

BPSI BULLETIN Fall • Winter 2017



Identity

Remembering the numerous events of the past few months—hurricanes and executive orders, mass shootings and assaults, losses and feeble recoveries—it is clear that a deeply layered storm has arrived and will remain with us. I am not alone in my welter of feeling—in the heavy blanket of undoing. Resistance arrives, then recedes to the background, as forces of dark dominance press us to normalize the daily assaults. It is a necessary, though temporary, retreat to a sense of safety and well-being. Adaptation to ever-present attacks on normality can result in detachment or denial. We do what we can to mitigate the sense of danger. But history is rife with tragic missteps that were made in troubled times, when we believed in wishful thinking; when we called something by another name to make it seem less dangerous.

The overexposure to macro-aggressions against the most vulnerable, the purposeful unraveling of facts, the endless relocation of hideous aspects of the self onto others—these are familiar in the one-to-one spaces of our professional world. To witness their magnification in the broad landscape of our country, the easy derision of democratic values and judicial process, is to hear a warning bell. It takes a special effort to remain numb or removed. The 2017 documentary *The Vietnam War*, by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, brought into high relief the degree to which narcissism and the need to avoid humiliation led to the atrocity of war and loss of life. It is a reminder of what can happen—what is happening. Who will now expose the deep layers of mortification that are protected by soulless men in retreat from personal responsibility? In his 2017 historical primer *On Tyranny*, Timothy Snyder writes that those who retreat or avoid the signs of democratic vulnerability will eventually pay in the currency of loss—that there are dangerous injuries to our republic in the daily indignities and dismissals of our conscious outrage.

Two weeks before the presidential election, Robert Schenkkan, the Tony Award-winning playwright of *All the Way*, imagined the aftermath of a Trump election. Set in 2019, *Building the Wall* tells the story of an incarcerated man. As he is interviewed, the audience becomes immersed in the slow erosion of morality and ethical values in a dystopian America. We witness the gradual influence of power and coercion as an ordinary individual justifies his role in genocide, claiming as his defense that he had no choice but obedience. Snyder reminds us of the psychologist Stanley Milgram, who argued that the ordinary person is capable of succumbing to outrageous acts of inhumanity within an easily constructed context of influence and authority. Any internal conflict is resolved by an alliance with an individual who proclaims certainty and offers the seductive power of group identity. In the last moments of Schenkkan's play, we learn that the border "wall" has already been built, and it is made of materials that will be much harder to take down. Every person who closes his mind to others, who condones exclusion, who is threatened by the existence of difference, becomes as solid and permanent as brick and mortar. There is no

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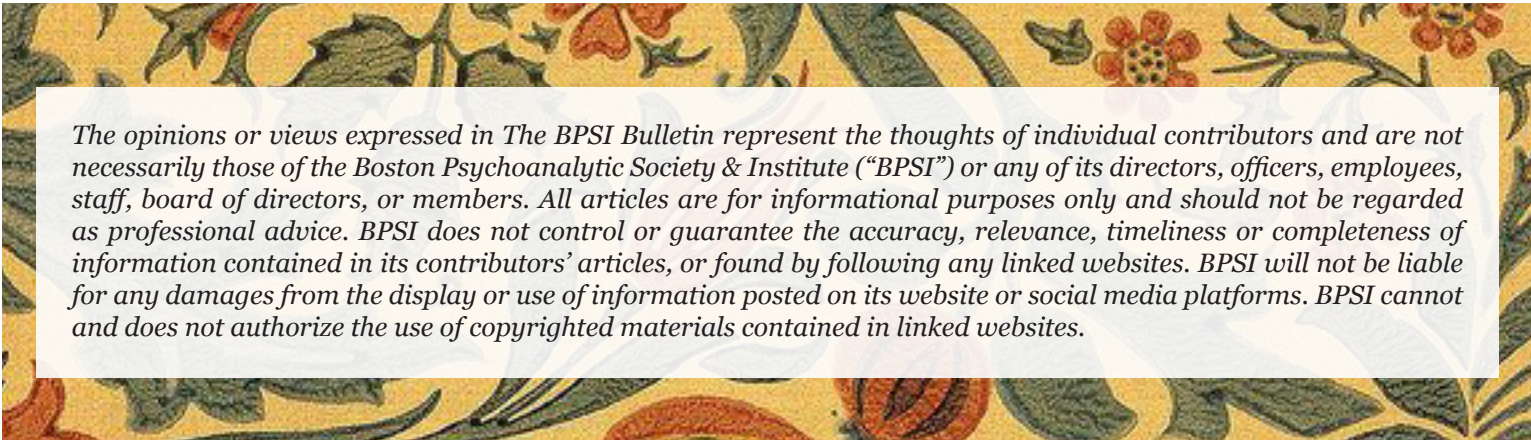
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Front cover painting: *Psyche Opening the Golden Box* by John William Waterhouse (1903)



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BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

Letter from the President

As you read this, we are several months into the new academic year. If you are in the building on a Thursday night, you are sharing space with 32 Fellows, 12 ATP Students, and 33 Candidates. On other days we have hosted three Explo courses, two Members Seminars, an Author's Night, a Wednesday evening and three Saturday programs, as well as the many committees that organize these events - and of course Carole and Karen and Drew and Lauren and Tony and Olga and Paul, who do the work to support these committees. A lot of good stuff, a lot of amazing energy and devotion.

Last spring we reconvened another committee, the Strategic Plan Working Group, comprised of representatives from across the BPSI community, with the charge of looking at how we are doing as an organization – what we do well and what we need to do better as we plan for the next several years. A “tune up” of sorts. We started this fall with a review of our Mission Statement (crafted almost ten years ago, a few months before the work began on our last Strategic Plan) and asked Members for their feedback. The shape it takes, along with the issues and concerns raised by the small groups which met last spring and our discussions at the annual Members Meeting in November, will guide the committee in its work over the next year.

The small group discussions varied in content, but the following issues were raised several times:

1. increasing scholarship funds for trainees;
2. more focus on case finding/development;
3. enhancement of our website, technology, use of social media;
4. social awareness – incorporating education and discussion of issues of race, gender, and sexuality throughout BPSI coursework and programming.

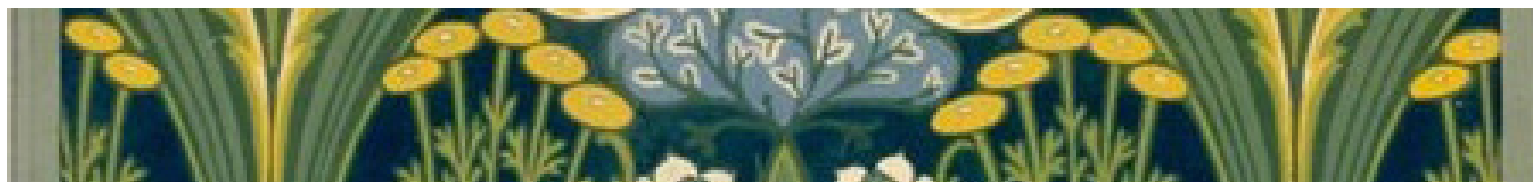
These specific concerns were expressed in the context of the larger questions. How can BPSI continue to attract and inform early career clinicians to and about psychoanalytic thinking? How we can continue to engage our post seminar members and our graduates over time? How we can increase BPSI's engagement in the larger community?

We are a fortunate group – we have a beautiful building filled with opportunities. With that comes continued concerns about hierarchy and lack of transparency. In my own group last spring, a couple of Members expressed worry that in our focus of energy on community, we can forget that we are a school, and run the risk of losing some of the rigor we strive for. I believe we can do both – and that our trainees will demand it of us.

As always, I hope that if you would like to reach out to me directly, you will.

Julie Watts, President
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Oh – and one more thing! If you haven't already made a donation to our Annual Appeal, please do so. It enables us to balance our budget, but it is also our source for scholarship funding. So the more of you who give, the more financial assistance we can offer our trainees!



BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

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need for the concrete when many hearts and minds have lined up to defend what is believed to be threatened. It is a chilling metaphor in these turbulent times. Snyder warns not to “obey in advance,” stating that “most of the power of authoritarianism is freely given” (Snyder, 2017, p. 17). Oppression has taught us that when “tyrants feel no consequences for their actions in the three-dimensional world, nothing will change” (*Ibid.*, p. 84).

To form identity in times of darkness and despair is a central goal of analytic work. To find out who we are in a world that bleeds with anxiety and toxicity is a new challenge for those of us who work in small spaces. Analysts have not always been comfortable with the role of the external, even though our history includes the urgent immigration and loss of many of our ancestors in times of war, exile, and annihilation. Silence is a luxury we do not have. Is this a time when we have no choice but to become more curious about what takes place *outside* the walls of our analytic home—where to “practice corporeal politics” means we must put ourselves in “unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people” (*Ibid.*, p. 83) and allow the penetration of discomfort? We face a world gripped by vulnerability, where unsettling change occurs every day. What we choose to do to address the world that we now inhabit will reflect the identity that we own, as well as our personal psychic reality. When the external reaches us in unexpected forms, we may want to reconsider the privileges associated with a benign social context, as well as the dangers of an unpredictable milieu. Each of us believes deeply in the outcome of self-knowledge. We may yet be tasked with finding out what is next, how the external world affects us, and what we want to become.

Snyder, T. (2017). *On Tyranny*. New York: Tim Duggan Books.

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LESSON I:
DO NOT OBEY
IN ADVANCE

#ONTYRANNY | TIMOTHYSNYDER.ORG

Organizing for the Future

Joseph M. Schwartz, *Chair, Board of Trustees*

As I enter my final months as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other members of our leadership team: Julie Watts, Catherine Kimble, Dan Mollod, and Carole Nathan, with whom it continues to be a delight to collaborate. I want to welcome to our leadership team Jim Barron, who on November 4 was unanimously elected to the position of Board Chair. Jim brings a wealth of organizational experience to this position. He is a former President of PINE and was deeply involved in the process that led to many PINE members joining us at BPSI. Jim has thrown himself enthusiastically into life at BPSI and is already making many important contributions to our community. I couldn't be more confident and pleased to be turning over the position of Board Chair to him. I would also like to welcome Amy Fleischer to the Board of Trustees as a representative of the ATP. Once again, I can't emphasize enough my gratitude to our dedicated staff: Karen Smolens, Drew Brydon, Lauren Lukason, Olga Umansky, Paul Brennan, and Tony Viti. And, of course, let me express my appreciation to all of the members of the Board of Trustees, who continue to provide wise oversight of all of BPSI's activities.

One important function of the Board of Trustees is to oversee all aspects of the organization's finances. This includes ensuring that our budget is carefully crafted to support our mission and to help realize the goals of our Strategic Plan. The Board is also charged with monitoring our endowment and ensuring that it is managed prudently. This past summer, the Board authorized a committee to review the performance of our investment adviser, Balentine LLC. After an intensive review of its performance and several competing proposals from other investment firms, the Finance Committee unanimously recommended to the Board that we continue our relationship with Balentine. After a spirited discussion, the Board voted unanimously to accept that recommendation, with the caveat that Balentine's performance be carefully monitored over the coming year. A special thanks to Carole Nathan, Managing Director, and Jim Nemetz, Treasurer, who put in many hours of hard work coordinating the review and selection of our investment adviser.

In the last Bulletin, I wrote about the Board of Trustees' creation of a Strategic Plan Working Group. At present, important programming, educational, and financial decisions are guided by a Strategic Plan that dates back to 2009. But the process of revising our Strategic Plan is well under way. The Strategic Plan Working Group has now met several times. Our first task has been to consider whether our existing Mission Statement remains an accurate representation of our aspirations as an organization. We invited and received feedback from our members about our Mission Statement that we will consider in making any necessary revisions. Flowing from our Mission Statement is an articulation of organizational priorities that in turn guides the big and small choices that our divisions, committees, and staff must make day in and day out. At our Members Meeting on November 4, a number of small-group discussions around important themes took place. The summaries of those discussions will be enormously useful to the Strategic Plan Working Group in its ongoing projects. We will do our best to keep members aware of the progress of the Strategic Plan Working Group as they continue their important efforts.



The Widening Scope of Psychoanalytic Education at BPSI

Stephen Kerzner, *Chair, Institute Education Committee*

BPSI has been known for its commitment to rigorous psychoanalytic education in the tripartite tradition of the Eitingon model, including seminars, supervision and the personal training analysis. As we continue to honor that model, the current Institute leadership is not wedded to the past. The Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Education Policies Committee (EPC) look to go beyond hierarchical divisions in a continuing effort to broaden our theoretical and clinical foci. We welcome thoughtful dialogue that challenges orthodoxy while also valuing our history. BPSI has widened its scope.

Our candidate classes have grown in number and diversity due in part to the efforts of the Training Outreach Committee. This fall, we admitted a talented class of ten candidates, including one combined adult and child analytic candidate, as well as an affiliate scholar. This committee has also undertaken a comprehensive survey of our candidates and recent graduates regarding their experiences of both the admissions process and training. The EPC committees have implemented changes based on the findings of this survey and will continue to do so. In 2017, eight candidates graduated as Clinical Program Graduates, five as Academic Graduates, including three with clinical cases, and one Child Analysis Graduate.

Enhanced case finding and case development have enabled our candidates to advance more quickly toward psychoanalytic clinical immersion. Our Students Committee has made modifications in the way we evaluate candidate progress to emphasize the educative value of the process. The implementation of “Small Groups” for both Progression and Graduation Reviews has facilitated more in-depth evaluation of candidate development and has been well received by both faculty and candidates. Case requirements have shifted to emphasize analytic process as opposed to length of time. The recent implementation of the developmental pathway for Supervising and Training Analysts (SA/TA) has encouraged many faculty to pursue clinical immersion, certification and professional growth toward SA/TA appointment. A SA/TA task force is currently assessing ways to further improve this pathway.

The Institute not only nurtures and educates our trainees, we also provide a professional home for our faculty. Our talented volunteer faculty are a dynamic and dedicated group. They invest great effort and expertise to prepare course offerings. While we have far more faculty eager to teach than core seminars and electives available for teaching, BPSI offers an array of exciting opportunities for faculty involvement, including participation in various committees. Our faculty teach in the ATP and Adult and Child Psychotherapy Fellowships and the Explorations in Mind Program and serve as advisors and mentors to our trainees in both the Institute and Psychotherapy Education.

Our core curriculum is made up of five course sequences: Theory, Technique, Psychopathology, Development and Clinical Practice. Each sequence provides a progression of courses over five years from basic to advanced that explore both classical and contemporary theory and technique. It is a packed curriculum. Yet the Curriculum Committee is working hard to expand its scope. At the urging of both faculty and candidates, a course on evolving conceptions of gender and sexuality was added last year. We are now in the process of integrating our Adult and Child Psychoanalytic Training programs to further promote developmental perspectives and expose our candidates to work with children and adolescents.

In the present political climate, rejection of otherness has permeated our psyches and infiltrated our consulting rooms. The Social Awareness Committee is actively working with our Curriculum Committee to find ways to incorporate psychoanalytic perspectives on societal issues including class, gender and race into the curriculum. The EPC wholly supports this effort.

It has been a privilege to chair the Institute's Education Committee during the past two and one half years. We have a superb and committed faculty and a talented, motivated group of candidates. In addition, we are fortunate to have a dedicated, hard-working administrative staff that deserve our gratitude and support.



We Need You!

2017 ANNUAL APPEAL

With Your Help We Can Reach Our Goal



We are hoping for 100% participation. ***Every gift matters*** — no matter how small or large. Your gift supports scholarships and all our BPSI programs.

Visit bpsi.org and click 'GIVE' to make a gift to the 2017 Annual Appeal.

Or, Contact Carole Nathan, Managing Director
by email (cnathan@bpsi.org) or by phone 617-266-0953.

Visit connect.bpsi.org/give/ways-to-give.php to learn more about how you can financially support BPSI's mission today, tomorrow, and in the future.

BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

Annual Members Meeting

Julie Watts, President

On November 4, approximately 60 members of BPSI gathered for our annual meeting and attempted to do something we don't get to do often enough: talk to one another about our experience at BPSI. Historically, the annual meeting centers on reports from Division Chairs to the large group. This year we changed the format. Inspired by issues raised last year in our small-group meetings, and in response to specific requests this year for a change to the upcoming Members Meeting, we created a group structure that would facilitate discussion. These are the seven breakout groups that organized our morning:

- Class, race, multiculturalism, and gender in our conversation...in our Mission Statement?

Facilitator: Deborah Choate

- Current controversies in psychoanalytic education: How will changes at APsaA affect us at BPSI? What kind of input do we have? How are we thinking about current questions in training (e.g., the gender and frequency requirements)?

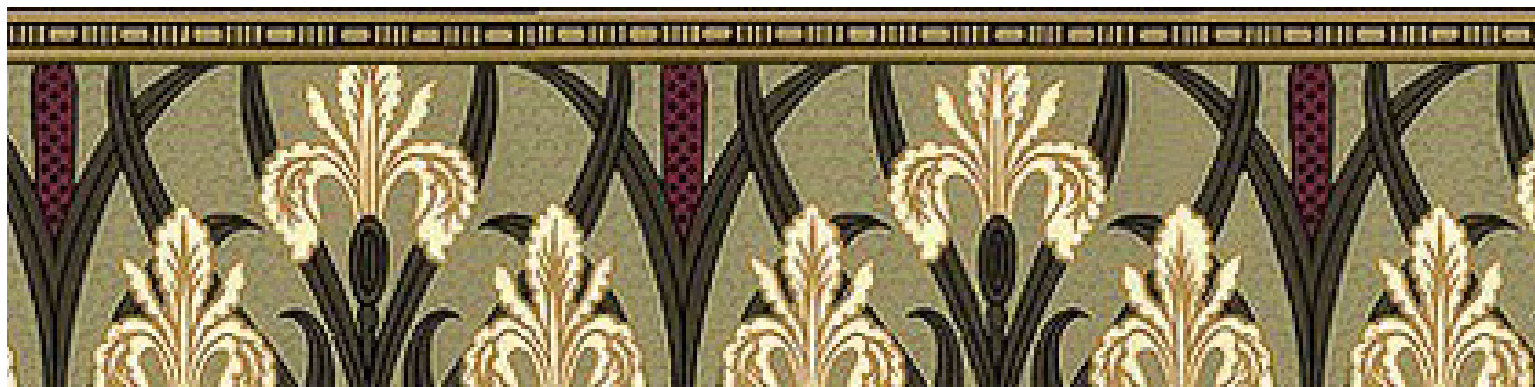
Facilitator: Bernard Edelstein

- Psychotherapy training at BPSI: Building for the future

Facilitators: Tanishia Choice and Alan Pollack

- Improving transparency: Engaging decision-making at BPSI

Facilitators: Sureyya Iscan and Randall Paulsen



- Say what?! Is there a BPSI “political correctness”? How do we encourage and respectfully engage the expression of multiple points of view at our programs, in our committees, in our conversation?

Facilitators: Jack Foehl and Joe Schwartz

- Beyond our walls: BPSI in the larger world

Facilitators: Jane Keat and James Barron

- BPSI membership through the life cycle: Making BPSI a professional home

Facilitator: James Walton

I am particularly pleased that three of the group facilitators were Trainees and that there were several members from both the psychotherapy and the psychoanalytic training programs among the attendees. The breakout groups met for an hour, after which the large group reconvened to hear the facilitators summarize their group’s discussion. We ended the morning with some time (not enough!) for responses to the group reports.

On a personal level, I found myself moved by the content of the breakout conversations—the seriousness (and humor) with which each group approached its task. Although we could have used more time for the large-group discussion, my experience was that folks were quite engaged, and the feedback thus far has been positive. A good start...



BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

Up Close and Personal: The Voice of Experience

Dan Jacobs & Olga Umansky, *Hanns Sachs Library*

Our library continues to produce interesting programs for our members and visitors. Join us on **Monday, January 22, at 7:30 pm** to meet the author Nathan Kravis, a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College and a Training and Supervising Analyst at the Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research. Dr. Kravis is visiting BPSI to talk about his new book, *On the Couch: A Repressed History of the Analytic Couch from Plato to Freud* (MIT Press, 2017). Among other fascinating images published in Dr. Kravis's book are Shellburne Thurber's photographs of psychoanalytic spaces. Coincidentally, several of Thurber's photographs are still on display in the library. Don't miss this engaging and visually stimulating presentation!



Audio recordings of past “Meet the Author” events, spanning the period from 2008 to the present, have been uploaded to the members’ section of the website. Log in using your member’s password and listen to conversations with Sophie Freud, Daniel Stern, Nancy Chodorow, Lewis Kirshner, and many other authors. More BPSI event recordings will be released to the members soon.

Earlier this year, the Library Committee introduced a new series of video interviews, *The Voice of Experience*, in which senior members talk about important milestones in their lives and careers. The project, which is being published on the BPSI blog, follows in the footsteps of Allen Palmer’s photo exhibit

The Face of Experience (2004–present), featuring black-and-white portraits of senior psychoanalysts captured in the context and environment of their work. The interviews are intended to educate listeners about our past and preserve the unique voices of our accomplished members, and will be released one at a time as they become available. You can now watch Dan Jacobs's recent interview of Arnold Modell on the blog. A Supervising and Training Analyst at BPSI and a Clinical Professor of Social Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, Modell is the author of these influential books: *Object Love and Reality: An Introduction to a Psychoanalytic Theory of Object Relations* (1968), *Psychoanalysis in a New Context* (1984), *The Private Self* (1996), *Other Times, Other Realities: Toward a Theory of Psychoanalytic Treatment* (1996), and *Imagination and the Meaningful Brain* (2006). Soon to be released is Ana-María Rizzuto's conversation with Axel Hoffer, recorded in the library on September 15, 2017. Rizzuto is the author of *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1979), *Why Did Freud Reject God: A Psychodynamic Interpretation* (1998), *The Dynamics of Human Aggression* (2003), and *Freud and the Spoken Word: Speech as a Key to the Unconscious* (2015) and the subject of Ana-María Rizzuto and the *Psychoanalysis of Religion: The Road to the Living God* (2017), edited by Martha J. Reineke and David M. Goodman. The Arthur R. Kravitz Award Committee is planning to produce a similar series of video interviews featuring past award recipients. The Kravitz award is given to BPSI members who have provided noteworthy psychoanalytically informed service to our broader community.


Links: Members' section of the website: <https://members.bpsi.org/audio-recordings-of-events/>
The Voice of Experience: <https://bpsi.org/category/library-corner/>
The Face of Experience: <https://bpsi.org/library/faces/about.html>



Photography credit: Allen Palmer. (l-r): Arnold Modell, Ana-María Rizzuto, Axel Hoffer, Dan Jacobs.

John Terry Maltzberger: *Contributions to the Development of Studies of Suicide and Self-Attack*

Mark J. Goldblatt



This year the Nemetz Lecture, held on September 23, 2017, was dedicated to the memory of Terry Maltzberger and his place in the development of psychoanalytic thinking in regard to suicide and self-attack. Occurring almost a year after Terry's death, this gathering of his friends, students, and colleagues served as a fitting memorial service, celebrating Terry's contributions as a psychoanalyst, his wit and character.

Terry Maltzberger died on October 5, 2016, at the age of nearly 83. He came to Boston from Cotulla, Texas, and attended Princeton, then Harvard Medical School. He did his psychiatric residency at Massachusetts Mental Health Center in the early 1960s and was greatly influenced there by Elvin Semrad, and Ives Hendrick. He valued these relationships and held on to them throughout his life. He talked about things he'd learned in residency, and in his analyses, as if they had happened yesterday; ideas that obviously had stayed with him and continued to influence him.

After his residency, he became a Candidate at BPSI and had his second analysis. He graduated from BPSI in 1970 and joined the BPSI Faculty a few years later. He was Chair of the Faculty from 1982 to 1985. He was a staunch advocate for analysis, always finding an opportunity to speak about what he had gained from his analyses and what analysis can give to us professionally and personally.

Over the course of the day, we heard how Terry Maltzberger came to exert a major influence on psychoanalysis and on suicide studies (suicidology). Mark Schechter moderated the program which was divided into three presentations (by myself, Elsa Ronningstam, and Ben Herbstman, all members of the Boston Suicide Study Group, which Terry founded several years ago). The audience-discussion period that followed was personal and revealing, perhaps more so than ever before.

I discussed Terry's contribution through a presentation on two of his papers: "Countertransference Hate," which he co-wrote with Dan Buie in 1974, and "The Descent into Suicide," which came out in 2004. I suggested that both papers had substantially transformed the field. Maltzberger and Buie identified a dilemma, hateful feelings toward your suicidal patient, that interferes in treatment, with potentially catastrophic outcomes. "Countertransference Hate" depicts the effects on the therapist and the potential consequence on the treatment: that countertransference enactments may prove fatal. By naming the dilemma and describing the issues involved, they empowered clinicians to identify their feelings (to themselves or their supervisors, or analysts) without shame, and, in so doing, to avoid dangerous enactments. This clarity empowered generations of clinicians and became an important part of modern training in the treatment of patients with more severe pathologies.

Their contribution was part of the ongoing developments in psychoanalytic theory that allowed clinicians to engage their own reactions, not shamefully avoid them. This allows the therapist to usefully employ these difficult experiences to understand patients, especially those with more severe pathology, in the borderline and psychotic range of functioning. For many developing clinicians, the unburdening of previously shameful feelings that they had had to hide from their supervisors, their peers, and perhaps even their own training analysts cannot be overestimated. Over time, we were also able to recognize that this paper contributed to the move away from treating the therapist as the container of unresolved (unconscious) fantasies, to a place of understanding the patient's pathology through the intersubjective field that is co-created.

Terry's 2004 paper "The Descent into Suicide" emphasizes the role of ego-regression in suicidal states. With the aid of a story by Edgar Allen Poe, he lucidly and vividly describes the breakdown of the self that leads to its ultimate destruction. His description of this tragic cascade is captivating and quite terrifying, told in a way that borders on the poetic. This paper helps us understand what's happening to the suicidal person; how the self breaks down and the suffering patient is then able to attack and kill him/herself. Terry elaborated a theory of suicide that goes beyond Freud's punitive superego, toward a description of a self that is battling to remain intact in the face of traumatizing affective storms that are common in suicidal states. Suicide-vulnerable persons have impaired capacity for affect regulation. When the maximum capacity of the ego is exceeded and the mind is deluged with unmanageable feeling, self-organization gives way and the mind breaks up. The inability to maintain ego functioning in the face of this onslaught leads to suicidal collapse. Ego functioning fails massively, resulting in narcissistic collapse with loss of reality testing, self-fragmentation, and ego failure. These patients imagine they can split off their mental and physical selves by killing their bodies. Terry's paper describes clearly, with rich detail, how the self may break down and attack the body in a suicidal crisis.

Elsa Ronningstam focused on Terry's contributions to the study of self-regulation and pathological narcissism in suicide. Terry considered suicide to be not just a mental illness but a human process, a crisis in a life context, with a broad range of deeply subjective and interpersonal facets. Suicidality can take a



Dido's Suicide (c.1500) by Liberale de Verona.

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BPSI Reveals: Reception and Response



Achilles and Ajax Playing a Board Game (540-530 BCE) by Exekias.

wide range of pathways. He stressed that each patient is unique and each therapeutic dyad between a suicidal patient and an analyst/psychotherapist can unfold very differently. He specifically attended to the individual behind the suicidal ideations and urges, and he underscored the importance of the subjective internal pain (often composed of fear, anguish, rage, shame, and despair) that characterizes the individual struggling with suicide.

Elsa discussed the paper “Suicide Fantasy as a Life-Sustaining Recourse,” which highlights the different functions and subjective meanings of suicidal ideations. Some suicidal fantasies can serve as a prelude to intents and action, while other suicidal fantasies preclude actions toward suicide. She also described sudden suicides by narcissistic personalities where suicidal processes were for the first time connected to narcissistic self-regulation in the absence of depression. She went on to discuss a paper she co-authored with Terry, titled “Rumpelstiltskin Suicide,” which addresses the complexity of suicides driven by impulsivity, rage, or despair in the context of an imminent narcissistic self-collapse. The Rumpelstiltskin fairy tale illustrates a more unusual aspect of suicidality associated with narcissistic character pathology; namely, the extreme vulnerability behind a facade of competence, assertiveness, and interpersonal manipulative or exploitive omnipotence, as well as the devastating rage that can turn toward the self with immediate deadly consequences in moments of threat or defeat.

Ben Herbstman described Terry's personal qualities as well as his contributions to understanding how the body-self is featured in suicide. Terry shifted focus from aloneness as suicide enticement to emptiness as a driver of suicide vulnerability. In so doing, he pivoted toward the body. With this shift, he also turned his attention to what he saw as significant underlying problems in suicide: a loss of personal cohesion and a body-self disturbance. In deeply depressive and suicidal states, a patient's internalized self can split into a psychological sense of self, or "me," and a body representation of self. Terry believed that the "self" is the sum of these parts and that when individuals experience early traumas, their body representation can become split off and disavowed as a "not-me" part. The patient's body representation fuses with the intolerable, or hated, internalized object, and it is this fusion that makes it easier for the patient to act destructively against his own body. Ben also underscored Terry's contributions to suicide risk assessment, which went beyond a checklist of risk factors to recognize the individual in pain sitting across from us. Terry urged us to listen at the right frequency for signs of breakdown.

Conclusion

Over the course of the morning we were able to highlight some of Terry's outstanding contributions to the psychoanalytic understanding of suicidal patients. We were also able to listen to anecdotes from his life, shared by people who knew him (some for as many as 60 years), and learn of his influence on trainees just starting off in this field. These memories were a comfort to us in our loss.

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Self Disclosures and Unknown Passions

The Imperfect is Our Paradise: A Writing Coach Working With Patients

Dawn Skorczewski

Drawing Hands (1948) by M. C. Escher

She seems to hide in the white collar of her pink wool coat as she enters the office, head down, shoulders scrunched. A copy of Sylvia Plath poetry sticks out of her bag. Everything about her tells me she has not had a good night's sleep. She probably hasn't eaten either. I do not mention these things. Instead, I say a big hello and offer an equally big smile. "I read what you wrote," I say. "That image of the train is breathtaking."

Slowly she begins to fill with life. "I didn't spend much time on it, really. I've been so depressed."

I repeat what I said. "Breathtaking."

"Let's read it aloud?" I say. She nods and reads it aloud, slowly, with great passion. When she finishes, she smiles. I smile. Then she opens her notebook and reports that she's written 20 more pages this week. Would I like to hear some? I look down as I nod, feeling a tear come into my eye. How does this young woman not know that she sounds more like Sylvia Plath than Sylvia Plath? But then, did Sylvia Plath know?

The first time I meet him, he does not look at me at all. He wears a motorcycle jacket into the room, ignoring the coatrack. He is at least 10 years older than I, and he looks like he is 30. Also, he does not talk. He smells of motor oil. His boots are thick with mud. I have the impulse to tell him about a critic who ripped my favorite poet to shreds. By some wild coincidence, he also hates this critic. He quotes him from memory with a snarl. We laugh.

Soon he is bringing a dozen pages to each meeting. Only a few of his sentences make sense to me. As a whole, they exude an expert tone. I would say that they even show his keen intelligence. But what exactly is he saying? Whom is he talking to? He tells me he is talking to "the reader." I say that for today the reader is the person in front of him. What if that reader feels confused? He smiles.

I ask if we can go over a few lines together. He can tolerate that for about 10 minutes. Sometimes when I ask what something means, he says that it is supposed to be murky. That is deliberate. But why, I ask, should the reader keep reading, then, if the writer is trying to confuse her? He laughs. As he leaves, he mumbles, almost to himself, "That was fun."

Most of the time, their therapists refer these talented people to me. We start wherever I can find an opening, a connection. They are almost always writers, and therefore they are, like me, in love with words. They are captivated by sounds and stories. Usually they reveal themselves to be far more gifted than I, and I struggle to keep up. They are also more troubled. They rarely say much about their troubles. This is for the therapy. We have the craft to share, and the stories. We meet once a week or every other week. Like the good teacher I'd like to be, I always assign a task for next time and recap what I think we've done together in the session.

Sometimes the task involves a long project, like a dissertation, that just never seems to get done. The writer is stuck. The clock is ticking. Each dissertation, like each dissertation writer, is like a vessel. Each contains a story, which usually takes weeks or even months for us to unravel fully. Few of them get through the story without using the word "perfect." It should be perfect and therefore it cannot be at all. I tell them that dissertations need to be *not* perfect, and hundreds of hours will not help with the production of imperfection. I remind them of the Wallace Stevens line: "The imperfect is our paradise."¹ We read Anne Lamott's "Shitty First Drafts"² and Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones*.³

I give them basic rules: No editing a first draft. Write for a maximum of one hour a day. Set a timer; after that, you can read for two hours. And then? Move. Play. Talk to a friend. Eat. Walk. Imagine your dissertation chapters. Imagine them as a finished book. Imagine it in a smaller place: on a shelf. It does not have to be your entire life. It can be written in 15 minutes a day. Read that book.⁴

Their demons do not come right into the room, but linger at the threshold. They belong to a graduate student whose professor told her she was a sloppy thinker. They are embodied in the bully who ripped up a teenager's math test just after her teacher placed a red star on it. Or the mother who said her daughter might be able to win the school prize with her seventh-grade story about Rapunzel (she hadn't started it yet). A father's rage, a sister's envy, a mother's alcoholism—all there. We sometimes talk about these ghosts when they barge right in. I encourage them to write down everything the ghosts say, and then we read it aloud. "You are a fucking asshole and you cannot write. You should be dead." My position is that the ghost must leave.

"It is time for it to shut up," I say. I am trying as a teacher/coach to clear a space for freer expression amid the interfering voices. My struggling author remains skeptical when I tell him to take all these notes home and burn them. He reminds me that the noise gets louder at night.

I know that progress is halting at best, but I tell them to write in the morning if they can. What am I holding for them if not a place where creativity can flourish?

When students bring a new piece of writing, we read some of it aloud. We talk shop about individual lines and their effects. We compare these lines to others by their favorite writers and poets. Sometimes we read these writers aloud. Very often they recite lines that they know by heart. Or entire poems. Impressively long passages. When they finish, they look up and smile. If I can recall it, I may finish a line or two myself. We become a chorus and laugh together looking for the right word. We are allies in quest of the right words.

I try not to say too much in this unknown territory. "We're lucky. We get to explore your amazingly creative mind that lives on the pages." This is not exactly psychotherapy.

1 Stevens, W. (1977). "Parts of a World". In *The Poems of Our Climate* (p. 142). H. Bloom (Ed.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

2 Lamott, A. (1994). *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (pp. 21-27). New York, NY: First Anchor Books.

3 Goldberg, N. (1992). *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

4 Bolker, J. (1998). *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*. New York, NY: Henry Holt.

BPSI Reveals: Reception and Response

My goal depends entirely on the person. Sometimes they have dared to attempt a course, and they need to write papers and hand them in. Sometimes they say they only feel good when writing, so I try to help them find a project that will last a long time. How about a girl's version of a favorite book like *The Catcher in the Rye*? The world might want to read some *Letters to Assholes*? With others, more paralyzed, I urge taking 10 minutes a day to write. Use the timer. Find a concrete topic to explore. Write about blue. Write about duck feathers. Write about a freezer. The task is to start and keep going. Start. Keep going.⁵

Sometimes they are really down. They can't connect, and they didn't really feel like coming. "Let me read you this paragraph I found," I may reply. "I was reminded of it when you gave me that poem last week." Usually I try to read something that they wrote to show I have them in my mind as a writer. "I was thinking about this the other day," I will say. "I was thinking about your writing."

We talk about a line of a poem that I find hard to understand. What does Adrienne Rich mean when she says "We are a book of myths / in which our names / do not appear"⁶? We try to make sense of works that interest them. Who is Hamlet's ghost and what does he want? Why does Sylvia Plath call her father a Nazi? What does Faulkner's Darl mean when he says "in a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep"⁷? Does Alison Bechdel ever draw her mother as herself?

In my own psychoanalysis, I learned how ghosts whispered in my ear that working-class kids didn't make good professors. They told me that I did not know how to write a new syllabus. They said my students could do better with a different teacher. They told me to eat a few more brownies to help. When I succeeded, they said I was probably just faking it; one day they'd certainly realize I wasn't that smart. These are personal touchstones that help me with these pained people. No one can do it alone.⁸

We are not Emily Dickinson in a solitary dark room with a soul at "white heat."⁹ We are not Tennessee Williams with a bottle in one hand and a pen in the other.

Years ago, a beloved, now-deceased colleague named Andy Morrison held a poetry group at his house. Although he did not know me well, he invited me to join. A Sunday that would have felt empty was

5 Thanks to BPSI's Murray Schwartz for teaching me this.

6 Rich, A. (1973). Diving into the Wreck. In *Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971–1972* (pp. 22–24)

7 Faulkner, W. (1930). *As I Lay Dying*. New York, NY: Jonathan Cape.

8 Thanks to Lewis Kirshner and Stephanie Brody for excellent revision suggestions.

9 Emily Dickinson (1924). Untitled. *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Boston: Little, Brown.

DARE you see a soul at the white heat?

Then crouch within the door.

Red is the fire's common tint;

But when the vivid ore

Has sated flame's conditions,

Its quivering substance plays

Without a color but the light

Of unanointed blaze.

Least village boasts its blacksmith,

Whose anvil's even din

Stands symbol for the finer forge

That soundless tugs within,

Refining these impatient ores

With hammer and with blaze,

Until the designated light

Repudiate the forge.

suddenly full. I met one of my closest friends in that room where we listened to beautiful poems and talked to each other about them afterwards. When other analysts learned I was interested in literature, they invited me to their events, or they asked me what I thought of particular authors or themes. They didn't seem to mind that I made mistakes, said stupid things, or seemed nervous or not smart. They welcomed me into their community. They believed I was already there.

It is true that for me it was helpful to start in psychoanalysis as two people in a room, five days a week. But to really get better, the dialogue needs to expand. It needs to open and open onto other settings and caring people.

Doing this work brings me great joy: not just a personally reparative pleasure but the happiness of having the opportunity to return something to other struggling authors. When I finish a session, whatever was on my mind at the start is gone. In its place is a feeling of having worked hard to make meaning with someone. As Galway Kinnell writes it, "Only that. But that."

Prayer

Whatever happens. Whatever
What is is what
I want. Only that. But that.¹⁰

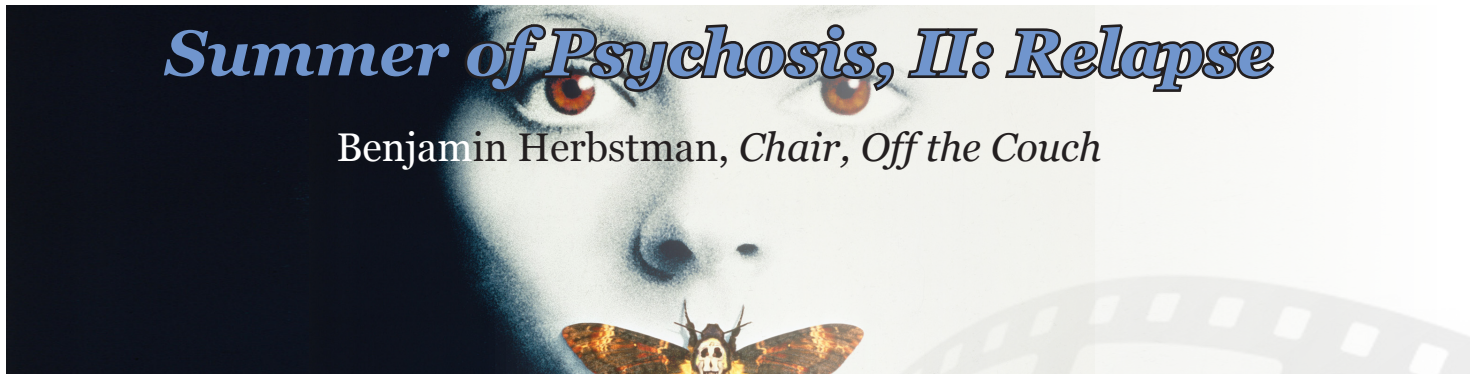
—Galway Kinnell

In January 2018, Dawn Skorczewski will become co-editor of *American Imago*.

10 Kinnell, G. (1995). Prayer. In *A New Selected Poems* (p. TK). S.M. Intrator and M. Scribner (Eds.). New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Summer of Psychosis, II: Relapse

Benjamin Herbstman, *Chair, Off the Couch*



“Off the Couch” (OTC) had quite an active summer and fall. After the Coolidge Corner Theatre’s successful “Summer of Psychosis” series in 2016, we decided to join the Coolidge by co-sponsoring its “Summer of Psychosis II: Relapse” this past July. The collaboration, led by BPSI administrative assistant Tony Viti, featured films with themes of madness, including *Black Swan*, *The Brood*, and *Silence of the Lambs*, and it provided us with the opportunity to reach a wider, younger audience. Given that all of the screenings began at midnight, our OTC discussants were not foolhardy or awake enough to try to host post-film discussions (2am film chat, anyone?). However, the late-night screening times did not deter Tony from setting up a table each night to talk about BPSI, give out brochures, add people to our mailing list, and answer questions about BPSI. In Tony’s own words,

It was clear the audience was quite different from our usual “Off the Couch” crowd—one was more likely to see theatergoers sporting dyed hair and piercings than wisps of gray and spectacles. Almost none of these attendees were familiar with BPSI at the start of the series, and many of them seemed to have a tentative apprehension regarding psychoanalysis. However, after a few films, audience members began to approach my table cautiously, like cats surveying a strange new backyard. I learned that many of them were completing degrees in medicine and social work, and they seemed excited to learn of BPSI’s proximity and purpose in regards to continuing education. We hope to see some of these same faces from this summer’s thrilling series on the third Tuesday of every month as “Off the Couch” continues to expand BPSI’s recognition and reputation.

Thank you, Tony, for all of your efforts to expand and promote OTC and BPSI. This fall has also been eventful, with Rodrigo Barahona giving an excellent discussion on the challenging and controversial film *Mother!*, directed by Darren Aronofsky, and Harold Bursztajn providing a thoughtful discussion of the critically acclaimed film *The Florida Project*, directed by Sean Baker. Finally, given the success of Judy Yanof’s discussion of *A Separation* at BPSI last March, we are working with the Coolidge to host a one-time screening of a classic or repertory film with psychoanalytic themes this spring. Thank you to all of the administrative staff—and Tony Viti and Lauren Lukason in particular, for their ongoing support of the program—and thanks, too, to all of the OTC discussants for their time and efforts. We look forward to an exciting winter and spring!

Off the Couch 2017-2018 Schedule

Tuesday —

September 19 -

MOTHER!

with Rodrigo Barahona, PsyaD

October 17 -

THE FLORIDA PROJECT

with Harold Bursztajn, MD

November 21 -

THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI

with Benjamin Herbstman, MD

December 19 -

with Howard Katz, MD

January 16 -

with Randall Paulsen, MD

February 20 -

with Mary Anderson, PhD

March 20 -

with Alistair McKnight, PsyaD

April 17 -

with Elizabeth Lunbeck, PhD

May 15 -

with Steven Cooper, PhD

June 19 -

tbd

Watch your email inbox and coolidge.org for each month's film and showtime information.

Miss an Off the Couch event?
Check out the BPSI Blog "Arts at BPSI"
(bpsi.org/category/arts-at-bpsi) for speakers' remarks from past Off the Couch events.

Launching Initiatives

Academic Affiliation & Research Division

James Barron is chairing a section of the APsaA Division of Public Education called Psychoanalysis in the Community. This group is sending a survey to all APsaA members about community activities. We urge all BPSI members to respond to this important survey.

The Psychoanalysis and the Community group is also forming subgroup task forces, one of which, Psychoanalytic Institute and Academic Cooperation, is chaired by our COMPASS coordinator, Murray Schwartz. Here is the description:

Psychoanalytic Institute and Academic Cooperation, chaired by Murray Schwartz

The purpose of the task force is to inform APsaA members of current forms of intellectual and institutional cooperation with academia, to inform academic institutions about contemporary psychoanalysis, and to promote additional cooperation in both directions. Our specific aims include the following:

- Enhancing the teaching of psychoanalytic concepts in colleges and universities and the teaching of contemporary academic interpretive practices in psychoanalytic institutions—i.e., to promote intellectual dialogues
- Developing courses in academia dealing with psychoanalytic history and contemporary psychoanalytic theories and practices
- Expanding teaching opportunities for psychoanalysts in academic institutions and teaching opportunities for psychoanalytically informed academic faculty in psychoanalytic institutions
- Enhancing awareness and knowledge of contemporary psychoanalysis among young generations of academic students

If you would like to join this task force, please contact Murray at murray.schwartz@gmail.com.

Conversations with People who Hate Me

Dylan Marron Talks the Talk and Walks the Walk

Michele Baker

My husband is a rabbi. He was raised Episcopalian and converted, so he is Jewish, but not *exactly* in the same way I am. He didn't have Jewish grandparents who paid him to eat the three cardinal food groups: milk, eggs, and bananas. He didn't go to Jewish summer camp. And he wasn't raised to *hate* Germans. So of course, as the chaplain at a Jewish Senior Life housing facility, he thought it was a perfectly lovely idea to invite the volunteer who works with him to our house for Sukkot. Her name is Johanna, and she comes from Germany.

“

Instantly
I felt better.

”

I was prepared to cringe at her accent and to judge her innocent do-gooder privilege. But she was lovely—polite, calm, helpful, and interested. And so very young—18 years old, just a couple years older than my high school-age son. I wasn't expecting to like her so much. As the evening spun toward the personal and intimate, and fueled by the liquid courage of a couple glasses of wine, I opened up a confessional conversation with Johanna. I told her how weird it was for me to have someone from Germany sitting in my yard and yet to feel so warmly toward her. I told her that I was raised to hate Germans and mistrust them. She listened attentively, silent for a while, and finally said, “Yes, I would probably feel the same way.”

Instantly I felt better. I felt unburdened of the meanness inside me, freed from the nasty thoughts, which intellectually I had long recognized as without merit, but which still held such hovering internal power. It was a powerful experience to be validated by a teenager. Through our interpersonal connection, Johanna and I had escaped from a stratified system in which there was good and evil, victim and perpetrator, into something more complex and nuanced. In his classic 1979 paper *On Projective Identification*, Thomas Ogden writes, projective identification refers to “a group of fantasies and accompanying object relations having to do with the ridding of the self of unwanted aspects of the self; the depositing of those unwanted ‘parts’ into another person; and finally, with the ‘recovery’ of a modified version of what was extruded” (Ogden, 1979, p. 357). Johanna had helped me to integrate my hateful feelings in this way.



Dylan Marron

In his video and podcast work, the social activist Dylan Marron cleverly satirizes our current reality. In his *Every Single Word* series, he edits popular movies down to the words spoken by people of color. The words spoken by nonwhite actors in the entire *Harry Potter* oeuvre of eight films take six minutes and 18 seconds to unspool. In his *Unboxing* videos, he satirizes the beloved YouTube staple of “unboxing” products

like tech items or high-end handbags, subbing in concepts such as “Privilege” and “Liberal Elitism”—and sparing himself least of all in the process. Some people seem to both hate his work and hate him, calling him, in online comments, “a piece of shit,” “condescending as fuck,” and a “flaming homo,” as well as other less kind and thoughtful invective.

In his newest project, *Conversations with People Who Hate Me*, Marron has lengthy, serious but cheerful chats with his critics. In a series of podcasts, which I experience as earnest, radical, and hilarious, he allows himself to calmly inhabit the role he has been painted into by his harshest critics. He phones the people who have excoriated him online and invites them to talk. He asks them why they hate him, but also what their lives are like and what they were thinking and feeling when they left their comments and diatribes.



Not surprisingly, on the phone the haters are more thoughtful and self-aware than their online personae. More than one admits to having been drunk when he trolled Marron. Still, they have the courage to stand by some of their criticism, and Marron takes the analytic approach of being interested in their perspective without voicing immediate or overt criticism. He accepts with curiosity their point of view and, at least temporarily, allows himself to be the hated *other*, just as the analyst allows herself to be responsive to her patients’ projections and transference experiences.

In “Episode 1: You’re a Piece of Sh*t,” Marron talks to Chris, a self-proclaimed enemy of “social justice warriors.” Chris, as it turns out, supports gay marriage, but finds “LGBTQ-whatevers” to be silly in demanding “special rights.” The two men continue talking about a range of topics, including Black Lives Matter, the training of police officers, and the definition of a “racist.” Chris is a fan of fossil fuels and thinks global warming is “fake news.” But he does support affirmative action and ends up conceding that he doesn’t know what it’s like to be black. Marron mildly interjects some facts, suggesting, for example, that the KKK has more members than “30 guys down south in pickup trucks,” as Chris has dismissively claimed. Marron seems to try to find a way to meet Chris where he is, proposing that the “undocumented immigrants” Chris disdains might be in search of the benefits of the “American way of life” that both Marron’s and Chris’s ancestors came to the United States to find. When Chris asks, “What rights do gays need that they don’t have now?,” Marron says, “Well, I can tell you...if you want to know.” He proceeds to answer, then refocuses on Chris, saying, “But I’m curious to hear what you think...” By the end of the half-hour episode Chris is telling Marron, with laughter in his voice, “I no longer hate you!”



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BPSI Explores: Dialogue and Discovery

Other podcasts follow a similar arc. Lee, a gay man from Georgia who commented that Marron is a “flaming queen,” turns out to have a compelling backstory filled with early violence and trauma that has led him to need to defend himself with the performance of manliness. Lee ends up conceding that Marron may have also developed—in his case as a liberal “bubble person”—as a product of his environment. He warmly invites Marron for a beer if he ever comes south, after asserting that he will *never* set foot in New York (where Marron lives).

“

He asks them
why they hate
him,...

”

Like an analyst, Marron becomes emotionally involved with his interlocutors. I imagine that his curiosity and his investment in the transformation of inchoate rage into art, as well as his sense that the hatred of his critics is transference and not personal, allow him to take the role of the analyst with the trolls (although he never uses the word “troll,” reminding us that there are people at the other end of the line). Perhaps, too, he believes in Freud’s advice that “one cannot overcome an enemy who is absent or not within range.” Marron seems to be catching bees with honey and his former critics seem happier by the end of these conversations, just as I was after having put innocent Johanna through her paces.

Harold Searles (quoted by Ogden in his aforementioned paper) wrote, “The patient develops ego-strengths... via identification with the therapist who can endure and integrate into his own larger self, the kind of subjective non-human part-object relatedness which the patient needs from him” (*Ibid.*, p. 366). Through the vehicle of the podcast, Marron has the opportunity to do analytic work, and to allow his critics—the people who hate what he represents to them—to repair or master old traumatic experiences: “The internalization of the metabolized projection offers the projector the potential for attaining new ways of handling a set of feelings that he could only wish to get rid of in the past. To the extent that the projection is successfully processed and reinternalized, genuine psychological growth has occurred” (*Ibid.*, p. 361). I had the lovely experience of getting to talk to Dylan Marron on the phone as I was writing this piece. Not surprisingly, his mother is a therapist. Marron told me that he “reconsiders everything when [he] hears someone’s story.... That is how we can understand people.” By creating a podcast from his conversations with people who once hated him, Marron is allowing his therapeutic work to reach a wider audience, and in his words, “make the world smaller”.

“

...but also
what their lives
are like...

”

Freud, S. (1914). Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis II). In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 12, pp. 145–156).

Ogden, T.H. (1979). On Projective Identification. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 60, 357–373.

Implicit Bias, Psychoanalysis, and Racial Bias

Ann Epstein



Dream Series No. 5 The Library (1967) by Jacob Lawrence

On June 10, BPSI held the 25th annual Child Care Conference. The title was *Implicit Bias: Differences Make a Difference: Promoting Racial Literacy in Early Education and Child Care Settings*. The two presenters, Walter Gilliam, PhD, and Howard Stevenson, PhD, spoke in Wilson Hall to a very full house of over 150 attendees.

The audience, a diverse group of early educators, psychotherapists, psychoanalysts, and program directors, experienced a lively program that included an exploration of current research on implicit bias, a moving participatory inquiry into how we are racially socialized and how we might learn to become more racially literate through practices of mindful attention and storytelling.

In carefully crafted presentations, the speakers created a remarkable experience for attendees, revealing intriguing crosscurrents between psychoanalysis and issues of social justice by exploring both current research into the unconscious, where implicit bias becomes embedded, and techniques for recognizing, managing, and defusing racially charged encounters.

Implicit Bias

Dr. Walter Gilliam, Director of the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale's Child Study Center, who has achieved much recognition for his recently published studies on implicit bias in preschool teachers, began with an introduction to the topic of preschool expulsions in the United States. Preschool expulsion rates are surprisingly high, and black boys are 3.6 times more likely to be expelled

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BPSI Explores: Dialogue and Discovery

than white boys. Using research, detailed anecdotes, teacher interviews, and videos, Dr. Gilliam helped us understand how larger societal forces can distort our perceptions of a child's behavior and lead to damaging and unjust outcomes. For example, black boys are commonly perceived as four years older than their actual age. He carefully described what laid the groundwork for his research, and in the process the audience members were able to experience a powerful realization of how deeply implicit bias can affect us all.

Dr. Gilliam's painstakingly crafted research into implicit bias tracks and measures eye movement and compares it with teachers' conscious explanations of their behaviors and perceptions. Asked to view a film of preschoolers that actually showed no incidents of problematic behaviors, teachers spent more time watching black children than white children. Intriguingly, though not surprisingly, his research shows the complexity of implicit bias. It is neither two-dimensional nor always predictable: Results differed depending on the match between the race of the teacher and that of the child, and on the nature of the teacher's knowledge about the child's family background. In other research that holds great importance for our community at BPSI, Dr. Gilliam suggests that the availability of mental health consultation for teachers, and whether it is on-site or off-site, affects the rate of expulsions. In other words, what appears to be a problem of a preschool child's behavior has, upon closer study, little or nothing to do with the child, but in fact has more to do with teacher biases and how we affect teacher perceptions.

Racial Literacy

The second part of the morning featured a presentation by Dr. Howard Stevenson, Professor of Urban Education and Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and former Chair of the Applied Psychology and Human Development Division in the university's Graduate School of Education. Dr. Stevenson took us on a moving personal journey through his own childhood and adult life to demonstrate storytelling's power not only to break down barriers between people, but also to help people understand, manage, and recast the impact of racial encounters in their lives.

He prepared the audience by telling us that he was going to ask us to discuss with the person sitting next to us an episode from childhood in which we heard a message about race or difference. First, though, he offered to tell us a piece of his own story. With disarming openness and gentleness, he told a rapt audience about his early life in southern Delaware. He described with humor the differences in personality and culture between his African American father, who was from southern Delaware, and his African American mother, who was from North Philadelphia, and how these differences



Schomburg Library (1985) by Jacob Lawrence

affected the way they each dealt with racial injustice. He traversed levels of complexity, moving from broad cultural differences to the intricate interpersonal and intrapsychic spheres. For example, in one anecdote he described childhood grocery-shopping trips with his mother, during which he and his brother, Bryan (who later became a civil rights lawyer), sat in the grocery cart. Knowing that their mother was likely to respond to a racial insult from the butcher or the checkout clerk with vigor, he and his brother tried mightily to distract her by loudly doing math problems. Here we can see the impact of the racial encounter not only on the parent but on the developing child and on the family system.

After sharing his own stories, Dr. Stevenson gave the audience five minutes to share their stories with one another. The auditorium was quickly abuzz, and many were surprised and moved by the stories they told and heard. Dr. Stevenson's intimate and personal story had dispelled much of the tension and reticence that might normally inhibit such an exercise. He had demonstrated the point he was lecturing about: Racial encounters are stressful in unique ways, and we need to locate that stress, acknowledge it, and learn to regulate it in order to make meaning and "recast" the encounters in more effective ways. In his words, racial literacy "is not about blaming others or myself, but about how well I can read, recast, and resolve a racial conflict (and not run away)."

Before the morning ended, Dr. Stevenson took us on another journey. He played us a recording of an extraordinary conversation he had with his young son just after Trayvon Martin was shot and killed. As he explained to the audience, the conversation unfolded as his son was watching the TV news coverage of the event. At some point in their discussion, Dr. Stevenson thought to record it, perhaps in some effort to steady himself during this difficult event. As his son asks him heartbreaking questions about how this could have happened, Dr. Stevenson tries to reassure, protect, and instruct his son. Both son and father are deeply upset, and Dr. Stevenson told the audience that even he, an expert and a leader in the field, had difficulty in that moment regulating his own reactions and remaining mindful.

Psychoanalysis and Social Justice

As psychoanalysts, we can sometimes forget that we are not the only people who think psychoanalytically, and that psychoanalytic principles can be of great use outside the consulting room. Using an interdisciplinary lens, the conference explored the working of the unconscious, the use of narrative storytelling to create meaning, the importance of recognizing the other as well as of oneself, and the role of mindfulness in self and mutual regulation. The Child Care Conference strives to bring the worlds of psychoanalysis and child development closer to the worlds of early education and care. It is equally important that we bring the social world into psychoanalysis, in order to understand ourselves and our patients, not only at the level of the individual and the family, but also at the level of society.



Migration Series No. 58 (1940-1941) by Jacob Lawrence

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)