum: Melissa McCarthy Chews up Sean Spicer

Michele Baker and Jennifer Bruni



Political commentator Ezra Klein [recently tweeted](#) that “satirists know how to cover genuine bullshit. The news media, by and large, doesn’t.” In a sketch that ran earlier this year on *Saturday Night Live*, comedian Melissa McCarthy crosses gender lines to play Sean Spicer, President Donald Trump’s increasingly embattled press secretary. As Spicer, McCarthy sets a combative, confrontational tone from the moment she opens her mouth. Having uncannily adopted the look of Spicer, who, McCarthy says, physically resembles her father, she starts by yelling, “I’d like to begin today by apologizing on behalf of *you* to *me*—for how you have treated me these last two weeks...” She pauses for a long moment, staring at the assembled press, then spits out, “and that apology is not accepted!”

With this opening, McCarthy reflects the administration’s nonsensical doublespeak. Her performance calls out the “bullshit”, highlighting the lunacy as she rushes on: “I’m not here to be your *buddy*. I’m here to swallow *gum* and I’m here to take names.” McCarthy virtually chews the scenery, dumping dozens of pieces of gum into her mouth. She gnaws on the oversize lump for a few moments, then slams the fist-shaped wad of semi-chewed gum onto the podium, screaming at it, “I’ll get back to you!” This moment is a clever displacement, revealing Spicer’s tendency to personalize benign moments and react defensively and aggressively to perceived narcissistic slights.

Never breaking character, McCarthy conveys the self-delusion of a humorless administration committed fully to asserting the truth of a *Twilight Zone*–like alternate reality. As Spicer, she insists that we swallow lies, asserting, for example, that all those in Trump’s presence are infused with his magical virility: “Today... when [President Trump] entered the room, the crowd greeted him with a *standing* ovation, which lasted a full 15 minutes.... Everyone was smiling, everyone was happy, the men all had erections, and every single one of the women was ovulating *left and right*. And no one, *no one* was sad.”

In case we were wondering if McCarthy is portraying Spicer as a man afraid that all is about to be lost and desperately gripping his phallic strength, she sprays a reporter with spurts of water from a giant plastic Super Soaker, then picks up the podium like a large codpiece and attacks the press pool with it.

In the current U.S. political climate, satire works because it calls out this rubbish for what it is: poppycock. Satire skewers the puffed-up self-importance of Trump, Spicer, and the president’s other cronies without

implying that the ridiculous lies and baseless accusations are legitimate subjects for serious reporting. Satire exposes stupidity, conceit, and vice. The humor invites engagement. In a totalitarian or authoritarian state, humor is a weapon. Effective social criticism, including satire and slapstick, shows us how to see Trump, Spicer, and the rest as ridiculous. It enables us to be skeptical.

Endless serious media coverage of Trump apologists and surrogates such as Sean Spicer and Kellyanne Conway asserting bizarre untruths about wire “taps” and the “Bowling Green massacre” legitimizes calumny and unsettles the notion of veracity and reality. If we viewers don’t believe that there is some truth to these fatuous worldviews and bogus ideas, we are tempted to turn away in disgust. After a visit to the podium by the real Spicer on March 20, Tina Nguyen wrote in a [Vanity Fair piece](#) that “Sean Spicer may also be a quantum physicist, so committed is he to bending the boundaries of reality.” Among the lies: The press secretary asserted that Michael Flynn was only a “volunteer” for the Trump campaign; that Hillary Clinton’s ties with Russia are more suspicious than Trump’s; and that Trump’s golfing is fundamentally different from Obama’s golfing. We may react to these kinds of stories by tuning out completely, in anger and frustration. But if we opt out, we’re abandoning the public discourse to the trolls. We need to be aware in order to have the knowledge and ammunition to argue for our values.

Satirical criticism serves as our guide in the dark woods of the upside-down world we entered on Inauguration Day. McCarthy is our King Lear’s Fool, a wise Shakespearean character who stands outside proper society. Not bound by the deference to elected officials that courtiers and journalists are expected to perform, the Fool cleverly cuts through the word salad, disambiguating with humor. McCarthy emphasizes Spicer’s incoherence and the proclamations that don’t reach the grammatical standards of a sixth-grade book review. McCarthy opens an avenue for intuition where our incredulity becomes more organized and our interpretations more focused -- in the service of reality.

Co-writer Jennifer Bruni writes about culture and current affairs and lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.

References

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Free Association **Reading “On Transience”**

Jane Keat

A year later the war broke out and robbed the world of its beauties.

—Freud

December 2016. I am reeling from the sociopolitical earthquakes of Brexit and the U.S. election. I am also starting the second year of my candidacy and struggling with how to make sense of my role as a psychotherapist and future analyst in this new world order. In this moment when the political is colliding with the personal in ever-clearer and ever-deeper ways, how do I keep working within a theoretical framework that has tended to repress the political and maintain the capitalist fantasy of the individual untethered from the social and political world (Jacoby, 1983; Layton, 2006); whose emphasis on the individual within the family may collude with a neoliberal framework that relies on keeping people apolitical?

It was in this context that I read Freud’s “On Transience.” It is a striking essay because, while it seems to be an attempt to explore an aesthetic construct and explicate Freud’s ideas on mourning, it is also very much a response to a sociopolitical trauma: the Great War and its accompanying losses. In fact, I read it while visiting my family in Britain, after an evening with old friends from Germany. We were grieving together the collapse of the project that was an attempt to prevent our countries from trying to destroy each other, as they were when Freud was writing this essay, and would do again within decades. So I scoured the essay for guidance and wisdom to deal with these times. Yet, in my scouring, I started to notice the gaps in the piece—the lost objects of the essay.

In his opening, Freud talks of his poet friend admiring the beauty of the landscape they walked in but feeling “no joy in it. He was disturbed by the thought that all this beauty was fated to extinction, that it would vanish when winter came, like all human beauty and all the beauty and splendour that men have created or may create. All that he would otherwise have loved and admired seemed to him to be shorn of its worth by the transience which was its doom” (Freud, 1915, p. 305). Freud notes two possible responses to “the proneness to decay of all that is beautiful and perfect”: the “despondency” of the poet or “rebellion against the fact asserted. No! it is impossible that all this loveliness of Nature and Art, of the world of our sensations and of the world outside, will really fade away into nothing. It would be too senseless and too presumptuous to believe it. Somehow or other this loveliness must be able to persist and to escape all the powers of destruction” (p. 305).

Later in the essay, Freud attributes the response of the poet, and that of the other friend he now references—if these friends are indeed Rainer Maria Rilke and Lou Andreas-Salomé, did Andreas-Salomé’s individual response get lost somehow?—to “a revolt in their minds against mourning” (p. 306). Freud understands mourning as the painful process of detaching libido from its objects. In “Mourning and Melancholia,” he describes how this process—a result of “orders” from reality stating that the “loved object no longer exists”—is “carried out bit by bit, at great expense of time and cathectic energy, and in the meantime the existence of the lost object is psychically prolonged. Each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hyper-cathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it” (Freud, 1917, p. 245).

Yet is the first of the responses described above—the poet’s despondency—really a revolt against mourning? If anything, it seems that the second, “No! it is impossible,” is the revolt - the “clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful psychosis” that Freud refers to in “Mourning and Melancholia” (p. 244). Freud had written, but not published, “Mourning and Melancholia” at the time of this essay. And since he refers to the poet’s despondency, it may be that he sees this first response to the transience of beauty as a melancholia, in which “the free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego” (Freud, 1917, p. 249), where an identification with the lost object is set up that—because of the ambivalence in the object relationship—includes hatred as well as love and leads to the self-reproach of depression. But the poet’s despondency, as described in this piece, does not have those elements. It may be, rather, that Freud sees the poet’s response as a refusal to cathect the beauty in anticipation of the future loss. Whatever Freud means here, it is notable that, while he uses his friends’ response to transience as a counterpoint to mourning, he does not actually explain the precise contrast between the two.



Max Beckmann, *Still Life with Fallen Candles* (1929)

If Freud sees his friends’ response as a revolt against mourning, he surely means to portray his own as a mourning process. Yet he expresses his response as follows:

I could not see my way to dispute the transience of all things, nor could I insist upon an exception in favour of what is beautiful and perfect. But I did dispute the pessimistic poet’s view that the transience of what is beautiful involves any loss in its worth. On the contrary, an increase! Transience value is scarcity value in time. Limitation in the possibility of an enjoyment raises the value of the enjoyment. It was incomprehensible, I declared, that the thought of the transience of beauty should interfere with our joy in it. As regards the beauty of Nature, each time it is destroyed by winter it comes again next year, so that in relation to the length of our lives it can in fact be regarded as eternal. (p. 305)

Though Freud attempts to frame it with “orders” from reality, this defense of transience actually has very much the feel of “No! it is impossible that all this loveliness of Nature and Art...will really fade away into nothing.” It also introduces a strangely economic (capitalist, even!) argument about scarcity as value that has little to do with the internal object world that he appears to want to outline in this essay. In short, Freud tries to explain his argument with friends about transience in terms of mourning, but does not seem to really achieve this.

Then comes the Great War. Freud’s description of its attendant losses—beauty, pride, admiration, hope—is powerful. But another notable gap emerges: life. Freud fails to mention the massive loss of life that the no-longer-impartial science has already wrought by 1915 and that threatens his own sons. Just as his application of mourning to the debate with his friends does not quite fit, he seems to struggle to apply it to the Great War. Instead of describing the process of detaching libido from the cherished objects and replacing them with new ones, he talks about clinging with greater intensity to those that remain, then questions whether lost objects have really lost their worth, then promises that we will replace the lost objects, and finally suggests that “our high opinion of the riches of civilization” has in fact not been lost and can be rebuilt, “perhaps on firmer ground and more lastingly than before” (p. 307). The essay itself seems to become a revolt against mourning.

I think that the Great War exerted its force on this essay, breaking some connections and leaving its scars and erasures. In fact, for me, the most important part of the essay is almost lost in a short phrase, as Freud describes the human capacity for love and sets the stage for the human response to loss. After being directed in earliest

continued on page 16

BPSI Reveals: Reception and Response

development to our own ego, he explains, libido is then diverted to objects, that “are thus in a sense taken into our ego” (p. 306). Shouldn’t this be Freud’s counter to his friends’ pessimistic view of transience? That “the world of our sensations and...the world outside” (p. 305) are in fact taken into our ego—that we hold it within us? I think we maintain the unconscious memory-traces of summer’s beauty through the winter, and that is how we neither deny transience nor become despondent about it. And I think that similar internalizations are required to survive war, fascism, and other sociopolitical and environmental catastrophes.

The social and the political, like other objects, are “taken into our ego.” They encroach on our lives, even when pretending not to in times of relative peace. They can nurture and enrich or wound and diminish us, physically and mentally. Just as Freud was wrestling with how to make sense of the Great War, my patients and I are wrestling with our sociopolitical catastrophe. Under orders from reality, we have to face the racism, colonialism, and genocide on which this country was built, which, for those not overtly “othered” and dehumanized by them, have been known and not known, and now resurface. We have to mourn our belief in the United States as a resilient democracy, or at least a democratic work-in-progress, striving for equality and justice. Perhaps—to help us hold on to our well-being and our minds—we have to work together to replace it with a belief in the power of resistance, in the value of “living in truth.” Surely this is psychotherapy with the political self.

I believe that psychotherapy can in fact be a political act. Its political nature lies in its emphasis on freedom, freedom of speech, and the powerful resistance to tyranny encapsulated in the radical idea of creating a private space, free of censorship, in which to explore our own humanity. In *The Power of the Powerless*, Václav Havel describes the incredible power of the greengrocer in the totalitarian regime who one day refuses to put up a sign that says, “Workers of the world unite,” a slogan that, in this context, really means “I am afraid and therefore unquestioningly obedient.” Havel explains that “by breaking the rules of the game, he has disrupted the game as such. He has exposed it as a mere game. He has shattered the world of appearances, the fundamental pillar of the system” (Havel, 1992, p. 147). In some sense, psychoanalysis exposes the game every day. It refuses to believe that the manifest is all there is, looks underneath every slogan. Psychoanalysis has

the capacity to represent this very power of the powerless, because “if the main pillar of the system is living a lie, then it is not surprising that the fundamental threat to it is living the truth” (p. 148).

Internalizing and holding onto a belief in “living in truth” may help us maintain hope and a sense of meaning in the face of these great losses. For, as Havel points out in *Disturbing the Peace*, “Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.”



Max Beckmann, *Moon Landscape* (1925)

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Self Disclosures and Unknown Passions

There is a Show Tune for Every Occasion: My Psychoanalytic Journey Through the Wonders of Musical Theater

Cary Friedman

When I was four years old, I am told, I performed the song “Wouldn’t It Be Lovely?” from the Broadway musical *My Fair Lady* for family and friends with a perfect cockney accent.

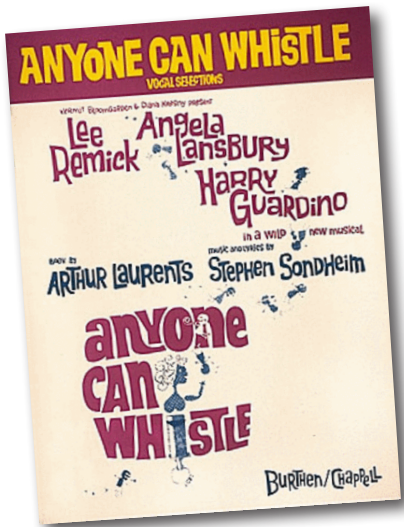
As I grew older, however, and shyness set in (or neurotic conflicts emerged), my love of performing and musical theater abated (or was repressed). But 30 years later, this passion returned with a vengeance, perhaps as a result of the liberating sloughing off of shame that psychoanalysis and coming out as a gay man enabled. Throughout the '90s, I found myself devouring cassettes of cast albums from old and contemporary musicals, by songwriters ranging from Cole Porter to Rodgers and Hammerstein to Jerry Herman to Kander and Ebb. I was charmed by the cleverness of their lyrics and the playfulness of their melodies, and found comfort in the notion that whatever joys or woes I was facing, a show tune truly could be found to capture the mood and meaning of the moment.



continued on page 18

BPSI Reveals: Reception and Response

It wasn't, however, until I found my way to the works of songwriter Stephen Sondheim that I fully discovered how powerfully musical theater can both delight the senses and explicate the human condition. Or at least *my* human condition during that decade I spent exploring the recesses of my own mind. Sondheim combined complex melodies, witty rhyme schemes, and intricate wordplay that often paid homage to his forebears (Hammerstein was a friend and mentor) and at the same time demonstrated his unparalleled mastery of the songwriting craft. He was particularly interested in transforming the characters that he brought to life in his songs into something beyond simple caricatures, frequently revealing the complexity of their fears, pains, and inner conflicts as they searched for love, affirmation, identity, and purpose.

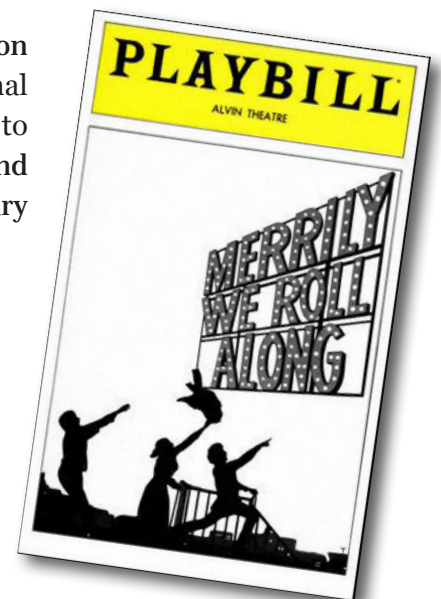


As I was learning to become an analyst, I found powerful echoes of my new profession and my own psyche within Sondheim's canon. In the title song from one of his early musicals, *Anyone Can Whistle*, Fay is a character who yearns for help in overcoming her inhibitions:

What's hard is simple,
What's natural comes hard.
Maybe you can show me
How to let go,
Lower my guard,
Learn to be free.
Maybe if you whistle,
Whistle for me.¹

In her book *Art Isn't Easy: The Theater of Stephen Sondheim*, Joann Gordon writes, "This song provides the key to all Sondheim's subsequent emotional opacity. His characters...are filled with doubt and insecurity.... Their inability to express their feelings unambiguously...is an indication of a profound angst and sensitivity."² One feels the doubt and angst as Beth wrestles with her painful fury over a lost love in "Not a Day Goes By" from *Merrily We Roll Along*:

Where's the day I'll have started forgetting?
But I just go on
Thinking and sweating
And cursing and crying
And turning and reaching
And waking and dying.³



1 Sondheim (2010), p. 129.
2 Gordon, p. 35
3 Sondheim (2010), p. 396

In “Putting It Together” from *Sunday in the Park with George*, George’s insecurity is evident as he struggles to navigate between his painstaking devotion to his creative process and his wish to be recognized for it. And Sondheim uses dazzling rhymes and word cadence to engage us in his struggle:

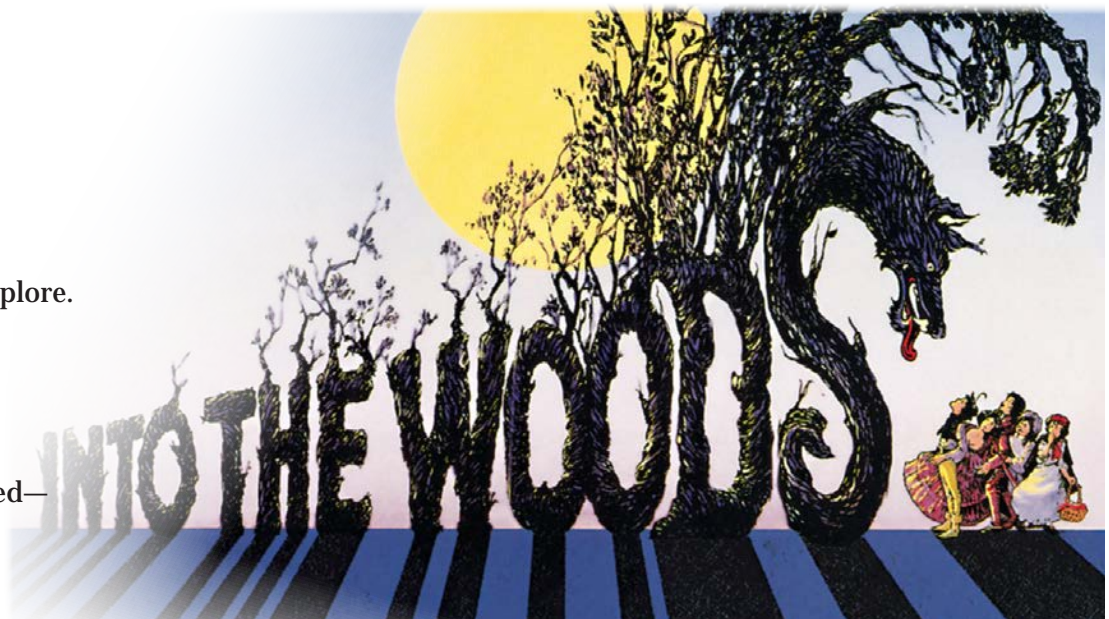
Art isn’t easy.
Every minor detail
Is a major decision.
Have to keep things in scale,
Have to hold to your vision...
If you want your work to reach fruition,
What you need’s a link with your tradition,
And of course a prominent commission,
Plus a little formal recognition,
So that you can go on exhibit—
So that your work can go on exhibition.⁴



And in “I Know Things Now” from *Into the Woods*, a riff on traditional fairy tales, Little Red Riding Hood lays out her convergent conflict between her internalizations of the wolf (id) and her mother (superego). To match the youth and naïveté of his character, Sondheim’s language here is seemingly simple, but one need not be an analyst to hear her anxiety and appreciate the multiple layers of psychic meaning in her tale:

Mother said,
“Straight ahead,”
Not to delay
Or be misled.
I should have heeded
Her advice...
But he seemed so nice.

And he showed me things,
Many beautiful things,
That I hadn’t thought to explore.
They were off my path,
So I never had dared.
I had been so careful
I never had cared.
And he made me feel excited—
Well, excited and scared.



4 Sondheim (2011), p. 39

BPSI Reveals: Reception and Response

The song goes on to describe her seduction “down a dark slimy path, where lie secrets that I never want to know,” and her subsequent rescue. It ends, as analysis typically does, with an expectation of resolution that is not, in fact, complete:

Now I know:
Don't be scared.
Granny is right,
Just be prepared.
Isn't it nice to know a lot?
And a little bit, not...⁵

None of these songs, however, touched me as deeply as “Being Alive” from *Company*. Bobby, a perpetually single thirtysomething man, watches with skepticism as his married friends describe the nuanced joys and sorrows of intimacy and commitment. As the show concludes, he sings:

Somebody hold me too close,
Somebody hurt me too deep,
Somebody sit in my chair
And ruin my sleep
And make me aware
Of being alive, being alive.

Somebody need me too much,
Somebody know me too well,
Somebody pull me up short
And put me through hell
And give me support
For being alive.
Make me alive,
Make me alive.

Make me confused,
Mock me with praise,
Let me be used,
Vary my days.
But alone is alone, not alive.



Somebody crowd me with love,
Somebody force me to care,
Somebody let me come through,
I'll always be there
As frightened as you,
To help us survive
Being alive, being alive, being alive!⁶

To my ears, the song spoke to the complexity of both my own and my patients' experiences of intimacy in analysis and real life. Bobby yearns for the *too much*—sleeplessness, challenge, confusion—that intense attachments arouse. He envisions a relationship as an ambiguous mix of pleasure and pain, without which, he concludes, one is not truly alive. While “I Know Things Now” might play subversively with classical analytic theory, “Being Alive” speaks to the central tenets of self and relational theory—which propose that we find the most vital, meaningful, and compelling aspects of who we are through our deep and persistent connections with others. One feels the internal pulls between Bobby's wishes for autonomy and closeness in the simple plea “Somebody crowd me with love,” but he concludes that as frightening as love may be, he does not want to merely survive alone. As did I; when I married during my next decade of life, that line found its way into my wedding vows.

Life did indeed become crowded, as we quickly added three children to our family. And it naturally warmed my heart when, years later, my kids became obsessed with the defining Broadway musical of their generation, *Hamilton*. While Sondheim's work largely explores intrapsychic conflicts, writer and composer Lin-Manuel Miranda employs the life story of American founding father and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton as a vehicle for exploring the competing political and social tensions at the roots of our national consciousness (and perhaps unconscious?). And following Sondheim's guiding principle that “content dictates form,”⁷ he reflects these tensions by drawing on his own favorite and seemingly incompatible musical styles: Broadway show tunes and hip-hop, with multiple direct references to well-known works in both genres. In the show's opening song, the supporting characters narrate for us the overwhelming challenges of Hamilton's early life. It begins:

How does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore and a
Scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten
Spot in the Caribbean by providence, impoverished, in squalor,
Grow up to be a hero and a scholar?⁸

6 Sondheim (2010), p. 195.

7 Sondheim (2010), p. xv.

8 Miranda & McCarter, p. 16.

BPSI Reveals: Reception and Response

And in another song early in the show, “My Shot,” we are introduced to Alexander as a young man with wide-eyed, boundless drive, as he sings to his fellow future revolutionaries:

I know the action in the streets is excitin',
But Jesus, between all the bleedin' n' fightin' I've been readin' 'n writin'.
We need to handle our financial situation.
Are we a nation of states? What's the state of our nation?
I'm past patiently waitin'. I'm passionately smashin' every expectation,
Every action's an act of creation!
I'm laughin' in the face of casualties and sorrow,
For the first time, I'm thinkin' past tomorrow.

And I am not throwing away my shot.
I am not throwing away my shot.
Hey yo, I'm just like my country,
I'm young scrappy and hungry
And I'm not throwing away my shot.⁹

The tension embedded in both the style and the meaning of these song lyrics, as well as in other elements of the show, abounds. The words immediately grab our attention with their bluntness in describing Hamilton's unseemly background; we do not expect to hear about bastards and whores when our colonial forefathers are described, and certainly not at a Broadway musical. And Miranda keeps our rapt attention by bombarding us with intricately constructed internal rhymes and passionate language that,

as Ben Brantley wrote in a 2015 *New York Times* review of the show, “makes us feel the unstoppable, urgent rhythms of a nation being born.”¹⁰ Miranda's penchant for combining seemingly incompatible elements—our white founding fathers played by African American and Latino performers dressed in 18th-century costumes and rapping phrases like “hey yo”—indeed smashes our expectations, liberating us to feel the “young scrappy and hungry” excitement felt by both renegades before us: Alexander Hamilton and Lin-Manuel Miranda. And just as with most new psychoanalytic theories, there is little in Miranda's style that is actually brand-new; instead, it is the ingeniousness of novel applications and previously unconsidered juxtapositions that engages us.



⁹ Miranda & McCarter, pp. 29-30.

¹⁰ Brantley.

The multiracial casting and diversity of musical and lyrical styles in *Hamilton*, along with the emphasis on its hero's immigrant origins, offer a timely political argument for embracing multiculturalism as an aspect of our national identity and heritage. The anxiety and distress that so many analysts and patients feel seeping into sessions from the current political assaults on these values are propelling us to be more attuned to the impact of external forces on internal psyches. For me, musical theater has at times been a cherished source of entertainment and escape, and at others it has enriched my understanding of my own internal experiences by articulating them in words and music. In "The Schuyler Sisters" and at several later points in the show, Hamilton's wife, Eliza, sings, "Look around, look around, at how lucky we are to be alive right now!"¹¹ In these troubled times, I find Eliza's persistent faith in humanity, despite the tumultuous events and tragic losses that she lives through, to be a source of welcome reassurance and hope.

Links to performances of all referenced songs may be found in the online version of this article in the BPSI Bulletin.

"Wouldn't It Be Lovely?" https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=v5ipgrp_xLU

"Anyone Can Whistle" <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ncyo8EUUCVE>

"Not a Day Goes By" <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=5kMIQgyz834>

"Putting It Together" <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=REqWBgEhU6w>

"I Know Things Now" <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=dQ-f6C3sCf0>

"Being Alive" <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=HnTu8IBWvTQ>

"Alexander Hamilton" (song begins nine minutes into the video, following an introduction by President Barack Obama) <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPrAKuOBWzw>

"My Shot" <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=PEHKBckBcr4>

"The Schuyler Sisters" https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ffjFS_4I8c

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11 Miranda & McCarter, p. 44.

BPSI Explores: Dialogue and Discovery

Community & Public Programs

Laura Crain, *Chair*

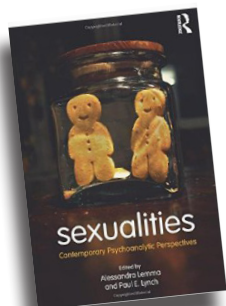
The Community and Public Programs Division engages the community in psychoanalytic thinking and also encourages our members to think more deeply about relevant social issues.

On March 3, BPSI hosted its first “Film Night” in collaboration with the “Off the Couch” program, chaired by Ben Herbstman, MD. The evening began with the opening reception for BPSI’s *Family and Friends, II Art Exhibit*, which displays the diverse artistic talent of our membership. Next on the program was a screening of the Academy Award–winning film *A Separation*, by Asghar Farhadi, followed by a discussion of the film led by Judith Yanof, MD. It was a very rich evening of visual art, thoughtful discussion, and wonderful collegiality, and Dr. Herbstman hopes to organize another “Film Night” at BPSI again soon.

The Child Care Conference Committee is excited to announce the 25th Annual Child Care Conference, to be held on June 10. The title of the conference is **Implicit Bias: Differences Make a Difference: Promoting Racial Literacy in Early Education and Child Care Settings**. The conference will feature two renowned educators: Walter Gilliam, PhD, from Yale University, and Howard Stevenson, PhD, from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Gilliam, Director of the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy and Associate Professor at the Yale School of Medicine, will present his research on how implicit bias—attitudes or stereotypes that affect our judgment and decisions on an unconscious level—may influence early educators. The aim of his research is to help elucidate underlying processes that contribute to racial disparities in educational and life outcomes for children. Dr. Stevenson, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education, Professor of Africana Studies, and Director of the Racial Empowerment Collaborative at the University of Pennsylvania, will present research on racial threat and racial socialization and will focus on teaching emotional and racial literacy skills. Since implicit bias is inherent in all of us, the conference aims to help us find ways of recognizing our own bias in order to improve the preschool experience of all children.



The Gender and Sexuality Committee, co-chaired by Larry Hartmann, MD, and Gerald Adler, MD, focuses on programming, curriculum, and initiatives that create a fuller awareness at BPSI of issues relating to sexualities and gender identifications. Cary Friedman, MD, has asked the Students Committee to examine the role of gender in psychoanalytic training and to reevaluate the requirement that Candidates treat one patient of “each” gender. Committee members Ayelet Barkai, MD, and Diane O’Donoghue, PhD, are offering a new course, for fourth-year Candidates, titled “Gender and Sexuality: Contemporary Psychoanalytic Perspectives.” It is being taught in the second winter quarter of this academic year. Dr. Barkai recently published “Troubling Gender or Engendering Trouble: The Problem with Gender Dysphoria in Psychoanalysis” in the *Psychoanalytic Review* (February 2017). Paul Lynch, MD, coeditor of the book *Sexualities: Contemporary Psychoanalytic Perspectives* (with Alexandra Lemma, Routledge, 2015),



discussed this work as a featured guest in the library's "Meet the Author" series this past January; Dr. Lynch had presented the BPSI Academic Lecture in the fall, titled "Sexuality in Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Facets of Bedrock and Beyond."

The Social Awareness Committee, co-chaired by Deborah Choate, MD, and Jane Keat, PsyD, will focus on the integration of social, political, and cultural issues into BPSI education. They hope to bring interested students together with faculty to develop a coherent approach to integrating awareness of social issues into the curriculum. Members of the Social Awareness Committee have created a group called Reflective Spaces/Material Places. Modeled on a collaboration between three Northern California organizations, Reflective Spaces/Material Places is an effort to pair community-based work and psychoanalytic thinking. The BPSI group meets every two months, in various community settings, and is open to all. Discussion topics have included how to talk about politics in therapy, xenophobia, the effect of precariousness, and the social being of the therapist. The next meeting, June 3, at Brookline Mental Health Center, will be focused on the Transitional Prison Project.

"Explorations in Mind" (or "Explo"), BPSI's community education program, chaired by Holly Friedman Housman, LICSW, and Christopher Morse, PhD, offered a wide range of courses this year. A course on the evaluation and treatment of refugees seeking asylum was offered this fall by four members of the Social Awareness Committee: Michael Grodin, MD, Bennett Simon, MD, Roberta Apfel, MD, and Karen Melikian, PhD. In light of events since the presidential inauguration in January, the course met pressing clinical needs and was fully subscribed with participants from a number of community settings.

In addition, "Explo" offered courses on topics including theatrical literature as a lens for examining sibling, family, and marital relationships; conversations on race; best practices for building a psychodynamic private practice; field theory; dreams; empathy; object relations; and the defense mechanisms of the mind. The program overall—which aims to promote an exchange between our members and the interested public on clinical, artistic, and social issues of concern to the community at large, as well as topics in applied psychoanalysis—is thriving. BPSI members are invited to design and teach courses for upcoming Explorations in Mind programs. The course proposal submission deadline for 2017-2018 was June 1. Please contact Holly Friedman Housman (holly@housman.org, (617) 491-8743) or Christopher Morse (cmorse1@bidmc.harvard.edu, (617) 730-9510) to discuss submissions for 2018-2019 and forward.

IMPLICIT BIAS: DIFFERENCES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Promoting Racial Literacy in Early Education and Child Care Settings



The 25th Annual BPSI Child Care Conference

Saturday, June 10, 2017

more information at www.bpsi.org

Outreach

Catherine Mitkus, *Co-Chair*
Academic Affiliation & Research Division

Consider looking at *The Lord of the Rings* from multiple psychoanalytic stances.

Or, the relational nature of creativity and play.

Consider thinking about what lies behind the pleasure that humor brings us.

Or, how fiction and creative writing describe the inner workings of the human mind.

What do psychoanalytic perspectives bring to the experience of art, and how does the experience of art add to the appreciation of psychoanalysis?

These are the sorts of discussions we hope undergraduate students and BPSI faculty will continue to embark on in our collaboration with Emerson College, now in its third year. We have built a solid institutional bridge with the college, offering interdisciplinary perspectives to its students via a rich array of courses. This initiative, spearheaded by Dr. Murray Schwartz, supports creative exchanges between BPSI members, Affiliate Scholars, and the broader academic community, with the longer-term goal of getting approval for an Emerson undergraduate minor in psychoanalysis and the arts expected to be achieved in the fall of 2017. The following courses either have already been taught by BPSI faculty or are in the queue for next year.

“Creativity and Psychoanalysis”

“Dreaming: Personal, Therapeutic, and Cultural Perspectives”

“Freud: Exploring the Mind, Building Theory, and Understanding Society”

“Psychoanalysis and the Arts”

“Humor and Psychoanalytic Thinking”

“The Holocaust: History, Testimony, Trauma”

“Aragorn on the Couch: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on *The Lord of the Rings*”

“The Relational Nature of Creativity and Play”

“Freud and the Creative Writer”

“Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Humor”

Those 10 courses are among the multiple pathways for dialogues about psychoanalytic concepts beyond our four walls. Hats off to the BPSI faculty for these creative exchanges with Emerson’s undergraduate community. May the seeds continue to grow, this spring and beyond!

I Am Not Your Negro An “Off the Couch” Discussion

Michele Baker

“ I LOVE AMERICA MORE
THAN ANY OTHER
COUNTRY IN THE WORLD
AND, EXACTLY FOR THIS
REASON, I INSIST ON THE
RIGHT TO CRITICIZE HER.”

JAMES A. BALDWIN



I was sympathetic to the Black Lives Matter movement. Of course I was. I’m a liberal.

But I wasn’t...*afraid*. I have two boys. They are, respectively, around the age Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice were when they were murdered. But my boys are white. Very white: One is blond, the other a redhead.

I am white, too. When I was pulled over for driving with my headlights off late at night in Brookline a couple of years ago, with my hockey bag in the backseat and my hockey stick jutting out over my shoulder, I was confident that the police officer would be polite, maybe even friendly. Maybe even a hockey player. In fact, he was helpful and patient as I fumbled for my registration, and then sent me on my way after ascertaining that I lived in the neighborhood.

In November, when the Electoral College went Republican, I began to feel the shock I hadn’t felt since I was a young person in Hebrew school facing for the first time the realities of the Holocaust. I became pretty obsessed with the subject. At my fancy prep school, ninth graders were required to give a 10-minute talk. Typical topics in my year were “Toothpaste” and what it felt like to have your parents own one of the most expensive restaurants in Boston. My subject was “The Holocaust.” But even then, it felt almost theoretical, so long ago and far away. Though I did lose family members, they were from my grandparents’ generation, and all my grandparents had been in this country since the early 20th century. I knew about Nazi Germany, and yet I was still stunned when Trump won.

On November 9, I went out for consolation and drinks with my friend Laura. She’s been a union organizer since we graduated from college. She’s a tall white girl, but her husband and daughter are Hawaiian. She was devastated that night, worried about her seven-year-old girl. She told me, with her classic self-deprecating

continued on page 28

BPSI Explores: Dialogue and Discovery

humor, that many of the folks in the union, people of color, had been mocking her earlier. “Oh!” they said. “White girl is sad...” They weren’t shocked. They were used to it. They hadn’t been blinded by good times and optimism. They hadn’t been counting on generations of living in houses with white fences and going to college and buying Plymouths and having children in smocked dresses who would grow up with the same luxuries. James Baldwin points out in the film on what white people had been able to do just this for years in mid-century America.

In his essay “My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the 100th Anniversary of the Emancipation,” James Baldwin writes: “These innocent and well-meaning people, your countrymen, have caused you to be born under conditions not very far removed from those described for us by Charles Dickens in the London of more than 100 years ago.... I *know* the conditions under which you were born, for I was there. Your countrymen were not there and haven’t made it yet.” I believe he meant that white people did not know, did not understand because they hadn’t been forced to. This ignorance is the idealistic fantasy of race neutrality offered by the old white Yale professor on *The Dick Cavett Show* to whom Baldwin responds with an explanation of his visceral, embodied fear.

This is white privilege.

Now, to some—albeit a much lesser—degree, it’s in my house, too. My 13-year-old doesn’t sleep through the night anymore. He’s scared and angry. He comes into my bedroom at 2:30 or 3 a.m. and talks to me in rapid fire about the latest outrage he’s heard and read about. Did I know that the Dick and Betsy DeVos Family Foundation gave millions of dollars to organizations that support conversion therapy? He can’t believe it. We can’t believe it. The bullies won. The bullies won?

I don’t think James Baldwin would be too surprised. In Haitian director Raoul Peck’s documentary *I Am Not Your Negro*, Baldwin speaks to us in his own voice and through Samuel L. Jackson’s. He tells us, the audience, what it is like to always have *had* to get it. To feel rage not as an adult for the first or second time, but always, once you’re old enough to look in the mirror.

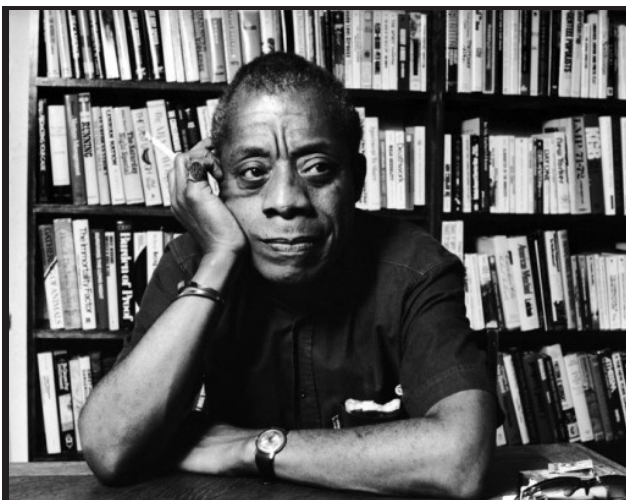
In the introduction to his book *Notes of a Native Son*, Baldwin writes: “The rage of the disesteemed is personally fruitless, but it is also absolutely inevitable; this rage, so generally discounted, so little understood even among the people whose daily bread it is, is one of the things that makes history. Rage can only with difficulty, and never entirely, be brought under the domination of the intelligence and is therefore not susceptible to any arguments whatever. This is a fact which ordinary representatives of the *Herrenvolk*, having never felt this rage and being unable to imagine it, quite fail to understand.”

After yet another of his friends, Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated, he tells us, he wept “tears of helpless rage.” This is the rage that propels the Black Lives Matter movement. This is the rage I did not feel personally. This was the limit of my empathy. Chris Rock, during performances on his Total Blackout tour, says of the current political landscape: “I’m not scared. I’m black. The future is always better when you’re black.” When the audience laughs, it’s because we understand. We get it. And this is what comedy and film can do. When we sit in the theater immersed in the sounds and sights, our mirror neurons start working. I think Peck is fully aware of the power of movies—he shows us clips from dozens of films, building up in us a semiotic experience of the world through his eyes.

Here is Peck in an interview he gave: “As a black person and as a third-world person...I don’t have my own narrative in this medium, which is cinema. Since the discovery of cinema others have been the one telling the story.... A Native American could redo all the John Wayne westerns from a different perspective. This is what we don’t have; we don’t have our own visual history. So being a filmmaker for me was also trying to save part of our memory, part of our images, part of our stories. I saw it as one of the responsibilities I have—to make sure that we are not totally dead in the picture.”

Watching this film helps us build our empathy. Analysis requires us to empathically join in another person’s psychological experience. On this topic Juan Tubert-Oklander writes: “True psychoanalytic empathy...requires both a sympathetic openness and an acceptance of the patient’s subjectivity *and its impact on the analyst* Consequently, the analyst must keep a dialectic tension...between an uncritical empathic resonance and an analytical inquiry of the experience that is thus harvested.” In the “Portrait” section of his film, Peck shows us old photos of African American people and then brings the photos to life, by showing contemporary people of color. The subjects look out at us, reversing the gaze. Baldwin tells us that black people have been looking at white people for centuries; now we look back, and thus look more closely at ourselves.

It is not enough to feel sympathy for another’s experience, to look through the mists of time at people long gone, people we had nothing to do with. Analysts, or in this case the audience, or perhaps white people in general, must do the work to know ourselves. We must look in our own mirrors. I initially felt deeply uncomfortable being the discussant for this film. But then I thought, why should only people of color have to do it? I need to *own* my role here as well, to speak from my experience. James Baldwin—brilliant writer, philosopher, and raconteur—tells us this. American history is built on the slave trade. American history *is* race history. He reminds us that *whiteness* is an invention. *Whiteness* is a consolidation of power, a signifier like “the Chase Manhattan Bank.” There are no white Americans without black Americans. It is *our* job, it is *my* job, to know myself, to know whiteness, and to look at it and to speak *to* it, and *of* it.



Not everything that is faced can
be changed, but nothing can be
changed until it is faced.

James A. Baldwin

The 25th Anniversary of the BPSI Child Care Conference

This year we celebrate the contributions of Judy Yanof, MD, which include two decades as the Chair of the Child Care Committee.

The Annual Child Care Conference is one of BPSI's oldest and most successful outreach efforts. It is planned primarily for an audience of childcare workers, preschool teachers, and other early-childhood educators in the Boston area, but the program is often of interest to parents, clinicians, and BPSI members as well. The conference has always featured prominent leaders in the fields of early-childhood education or child development, and it includes continuing education credits for participants at a low fee. The focus of the event is often on the emotional well-being of the young child and the family, examined through the lens of a strong developmental perspective. The conference has achieved prominence and has attracted a loyal following among early-childhood educators because of its consistent high quality and its synthesis of developmental, emotional, educational, and public policy issues related to early-childhood care. As Chair of the Child Care Committee, Dr. Yanof has developed a strong and dedicated group of committee members who have helped to build alliances between our community of psychoanalysts and the early-education and child-care community.



The BPSI Annual Child Care Conference was started in 1992 by Lyle Warner, who organized the program under the auspices of the Friends of BPSI. Judy Yanof and Ann Stambler gave the very first lecture, titled "Hello Good-bye." For the last 20 years, the Child Care Committee has organized the program. The committee consists of early-childhood educators who volunteer their time to plan the program, with the assistance of Judy and the administrative staff of BPSI. Many of the committee members have also been speakers and moderators at the conference, including Ellen Moore, Jane Lannak, and Ann Stambler. BPSI member Alex Harrison has been a speaker and a panelist on numerous occasions. Other speakers have included T. Berry Brazelton, Mary Catherine Bateson, Jim Greenman, Eli Newberger, Vivian Paley, Alice Honig, Ed Tronick, Lilian Katz, Susan Linn, Joan Almon, Howard Gardner, and Jerome Kagan.

Members of the current Child Care Committee appreciate Judy's leadership, as indicated by one member's comment:

- *"Judy's unique leadership style has been both to seek the expertise of and to provide support to members of the early-childhood and psychoanalytic community as well as the committee. The selection of speakers and topics since the introduction of this conference is a clear indication of that joint interest."*

A Tribute to Judy Yanof, MD

Committee members also shared some thoughts about why the conference has become so important to the early-education and child-care community:

- *“A few of the many, many reasons include availability and affordability for all participants. Judy has always said that nobody will be turned away and if you need help, just reach out. However, the cost of the conference is so reasonable, I don’t think anyone has ever felt they couldn’t afford to participate. This has also contributed to another important community issue: The range of participants is diverse in terms of early-childhood interests, allowing new ideas to reach a wide audience of professionals interested and involved in early-childhood issues. The conferences have also provided validation to so many of the participants who work directly with children on a day-to-day basis.”*
- *“The conference is small enough that it allows networking to occur during break times. The BPSI staff have always provided wonderful support in arranging this under Judy’s direction, and they, too, have become an integral part of our conference team.”*



This year, the committee welcomes Ann Epstein, MD, as co-chair, and she looks forward to working with Judy to further the conference’s mission: understanding the complexity of raising our children in the context of our society. Twenty years ago, the topic was “Children in Adversity,” with contributions by Betsy McAlister Groves and Ann Easterbrooks, among others. The topic for this year’s conference, taking place on June 10, is **“Implicit Bias: Differences Make a Difference. Promoting Racial Literacy in Early Education and Child Care Settings.”**

BPSI and our wider community have been greatly enriched by Judy’s many years of leadership on the Child Care Committee and we are grateful to her for her generosity and her knowledge.



THE ARTHUR R. KRAVITZ AWARD

FOR COMMUNITY ACTION AND HUMANITARIAN CONTRIBUTIONS

The Kravitz Committee is pleased to announce that the recipient of the 10th Annual Kravitz Award for Community Action and Humanitarian Contributions is Dr. Karen Melikian. The award honors the late Dr. Arthur Kravitz's commitment to using his psychoanalytic knowledge and experience in the wider community. The award will be presented on June 2nd at the BPSI Spring Graduation Party.

Karen Melikian has been dedicated to psychoanalysis and its application in the wider community for many years. Beyond her practice in adult and child psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, she has participated through Physicians for Human Rights in interviewing refugees seeking asylum in Dilly, Texas, and has taught Explo courses through BPSI on evaluation of refugees and asylum seekers. Her career has included consulting to the Department of Social Services in the past, and working at Franciscan Children's Hospital. She has recently visited an orphanage in Armenia and now is teaching a course on Winnicott to staff at that orphanage via Skype.



Calling All Writers:

The BPSI Bulletin is seeking members who have attended interesting talks, panels, or plenaries at local professional meetings, or at national and international conferences who would report on the event for the next issue. Or, if you would like to contribute a book review, please let us hear from you.

The Bulletin is published two times a year, and your contributions will provide opportunities for writing, and will enrich the community with your unique voice.

Please contact: Stephanie Brody (stephanie_brody@hms.harvard.edu)