



#### Are you listening?

In these times of conflict and fear, *The Lord of the Rings* has become a strangely comforting obsession: The forces of dark evil, the stunning moments that turn the tide, the women who prove their authority, the innocent folk who discover personal power. The trilogy unfolds as a kind of arc where conscious awareness and activism painfully emerge from the complacency of everyday life.

Though I read the Tolkien books as a teenager, it is the Peter Jackson film version that enthralls me now. In *The Two Towers*, the second part of the trilogy, Jackson depicts the military industrial complex that Tolkien conceived: a breeding factory where the natural resources of the planet are ravaged in a war to destroy the world of men. In a degraded landscape, an army of Orc creatures have been cloned to produce weapons of mass destruction and to fulfill the orders of a powerful authoritarian, Saruman. Tolkien invents an unlikely ally, the anthropomorphic Treebeard, who speaks for the great forests of Middle Earth. Called an Ent, Treebeard is a giant tree that can think, talk, sing, and travel. When it is clear that the great resources of the Earth will be harvested to extinction, Treebeard enlists an offense against Saruman. Until this moment, humans have known little of the world of the forest. But the Ents have an unexpected power—they are capable of sharing knowledge, creating invisible defensive strategies, and communicating with a reach that is farther than the length of their branches. The dormant power of the Ents is unleashed and Saruman reels. The death crucible is toppled and, for a time, destruction slows.

Tolkien was prescient. That trees are capable of mobilizing a strategy is no fantasy. In recent years, botanists, arborists, and scientists tell us that trees have a unique communication network that support their own survival and, like a finely tuned gauge, reveal the distress of the Earth in their very being. The interdependency between trees and every living creature defines their evolutionary purpose: To create a survival horticulture and maintain a legacy of value, even in Death.

Richard Power's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Overstory*, also describes a magical world where a Dickensian set of individual stories intertwine, much like the roots of an ancient forest. At the heart of *The Overstory* is the discovery of harmony: a deep forest world, where communities of extraordinary competence and fortitude function in the service of one, and of many. Powers reveals what the trees know, and like Tolkien, hears their music. In this literary form of empathic immersion, Powers writes the reader into detailed character studies of people, and of the trees that have been present prior to human existence. His human characters are mesmerized and galvanized as they enter into a deep

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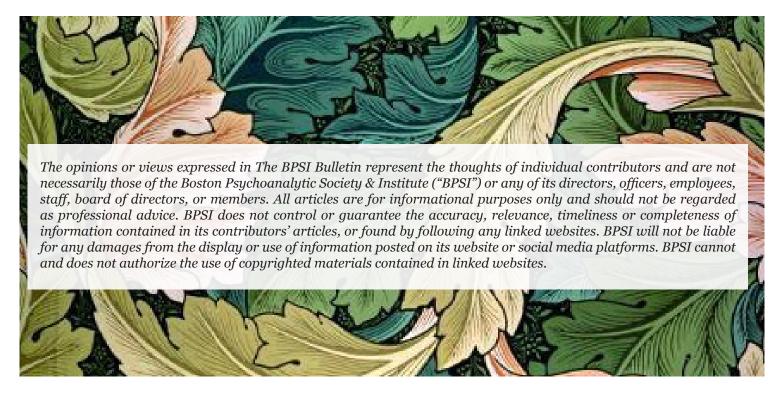
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Front cover image: Psyche Opening the Golden Box by John William Waterhouse (1903)



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comprehension of the leaf bearers and the environment. In describing their endurance and their greed, Powers details the uniquely human capacity to foreclose long-term needs in the service of short-term gratification, and also how dormant awareness can transform into a heroic, and sometimes fruitless, call to action—a rejection of indifference and disavowal.

We are becoming familiar with such activism. Some of it comes from young people who have been pressed into precocious maturity and have put aside the joyful exuberance of youth to secure the planet. They warn us that when the trees disappear, so will we—that there can be no reversal. For these warriors, every moment is urgent and there is no hesitation. They challenge us to confront and acknowledge our denial—to reflect on the omnipotence that motivates us to exhaust all that we depend on for our existence. It is an ironic feature of our arrogance—we seem determined to consent to the suicide of our own species. This is another form of denial that works to obscure the dread of loss.

Activists, in fiction and in the world of 2019, are animated by reality. They know we are in a battle to save the future. But this cause cannot be won with foot soldiers alone. Ultimately, we must recognize what we will all lose if we do not share the mission, if we fail to listen to the fateful tree song that the activists can so easily hear.

Stephanie Brody, BPSI Bulletin Editor stephanie\_brody@hms.harvard.edu



#### 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.

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## BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives



#### Letter from the President

It's 2019 and BPSI is rocking!

Indulge me as I share with you here my overarching goals as President for the next two years. I think BPSI has never been a better organization and I want to pay tribute to the recent members who got us here.

We find ourselves amidst a treatment world of two to three letter acronyms (e.g. ACT, CBT, DBT, MI) that aim for the quickest therapeutic hit. I have finally begun to feel like a Luddite as I witness the rollout of online, on demand therapy solutions in the form of "Amazon Turk" video therapists. Though I regularly liaison with CBT, DBT, and other adjunctive behavioral-based therapists, and see their increasing presence in the context of treatment options, I do not despair. The race to reduce the amount of personalized contact patients have with the mental health system, and the increasing anonymity of experience via the online world, is a golden opportunity for psychoanalysis to stand out as a clear alternative. Psychodynamic interventions remain personalized approaches, conducted by skilled clinicians who value the power of connection. I believe psychodynamic therapy and psychoanalysis will remain uniquely needed and valued as a counterweight to industrialized treatment options. BPSI is poised and experienced to train clinicians to deliver this valued alternative. I would argue that BPSI is becoming increasingly broad-minded around education for trainees and members alike, excelling at both teaching core psychoanalytic approaches as well as integrating this approach with newer treatment options and diverse treatment settings.

Here's what I find unique about the BPSI experience:

- **Generativity**. We have a longstanding culture of intergenerational support and caring. Teachers, supervisors, and mentors give hundreds of hours of time to bring candidates and students into the dynamic "fold"—a process that demands not just the exchange of dry intellectual concepts, but a more personalized transmission of analytic wisdom and instruction on ways to maintain emotional steadiness under the immense emotional pressures of the treatment relationship.
- **Quietly confident intellectual leadership**. We have an almost one-hundred-year history in the vanguard of analytic thinking, with a relatively recent (at least several decades long) robust tradition of openness and eclecticism. Our programs' increasing acknowledgement of its social surroundings, embracing issues of race, gender, sexual preference, to name a few areas, demonstrates a deep willingness to remain flexible and self-observant in what we do.
- We have what I would call a **deep-seated clinical support network**. So many of our members have decades of experience or specialized expertise, and I have seen regular examples of generous assistance, peer consultations, or donated time to help a member or trainee with a clinical quandary.
- There is an inspiring level of **volunteer spirit** at BPSI. Members and trainees step up when asked to help educational and outreach efforts in ways that continually impress me.



During my eight years in BPSI governance, I have witnessed our increasing efficiency in running our programs, managing our resources, eliciting member feedback, modernizing communication, and freeing up volunteer time. My own inclination is that this has come from our willingness to listen to a broader set of voices, including consultations from outside our organization, the expertise of community Board members, and the expansion of our internal committee roles that include a larger subset of the membership—particularly with trainees serving on most committees.

For other examples of our increasing professionalism, you can look to how our larger programs are implemented. We are using the Web and social media to advertise. Information on registrants and feedback on program quality is analyzed so we can see who is interested in what we offer and why. We have a robust Greeters Program to introduce new BPSI participants to information about other members of the community and our program options. The New Members Committee has expanded and clarified categories of membership so that we can be welcoming to the public as well as those who have completed the Fellowship, but would still enjoy BPSI contact. The Web Committee and staff have implemented a more seamless "user experience" to our website, online registration for programs, and a careful waiting list procedure. All the while, BPSI's Strategic Plan Working Group is reviewing membership-polled priorities, our governance structure, and evaluation of our financial health with outside consultants.

Ultimately, BPSI is a caring organization. I am glad to see BPSI serve as a beacon when we gather to help process community stresses, as we did for the heartbreaking suicide of a candidate. We have strengthened our organized "in-reach" to advanced candidates and students, striving to keep them connected. Our graduation party is our most well attended social event, as we come together to honor and hear about the personal growth of our trainees. Some of you may have noted our first ever celebration of recent retirees, which we hope will become an annual event. Simply put, there are transcendent experiences that only community involvement can bring, and BPSI can play a strong role in catalyzing these types of experiences.

In my new role as President, I take my inspiration from prior leaders who led BPSI through challenging times so that we could reach this new pinnacle of intellectual openness, professionalism, and caring that makes our organization so unique. I can see the arc of these values in leaders like **Gerry Adler**, who, eager to bring in outside voices, formed The Alliance, as well as the Gender and Sexuality Committee. **Randy Paulsen** brought together disparate voices within BPSI during a time of "crisis." The steadiness of **Howard Katz** saw us through our potentially cataclysmic location change. **Ann Katz** helped our governance changes become bylaws, keeping our focus on quality training despite all the distractions during the move. **Bernard Edelstein**, seemingly omnipresent in his availability to all corners of membership, welcomed and helped integrate members of PINE, and in so doing, emphasized generosity of spirit as a BPSI ideal. I am also thankful for **Jim Walton**, who repeatedly reminded us of the importance of BPSI as professional home.

**Julie Watts** requires a special dose of gratitude. I have called Julie the epitome of grace. In her non-self-aggrandizing yet powerful way, she led us through difficult soul searching and grieving last year. I have witnessed her behind the scenes decision-making and relentless encouragement of others. I continue to try to internalize

## BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives



Julie's way of community-building and inspiring others through her thoughtfulness.

And, finally, we get to **Catherine Kimble** and the staff, whose daily acts of dedication and commitment, humble me. You know this implicitly: Catherine Kimble is BPSI's human avatar. With deep institutional knowledge and an expansive vision, Catherine works tirelessly to bring people together and make our programs and teaching goals a reality. It is difficult to underestimate how professionally **Carole Nathan**, **Drew Brydon**, **Lauren Lukason**, **Karen Smolens**, and **Jessica Hardin** make BPSI flow, as if by magic. They undergird everything that we do, and make sacrifices of time and energy that most of us don't see or realize.

For my Presidency, I have established two additional goals for even more improvement. The first is "inclusiveness." I would like to solicit involvement from all member categories and trainees. We should improve the ways BPSI functions as an analytic home, making sure we pay attention to the needs of each "generation" within BPSI. Even a straightforward idea like the relatively recent and popular BPSI referral listserve helps bring the community together and marshal our talent pool. I believe we can interlink ourselves in even more ways.

The second is what I call "effective outreach." Outreach has been steadily improving at BPSI. To wit, our PiP programs are thriving. The collaboration with Emerson College to provide teaching for their interdisciplinary minor in psychoanalysis now has a sizeable queue of BPSI instructors and proposed courses. Our *Exploration in Mind* courses, open to members of the community, are expanding. As I have often said, this outreach provides not just an awareness of our training programs, but bolsters the name recognition of psychoanalytic ideas in other institutions, and creates lifelong "friends of psychoanalysis" outside of our field. That being said, outreach needs to be targeted and efficient with resources. The new BPSI partnership with the Center for Early Relationship Support at Jewish Family & Children's Service allows our trainees and members to gain exposure to parent-

infant study expertise while at the same time connecting us with another organization. This is good model for future reciprocally beneficial relationships outside ofthe organization.

Thanks for entrusting me with helping make BPSI's future even brighter It's inspiring—we've come a long way.

Dan Mollod, President mollod@me.com (617) 232-7300

#### **Announcing our new Community Partnership!**





We are very pleased to announce BPSI's first ever community partnership with the Center for <u>Early Relationship Support®</u> (CERS) at Jewish Family & Children's Service (JF&CS). CERS is an example of an agency that applies psychoanalytic principles at the community level to effect change and support healthy relationships. This "Partnership" will create unique opportunities for members of both organizations as well as increased visibility for BPSI and CERS as models for psychoanalytically informed services in the community.

Visit <a href="https://conta.cc/2Zwbxv0">https://conta.cc/2Zwbxv0</a> for more information.



#### **Library Committee Projects**

The Library Committee members oversee many important research projects and video recordings. The library helps produce three video series (all are posted in the Library Corner of the BPSI Blog):



Dan Buie, MD

The Voice of Experience series presents conversations with our senior members. Don't miss its newest release—an interview with Dan Buie. This program has also featured Ana-Maria Rizzuto, Arnold Modell, and Malkah Notman.

**Meet the Author** programs feature conversations with BPSI authors. The latest in this series is Lewis Kirshner's interview about *Intersubjectivity in* 

Psychoanalysis: A Model for Theory and Practice (Routledge, 2017). Previous webcasts showed

interviews with Stephanie Brody, the author of *Entering* Night Country: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Loss and Resilience (Routledge, 2015), Ilonka Venier Alexander, the author of The Life and Times of Franz Alexander: From Budapest To California (Karnac, 2015), and Paul Ornstein discussing his life in his memoir, Looking Back: Memoir of a **Psychoanalyst** (Plunkett Lake Press, 2015).



Lewis Kirshner, MD

#### BPSI Works: Dreams and Objectives

The Kravitz Award Videos spotlight recipients of the Kravitz Award for Community Action and Humanitarian Contributions. This award is given annually to BPSI members who have provided psychoanalytically-informed service to our broader community. Currently in production is Judy Yanof's interview, recorded in the library on March 22, 2019. Judy received the award in 2012 for her consultative work with disadvantaged children and families. Previously recorded for this series was an interview with Bennett Simon and



Judith Yanof, MD

Roberta Apfel about their work with children of war. They received the Kravitz award in 2009.



Bennett Simon, MD

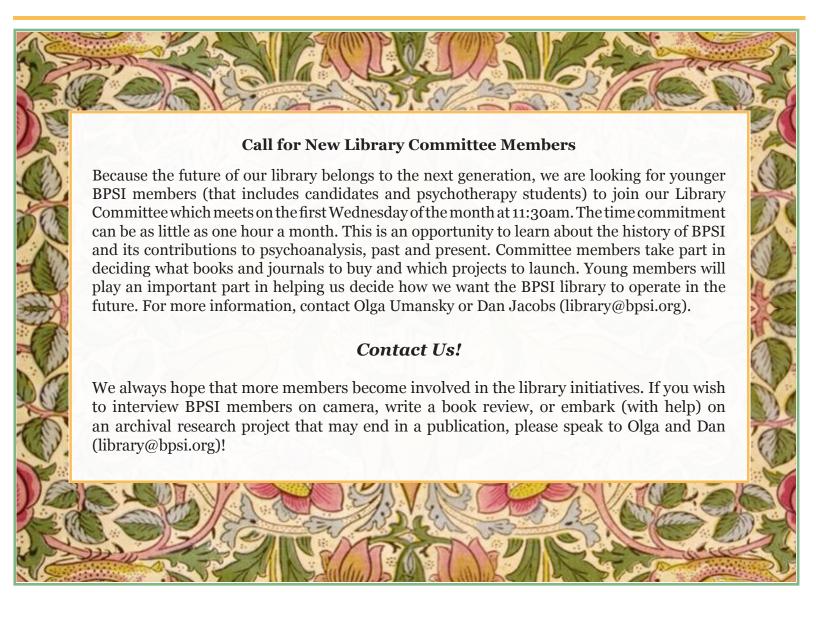
Roberta Apfel, MD

#### **Library Archives**

Several members have recently used our archives for their research. Shari Thurer is writing about the history of homophobia at BPSI and other psychoanalytic societies. Malkah Notman is researching lives of early female members and candidates. John Martin-Joy and Elizabeth Lunbeck utilized the Walter Langer papers for their upcoming publications and presentations. In addition to local usage, BPSI Archives continue to attract researchers worldwide. Aurelia Young, the daughter of Oscar Nemon (sculptor of Freud and Churchill) visited BPSI on March 29th, sharing

photographs, memories, and stories about Nemon's work for BPSI in 1963. Her book Finding Nemon: The Extraordinary Life of the Outsider Who Sculpted the Famous (Peter Owen Publishers, 2018) is available in the library.





#### **Kravitz Award** continued from page 32

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# FREE ASSOCIATION When the Dream World Becomes the Real World James P. Frosch

The unsophisticated waking judgement of someone who has just woken from sleep assumes that his dreams, even if they did not themselves come from another world, had at all events carried him off into another world.

— Freud

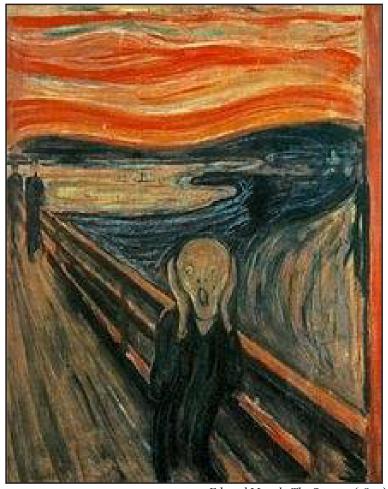
I have a recurrent fantasy. I'm asleep. I wake up in a fearful sweat. I nudge my wife and say, "I had this horrible nightmare! I dreamt that Donald Trump was President!" She would say, "Go back to sleep, it's just a dream." Relieved and reassured about the difference between waking reality and dream reality, I would fall back asleep. The only problem is, Donald Trump is President in waking reality and we are living in a dream world, a world governed by the rules of the dream. Over a century ago, Sigmund Freud wrote about differences between the logic of waking reality, which he called secondary process, and the a-logic of the dream, which he called primary process. In the dream, logical contradictions coexist and there are no constraints of linear time, individual identity (people can be themselves but also other people at the same time), or evidence-based truth. Lewis Carroll also knew something about the dream world. As Alice discovered in the world of her Wonderland, up is down and down is up. "Sentence first—verdict afterwards [...] Off with their heads," says the Queen of Hearts, who perhaps was Donald Trump in one of his former reincarnations. To illustrate dream logic, Freud retells the joke about the man who borrowed a teapot from his neighbor. When the neighbor later sees it on his doorstep, the teapot has a crack in it. He confronts the borrower, who denies everything. He says, "First of all, I never borrowed the teapot. Second, it had that crack when I borrowed it. And finally, I returned it in perfect condition." Sounds like a tweet from you know who.

It's one thing to have a troubling dream, where the usual rules of law and logic don't apply. It's another to be living in a dream-like reality. As Kafka taught us, it's one thing to dream one is a cockroach (I've had those dreams) but quite another to wake up and discover that one *is* a cockroach (hasn't happened to me yet, but the way things are going, it might!). There are conditions of living where waking life starts to resemble a dream, and these situations are usually frightening states of free-fall in which one cannot have a sense of security, predictability, or consensual truth. We are sadly familiar with these horrible traumatic situations. Brutal wars, holocausts, and Orwellian dictatorships which have the means to dictate truth, provide ongoing examples of such realities.

The dream state resembles a psychotic state, in which the usual function of reality testing is set aside. States of psychosis are generally terrifying states of vulnerability to those in the midst of them. Do not be misled

by the occasional aggressiveness and paranoia of the person in the grip of a psychotic state. However manifestly threatening, he or she is feeling terrified and unable to count on anything. Physical objects might start moving on their own, or transform into human form, and other human beings are not to be trusted because they might be possessed, as in a horror film. Someone or something else might possess one's self, in which case, one would lose his or her sense of identity. Above all, bonds of trust between human beings, which are the foundation for a sense of security and reality, cannot be counted on.

It is not as if there are no disputes in the world of secondary process about what is real and what isn't. The perception of reality is endlessly subjective. But, optimally, these disputes are not settled by who has the most power, but rather by complex internal and external negotiations in the context of good faith relationships, which include not only relationships with loved ones, but also relationships with fellow members of one's society and with one's government. Reality testing is what mental health practitioners call



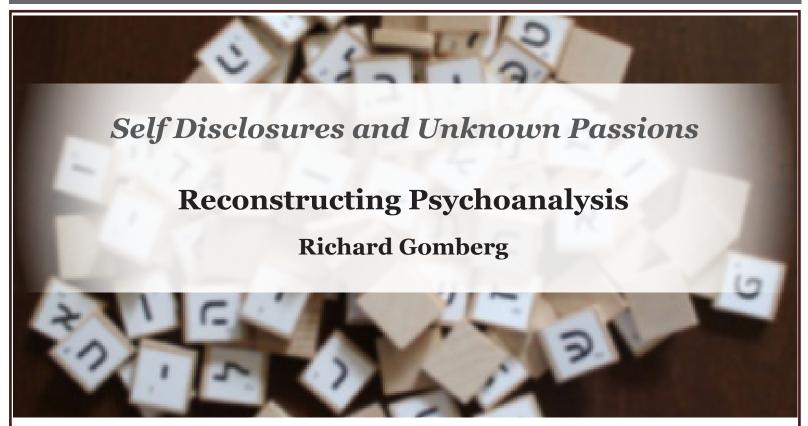
Edvard Munch, The Scream (1893)

the internal negotiations within an individual. The external negotiations on a societal level are known as the rule of law, where the truth is determined through consensus and evidential procedure, and not, for example, through trial by ordeal or by who has the most power, as in *Game of Thrones*. When these conventions, based on secondary process, break down, no one is safe. I watched our President say in a news conference, "I know Matthew Whitaker." At a subsequent news conference, he said, "I don't know Mathew Whitaker." He never borrowed the teapot and the teapot had a crack in it when he borrowed it. Up is down.

Thankfully, we do wake up from dreams, and even nightmarish psychotic states can pass, with or without professional help. Hopefully, we will awake from the nightmare of Donald Trump and his notions of reality. But if we do, unlike in the case of the dream, it will be through our own efforts to restore the rules and conventions of waking life. Even as he seems increasingly encircled, Trump and his minions remain a threat to our sense of reality. As the Framers of our Constitution understood, unchecked power in anybody tends toward abuse sooner or later. We cannot count only on Robert Mueller. We all have to wake up ourselves and each other.

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**M**ost of us have the experience of reading formative psychoanalytic writers from any era, and recognizing something true, immediate, and contemporary in their ideas. What a pleasure it is to read a paper that helps us understand a patient in a new way and shows us how to intervene, facilitating growth and change. But then, sometimes in the same paper, we may be hurt or disappointed by reading something that is deeply offensive and based on prejudice. Sometimes the objectionable concept is claimed to be central to the writer's theory. How can we best think about this?

I have found that importing an approach from another tradition, Reconstructionist Judaism, has helped me make sense of my relationship to the psychoanalytic literature. I came to this approach reluctantly. I am a committed atheist from a culturally Jewish family that actively rejected formal affiliation with any religious community. When my wife, Diana, wanted to join a synagogue 20 years ago, I grudgingly went along, primarily as a way to maintain marital harmony. Diana and I visited a number of local temples to see what they were like and to see whether I could tolerate any of them (and whether they could tolerate me!). Diana was committed to joining a community that would not discriminate against gay or intermarried couples (in my naivete and distance from organized religion, I didn't even know this was an issue). We found a Reconstructionist synagogue which clearly was tolerant in ways that worked for both of us. I had never heard of Reconstructionism, as is probably true for many of you reading this. Reconstructionism has many important qualities and attitudes that help define it, but I believe that one of its central approaches, expressed in the name of the movement, is helpful to me as I try to think about my relationship to psychoanalysis.

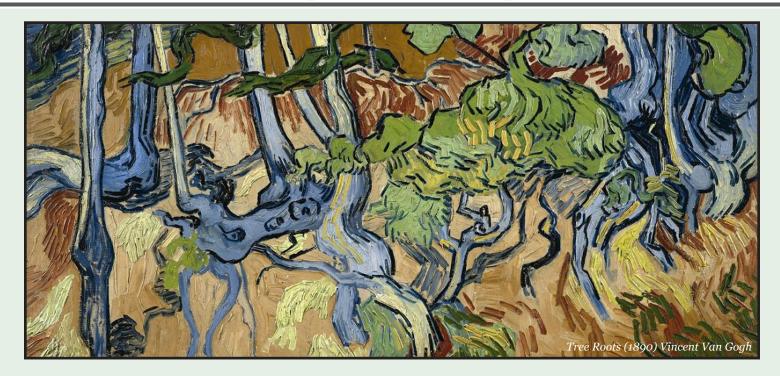
**K**econstructionism believes that Judaism's teachings are of deep value, even if they are not divine revelation. The rituals and texts embody important lessons. Every generation can benefit by deeply and respectfully engaging with the foundational texts and customs, with the expectation that these traditions are attempting

to communicate some wisdom. But at the same time, there is not a blind devotion to believing the texts literally, and there is no expectation of fealty to them. Instead, there is an active attempt to understand what is of value in this belief system: What does it attempt to explain? In what ways might it be useful? If something seems wrong or misguided, can we try to understand why it seemed right at one time? Then we can make our own judgment about whether to reject it or "reconstruct" it. There is an ongoing need to make traditions relevant to us in the modern age. This leads to a flexibility in how rituals are followed. The "letter of the law" is not viewed as crucial, but we strive to maintain the spirit of the tradition. At times, concepts which were once considered to be vitally important (Jews as "the chosen people," or rules about the role of women) can be completely rejected without undermining the richness or recognizability of the religion. Other ideas can be integrated into a modern practice in a way that values but updates them. For example, one day a week may be set aside for rest, relaxation, self-reflection, or some other practice, but many of the rules about Shabbat can be put aside as not facilitating their original purpose. Thus, we are constantly reconstructing our theory and our practice.

**P**sychoanalysis is not a religion, but I have come to believe that these attitudes from Reconstructionism apply to psychoanalysis and clarify how I approach both our foundational texts and our clinical traditions. Every psychoanalytic writer, from Freud to the present, is struggling to share something important that they have learned in their work. Great psychoanalytic thinkers attempt to convey ideas that helped them to successfully treat their patients. They are trying to communicate something of value in their writing. It is imperative for us to take them seriously, to try to understand them in their own terms, and to discover what they have learned. At the same time, they should not be taken as an eternal truth. Their theories need to be engaged with, and we must always take what is of value in them and "reconstruct" it to make it relevant for our current psychoanalytic world. Some parts of their writing, sometimes even concepts that they believed were central to their approach, may not have stood the test of time. But before we discard them completely, it is important for us to make sure we deeply understand why they thought they were worthwhile, and make sure we can address their concerns in some other way. Once that work is done, we may reject some ideas, or "reconstruct" them in a new way, ever striving to improve our theories and technique.

I think this attitude is especially important to our community at present. Right now, maybe partly in reaction to the age of Trump, I experience psychoanalysis both at BPSI and nationally, as deeply searching and reflecting, particularly re-evaluating issues around diversity and inclusion. Issues of race, gender, and sexuality seemed to be especially hot topics at the APsaA Winter Meetings in February. And these topics and others are currently being wrestled with at all levels of BPSI. Some of our foundational texts have content that is clearly offensive to many of us from a contemporary perspective. And yet, at the same time, these writings may have immense value and a great deal to teach us. These psychoanalytic traditions are not only of historical interest, and are not only important as a helpful background to understanding supposedly more correct current theories. The texts demand our respect, our engagement with them, and an authentic attempt to understand what they are teaching us. But then, as a community and individually, we need to reconstruct the ideas into our own psychoanalysis. We must blend the traditions with new concepts and new information, sometimes rejecting parts, to ensure that psychoanalysis can continue to evolve and grow, while not losing what is best from its past. Reconstructionism sees Judaism as a civilization that each generation must actively engage with in order to produce new ideas and contribute to its ongoing evolution. We should expect no less from psychoanalysis.

This is why I now see myself as a Reconstructionist Psychoanalyst.



# Psychoanalysis, Climate Justice, and Nature Jack Foehl

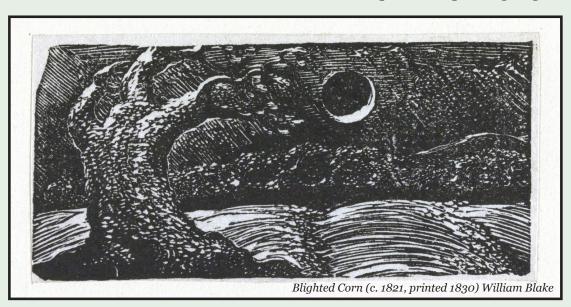
#### Three Improbable Activists

**Greta Thunberg** is a sixteen-year-old Swedish climate activist with a self-described Asperger's diagnosis and a will of steel. In a now widely viewed and acclaimed TED Talk (2018), she described being eight years old and first hearing about global warming, "something humans have created by our way of living." She was told to turn off lights and recycle to save resources. But, she thought, if it were true that humans were changing the Earth's climate, if this was already having devastating consequences, we wouldn't be talking about anything else. Everything on TV, radio, newspaper headlines, would be this catastrophe and nothing else, just "as if there was a world war going on." But, "no one ever talk[s] about it." If burning fossil fuels was indeed so devastating and threatened our very existence, "Why were there no restrictions? Why wasn't it made illegal?"

Greta said that this was just "too unreal" for her. At age eleven, she fell into depression; she stopped talking and eating. Along with Asperger syndrome and OCD, she was diagnosed with selective mutism. "I only speak when I think it's necessary—now is one of those moments." Greta went on to describe how people on the spectrum like her tend to see things in black and white. "We aren't very good at lying and don't enjoy participating in this social game that the rest of you seem so fond of." From her perspective, "in many ways […] we autistic are the normal ones and the rest of the people are pretty strange." Strange because everyone claims that climate change is an existential threat and we all just carry on like before. For her, "if emissions have to stop, just stop them. There are no gray areas when it comes to survival. Either we go on as a civilization or we don't. We have to change."

Greta then continued with an incontrovertible array of statistics that are indeed alarming. Should global emissions continue at their current rate, the world will be eight degrees warmer in 2100 than it is today. The average surface temperature has already increased 1.62 degrees since the late nineteenth century, with most of that increase occurring in the past 35 years. This, along with warmer oceans, shrinking ice sheets, and rising sea levels are responsible for devastating increases in severe weather including droughts, intense storms, floods, and wildfires. We have all been touched by these changes, we all know someone or at least know of someone who has suffered losses due to these changes. Greta noted that we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction since the dawn of time, with up to 200 species going

extinct every day, a rate many thousand times higher than normal. We use 100 million barrels of oil daily, and vet even climatologists continue to fly to their "People conferences. keep doing what they do because the vast majority doesn't have a clue about the actual consequence [...] No one is acting as if we were in a crisis."



**Bruno Latour** is another surprising climate activist. For years he built a solid ground of work challenging the legitimacy of scientific authority and truth. He is considered one of the most illustrious philosophers of the post-modern age, having developed a new discipline of science and technology studies. Over the course of many decades, Latour (1993, 2005, 2013) has shown how scientific facts are the product of the all-too-human procedures used to "discover" them. He showed how facts (the existence of entities like electrons, quarks, or muons) are networked. Rather than existing in a manner separate from our practices, they require the interweaving of the very practices used to investigate them to remain intelligible. If this network fragments, so too does the veracity of the facts within which they were developed.

But when his social constructivist arguments began to be used by climate-change skeptics to question the legitimacy of the scientific evidence supporting global warming, Latour developed a new dimension of his understanding. In this era of "post-truth," his thesis of the scientific production of fact provides a framework for examining current practices in which facts are being dismantled by processes that question long held assumptions about living in a common world of nature. Current political and social movements challenge the assumption that we share a common frame of reference regarding basic "facts" about the natural world. This was always an issue in certain circles, as seen in the debates about evolution or immunization or flat-earthers or a host of other concerns. But the controversy has come center stage in a way that has begun to unravel the basic fabric of accepted truth; the Latourian "network" that holds together any received wisdom of a common world has fallen apart. We no longer

live in a world bound by the same network of truths. From Latour's perspective, facts remain robust only when supported by a common overarching frame of reference within which they remain relevant. When we lose what holds us in common—when communities fracture to the extent that we lose common reference points for what is true—"alternative facts" begin to hold greater sway.

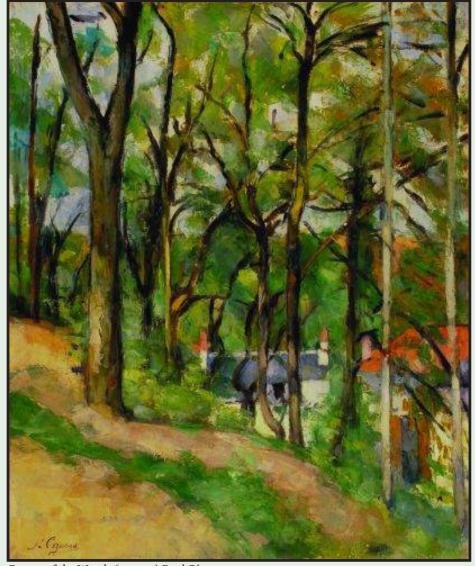
Latour is currently lecturing around the world, discussing his recently published book. Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime (2018). His lectures are multimedia events highlighting how "nature" is no longer something "out there" apart from us. The "facts" of the climate crisis have never been objective. Latour argues that we speak and live our facts "from the inside," where we are always (and always have been) offering a political point of view from within nature. Our challenge today is to notice and comment on the fragmentation of our globally networked consensus, to find ways of re-weaving a global context for revitalizing fact.



Paradise Lost (1882) Paul Gustave Doré

**Donna Orange** is a third improbable climate activist. Orange is one of the most nuanced philosopher-psychoanalysts in the world today, with many additional literary and reflective books calling to be written, but she has suspended these kinds of pursuits in the face of a literal wildfire. Orange retired from practice (if you can call what she does "retiring"), moving to a community of like-minded souls in Claremont, California, near Los Angeles. But reflective presence was literally set ablaze with the California fires, some quite near to her—vivid harrowing instances of the climate crisis. In response, Donna is on a mission, not one she exactly chose, but one that has an ethical imperative, one that comes, as she described in her presentation "Climate Justice and Psychoanalysis" (2019), from a "demand," an "urgent call" for us to "stop now!" As a psychoanalyst offering a keen perspective on the denial and lack of a response to the severity of the problem, Orange has been talking about this crisis and our complacency. Her recent book *Climate Crisis, Psychoanalysis, and Radical Ethics* (2017) outlines these thoughts, but she presents not simply a perspective, but an *exhortation*, a challenge to our complacency. She holds that rather than being active witnesses, we slide into the passive stance of being hapless observers as the world burns and floods and storms and...warms.

In spite of the global response of the Paris Accord (with the ignoble exception of the United States and Russia), Orange's book describes a profound immobility in the face of a growing catastrophe. She offers a framework for understanding this immobilized denial, suggesting a number of contexts. She has coined the notion, "Enlightenment egoism" (p. 8), the Euro-centric emphasis on western prerogatives, and a "double-mindedness" that ignores the profoundly unequal responsibility of the West with its carbon debt and colonialist prerogatives. She outlines the heritage of denial in this country, found in what she calls the "historical unconscious" (p. 37), the pervasive effects of white colonialism and our history of "chattel slavery" (p. 44). Orange reminds us of Loewald's notion of the unconscious as "a crowd of ghosts" (p. 40), suggesting that our collective ghosts of American-made local genocide with Native American massacres and slave lynchings continue unresolved in our culture, and thus in our field today. Orange also outlines specific forms of evasion from the crisis: she notes a "fear of vulnerability" (p. 65) with various defenses against primitive anxieties, a traumatic paralysis in the face of an overwhelming emergency; she elaborates a fear of responsibility and more centrally, the pervasive role of shame, seeing shame as an intersubjective field phenomenon that is specifically manifest as "climate shame" (p. 73), a



Corner of the Woods (c. 1900) Paul Cézanne

pervasive sense of powerlessness in the face of climate trauma; she also describes the destructive role of envy, a culture-wide obsession with those who have more, which renders the indigent, have-less masses invisible. These First World concerns are a self-enclosed preoccupation that distance us from suffering outside the consulting room.

Orange sees the climate crisis as an ethical imperative. She draws from the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas emphasizing the suffering Other as the starting point for any dialogue regarding climate justice. From a Levinasian perspective, "the hungry child in a distant land is no longer out of our reach" (Orange, 2017, p. 109). She calls for a radical response of "disrupting massive political injustice when we are able to see it" (p. 91). Hers is a call to action rather than a call to understanding, something I will address at the conclusion of this article.

#### The Duality of Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis reflects both the failings of our culture and offers a profound stance of hope in response to the unconscious destructiveness that Orange outlines. Numerous social critics outside the field (e.g., Adorno [1953, 1966], Foucault [1990, 1996], Deleuze & Guattari [1983, 1988]) have demonstrated how psychiatry and specifically psychoanalysis have been repressive disciplines in the service of social hegemony and normativity. The early promise of a psychoanalysis critical of social order does not easily sustain. Perspectives from Herbert Marcuse (1955) and Eric Fromm (1941), influenced as they were by the Frankfurt School, use cultural critique to question and transform the limiting and oppressive role of social power. From their view, psychoanalysis was seen in the service of emancipation. Therapeutic objectives weren't simply framed in terms of resolution of internal conflict but in terms of freedom, in terms of sustaining a critical stance in relation to repressive social norms. But at many points, psychoanalytic theory has ignored systems of social power, has lost sight of how psychopathology, health, and the very meaning and experience of subjectivity are culturally constituted. In the service of cultural norms, psychoanalysts have at times ignored and even supported pervasive social injustices (e.g., pathologizing homosexuality, deep racial discrimination and mistreatment, etc.). Like Orange, I think this difficulty arises out of the deep traumas that were part of psychoanalysis in its formation during the period of the World Wars.

Orange's notion of "double mindedness," might be better framed as *dualism*, one of the most pervasive and insidious problems in our culture today. I will contrast dualistic thinking and experiencing with what I call "lived depth" (Foehl, 2014; Foehl, in press). This is one way of framing the change that has taken place in our theoretical landscape in psychoanalysis, where all theorizing offers different articulations of what has come to be understood as the *analytic third*, an increasingly sophisticated appreciation of intersubjective processes. Current psychoanalytic theory offers a stance in response to the crisis of dualism. Although this can be seen as a crisis in relation to our climate, it is a more pervasive crisis of thinking, relating, and experiencing constituted in our current social situation, a reduction of a necessary *thirdness* in experience, thought, and action. Mark O'Connell (2019) has made a powerful commentary on this perspective in a Massachusetts Institute of Psychoanalysis (MIP) program that will be published: "When Thirdness Dies: Modern Lies, Vanishing Truth and American Illiberalism." In regard to the climate, dualism can be understood as having lost sight of a relationship to *nature*, what the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1995) calls "the non-constructed ground of experience."

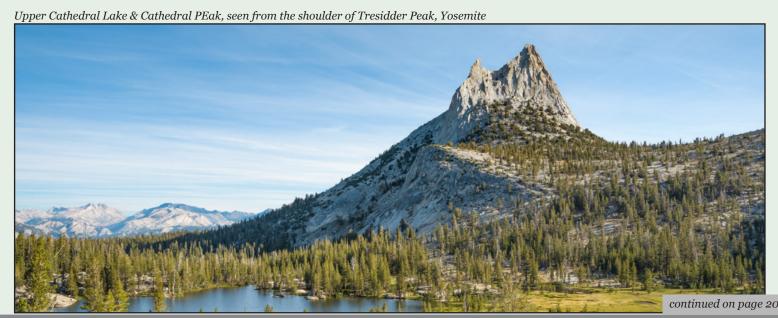
All of the great naturalists write in a tone of poetic exhortation about *nature*, the whole, interconnected totality of our existence in a world where no single being can be considered in isolation. John Muir (1918), the Scottish-American environmental philosopher and wilderness advocate recounts the epiphany he had while hiking Yosemite's Cathedral Peak for the first time:

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe. One fancies a heart like our own must be beating in every crystal and cell, and we feel like stopping to speak to the plants and animals as friendly fellow mountaineers. Nature as a poet, an enthusiastic workingman, becomes more and more visible the farther and higher we go; for the mountains are fountains—beginning places, however related to sources beyond mortal ken. (p. 110)

Naturalists juxtapose this deep experience of life as a unitary phenomenon with a technological perspective that posits an objective truth devoid of our very subjective inclusion in that truth. From this perspective, the natural world is *res extensa*, things extended in space, separate from mind or soul (*res cogitans*). Nature without soul is thus literally at our *disposal*. As recent as 2012, for example, a research consortium concluded that fish, without a neocortex, cannot feel pain. Thus, we have attitudes that contribute to the legitimation of mass harvesting to the point of extinction. Terry Tempest Williams (2016), a contemporary environmental writer, puts the dilemma starkly:

The irony of our existence is this: We are infinitesimal in the grand scheme of evolution, a tiny organism on Earth. And yet, personally, collectively, we are changing the planet through our voracity, the velocity of our reach, our desires, our ambitions, and our appetites. We multiply, our hunger multiplies, and our insatiable craving accelerates [...] We believe in more, more possessions, more power, more war. Anywhere, everywhere our advance of aggression continues. *My aggression toward myself is the first war*. Wilderness is an antidote to the war within ourselves. (p. 209-210, emphasis added)

How do we find our way back to a world interrelated and interconnected, whose priority is to thrive and evolve? What kind of belief systems are emerging now that reinforce and contribute to a world increasingly disconnected from nature? And what about the belief—my belief—in all that is wild? I return to the wilderness to remember what I have forgotten, that the world can be wholesome and beautiful, that the harmony and integrity of ecosystems at peace is a mirror to what we have lost. (p. 216)



The dualism of disconnection and alienation between self and world, between self and other, begins as a particular kind of alienation between self and self, a dualism at the heart of selfexperience and perception.

#### Disorders of Thirdness

This is where psychoanalysis provides a unique window into both the causes and potential responses to this contemporary crisis. Even though psychoanalytic thinking from Freud's time



Der tag im Wald (1935) Paul Klee

can be seen as inherently dualist in its juxtaposition of internal and external reality, good and bad, primary and secondary, etc., Freud always transcends reductions with triadic concepts of the Oedipus, *nachträglichkeit*, and the structure of the psyche. Especially with the work of Winnicott (1960), developed further by Bion (1961, 1962), by the Barangers (1961, 2012), by André Green (1975, 2004), Britton (1998, 2004), Meltzer (1975), Ogden (2004), Benjamin (2004) and Nelson Coelho (2016), contemporary psychoanalysis is best understood as developing an understanding of the *third* and the disorders of thirdness. The concept suggests that the very structure of subjectivity is in dialectical tension with an intersubjective ground. Rather than dyadic interaction in which subject is seen as separate and impinged by objects or other subjects (where we see the effects of power, the mark of prejudice, fanaticism, violence, and intolerance that inundate our daily living), subjectivity and perceptual experience are characterized by *dimensionality* and *depth* (Meltzer, 1975; Foehl, 2014).

On one register, this takes shape in the experience of an interconnected relationship with the other and the world, described by the Naturalists above. We cannot experience another *in relation to* self without the experience of an intersubjective context in which self and other are constituted. Without this interconnected, intercorporeal ground, the other is polarized into what is alien. "Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" becomes: "These aren't people, they are animals. Drug dealers, criminals, and rapists." And in kind, we have Robert De Niro gesticulating as he shouts on stage: "Fuck you, Donald Trump!" where Trump becomes a two-dimensional pariah, where his supporters become a "basket of deplorables." This kind of dualism flattens discourse, turning the other and the environment into "fish who cannot feel pain"—the insensitive and power-grabbing right, the domineering and condescending left—each finding the alien, the enemy, missing our common humanity and our deep connectedness in a Natural World that binds us. It's not just that we are misunderstanding each other, not a failure of communication *between* you and me. In disorders of thirdness, there is a collapse of context that provides the condition for any possibility of productive discourse. Latour's "network" is gone.

We can find an immediate thirdness in our perceptual experience in the form of depth. Think of visual perception and the immediate way we see a shifting set of figures or objects or others in a context or ground. When things are working well, there are several sets of relationships in this very basic kind

of experiencing. First, we can perceptually situate things in relation to their field. There's a specific kind of dimensionality in this situating where we find the things of our world in relation to everything else, and it is the relationship between things and their context that creates meaning. Second, this form-field relationship brings the perceiver into the creative process of what is perceived. The object of experience is never separate from the subject who experiences it. The perceiver is the third point of connection between form and field, where depth announces an indissoluble link between myself and things. In this relationship, there's a specific kind of reciprocity between perceiving and what's perceived. Seeing always necessarily implies the experience of being seen, touching always entails the possibility of being touched. Paul Klee noted that it wasn't only he who looked at the forest, but he felt that the forest looked at and spoke to him. We are implicated in the world that we experience, at one and the same time dialectically connected and separate from it. And this is an important point: this perceptual experience provides the very condition for the possibility of thinking. When I say, "I see," this statement of perception also becomes a statement of incipient thought or understanding. The perceptual third of depth finds its bearings in the capacity for thought where there is a dialectical relationship between thinking and the capacity to observe one's thinking in relationship to one's context.

What does this have to do with Nature, the climate, and our current crisis? The climate crisis is a central and calamitous disorder of thirdness, the consequence of decades of exponentially worsening dualism. The multi-dimensionality of experience and thought collapses, flattens or polarizes into a fixed dyadic that is sustained by socio-cultural practices that seep into our very nature. The entire



Lichter Wald (1934) Paul Klee

thrust of Continental Philosophy is a critique of a technological attitude where we lose the experience, awareness, and understanding of our vital interpenetration with the world, Nature, and others.

"fall back" (Heidegger's We vorfallen, into Das Man) the anonymity of a world of consumption, we submerge into a technologically facilitated mass culture that seems to be social but in fact is profoundly alienated from an intersubjective existential ground. Rather than connected, we are alone, and in place of genuine dialogue, we substitute an identification with our tribe or hoard. This fundamentally changes the way we think and see

and feel. Instead of the depth of perspective, where what I know and see is found in a context where I can acknowledge other ways of seeing, I feel impinged by the unfamiliar which is dangerous and false. Instead of a necessary space or distance between belief and fact that allows for reflection and

recognition of difference, I find the antinomy of right and wrong, where conviction is replaced with certainty (O'Connell [2019] elucidates this at length). This is the world of occluded vision, of dissociation, of socially constructed opposition and paranoia.

# The Climate Crisis of the Consulting Room

The above-mentioned world is our sweet spot as psychoanalysts, something we address in the consulting room daily. But rather than addressing it through interpretation of specific certainties—holding a pseudo-objective stance that is somehow out of the fray—we become implicated in a process, an experiential field. Our task in the consulting room is to see beyond the



Wald Bau (1919) Paul Klee

exchanges of interaction between two subjects about internal or external content; we engage the fluid moment, the shared atmosphere of mooded bodies in space and time. Psychoanalytic depth entails seeing and responding to a living context within which flattened discourse might unfold dimensionally.

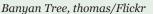
Ironically, the psychoanalytic setting has its own form of climate crisis. Freud (1915) describes how, in the *mise-en-scene* of analysis, there is a "fire in the theater." This "outbreak of a passionate demand for love" (p. 162) is equated to the panic of a fire, an irruption of the real into the imaginary of the analytic scene. But in contemporary theory (Civitarese, 2005), real and imaginary are seen in a tensioned dialectical relationship such that the external certainties are taken up in a dream-paradigm of the session where all that unfolds is experienced as the climate of the interconnected moment. The analyst is "a servant to the process" as it unfolds, finding depth-perception in the midst of flattened statements about fact.

Here's the rub. How do we transform our knowledge, and our ability to navigate the climate crisis of the consulting room, to effective activism responding to the global climate crisis? Donna Orange's radical ethics, her deep experience and work as a philosopher and analyst grounded in the teaching of Emmanuel Levinas holds that we must in every context (not simply the context of the consulting room) respond to the other. She says, "The others' suffering persecutes me, takes me hostage, requires substitution, one-for-the-other" (Orange 2017, p. 110). This is the appropriation of a context that privileges the other's perspective, given the power of our own context-defining bias, our own tendency to flatten discourse into duality.

#### Psychoanalytic Emancipation

In a different framing, following Walter Benjamin (1929), Marcuse (1955), and Fromm (1941), we can envision psychoanalysis as a form of *emancipation*. Psychoanalysts have been and can be cultural critics, taking our praxis into social discourse. In our work but also in but in our public lives, in *every* context, there's a call to convey what we know, and to live that knowing in how we engage. More than knowing, this calls for a sustaining of thirdness in the midst of the firestorm of cultural dualism. From my stance, this entails something immediate and profoundly personal, beginning with our bodies—our embodied perceptive and expressive presence—to perspectives other than our own, held in context with Nature. Specifically, it's *Nature* and not simply the world or life. Merleau-Ponty (1995) notes that: "Nature is the primordial, that is, the non-constructed, the non-constituted [...] Nature is an enigmatic object, an object that is not an object at all; it is not altogether in front of us. It is our ground (our soil), not what is in front of us, facing us, but rather, that which carries us" (p. 4). Nature is our ultimate context, the prism through which we find ground beyond duality. Emancipation comes in staying deeply connected to our personal embodied ways of seeing while engaging perspectives other than our own.

But more specifically, the climate crisis requires action that moves us toward climate justice. Orange's book and presentations are an exhortation. More than anything, she suggests specific steps of activism. The idea is that it is no longer sufficient to reduce our own carbon footprint, nor to "contribute at the office" in the practice of our craft. We must use our expertise to communicate, witness, and effect change in ways that respond to dualism today. This is a crucial form of personal emancipation that pays tribute to the interconnections that bind us as part of Nature; it is the grounding (the soil) that carries us all.





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#### Steps Toward Activism

- Create a Psychoanalytic Consortium, networking different psychoanalytic organizations, with an emphasis on climate change;
- Consider volunteer consultation to other disciplines on the nature of dualist protocols;
- Join the Climate Psychology Alliance (<u>climatepsychologyalliance.org</u>) and volunteer in a wide range of social interventions addressing climate justice;
- Work with the NAACP on environmental injustice in the placement of waste facilities;
- Download the NAACP's Action Toolkit: "In the Eye of the Storm, A Peoples Guide to Transforming Crisis & Advancing Equity in the Disaster Continuum";
- Volunteer through immigrant aid organizations.

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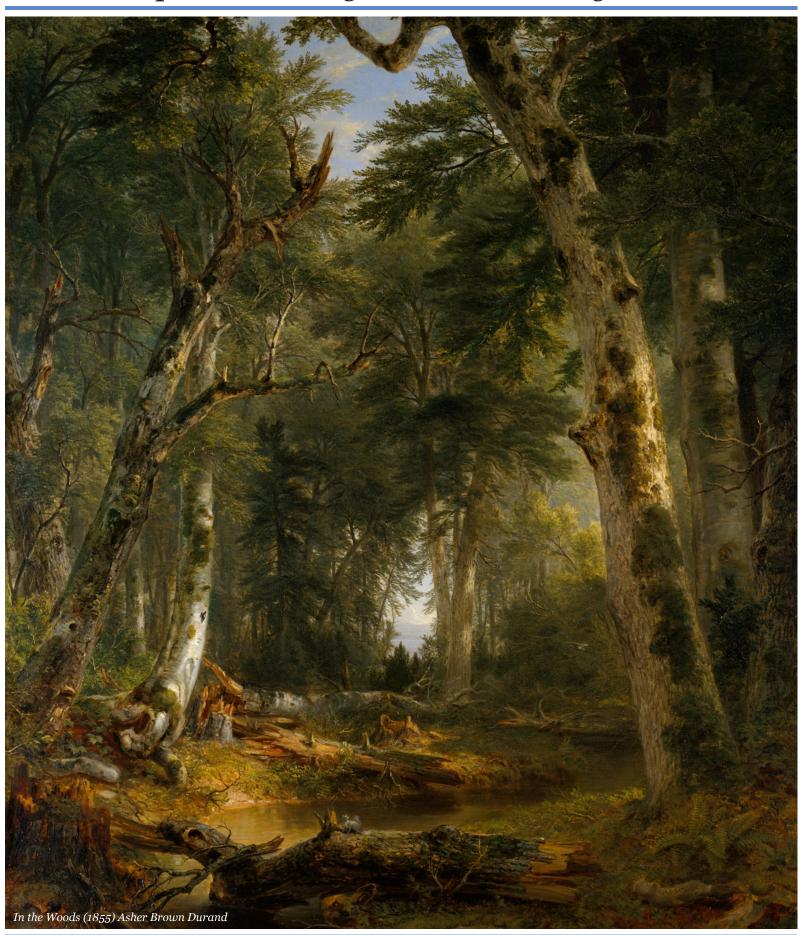
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## BPSI Explores: Dialogue and Discovery



#### **Mourning in America**

Janet English

We decided Mother Earth was weeping. Weeping for herself. What other explanation could there be for the reliably monotonous weekly downpour, uncannily synchronized with our Tuesday evening class this past fall on global warming? "Mourning in America: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Climate Change" was a course offered in BPSI's "Explorations in Mind" series. Conceived and taught by Cris Ratiner, PhD, and myself, the course grew out of our increasing conviction that the work of mourning, so central to psychoanalysis, needs to go global.

Every class needs a catchy title to incite interest. "Mourning in America," a nod to Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign slogan "It's Morning in America," locates what I believe is the central dilemma humanity faces: Collectively, we must do the hard work of mourning the damage we have inflicted on our earth and attain what Melanie Klein so aptly named "the depressive position" before it's too late to restore our environmental surround. We need to recognize that our greed and insatiable hunger to exploit and consume the earth's resources have done significant damage to the planet. Reparation and repair need to occur. We need to achieve a sense of guilt over our destructiveness. Our inability to mourn has left us paralyzed in a state of global melancholia, rendering us incapable of successfully mourning the loss of our environmental security. The global mobilization of paranoid-schizoid defenses, such as projection, denial, and splitting to fend off profound annihilation anxiety (and this time real annihilation, not the psychic annihilation of the consulting room) are sorry and unsustainable strategies for dealing with the mess we have made of our home.

Our class was a lively and robust mix of familiar BPSI members and newcomers. Some wanted to find a like-minded group with whom they could learn, others were looking to arm themselves with knowledge to pass on to children and grandchildren. Two young participants shared a curiosity about both psychoanalytic theory and social activism. We all came out of fear and dread.

The course tackled climate change from multiple angles, all based on the assumption that, as Harold Searles so presciently noted in 1972: "Man is hampered in his meeting of this environmental crisis by a severe and pervasive apathy which is based largely on feelings and attitudes of which he is unconscious" (p. 361). Whether or not we will succeed in arresting environmental collapse rests much more on psychological factors than on scientific facts. The reality is that the lack of effective climate response is not due to a deficiency of facts or technology or policy solutions. We have the scientific knowledge to begin to reverse global warming. What we don't have are the psychic resources. Our present day "apathy" about global warming is, as Renee Lertzman outlines in her book *Environmental Melancholia* 

## BPSI Explores: Dialogue and Discovery

(2015), not merely a lack of interest, a lack of action, it is the presence of something: a psychic pressure to not know, not act, to not respond. Apathy has meaning. When we see it clinically, we understand apathy as a communication about an internal dilemma. Apathy, denial, and resistance are all solutions to an untenable, complex, and painful internal situation.

Climate change is one of the most polarizing issues of our day. The temptation to collapse the world into combatting social and political enemies is seductive. Political party affiliation has been shown to be the strongest correlate for individual beliefs about climate change. The partisan divide about climate change is ground zero in the culture wars. Battle lines are drawn. Cris and I did not want our class to devolve into weekly "us versus them" sessions whereby "we" (the highly educated, enlightened, open minded, sane, rational, informed) smugly devalue "deniers" as ignorant, indoctrinated, selfish pawns of the right-winged incendiary media. We recognized the temporary satisfactions of living in a narcissistic schizoid world of outrage and superiority in which "the other" (Fox News) is not accorded equal validity. Our goal for the class was to create a model for thinking constructively and creatively about tackling the challenge of climate change, both within ourselves and in the wider community. To do this we (tried) to adopt and maintain a psychoanalytic attitude of curiosity about man's maladaptive response to our shared global threat. We tried to think about climate change denial and splitting responses in the same way we think about symptoms and defenses psychoanalytically with our patients. We don't lecture, bully, or argue our patients out of their blind spots. We don't moralize or berate them in the hopes of changing their minds about deeply held belief systems. Why are we doing that to those who disagree with us about the fate of the earth?

We learned a lot about marketing climate change. Global warming is a tough sell. Sermonizing, bullying, and moralizing tactics do not seem to be altering public opinions, either in public arenas or the small spaces of our consulting rooms. What *is* successful is a strategy that aligns messages about cleaning up the planet with what people care about: their children, their grandchildren, and their paychecks. A demoralizing finding from communications science is that politically right leaning populations do not respond positively to images of suffering people on the other side of the world. Nor do they respond to images of starving polar bears, or other animals in danger. Documentaries focusing on dried up crop fields, shrinking glaciers and, yes, starving polar bears are seen by the right as evidence that we tree huggers are nothing but a bunch of immature, whiny, emotional, panicky leftists, demanding that they "give up" their God given right to their "way of life." My guess is that the anxiety and guilt generated by those images initiates a need to locate weakness and dread externally, hence the derision heaped on those of us who feel and own such feelings.

Our class spent a fair amount of time discussing what it means to "believe" in global warming. A belief is a mental state. But is it a cognitive state? Does a belief have to be true? Does a belief have to be justified? What about opinions? Beliefs, opinions, and facts all have different standards of provability. Or at least they used to. In this "post-truth" era, what does knowledge consist of? How do we make a claim of truth and fact? More often than not, we chase "facts" that conform to our beliefs, not the other way around. How has it come to be that political opinion is mistaken for truth? Epistemological issues regarding how people arrive at what they "know" about global warming is a slippery topic. Daniel Patrick Moynihan famously stated, "You are entitled to your own opinions, but not your own facts." A charming idea, perhaps once true, but not so anymore.

So we met, as Mother Earth shed her tears. A like-minded group. Intelligent and afraid. Old and young. We worked hard to remain curious, to preserve empathy, to understand self-sabotaging stances as desperate measures for desperate times. And we, ourselves, fought against our own apathy, helplessness, and dread. We came away with a powerful and universal truth, one easily forgotten as we live our disconnected lives: Coming together in recognition is the engine of progress. It is a psychoanalytic truth, brought to bear on a global scale, one small group at a time.

Lertzman, R. (2105). *Environmental Melancholia: Psychoanalytic Dimensions of Engagement*. NY: Routledge Press. Searles, H.F. (1972). Unconscious process in relation to the environmental crisis. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 59(3), 361-374.



#### BPSI Explores: Dialogue and Discovery

## COMPASS and American Imago

**Murray Schwartz** 

Since its inception several years ago, BPSI's Center for Multidisciplinary Psycho Analytic Studies (COMPASS) has steadily created new opportunities for interrelating psychoanalysis and the arts and sciences. Through the minor in "Psychoanalysis and Cultural Criticism" at Emerson College, now planning its fourth year, BPSI members have designed and taught a broad variety of courses for undergraduates, including explorations of dreaming and art, humor, play and creativity, Shakespeare, and Holocaust Studies. BPSI's affiliation with Emerson College joins other models for linking psychoanalytic institutes with colleges and universities, such as Emory University and Colorado College. COMPASS is also represented in the APsaA task force on Psychoanalysis and the Community headed by James Barron, which provides a forum for encouraging cooperation with academic institutions in teaching psychoanalysis.

COMPASS houses BPSI's Silberger Prize, which has recently been awarded to essays on Philip Roth, Merle Haggard, and Thomas Kuhn. In addition, beginning this year, the Loewenberg Prize (formerly the CORST Prize) sponsored by APsaA will be added as a COMPASS activity. This year's winner, Daniel G. Butler, presented a theoretical framework for understanding the severe trauma of stateless immigrant children.

The most exciting and promising addition, however, has been the return of *American Imago* to BPSI, where it began in Boston under the guidance of Sigmund Freud and Hanns Sachs in 1939. Beginning as *Imago* by Freud and his first-generation followers, *American Imago* has had a distinguished history of scholarly publishing in theoretical and applied psychoanalysis. In accord with Freud's vision of psychoanalytic education, the journal has published essays and reviews on literature and the other arts (including painting, photography, film, music, sculpture, and architecture), psychoanalytic history and theory, and topics of special contemporary interest, such as trauma studies, post-colonial studies, and the intersections of psychoanalysis and political experience. In recent years, Peter Rudnydsky (literary critic) and Louis Rose (historian) have been its Editors, and in 2018, I was appointed Editor-in-Chief. Louis Rose initiated a series of personal memoirs about psychoanalytic experience, with contributions by Harold Blum, Stephen Frosh, Eli Zaretzky and others, including my own "Psychoanalysis in My Life: An Intellectual Memoir," which appeared in Rose's last issue (Summer 2018). The journal will continue this tradition of personal writing, while maintaining its full spectrum of subject matters. The journal's sub-title, "Psychoanalysis and the Human Sciences," indicates this unique range.

As Editor of *American Imago*, it is vital to uphold the journal's exceptional quality and accept essays from various theoretical perspectives, making them accessible to a broad readership of scholars and analysts. My goal is to expand the journal's purview to include greater attention to urgent contemporary

concerns, such as human responses to climate change, problems of human pseudo-speciation, and questions of visual and verbal forms of media representation.

Along these lines, a number of special issues are planned. The Fall 2019 issue will celebrate the 80th anniversary of *American Imago*'s founding in Boston by publishing the reflections on James Baldwin's "A Letter to My Nephew" that were delivered in a symposium on race relations at BPSI in 2018. This will be followed by two special issues dealing with climate change and its human consequences. In collaboration with guest editors Howard Moss in New York and Stef Craps in Holland, these issues will address how psychic life is affected by the profound and accelerating changes to the planet that we are all inexorably experiencing.

Less ominously, *American Imago*'s Associate Editor, Vera J. Camden, is soliciting essays and reviews about "Comics on the Couch," addressing the prevalence of mixed media narratives in contemporary society. Associate Editor Cathy Portuges is planning a special issue on contemporary film studies and BPSI's own Olga Umansky is organizing papers on Freud's "Wolf Man" and its history.

In addition to the current BPSI members on *American Imago*'s Editorial Board, our new Advisory Committee includes five BPSI members: James Frosch, Jane Hanenberg, Dan Jacobs, John Martin-Joy, and Ellen Pinsky. This committee meets periodically with the Editor to discuss the journal's direction and plans for the future. All BPSI members are invited to offer advice and contribute their writing to *American Imago*.

BPSI members may subscribe to American Imago at a discounted quarterly rate of \$30 (print), or \$35 (electronic), a 35% discount.

To subscribe, please send a check to the following addess, and indicate that you are a BPSI member:

Johns Hopkins University Press, Journals Publishing Division, 2715 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218-4363.



The Wolf Man's Dream, Sergei Pankejeff

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#### THE ARTHUR R. KRAVITZ AWARD

#### FOR COMMUNITY ACTION AND **HUMANITARIAN CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Kravitz Committee is pleased to announce that the 12th Annual Arthur R. Kravitz Award for Community Action and Humanitarian Contributions will be given to Dr. Paola Michelle Contreras, a fifth-year candidate in psychoanalytic training, for her significant work in using psychoanalytic ideas to understand human trafficking, to treat its victims, and to teach those caregivers who provide clinical service.

In 2006, Dr. Contreras began working on anti-trafficking initiatives in the U.S. under a grant from the Department of Justice to train law enforcement and other legal professionals on the psychological consequences of human trafficking. She has worked with individual victims of international human trafficking to enable them to enter the U.S. under legal visas. As a consultant to national and international anti-trafficking organizations and foundations, she has developed and advocated for legislation that is sensitive to the needs of human trafficking survivors.

Over the last five years, Dr. Contreras has provided consultation and program development Paola Michelle Contreras, PsyD

for survivors of exploitation using a psychoanalytic lens. She has found that the concepts of transference, countertransference, and witnessing are very useful to staff working in this area. By helping staff members to access regular supervision, Dr. Contreras has demonstrated the value of a supervisory relationship to metabolize and bear the intense affect that emerges in this work. By utilizing core psychoanalytic concepts, supervision helps staff members make meaning of their experience. As a result of her efforts, staff burnout and turnover has decreased.

Dr. Contreras has also published on trafficking (partial list of references, p.9) and has co-produced a short documentary on human trafficking with the Society for the Psychology of Women and the American Psychological Association (2012). In addition, she recently won a grant through the International Psychoanalytic Association to study unconscious forces, such as attachment patterns, that may contribute to difficulties in leaving situations involving exploitation, trafficking, and prostitution.

#### Dr. Contreras states:

I enjoy the work because the people are inspiring. The victim(s) and survivors that I've had the opportunity to meet and work with are always remarkable people that teach me more than I could ever give them. And the providers that work in this area are incredibly passionate and committed to the cause. I hope to [...] be able to make more connections between my anti-trafficking work and BPSI. One way that I've started is by encouraging some of the staff from the organizations that I consult with to participate in BPSI offerings: a couple have attended conferences and one is a student in the Fellowship program. (2018)

Dr. Contreras is an Assistant Professor in the Counseling Department at William James College, where she teaches a range of subjects including Psychopathology, Clinical Skills, Latino Mental Health, Trauma Theory and Treatment, and Introduction to Human Trafficking for Mental Health Providers. She studied Clinical Psychology (BA & MA), at the Universidad Rafael Landívar (Guatemala), obtained a PsyD at Williams James College, and completed her postdoctoral work at Cambridge Hospital. In addition to her advocacy and teaching, she has a private practice in Cambridge.

With the 2019 Kravitz Award, we celebrate Dr. Contreras' remarkable commitment to advocacy against human trafficking in the community. We appreciate her scholarship, her clinical work, and the application of psychoanalytic principles in all her endeavors.

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