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The Wounds of Our Mother
Psychoanalysis
New Models for Psychoanalysis in Crisis

Edited by Paolo Azzone



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Contributors

Barnaby B. Barratt, Jason Barton, Paolo Azzone, Gita Vaid, Valeska Kouzak Campos Da Paz, Erika Reimann, Mark FurLong, Andrei Novac, Alison Short

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Meet the editor



Paolo Azzone, MD, is a psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst. He is head of the Forensic Psychiatric Outpatient Program at ASST-Rhodense Hospital, Milan, Italy. Dr. Azzone substantially contributed to the establishment of a psychotherapy research tradition in Italy, with empirical studies on the psychotherapy process and on dreams. His current interests include the psychoanalytic treatment of depression and the intersections between psychoanalysis and philosophy, literature, history, and religious experience. He is co-editor of *La mente dell'anima* (*The Mind of the Soul*), and author of *Depression as a Psychoanalytic Problem*, *Le Kharjas: Frammenti di Letteratura Erotica in Lingua Mozarabica* (*The Kharjas: Fragments of Love literature in Mozarabic Language*), and *Freud and the da Vinci Code*.

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Preface

There is no doubt that psychoanalysis is in a crisis, and a serious one at that. Academia has expelled it from its curricula, the media have downsized it to a minor branch of Western philosophy, academic psychology mocks its model of the human mind, and medical institutions the world over contemptuously dismiss its therapeutic procedures. The empirical evidence that has been accumulating over the past 40 years, and that has lent a wide support to various psychoanalytically oriented treatments, is simply ignored by any esteemed public institution.

Unluckily, psychoanalytic institutions have generally appeared shy, even helpless in front of such an impressive army of critics and opponents. It would be easy to blame the opponents of psychoanalysis for its current disquieting status, to point to the decline of European culture, to the spreading of a simplistic and unsophisticated materialism through the whole range of social sciences, and to the enormous financial influence of the pharmaceutical corporations. All such circumstances are not news, but a focus on events outside the psychoanalytic community would be misleading. In a recent paper, Garza Guerrero [1] suggested that the current crisis cannot be properly understood without a due awareness of the inner weaknesses of the psychoanalytic movement.

In fact, born in 19th-century Wien, psychoanalysis has thrived on positivist epistemology and has valued an attitude of objective observation of the patient. However, within such framework, “[a]symmetry between the observing analyst and the objectified patient, between the impassible knowledge and the emotionally suffering blindness, between the power to heal and the inability to cope, ironically reflected the rigidity of oedipal configuration which psychoanalysts aimed to solve through interpretative work” [2].

Consistent with such perspective, we have suggested that psychoanalytic theory has so far failed to fully integrate the advancements promoted by the intersubjective model of the human mind within its theoretical and clinical framework. Such failure has brought about a number of substantial drawbacks.

1. Implicitly embracing the basic assumptions of somatic medicine, psychoanalysts have gotten used to conceptualizing adverse emotional and developmental vicissitudes and personality constellations as illnesses, that is, as ontologically meaningful constructions. This is bound to legitimize a subordination to the unwarranted hegemonic claims of neural sciences.
2. An inadequate understanding of the contribution of the psychoanalyst to the psychoanalytic process has produced a highly asymmetric conceptualization of the psychoanalytic situation, where the patient is at the mercy of overwhelming unconscious forces and the psychoanalyst is the sole, generous bestower of care and knowledge. This circumstance has led mainstream psychoanalysis to

lend repression an ontological status while investing the psychoanalyst's role with massive idealization mechanisms. A parallel devaluation of relationships and events outside the psychoanalytic situation has hindered an adequate understanding of the patient's object relationship system.

In order to formulate a comprehensive conceptualization of the current crisis of psychoanalysis, we need to take into account an additional dimension. We should never forget psychoanalysis is not only a theory of the human mind. It is also an intellectual movement. And sure, institutional group dynamics have fatefully fostered the previously mentioned idealization processes with the associated impact on clinical and theoretical developments.

Under this perspective, it is essential to point out that the structure and functioning of psychoanalytic institutes are heavily affected by a core component of admission procedures for candidate analysts: the training analysis. Training analysis, as currently understood, involves a structural overlap between needs for care and personal development on the one hand, and professional and social goals on the other. As repeatedly mentioned in the relevant literature, the training function of the treating psychoanalyst is bound to deeply infiltrate and potentially distort the treatment process [1].

An omnipotent phantasy is encouraged where the patient's compliance and Superego skills would win him the father's perpetual mercy and undisputed preference over inner and outer siblings. The coincidence of such phantasy with the external reality circumstances of the training institution is bound to perpetually withdraw it from the training psychoanalyst's interpretation activity. Accurate interpretations of negative and aggressive transference are then hindered, while separation anxieties involved in the termination of any clinically meaningful psychoanalytic treatment are eluded.

Psychoanalytic institutes are so bound to set up as psychoanalytic citadels, where competition and hate are split and projected onto the external world [3]. The stronghold is inhabited by an institutional family, where two generational layers can easily be identified. The phantasmal interaction between the training analysts' elite and the wider community of candidates and then junior analysts features enhanced idealization mechanisms. The high educational and ethical standards shared by the institution members, their undisputable interpersonal skills, and emotional sophistication promote the repression of stinky or hurting fecal introjects and allow their disposal into the external space of lower-level mental health professionals as well as of the general society.

The narcissistic quality of such an institutional community is obvious. Conformism with the training analysts' understanding of psychic reality is then enhanced, with the aim of keeping conflicts within the community to a minimum.

Within such a framework, any substantial growth of knowledge is impossible. Scientific content are produced with the main aim of reaffirming emotional and cognitive dependence on the institutional father's images. Original formulations of original clinical work are not welcomed.

Scientific exchange with diverse perspectives from concurring psychoanalytic communities is experienced as no less ominous. In fact, it cannot but undermine the defensive mechanisms that sustain the institution's precarious sense of self.

In essence, within the current institutional environment, any growth of knowledge is heavily hindered. It is no surprise, then, if the phantasmal body of our mother psychoanalysis is deeply wounded. Without the courage to consistently search for and make available to humankind the truth about the unconscious mind, psychoanalysis is and will stay in a dire crisis.

The present book gathers some original contributions that discuss the current crisis of psychoanalysis or suggest some intriguing new perspectives. The authors have tried to tackle the issue from various points of view. The book opens with an essay by Barnaby Barratt (Chapter 1), who focuses his attention on the very core of the psychoanalytic situation. Over decades of psychoanalytic practice and theoretical work, he has developed a model where free associations amount to the absolutely basic brick of the psychoanalytic endeavor and the sole driver of change processes. They would promote deeply regressive states, which Barratt even compares with the meditative states associated with ascetic traditions.

In her understanding of the current crisis of psychoanalysis, Valeska Kouzak (Chapter 2) points to an inappropriate compliance with hegemonic social and cultural forces and institutions. To the aim of keeping confrontation with competing Weltanschauungen to a minimum, psychoanalysts would have chosen to improperly dilute their original model of psychosexual development. This in turn would have stripped psychoanalysis of its revolutionary power and would have permanently quenched its potential contribution to human culture.

In Chapters 3 and 4 respectively, Andrei Novac and Gita Vaid tackle the challenging issue of the confrontation with contemporary biology and particularly with neural sciences. Novac audaciously explores the technique of free association from the points of view of cognitive psychology, neural networks, and system theory. Vaid's contribution shows how psychoanalytic theory can substantially contribute to our understanding of biological interventions on brain functioning. In her comprehensive discussion of the effects of psychedelic medications, she even formulates a genuinely psychoanalytic model of the altered states of mind produced by psychedelic compounds and of the psychotherapeutic processes that are so fostered. However, I must warn the reader that the addictive potential entailed in such therapeutic procedures has not been adequately studied, so far. In addition, the administration of a medication during a psychotherapeutic treatment is bound to establish a highly polarized transference relation where the dependence on the therapist will never be fully worked through. The reader should be aware that such elements clearly exclude psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy from the range of veritable psychoanalytically oriented treatments.

The chapters in the last section of the book give evidence of the essential contribution psychoanalysis can still offer to human sciences and to the understanding of social phenomena. My chapter (Chapter 5) on the unconscious roots of anticlericalism shows the reader how basic social confrontations can be adequately conceptualized only

through a proper reliance on psychoanalytic conceptualization of the unconscious mind. Alison Short (Chapter 6) takes advantage of a narratological investigative strategy in order to get a better understanding of the phantasies associated with pregnancy and motherhood. Finally, Chapters 7 and 8 explore the socially spread unconscious conflicts associated with two core issues in contemporary public debate: climatic change and identity politics.

Paolo Azzone

Forensic Psychiatric Outpatient Program,
ASST-Rhodense Hospital,
Garbagnate (Milan), Italy

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Section 1

The Core of the
Psychoanalytic Endeavour



Chapter 1

Rediscovering the Psychoanalytic Revolution: Contemporary Crisis as the Result of Resisted Fundamentals

Barnaby B. Barratt

Abstract

Considering the contemporary discipline to be in a state of crisis, and as having in a certain sense betrayed its origins, requires that we consider what of Freud's revolutionary discoveries have been forgotten. It is argued that the priority of free-associative praxis led Freud to posit 'helpful notions' that would serve as the fundamental coordinates or 'cornerstones' of his discipline. The extent to which these have been lost in the promulgation of new models is assessed.

Keywords: theory, praxis, repression, sexuality, oedipality

1. Introduction

If the proverbial alien landed on earth today, it would not recognize psychoanalysis as a singular discipline. Not only do multiple approaches to clinical practice cluster under this rubric, but the discipline embraces sharply divergent assumptions about the fundamentals of the human condition. To give just a single example, there are practitioners who labor clinically on the assumption that we are born with rapaciously envious and destructive motives that cause us, even as infants, to aggress against the nurture provided by caretakers. By contrast, there are practitioners who conduct their therapeutic mission on the assumption that babies are born pristinely innocent, taking their place 'center stage' in their relational world, and only coming into difficulties when caretaking fails them.

In short, even though psychoanalysts generally have international allegiances to one or another of only three professional organizations, within these arenas (and notably within the largest of them, the International Psychoanalytic Association, which was founded by Sigmund Freud himself) the discipline splinters into a multitude of practices and modes of fundamentally divergent theorization. In this context, new and not-so-new models of our psychological functioning are propounded, with little regard to their impact upon each other, and even less regard for what of value is lost in the promotion of 'new models.' Responding to this untenable polyglot, some organizations have de-emphasized their consideration of controversies over what

occurs intrapsychically in the consulting room, focusing rather on the relevance of psychoanalytic thinking for community action.

In this brief paper, I point to several aspects of Freud's discoveries that are evident in a specific—and somewhat maverick—reading of his early writings, but that seem to have been lost even in his own later formulations of his discipline, and conspicuously in those of his heirs. That is, I will schematize much of the history of this putative discipline as one in which a revolutionary vision of humanity has been domesticated in the promulgation of 'new models'—models that are, in a sense, pre-Freudian in their assumptions about the human condition. The fuller arguments in support of this thesis have been elaborated elsewhere [1–5].

2. Reading Sigmund Freud's discoveries prior to 1915

There is an understanding—quite consensual within the humanities, but not within the hard sciences—that all readings are tendentious. This is particularly true of the task of reading Freud's voluminous writings, in order to grasp what in them is profoundly unsettling and revolutionary. Not only because there is a restless shifting, reformulation, and regressive or progressive development in his thinking, but also because there are moments of perplexity and internal contradiction. He aspired to hard science ('natural science' under the eminent influence of pioneers such as Karl Rokitansky, the Dean of his Medical School in Vienna). But more than a 'natural science of the mind,' he penned what can be read as the most provocative, instructive, and insightful literature (with ideas that are a profound and powerful guide for praxis). Many of his key ideas are about matters of human functioning that are simply not operationalizable. They are not to be demonstrated, measured, or made ostensible in a manner that would satisfy the rigors of empirical science as established in 'western' discourse throughout the modern era (the hegemony of logical empiricism and analytico-referential rationality).

For example, Freud's 1923 idea (produced over two decades *after* his free-associative discovery of the repressed unconscious) that the operations of psychic functioning can be partitioned into those belonging to the ego organization and to this organization's depiction of reality, to the id's drives, and to the forces of the superego (as well as the ego-ideal) provides a remarkably powerful hermeneutic for the conduct of psychotherapy, but scarcely is it scientifically provable in a manner that would satisfy a hard scientist.

But that does not diminish the revolutionary impact of Freud's ideas. Moreover, it must be noted that those discoveries, which are the most radical and which have been the most resisted subsequently, were the ones he advanced before he became obsessed with the generation of scientific models. To describe this summarily: Prior to 1895, Freud was heavily preoccupied with hard science. In the years after graduating medical school, he dissected the gonads of eels, performed experiments on the nervous system of frogs, and published over 200 neurological papers (also experimenting with the effects of tropane alkaloids on human functioning). Hard science was his passion. However, with the discovery of the repressed unconscious around 1895 and of the fundamentality of erotic energies in our cognitive, affective, and conative operations, he was compelled to relinquish his teacher's (Ernst Brücke) commitment to experimental methods. He discovered the repressed unconscious and the power of libidinal life simply by talking with patients (along with an initial use of hypnotic trances, which he soon relinquished) and asking them to disclose their 'associations.'

Although subsequently he reverted to a conservative position, in its implications, the period of Freud's writing from 1895 to about 1915 is wild and revolutionary, as previously discussed quite extensively [1–8]. During this period, he relinquished—at least somewhat—the challenge of specifying only what might be 'scientifically provable' and documented a radical exploration of the human condition. After 1915 (and especially after World War I, with the death of family members, his aging and ailing health, and the vision of a whole world ending), Freud became significantly more preoccupied both with building a movement invulnerable to apostasies (such as those of Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, and Wilhelm Stekel) and with courting credibility in the general scientific community. Consequently, he began to produce quasi-scientific 'models of the mind'—of narcissism, of object relations, of the structural-functional partitioning of psychic life, of anxiety as a non-conscious signal system, and of the splitting of the ego organization in the face of unbearable events. In different ways, all these objectivistic models have been elaborated and made central to their conception of the discipline by his successors (frequently augmented by a particularly biased reading of Freud's 1920 writing on the 'death drive'). My thesis is that there are losses inherent in these 'developments.'

What happens if we dim the emphasis on post-1915 theorizing and focus on Freud's ideas between 1895 and 1915? A rather different 'take' on the discipline of psychoanalysis emerges.

3. Free-associative method divulges the 'Psychology of Repression'

Even after 1915 (and even though this assertion contradicted the increasingly objectivistic framing of his later theorizing), Freud would repeatedly insist that the *sine qua non* of his discipline is the method of free-associative speaking on the part of the patient and listening on the part of both patient and psychoanalyst [9]. Most of his successors have taken this less than seriously. They reduce free-association merely to a particular technique of 'data-gathering' for the purposes of formulating the patient's functioning in accordance with one or another objectivistic model. Alternatively, seeing the technique merely as clinically valuable in opening channels of communication by which the patient and the psychoanalyst interact, in terms of reciprocating fantasies that have a preconscious or descriptively unconscious status—communications that provide material for the latter's interpretations, which are the instigator of change in the patient. In these frames, psychoanalysis is cast as a primarily epistemological operation (producing information that can then be used instrumentally to change the patient's psychic functioning). This standpoint overlooks the possibility that free-associative discourse itself catalyzes changes in the being-becoming of the individual participants—the possibility that psychoanalysis is primarily an 'ontoethical' venture.

For heuristic purposes, it can be argued that there are twin poles to (or modes of) the processes of free-association. At the more conservative pole, it is a matter of speaking aloud with absolute confidentiality, which enables the subject to say whatever would not ordinarily be spoken in public. In this mode, the individual enunciates chains of stories, each of which more or less 'makes sense,' and the sequentiality of the chaining discloses underlying themes that must have been preoccupying the speaker (presumably without reflective consciousness of the themes that are being expressed).

For example, I talk about my neighbor who is currently suing me in court, claiming she owns a piece of my property. Next, I talk about how I can often smell her unpleasant cooking wafting into my garden. Then I mention a lover with whom I would never stay overnight, because she thrashed about in bed, leaving me no space to sleep. Suddenly I start to recall a childhood incident in which my mother lied to a family friend, claiming that it was I who had told her a falsehood, which I had not. Clearly, whether I realize it or not, there is a theme here concerning my anxiety, rage or fear, of being invaded or overtaken by a female force. It is probably not a theme that would have surfaced like this if I had not been allowing censorship to relax—for example, if I had just been sitting with a therapist trying to ‘figure out’ the reasons for my feelings.

If a person talks freely whatever ‘comes to mind’ without the usual level of interpersonal censorship, then one narrative rolls into the next and themes or sub-themes emerge that are not conveyed adequately by any single narrative, but that gain weight as one listens to their sequencing. This has value in terms of a therapist’s ability to help patients ‘make sense’ of their lived-experiences in ways that are novel (and may often be adaptive). However, it can be argued that this is not yet psycho-*analysis*, where the ‘analytic’ process is not the philosopher’s logical analysis-in-order-to-make-sense (an epistemological labor), but rather the chemist’s task of unsettling the stability of a compound in order for its elements to be free to rearrange themselves (an ontological or ontoethical treatment).

A radicalized method of free-association requires the patient to relinquish any mandate to ‘make sense’ and to speak aloud the stream of consciousness (while lying comfortably and keeping the eyes closed). The patient is enjoined to express the stream of consciousness, rather than to attend to narration. At this pole, the process defies description in writing—in Freud’s words it ‘tolerates no audience and cannot be demonstrated’—because what is expressed becomes quite different from the uncensored sequencing of stories, or indeed anything that appears to make sense. Indeed, what is radical is precisely the speaker’s capacity to disengage the narratological imperative and give voice to all that is within (or, at least, as much as is feasible, since consciousness moves faster than can be given utterance).

This radicalized method of free-association is wild. The emphasis of the process now shifts to the aliveness of the ‘saying’ rather than to the interpretation of what is ‘said.’ With such a radical praxis, vocalization becomes more chaotic, and momentary bodily sensations are more likely to be voiced, as the stream of consciousness meanders, babbles, and crescendos in fits and starts. The speaker’s utterances are invariably more linguistically disorganized and, in an important sense, more energetically, poetically and erotically embodied, as well as more regressive. There are hiccups and hallucinations, meaningful gaps in meaning, syncopations, the voicing of bodily events, and so forth. In this way, the usefulness of free-association not so much as a tool (deployed in order to know), but as an opening of the patient’s being-becoming, an unsettling momentum toward greater authenticity [6–8].

What did Freud believe he had learned from his earliest experiments with free-association? His masterwork of 1900, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, elaborates a depiction of psychic life, as illustrated by the deconstruction of dreamwork [10]. The manifest content of a dream is generated, by operations of condensation and displacement, from ‘latent dream thoughts’ that have been *suppressed* from consciousness. The motor of transformational operations, which take meaning from latent thoughts and express it disguisedly in manifest contents, is energetic. Freud also postulates that psychic life always has an ‘unfathomable navel’—an energetic wellspring of

meaningfulness not itself translatable into representational meaning, and thus *repressed* from consciousness [10–12].

Freud thus distinguishes his discipline from all other psychological frameworks as the ‘psychology of repression’, and he criticizes any endeavor that begins by giving credence to the productions of reflective consciousness—that is, any discipline that does not interrogate or deconstruction these productions for what they render unthinkable [13–15]. Concurrent with the discovery of repression came the realization that what the child realizes is most unthinkable are incestuous impulses, which have to be repressed. Repression is thus always associated with oedipality, and the dynamics of suppression and repression are typically active around conflictual matters of sexuality—in this sense, the energies of the unconscious are always erotic or libidinal [10, 15–16].

In three papers published in 1915, Freud systematizes this depiction [17–19]. These are an effort to summarize what he believed he had discovered in the course of nearly two decades of experience with free-association. There are several ways to read these complex papers. One schematic and nonconventional way is as follows. There is an arena of psychic life that is within the purview of representational reflection. This is one definition of consciousness (called ‘secondary consciousness by some scholars). Then, there are representations that have been cast into exile by what I am calling the operations of suppression. They are persistent, as if indefinitely—but not inactively. Rather, they are impactfully insistent in getting their meaningfulness expressed disguisedly in consciousness, indirectly influencing the contents of its purview (in a camouflage generated by the operations of condensation and displacement). Then, there are representations of thoughts, feelings or wishes, so threatening that they are subjected to repression. It is as if they cross what Freud called the ‘repression-barrier,’ losing their representational form but retaining their meaningfulness as traces of psychic energy—in its genesis, this barrier may be understood as the intrapsychic inscription of the incest taboo. This is a deformation of representation into a meaningful—and embodied—energy trace. Such traces join the energetic source of meaningfulness that Freud in 1900 called the navel of psychic life and ‘the core of our being.’ This energizes the dynamics between what is representationally expressed and suppressed. These then are the findings—formulated by Freud as ‘helpful notions’ rather than disprovable hypotheses—that one arrives at through lived-experience with the method of free-association.

4. The energetics of psychic life

We now come to the most contested and derogated implication of this way of reading Freud’s early writings. Freud’s experiments with the processes of free-association led him to posit a special form of psychic energy that is neither identifiable in terms of neurology nor identical with anything mental (which in this context means representational). In 1913, Freud wrote that he could not avoid the notion of *Trieb* (which we can translate as psychic energy, drive, or desire) as a force ‘on the frontier between the spheres of psychology and biology’ such that ‘psychoanalysis operates between psychology and biology’ [20]. Yet psychic energy impacts and animates both domains.

This is a simple notion that is nevertheless difficult to grasp for those who adhere to the tenets of hard science and the logical empiricist or analytico-referential master discourse of the modern—eurocentric—era. After 1915 (and with the controversial

exception of Freud's 1920 essay), 'drive' in psychoanalytic thinking increasingly comes to refer to forces that are assumed to be innately endowed and inherently biological (in some 'new' models, it is disregarded entirely). Today many practitioners discard the notion altogether.

Even though in 1900 Freud had presented his conjectures about the energetic 'navel' or wellspring of psychic life, his 1915 writings, which elaborate these suppositions, constitute a highly significant break with the precepts of hard science—as indeed he must, on some level, have known [9, 20]. This perhaps explains why so few of his heirs have taken this notion seriously. However, this particular 'helpful notion' now seems profoundly significant and even prescient.

The rigors of hard science require that the existence of things and forces must be empirically demonstrable or logically inferable based on ostensible evidence. Moreover, throughout the modern era (notably since Descartes), science and mainstream philosophy treat axiomatically the binarism that things and forces are *either* material *or* immaterial-mental. Yet Freud's 'helpful notion' of psychic energy meets neither the requirement nor the axiom.

Even though Freud's 1900 publication included his conjectures about the energetic 'navel' or wellspring of psychic life, it is even more evident in his papers of 1915 how much the 'between but within' operations of psychic energy constituted a highly significant break with the precepts of hard science. There are hints that—to some extent—Freud knew this to be the case [9, 20]. The rigors of hard science require that the existence of things and forces must be empirically demonstrable or logically inferable based on ostensible evidence. Additionally, throughout the modern era (notably since Descartes), science and mainstream philosophy treat axiomatically the binarism that things and forces are *either* material *or* immaterial-mental. Yet Freud's 'helpful notion' of psychic energy, with its 'within yet between' functioning, meets neither the requirement nor the axiom. This perhaps explains why so few of his heirs have taken this notion seriously. However, today this particular 'helpful notion' might be seen as profoundly significant and even prescient.

The idea of a 'helpful notion' should be read as meaning one that facilitates psychoanalytic *praxis* (processes that are to be distinguished from the representational maneuvers of psychotherapeutic *procedures*). In this regard, it is unlike a theoretical concept that directs and is adjudicated by application or action—in the objectivistic mode of hard science. Rather, such a notion might be held to facilitate a mode of awareness that guides lived-experience and cannot necessarily be translated into a conceptual reference or representation [4]. The notion of psychic energy is vital to engaging a psycho-*analytic* awareness of the depths of our being-becoming, without the distraction of a preoccupation with the generation of representational formulations. In Freud's pre-1915 thinking, this helpful notion poses as a lifeforce operating within neuronal and representational events, yet going between them, and yet is identical with neither [21–23].

I have argued in previous writings that, in positing the notion of psychic energy, Freud uncovered and became aware of what indigenous (and non-eurocentric) cultures have always acknowledged as both ancient wisdom and ubiquitously present experience. Namely, that there are subtle energy fields and forces that circulate within us and all around us, interconnecting the universe of all that is (and is not). These venerable teachings are conveyed in terms such as *prāna*, *ch'i*, *umoya*, *rukha*, *mana*, *ōd*, and *spirit*. This energy—powerful yet so slight or abstruse as to be impossibly difficult to detect, describe, or comprehend—is what some 'western' philosophers have called the *élan vital*. It is a notion that Freud presents somewhat tentatively up to 1915, but

that then more or less disappears—returning briefly in Freud’s 1920 discussion of the ‘lifeliness’ and ‘deathfulness’ of the movements of *Trieb* [24].

By and large, hard scientists have rejected the notion of psychic energy as unprovable and therefore illusory or delusional—in short, esoteric. However, in recent years, it is remarkable to what extent there has been an acknowledgement of the complexity of the general idea of ‘energy.’ It is being recognized that perhaps the most salient feature of all the prevailing conceptualizations is the difficulty in providing a unified and tenable definition of what it is [25]. In this context, the notion of psychic energy becomes a degree more plausible, perhaps even to a skeptic—the possibility of forces within (and even around) us that the individual might become aware of, but the activities of which cannot be captured in the maneuvers of representational reflection.

Additionally, even within the canon ‘western’ philosophy, greater respect is now being accorded a ‘lineage’ of thinking that runs counter to the assumptions of the mainstream rational-realism. It is perhaps unwarranted to call this a lineage, but the thread that is of interest here are viewpoints that do not require epistemology to be ‘first philosophy’ [26]. One aspect of this is that for changes to occur and to be *aware* of changes does not require that what is changing can be represented or translatable into representation. Accordingly, *conscious* activities, in the reflectively representational sense of this term—are not ‘at the helm’ (which corresponds to Freud’s warning that the ego can never be ‘master’ in its own house). In the ‘western’ tradition, this ‘lineage’ of thinking extends from the pre-Socratic (Anaximander, Heraclitus, Empedocles) and the Stoics, via underappreciated philosophers such as Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Leibniz, to 19th and 20th century writers such as Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri-Louis Bergson, Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze [5, 8].

Freud’s discoveries must be comprehended as falling within this lineage. The free-associative praxis of psychoanalysis comprises a movement of change within an erotic field of subtle energies. Such processes cannot be grasped within our capacity for reflective representationality. They are not epistemologically driven. Rather, they comprise a lived-experience that is ontological or, more precisely, ontoethical. In short, if this ‘spiritual-existential’ way of reading Freud’s revolutionary discoveries is given credence, and then, the processes of psychoanalytic praxis must be understood an ontoethical prioritization of lived-experience, free-associative discourse, and helpful notions such as those of psychic energy, repression, and the fundamentality of our erotic embodiment.

5. Conclusions

My interest here has been on Freud’s labors as the father-figure who—so to speak—mothered his discipline into existence. Like most, perhaps all, mothers, he initiated it, nurtured it, defended it, stood-up for it, and—in certain specific respects—betrayed it. However, to the end of his life in 1939 and despite all the work he did after 1915 constructing grand theoretical frameworks of metapsychology, he did remain very clear that free-associative speaking and listening are the *sine qua non* of psycho-analysis. He was also convinced that psychoanalysis would be resisted—not only because radical free-association is frightening, but also because it leads inexorably both to the unconscious-as-repressed and to the fundamentally erotic energies that underlay all our cognitive, affective, and conative activities. Despite his lucidity

and prescience in these respects, this clarity did not prevent Freud from generating theoretical models that point the discipline in a profoundly different direction.

Before 1915, Freud knew that it could be the fate of psychoanalysis to ‘disturb the peace of the world’ [27]. In 1913, he articulated quite clearly his vision of the destiny of his discipline as a ‘conflict with official science’ [20]. Yet despite these insights, he remained enthralled with hard science, courted credibility in that context, and became increasingly preoccupied with the construction of theoretical frameworks that both are articulated in a manner that is quite distant from the lived-experience of free-associative discourse and are encouraging of the assessment of his discipline as if it were primarily epistemological.

I have suggested that, in relation to the revolutionary beginnings of his discipline, there is a sense in which—especially during and after World War I—Freud betrayed some of his own best insights into the human condition and the method of liberatory change. Yet as a not-unfair generalization, it can be noted how much ‘new models’ of psychoanalysis (some of which Freud himself initiated, many by his successors) have extended this retrogressive development toward what are, essentially, pre-Freudian ways of thinking. Of course, the cleverest maneuvers of resistance always brand themselves as loyal acts of conformity and the deferential expansion of what the ‘master’ initiated—even while they ignore the most uncomfortable lessons that the master once taught.

We could consider here: structural-functional (ego psychological) theories, object-relational theories, self-psychological theories, social-relational theories, and linguistic-structural theories. Unless we agree to use the term ‘psychoanalysis’ profligately—to encompass any conversation that delves into thoughts, feelings, and wishes—then it must be conceded that the discipline is in crisis. Indeed, it has splintered so licentiously that to refer to it as a singular endeavor is empty and otiose. I doubt that there is remedy for this. Rather, it seems warranted that psychoanalysis, as the method to which Freud introduced us, be rediscovered.

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Author details

Barnaby B. Barratt
Parkmore Institute (www.parkmoreinstitute.org), Wilmington, Delaware, USA

*Address all correspondence to: drbarnabybbarratt@yahoo.co.za

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Chapter 2

The Psychoanalytic Crisis: The Place of Ego in a Contemporary World

Valeska Kouzak Campos Da Paz and Erika Reimann

Abstract

Psychoanalysis rose at the end of the nineteenth century as a possibility of reintegrating the mind and body. This came up as proposing a theory that empirically demonstrates that emotions create symptoms in the body. Psychoanalysis introduces a subject moved by desires, governed by the unconscious. Since then, in a dialectic perspective, search and offer to society a counterpoint view of current thought, offering new insights and reflection, bringing enlightenment of what is obscure in individuals' internal life. The contemporary psychoanalytic crisis comes from conflict avoidance, not worrying in the integrative view, falling into a trap of "politically correct," that is, accepting what is advocated, without questioning, not putting on the agenda the obscure side effects in human beings, the Unconscious. Therefore, in a psychoanalytic theoretical perspective, this chapter has the aim to reflect about the psychic suffering inside a body identity, without getting into sociological and anthropological meanings about the shaping of social identity. This study seeks to present the psychic suffering of the unidentified body, which not always will find resolution in an aesthetic procedure that might be belonging to a fantasy and identity recognition.

Keywords: identity, unconscious, narcissism, paranoid-schizoid position, depressive position

1. Introduction

"I mean Negative Capability, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason" John Keats (1817)

Psychoanalysis emerged at the end of the nineteenth century as a possibility of reintegration between body and mind. From an empirical perspective, psychoanalysis demonstrates that emotional aspects interfere in the body, producing symptoms. The human being is presented as a subject of desire and ruled by unconscious thought. This knowledge was built by Sigmund Freud [1] in analyzing hysterical patients, provoking a revolution in Cartesian thinking from that time. The Freudian subject goes beyond the rational, which was studied and reached by The Age of Enlightenment.

Therefore, psychoanalysis brings a new possibility of treatment to a patients' burden. Psychoanalysis is presented as healing through talking, that is, it gives place to emotional expression through signs.

Freud [2] also introduces a being with ambivalent drives, life and death, a being reigned by desire. He highlights that the psychic structure is developed in the family context, between the first object relations of the baby, that is, with their mother and father or caregivers [3]. Thus, the family context is the child's first social place, in which the baby becomes a body in the world, and the world's action over that body shapes a history in it. In this way, the game between biology and society is established, once that baby's perception about what it receives is influenced by innate factors [4].

With regard to the psychoanalytical crisis, the question in mind is not the science itself, but rather those who represent it. Hence, given that psychoanalysis endorses a human being with instincts, desire, phantasy, and affection, who are dealing with an external reality. And, as ambivalents beings, they need limits to live in society [5].

Psychoanalysis does not have the intent to be "politically correct," once that it seeks to bring to light the obscure side of human beings, in order to be seized, understood, and developed. When we become trapped in the social discourse, we are denying the affective ambivalence, the anguish of helplessness that rose since birth trauma [2], in face of fragility of the human body and which accompanies life in its relation with reality [6].

When psychoanalysts become speechless ahead of a movement that is growing massively with identitary questions, with countless definitions, denouncing a huge egoic split in search for integration made from the outside to the inside, we can say there is a crisis in psychoanalysis.

Humans are primarily biological beings, with individual physical characteristics. The mind arises from our body with the parents or caregivers' intermediation, who names the external and internal world of their children [7, 8].

Biology brings objective aspects that guide the actions of those who take care of the baby, who is born with a body that has characteristics of skin color, weight, sex, etc. This information guides parents and society about their roles and expectations over this subject. The baby is born as a social being when it registers inside a familiar and cultural boundary that defines where one came from, which family one belongs to, and how to interact with the world [4, 9]. Those expectations might bring consequences on many levels, from disastrous to wonderful. Consequently, these biological bodies will develop according to cultural-context influences and according to its internal perception about what is received [10]. The projection and introjection are moving inside the baby's internal world, allowing the possibility of emotional development.

Biological development also depends on interactions with the environment. That is, the plasticity of the nervous system depends on what is offered as stimuli to the baby, which goes from emotional regulation to cognition [11, 12]. This new member of the family leads to countless fantasies in their parents. The first contact that they have with the baby is with its body, in which it will be recognized and known by them. Parents will be in contact for the first time with the real baby, who is different from their fantasies [13, 14]. The baby's sex also will interfere with parental fantasies, that is, it will move the internal world of those who will receive it in the external world.

Presently exists the defense of a neutral gender, which makes us reflect about the formation of Ego in the contemporary world. We observe a risk in denying a human being's external biological reality and denying the importance of others' look over a body.

We live in a social moment where one may be/have almost everything through technology. It might be possible to change our body to a different sex, changing our phenotypical characteristics, denying genotypical issues. However, the emotional difficulties require an internal place to welcome and understand them.

In 1911, Freud [15] presented his famous case of Dr. Daniel Paul Schreber, former president of Saxon Court of Appeal, who in his years of psychiatric internment wrote: “Memoirs of my nervous illness” [16]. This renowned judge described in his book paranoid delusions, which allowed the first psychoanalytic discussion about psychoses, demonstrating how a body deconstruction is linked to an egoic disintegration.

Therefore, the present chapter has the objective to highlight a topic that seems obscured by what is “politically correct” inside the same psychoanalytic circle, in which we cannot think about what is behind transsexuality, body mutilation, and moreover, the sexual organ, which identifies humans with their internal parents. The search for physical alteration has increased a lot [17] and is being accepted as something regular. We see it as barbarian when sexual transition is encouraged in children, who are still in psychic and physical development.

We notice a lack of recognition of the psychic suffering, which might indicate a disconnection with the body. We also see a denial of looking at narcissistic identity suffering that is in the center of the question when you want to become somebody else.

In what follows, we will go through the formation of Ego and the symbolic process, in order to understand the narcissistic identity suffering inserted at the search of a social naming to define identity. Also, we will attempt to understand the meaning of transsexuality and how this theme might be brought to a psychoanalytic clinical setting. So, is there a crisis in psychoanalysis? What is the place of the analyst in the contemporary world?

2. The formation of ego

Garcia-Roza [18] calls attention to the fact that the Freudian Unconscious was a true rupture in relation to early understanding of the concept, taking into consideration that Freud was not the first to speak about this concept. The biggest novelty was the affirmation of the Unconscious as a decisive factor to subjectivity and consequently the subversion of the subject notion that would find expression in the elaboration of the first topic of Freudian theory, that is, at the conception of a split subjectivity, marked by the dialectical articulation between two intricate psychic systems.

As psychoanalytic theory advances, especially in conjunction with the second topical elaboration, the vision about subjectivity acquires more complexity in a way that goes beyond the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious. Psychoanalytic theory creates a model of personality articulated in three psychic instances—Id, Ego, and Superego—which indicates, as Laplanche and Pontalis [19] point out, the emergence of an intersubjective field conceived in the molds of intersubjective relationships, that is, where the psychic instances act as internalized “subjects” (objects).

Freud, in his reflection about the character of Ego in the text *The Ego and Id* [20], assumes the existence of a certain heterogeneity or gradation in the constitution of this psychic instance, adding complexity to the structure of the Ego. Freud argues that this internal differentiation has a strict relation with the mechanisms of identification, in a sense that this makes the Ego altered by processes of internalization of

objects that passed through intense libidinal investment. In other words, the mechanisms of identification would be a constitutive process of Ego. Consequently, the classical Freud affirmation states “the character of the Ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains the history of those object-choices” [20].

The father of psychoanalysis supports that the identification and the object cathexis happened at the same time; hence, the Ego assumes to itself certain object characteristics in a transformation process from object libido to narcissistic libido [21]. By carefully analyzing this process, Freud notes a certain tendency of Ego fragmentation due to numerous identifications and questions himself about the power of those identifications that happen in the early childhood or the primary identification. Such identifications would have a special character in a sense that is independent of id object cathexis. The primary identification would happen in a direct way, being influenced by the triangular nature of Oedipal complex and by the constitutional bisexuality of the individual.

Klein [22] went even further, after extensive study of the primitive mind, developing a theory of positions, which involved the paranoid-schizoid position and depressive position. She defends a constellation of anxieties, defenses, and internal and external object relations specific to each position. Therefore, the infants after the birth do not differentiate themselves from their mothers, and they are considered an extension of their mother’s breasts. When the baby has a good experience, the breast becomes a good breast (love), and when the breast is not present or does not satisfy their needs, the breast becomes a bad breast (hate); this is the paranoid-schizoid position. At this moment, the infant lives a complete fusion, where there is no differentiation of what is inside and outside, from what is one or another. Omnipotence and idealization are important aspects of this activity as well as the splitting. Klein assumes the very young infant to have a rudimentary Ego, although unintegrated.

At the entrance of a third in the relationship, the infant starts to realize its dependence on another outside, the mother starts to be recognized as another and separate from “I.” At this moment starts the depressive position. The feelings are characteristically ambivalent; hate being transformed by the infant’s own love into remorse. Typically, the anxiety that is felt is a fear of damaging a loved one. Objects become threatened, or damaged, and that brings out concern for their suffering. Relationships with objects then begin to allow more separateness; less control (omnipotence) is demanded. And defenses that operate against anxiety and remorse are different from the primitive and violent ones previously described against the paranoid fear of being persecuted.

Since the beginning of life, human beings need to deal with ambivalence: life and death. The deflection of death drive would be the first projection, the most primitive mechanism of the internal world in front of helplessness generated by the birth trauma. The infant’s body internal and external perceptions are anxious to the rudimentary psychic apparatus. The infant mind creates primitive defense mechanisms to deal with the anxiety arising from these feelings (good/bad breast, life/death). These primitive relations are the first identifications with external objects. Klein does not give as much importance to mothers’ emotional development as the precedents Bion and Winnicott. Although she has talked a lot about the environmental context, she kept the attention to the infant’s internal world, together with several innate emotions, that will allow or not the good fruition of the good internalized object [23].

Ogden [24] argued about Winnicott’s idea that a baby does not exist separate from a mother’s provision, and at the same time mother and baby are separated individuality [25]. And yet, Bion [26] and Rosenfeld [27] traced their own understanding about

mother-baby relationship under the conception of projective identification as an unconscious interpersonal psychology in which mother and baby think together at the same time that remain separate since the first year of life.

Winnicott, Bion, and Rosenfeld [25–27] highlight the importance of mothers in the infant's psychic constitution, that is, the development of children's psychological life is not conceived only in terms of infant individual progress, but also in terms of a bond created by mother and baby. The initial unconscious fantasies of the baby are supported in its primitive mind, in the mother's psychological mature life and in the interaction of both. Thus, in this perspective, the mother as a developmental context includes the mother as an environment for the baby, but also the mother as functional aspects, such as the metaphoric interior of the baby mind built by two [28].

To Winnicott, the mother's look is the life's mirror to the baby. By handling and holding, the baby understands the world and sees themselves projected in the mother's desire. Therefore, the mother's affective expression helps the baby to understand their own identity, to separate themselves, and to live [25].

Consequently, the importance of dealing with reality, the emotional maturation, and the consequent integration of Ego (good and bad together, bringing the idea of human incompleteness), the perception and acceptance of an internal object, which is separated from Ego and might be respected and loved, as happens in the differentiation in breast, in the depressive position, helps the development of the negative capability [29], that means to tolerate the uncertainties, in accepting the unknown as integrant part of life, which inside the analytic setting might be represented as not known. The daily search is the resultant of this first relation, that is, deal with the pleasure principle versus reality principle without draining out of what is good inside.

The principle of reality is a modification of the pleasure principle. The origin of thought resides in the process of testing the fantasy (mental expression of instinct) against reality. The fantasies derive from instinct in the frontier between the somatic and psychic activity, so, the fantasies might be lived somatically or mentally, being the beginning of emotional life, of infant world. The fantasized objects and their satisfaction are lived as physical experiences, the reality moment in interaction with the unconscious fantasies and the memory traces are incorporated in mental life; they are changed by reality contact, conflict, and maturation. Consequently, the mind develops from the body [30].

3. The symbolic process

According to Freud, the mechanism of sublimation referred to the plasticity of drive and about the capability of the psychic system in converting energy initially destined to direct motor discharge in more accepted social actions [31]. This line of thought opens a question about the nature of representation, and considering the technical psychoanalytical preponderance in the use of word as a symbol or verbal representation, Freud reflects about the word's characteristic and function, adopting a descriptive point of view.

Therefore, Freud [2] works about the function and characteristic of representation in the field of memory, articulating two dimensions of the concept: the Thing representation, related to the unconscious system, and Word representation, related to the preconscious system and conscious. Besides that, to Freud, representation and motor discharge were an exclusionary process. So if representation happens, then no motor discharge will be involved. The Freud's systematization launched the basis to think

about the symbolic formation process, especially, in the context of verbal language, with lower consideration about forms of representation, except by dream. It is from this point that the Kleinian thought took another direction.

To Klein [22], children developed the capability to symbolize early as a way to deal with situations of anxiety, highlighting the role of symbolizing as a defensive resource. This capability rose from very early stages of life, and its first activities would be related to body experience. In other words, the children's experiences in relation to body parts would be their first stimulus to create an archaic form of mental representation, which constitutes elements that are fundamental to posterior elaborations.

When thinking about the construction of emotional development, it became necessary to understand the unconscious fantasies. Isaacs [30] proposed a different writing to the term fantasy to differentiate from conscious. In his text, Isaacs endorses the definition of Rivière over *phantasia* as "the subjective interpretation of experience." Isaacs also suggests that the activity of *phantasia* constitutes the early symbolic function consciously and unconsciously, in that the experience is meaningful to the subject that understands/interprets it.

To Ogden [28], the unconscious *phantasia* is the first form of thinking. He concludes that *phantasia* is the creative process of meaning, it is the form in which all the meaning, including feelings, defense mechanism, impulse, body experience exist in unconscious mental life. So, it is understood that unconscious *phantasia* is a force in the development of the internal world. Thus, the primary object, the mother (caregiver) has an enormous contribution to the way of dealing with others and with one's own body.

It is with the ground of archaic representations connected to its own organic workings that the child will experience its first relation with the external constitutive world, at this moment, through the mother's body. Klein [32] states that success or not in this stage will determine the relation between the external child's world and its counterpart with reality. Specifically, Klein argues that the child's primary reality possesses a fantasmatic character and that the path to true reality would come with the development of Ego. Such development is driven by the anxieties arose from this first relation and its measure defined by the capability to support them. This capability is related to the symbolic formation process and by the settlement of a fantasy life, being both dependent on an optimal amount of anxiety to develop.

Thus, the symbolic formation is configured as a primary resource that constitutes at the same time a way for life expression, fantasy, and a defensive strategy to deal with anxieties, according to Klein's studies on the field of defense mechanism. At the next developmental stages will be the intensity of intrinsic affective ambivalence with the primary objects that boost the infantile psychic searching for new objects by symbolic processes. Those objects will be represented by primary objects and inherit the relational dynamic established with them. Therefore, is this legacy that will make the child keep zooming into its symbolic world, maintaining constant the search for new objects in order to escape the anxieties rooted in the affective ambivalence for the primary objects [33].

Segal [34] accomplished a distinction between symbolic formation process and symbolic equation, denoting its relation with two forms of psychic functioning. To Segal, the symbolic formation would port the true symbolism, in the sense that this is known as such, that is, with an object that occupies the place of another without being another. The true symbolic has its own characteristic and amplifies the representation ability, being able to condense representation of diverse objects simultaneously.

Thereby, it is understood that the symbolic formation has an evolutionary character that acts as a force in permanent expansion.

In the text “Notes about the symbol formation,” Segal [35] indicates the importance and contribution of Jones [36], where he defends that “a desire, coming from a conflict, has to be abandoned, repressed, and might express the symbolic mode, and the object of desire that has to be abandoned can be substituted by a symbol.”

The author developed her theory from the beginning of mental life, that is, the anterior moment to repression. Afterward, she starts from the principle that the first interest and children’s impulses are driven by the parents body and to its own, and the existence of those objects and child’s impulses in the unconscious that provide origin, by symbolization, to all other interests [35].

The beginning of those physical sensations when unpleasant are felt by the infant as persecuted objects, would the external world attack it, that is, projection. These sensations are the origin of primary *phantasies*, as well as pleasurable experiences. Therefore, the primary unconscious *phantasia* is the psychic representation of drive [37].

The symbolic equation is the first mental moment to develop a symbolic formation, in other words, in this moment the symbolic-substitution of the original object is felt as the proper object. It is used to deny the absence of an ideal object or control the persecutory object. Remembering that this moment is inserted in the esquizo-paranoide position, that is, there is no differentiation between external and internal world, neither between Ego and external object. There is also at this moment a predominance of the omnipotence fantasy, object control, among other primitive defense mechanisms [38].

On the other hand, the symbolic equation also could be located in the pathological projective identification, in a way that the new object would receive the integral projection of the primary object, not preserving its own characteristic. This emptiness or obliteration makes that the new object can be perceived as its own primary object and get all the loaded conflict and anxiety. Thus, the object taken by symbolic equations does not suit as an instrument of primary resource expansion or defensive Ego capability. On the contrary, it establishes a closed circle in that new objects are totally identified with primary objects, multiplying the sources of anxiety and impoverishing the Ego’s resources to deal with difficulties. By its strong correlation with the projective identification mechanism, it is noticed that the symbolic equation integrates the function mode of paranoid schizoid position. Therefore, the symbolic equation is linked to a concreteness while the symbolic formation is the capability to think, create [37–40].

From a contemporary perspective, Cintra [41] reflected that the repeated elaboration of depressive positions is necessary for life, because this is made of constantly objects lost and found next, in a new form. Those elaborations can be translated into symbolic processes that involve the continuous search for new objects as a defensive strategy to deal with anxiety. The new search movement implies the abandonment, in a certain way, of the anterior object. Consequently, it is part of the symbolic formation process, the fortification of the capability to deal with loss and create new paths to emotional experience.

Ribeiro [42] presents a theoretical articulation based on two key concepts—narcissistic trap [43] and symbiotic illusion [44]—united by the expression “empire of the same,” described by Jacques Andre [45]. This expression, although, did not work as a concept, points out to a constant challenge in the mother and daughter relation, which involves the unfinished psychic work of frontiers’ elaboration against the risk of fusion and the different needs. To be cited:

“The empire of the same navigate by narcissistic water, in which the differentiation, the frontier between me and the other are not welcome guests. It resembles the projective identification by the frontiers erasure, as in the communication mind character, as in a more pathological way. The similarity between mother and daughter seems to generate pathways of facilitation for narcissistic trap, as a formation of a double.”
(p. 59)

The narcissistic trap [43] and symbiotic illusion [44] are deeply related and reveal nuances of the same phenomena related to “The empire of the same.” Specifically, the narcissist trap refers to the double formation, phenomena stated by Freud [46] in the text “The Strange” in 1919. To Freud [46], the formation of a double reveals an accentuated process of identification, in which the subject lost the other, by the confusion between identitary frontiers, or by the self-adoption of Ego from another as itself. Ribeiro [42] asserts that the double is easily found in clinical setting and might be formed by mother and daughter, son and father, brothers of the same sex.

Therefore, when it is thought on the diversities of possible identities presently, it might be possible to question if the symbolic formation of the subject could be against wavering symbolism and narcissism in which the other could be an Ego extension of parents or even the physician.

Roudinesco [47] points out that the evolution of the concept related to gender identity brought changes to the form in which body and subjectivity are seen, which can be observed by the radicalism between biological and social, excluding the transit between these two realities. That is, from the end of the cold war and the advances of existentialist philosophy, it established an idea that the biological body is not preponderant over culture, and some experiments were conducted to prove this argument. It can be cited that the study conducted by John Money [48], who was influenced by this thought and was determined to prove that gender is built by social experiences finding the perfect individual for that, a child, D.R., who has a lesion on his penis after a phimosis surgery. Money convinced the boy’s parents to change his name, pronoun and conducted the testicle ablation surgery, raising the child as she. However, during teenagehood, D.R. starts to identify himself as male and decides for a penis reconstruction surgery unfortunately, facing burden and chirurgical traumas, he committed suicide.

The example above is a portrait of how denying the biological reality over a social desire can be dangerous, inflicting subject to become lord of the self, to the point of not integrating the parts that are perceptually recognized for a sake of subjective domination, that is, a denial of the reality principle and appreciation of a fantastic and magic world.

Considering that the society becomes the sovereign of others, over to the empire of the same, how might this other individual build a symbolic identity in this place that imposes a subjective recognition above corporal recognition? In other words, the subject easily becomes the target of Ego projection from another. Therefore, what is supposed to be a symbol of freedom became a prison or a fusion of other’s projection.

4. Transsexuality

The diagnosis of gender dysphoria presented by the DSM-V was an attempt to de-pathologize transsexuality, which was classified as a disorder of gender identity in the previous manual. This transition in diagnosis is marked by a classification that is

justified in the name of health, which favors insurance programs and at the same time brings “normalization” to the diagnostic. According to the new criteria of DSM-V, the gender dysphoria can be defined as: “a strong desire to be free from one’s primary and/or secondary sexual characteristics, because of a marked incongruence with one’s experience/ expressed gender,” and “a strong desire to be of the other gender” and additionally “a strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reaction of the other gender.” Besides that, it also states that “is associated with clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning” [49].

The diagnostic changes mark a medical effort in medicalizing the transsexually and consequently proposing a way to treat it. From that idea that the gender nature has to do with something subjective and from a symbolic order distorted, mischaracterizing the symbolic formation along the development with concepts that validate the normalization of transsexuality. Thus, in a rush to satisfy parents’ wishes and their own medical service, an interruption of the physiological process is proposed in order to facilitate surgical procedure.

The case Bell versus Tavistock is an example of the new position that is rising against this diagnosis. In 2020, the British Court brings to question if children under 16 years old are able to decide by themselves if they can take hormones suppressants to facilitate in future the sex changing. This case was based on a patient from the Tavistock Clinic that decided with 16 years old to use suppressants and after the transition preferred to return to the biological gender. At last, the Britannic Justice decided that the children under 16 years old hardly have the competence to decide over the use of medication, modifying the conduct line that has been carried out by the only Britannic public health service that offers this treatment [50].

Some psychoanalysts critical to the vision that promotes hormone suppressants in children see the identity problem as requiring a symbolic work, and the body intervention is a mistake, a psychotic solution [51]. According to Bell [52], there are under-explored factors from a social point of view contributing to the current emergence regarding gender dysphoria that includes misogyny internalization, seeing patients as products, and social media influence.

From the epidemiologic point of view, the prevalence of gender dysphoria is from approximately 4.6:100.000 [53], and yet according to that reference there is no correlation with social status, intelligence, or ancestry. However, it is more common a transsexual transition from male to female (6.5%) than a female to male (2.6%), and for children, the literature states that the prevalence is from 1% to 4.7% [17].

Gender dysphoria is correlated to high taxes of affective disorders and anxiety (18–80%), personalities disorder (20–70%), suicidal tendencies, suicide, and self-harm. Consequently, gender dysphoria is a delicate diagnosis that needs extreme caution from development, once in children the gender incongruence fluctuates over time. Children that manifest gender dysphoria might feel comfortable 85% of the time with their gender after adolescence [54].

The Bell versus Tavistock case is a portrait of the crisis that psychoanalysis has been facing in relation to gender identity. Whereas a group is favoring a gender transition for subjects afflicted with the pathology, including the early interventions, another group became critical, as they understood and valued the search for a bigger understanding about symbolic processes from these subjects and how this suffering might indicate that there are other questions about Ego formation.

According to Sakteopoulou [55], the maintenance of children in a non-identity body creates a “massive gender trauma,” which implies an emergence of a trauma from the gender dysphoric experience. What calls the attention is that according

to this author “some psychic conflicts cannot be resolved within the psychic realm, requiring action” [55], escaping from the analyst’s place, that is in search for the subject psychic realm understanding, which implies, many times, in welcoming the anxiety lived in the analytical field.

Osserman and Wallerstein [50] assert that we are witnessing the growth of psychoanalytic literature that validates the access of teenagers and children to medical intervention, medication, and body mutilation, related to gender identity. This is an alert to the anxieties that emerge from analysts to countertransference reactions.

Therefore, while on one side a group is *gender affirmative* and believes that the suffering by feeling in a body that is not their own is severe and so needs an early intervention, on the other side a group is *gender critical* and believes that the early intervention does not give time to explore another aspect that surrounds the identity formation of a child.

The defense of a neutral identity, in which the subject chooses what one’s intend to be, for instance, it is offered to a child the “choose” of how one’s want to be bodily recognized in the world, in a developmental moment that depends on environmental feedback to that end, in order to avoid the suffering that the reality principle brings also may affect the developmental process. According to Winnicott [56], a child is not born alone; therefore, it is a parent and caregiver’s role to protect them, including in face of situations that require mature decisions about the child’s life.

Afterward, it can be said that in order to avoid children’s future suffering, these interventions could stop the development of the identity against inevitable traumas from life, that is, boundaries.

5. The place for the analyst

“In choosing theater as a metaphor, psychic reality was perhaps following in the footsteps of Anna O., who, at the turn of the century, evoked her “free associations”, on the occasion of her treatment with Breuer, as her “private theater”. For the analyst, it is a theater that his patients want to share with him and which he is invited to play in various roles. But, unlike Breuer, who was frightened by the role Anna O. made him play, the analyst tries to observe his own inner theater well and interpret it as best he can before playing his patient’s.” [57]

The term created by those analysts, who want to validate the social speech instead of analytical work, is mistaken by definition when the gender affirmative is the confirmation of gender; however, it is not possible to confirm what is neutral, out of binary, or yet, out of innate human bisexuality defined by Freud in the perverse polymorph sexuality [2]. And put those searching for a work inside the psychoanalytic approach in a delicate position of gender critical, as if thinking about gender was something critical, and maybe it is, critical in a sense, referring to a crisis. It is critical to think about the denying of the body in favor of a psychotic society, that is, the one that has seen the difference of others as an enemy, a persecutor that must be eliminated.

Therefore, the present authors disagree with that term created for those psychoanalysts who value the analytical work, “where there was id, that have an Ego,” that is, the reality principle prevails over the pleasure principle [31].

The “trans” children in this sense do not transit between natural genders, as they are supposed to do in childhood [31]. Given that according to gender affirmative they

must decide prematurely what is their object choice and who will identify concretely with one's body [55].

The analyst's work is trying to be a continent, decoding one's feelings, giving them meaning and names to their emotional experience [58]. Consequently, the analyst work is not work with the concreteness thought [26].

The symbolic formation begins very early, primarily comes the symbolic equation (in paranoid-schizoid position); however, it changes its character and function by the maturation of Ego and objects relation and consequently, Ego integration. The problem of symbolic formation must be always examined in the context of Ego relation with its objects, the analytical work is done by analyst and patient relation [59].

The symbol represents the absence, it can be the presence in the absence too, as long as the Ego develops and integrates, three changes in relation with the object affect the sense of Ego reality: a major consciousness of the ambivalence, the diminish of intensity by the projection, and the increased differentiation between self and the object. By these three processes, the subject might bear the object separation, due to introjection, there is a rise sense of reality, both internal and external. The internal world became different from the external world [20, 23, 60].

In the analytical work, the impotent thought gradually gives place to a more realistic thought. Simultaneously, there is a certain driving primary object modification. The Ego starts worrying to save the object from its own aggression and possess, which implies a certain measure of direct driving object inhibition, both aggressive and libidinal [22].

This situation is a powerful stimulus to a symbol creation, and these acquire a new function that alters its character. The symbol is necessary to move the object originally aggressive and diminish the fault and fear of loss. The symbol here is not an equivalent of the original object, it is only a partial object—once the displacement object is to save it—and the guilt lived in relation to it is lower than those coming from the original object. The symbols are also created by the internal world as a mean to restore, re-create, re-capture, and possess again the original object. Thus, the sexual organ that is presented in the external reality of subject is not only an organ, but also a symbol, and symbolic, full of unconscious *phantasies* [35–39].

Consequently, the capability of living a loss and the desire to re-create the object inside of self gives freedom to the individual unconscious in the symbol's use. And how a symbol is recognized as a subjective creation, differently from the symbolic equation, it might be freely used by its creator. In this sense, the analytical work would come through the expansion of object symbolic sense, allowing the body appropriation [34].

In the symbolic equation, the symbol-substitute is felt as being the original object. The substitutes of their own properties are not recognized or admitted. It is used to deny an ideal object's absence or control a persecutory object [35]. In this individual emotional developmental moment, the lack of body integration could be seen as a failure in this maturation symbolic process. There is no metaphorical thought [37].

The proper symbol available to sublimation and Ego development enablers is felt as representing the object. Its own characteristics are recognized, respected, and used.

The symbolic formation emerges when the depressive feelings prevail over the paranoid schizoid, when the object separation, the ambivalence, the guilt, and the loss can be lived and tolerated [23]. The symbols are not used to deny the loss, but to overcome it.

The contemporary Ego presents a symbolic emptiness, as there is a concreteness solving the self-issues and being in the world. However, the analyst place is the same

since the creation of psychoanalysis, that is, to help the patient to name own anguish, accept own limits in face of external reality without emptying oneself of what possess of good to allow a space to think emotionally and create possibility of change.

Hence, the crisis that is seen today in psychoanalysis is when the “analyst” tries to occupy a place that is not own, but of a socialist, anthropologist, or even a physician, with fast solution and with high acceptance.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the psychoanalytic crisis brings a reflection on the role of the analyst in a contemporary world, which can lose in some moments the historical dimension of the knowledge by theory in the function of a social narrative acceptance and a globalized politics to not live the anxieties in the countertransference relation, which leads to an acting-out position of the analyst in the analytic setting and outside it.

From that, there are two groups, those who want to take action represented by this analytical approach and those who demand reflection, searching for analytical work to help the patient to cope with the psychic burden.

Nowadays, the analyst’s anxieties about being part of social media might interfere in the investigative and inquisitive work, in order to attend to social demands. It can be argued that the analyst’s narcissism in a world where we are connected and judged all the time, the view is focused on the outside, in trying to reach the ideal Ego. There is no way to please everybody, and this means tolerating the narcissistic wound without the fantasy that one will fall in the anguish of annihilation.

It is necessary to be attentive to the fact that the fear of prejudice does not obscure the psychic suffering that is behind the corporal issues. Consequently, this work has not the intent to question the existence of a diagnosis or a pathology, but rather to reflect on the analyst place and counterbalance the procedures that are being imposed as parameters and are referenced as “gold standard” with protocols that many times withdraw the subjective identity in favor of a rule of how this individuality must act in the world. Therefore, we think that analysts have a role in questioning the medicalization of identity, in order to assist the subject in its broad spectrum, to be precise, in its full identity.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author details


Valeska Kouzak Campos Da Paz^{1*} and Erika Reimann²

1 University of Brasília—Unb, Brasília, Brazil

2 Centro Universitário de Brasília-UniCEUB and Sociedade de Psicanálise de Brasília-SpBsb, Filiate to International Psychoanalytical Association-IPA, Brasília, Brazil

*Address all correspondence to: valeskakouzak@gmail.com

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Section 2

Psychoanalysis and Brain Sciences

Chapter 3

Free Association, Synchrony, and Neural Networks as Evolutionary Exponents in Psychoanalysis

Andrei Novac

Abstract

The author is proposing a reexamination of our own attitude toward psychoanalysis in modern society. Free association remains a fundamental psychoanalytic technique that has been reported to have separate curative functions. Deconstruction and reconstruction of the human thought process; the reshaping of implicit memory; and the aspects of an individual's self have all been linked to spontaneous thought and free association. Additionally, neuroscience has revealed that very different and complex neural networks (default mode network, interacting variably, with the executive cortex, etc.) are at play in all these “mental reshaping” processes. Taken together, contemporary psychoanalysis, similar to ancient forms of meditation, stream of consciousness, and the creative process itself in different fields, constitutes evolutionarily based natural processes that are meant to allow for the creation of adaptive thoughts. This, in turn, allows for the creation of solutions in life, mental/psychological survival, and social adaptation. The author will conclude with recommendation for further integration of different schools of thought into a unified understanding of psychoanalytic change, in view of nonlinear dynamics in complex system theory.

Keywords: free association, neural networks, deconstruction of thoughts, self-adaptation, implicit identity narrative

1. Introduction

As part of a process of epistemic expansion in psychoanalysis, besides a long-standing relationship with philosophy, many authors have created dialogs with other disciplines, over the past decades. The humanities, attachment, developmental studies, and ethnic and gender identity studies are only few fields that are currently contributing to the creation of diversity in our field. As a discipline, neuropsychanalysis has been officially founded in 2000, but it has reflected the rapid development of neuroscientific research and the need for a dialog between brain sciences and psychoanalysis. In fact, such a dialog can be traced back to Freud's “Project” and “On Aphasia.” In this chapter, I will be covering the “interface,” the intersection and interaction at the border of a variety of concepts in psychoanalysis. I will begin with some of the previously presented ideas on free association (FA), as an enduring basic concept, the ground rule (i.e., *Grundregel*), and its relationship to thought deconstruction, reconstruction, and therapeutic change

in psychoanalysis. I will then propose that the primal repressed (PR) and synchrony be considered as subjects of our future exploration, from a neuropsychanalytic point of view.

2. Evolution as manifested in thought process

In a contemporary context, FA can be seen as a representative of a variety of ancient practices that have promoted mental and physical health [1]. In the same vein, we have found culturally and religiously sanctioned techniques in every culture that are known to promote health [2]. From the prayer of the heart, the rosaries, Jewish davening to different forms of meditation in Hindu, Buddhist, and Zen traditions, they all promote the triggering of the relaxation response [2], a form of altered states of consciousness that accesses semi-trans and vagal tone enhancing [3] similar to what is experienced at times, on the analytic couch in the process of free association.

While Freud rejected organized religion, he was familiar with Eastern traditions and mysticism in general [4]. Freud was entrenched in German philosophical writing: works by Schopenhauer, who was influenced by Indian Vedantic and Buddhist literature. He corresponded with Girindrasekar Bose, who introduced psychoanalysis in India. He cited *Upanishad* in a footnote of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* [5]. Freud owned a statue of Vishnu, the Indian creator god of laws. Freud was interested in the spirituality of different cultures and had knowledge of the Kabbala. Freud did understand the significant role of mystical experiences in history as an expression of the human mind. He wrote the paper *The Uncanny* [6], about the dread in situations where childish fears and phantasies appear more real than our adult world perception.

Freud first reported in his studies on aphasia that mental activity has dynamic neurological concomitance. This idea of the brain functioned as dynamic and adjustable, inspired by Jacksonian neurology, and constituted inspiration for the founding of psychoanalysis. With it, Freud moved psychology from the realms of philosophy to that of natural science [7]. *On Aphasia* [8] may have served as an inspiration for non-localized dynamic brain function in neurology, creating the basis of psychodynamics for psychoanalysis. This, later inspired Luria, the founder of *Functional Neuropsychology*, is still in use today. As it is well known by now, Freud first used free association (FA) with Frau von N. [9]. However, a closer examination of the text may suggest that prior to that, in studies on hysteria [10], Freud noticed that Elizabeth von R's feelings were cut off from connections of thoughts and the rest of the ideational content of her mind, an early indication for retrieving the "pathological psychical material," by what would later become a free association.

3. A proposed new definition of FA

In a previous contribution, we summarized our understanding into an updated definition of FA, the ground rule of psychoanalysis [1].

Free association is an internally energized emotional cognitive mobility that taps into all forms of memory (episodic, implicit, embodied, and unformulated) and facilitates memory reconsolidation and simulation of future possibilities.

This definition offers a perspective of a process that has a spontaneous side (mediated by the default mode network of the brain—the DMN), which is recruited by an internal activation (mainly by the executive network of the brain—EN), with a

variable expansion. A space of “mobility” that accesses all forms of memories includes vestigial somatic preverbal internalizations. Once activated, such memories undergo a process of *reconsolidation*. This refers to a reshaping of a memory according to the emotional experience from the time of recollection [11–13]. One of the essential features of FA as a form of mobility is the fact that its kinetics may extend from analysand to analyst as a *continuously interactive expandable therapeutic space that is synchronized in time (the “timing”) by a variety of mirroring mechanisms*. The well-known observation that “the patient speaks, and the analyst freely associates” [14, 15] accurately describes the multiple possibilities of entrance into this space of “mobility” of FA.

4. Psychoanalysis as a doctrine of adaptation and growth

4.1 The primal repressed

Freud [16], in his paper on repression, differentiated primal repression from repression proper. The former may not be representable, while the latter is repressed of buried material behind defenses that may surface in the course of psychoanalysis out of the preconscious. Linked to the variability of repression, Green [17] concluded that meaning making that is representable is *preconscious*. Psychoanalysis directly addresses the repression of self-reflection (“self-consciousness”). As a consequence, the unrepresentable, deeply unconscious material, does not surface in language.

In Freud’s terms, the primal repression or the arch-repressed (*Urverdrängung*), which remains un-representable (through language), is tightly linked to drives, *Triebe*, and instincts *Instinkte*. Therefore, Freud’s “unconscious” remains, in Eagles’ terms a “*cauldron full of seething excitations*” [18]. In fact, Derrida [19] further observed that Freud’s psychoanalysis generates, by means of FA, a “breakdown” that deconstructs the representational system that censors the emergence of the repressed [19]. Solms [20], inspired by affective neuroscience, clarified the difference between drives (*Triebe*) to be used as demands that need to be met to create *homeostasis* versus instincts (*Instinkte*), which are innate predictions or activities preprogrammed and reshaped for development and survival. The latter is connected to the seven proto-emotions previously described by Panksepp¹ [21, 22].

Returning to the nineteenth-century Vienna, Otto Weininger, a philosopher and contemporary of Freud, used the term *henid* to refer to fragments of thought [23]. Henids also surface during the creative process [24] and may surface in the course of a psychoanalytic encounter. When noticed, henids may give rise to countertransference reactions related to a sense of impenetrability of an analysand’s mentation. However, in many cases, it is a mutation of a deeper repressed that may find a preconscious association that initially bares limited expressive valence. Yet if carefully examined, henids may give a hint to a much deeper content that necessitates a special empathic exploration.

As it is noticed, the unrepresentable may surface in a variety of verbal and emotional enactments that can be captured nonverbally (by means of a large set of nonverbal mirroring mechanisms of the brain) by the psychoanalyst. Ferenczi [25] reported what he referred to as “thought transference,” an instance when the analyst and analysand experience the same thoughts or similar thoughts. This type of resonance may bare significance, among which is the natural timed mirroring of

¹ Panksepp’s seven proto-emotions/instincts include four positive (SEEKING, PLAY, CARE, and LUST) and three negative (PANIC/GRIEF, FEAR, and RAGE).

mental and emotional content that resurfaces in expressed language. One can expand the understanding of such mechanisms to somatic body mirroring [26], subliminal perceptions by the amygdala [27, 28], or even more complex interpretations in the realm of quantum physics [29–32].

Associations and connectivity may be created with neural stimulation arriving from many areas of sensory input of the Self, both in analyst and analysand. These would include the mirror neuron system [33] and the amygdala [27], which recognizes faces and movements, even below the perceptive threshold. The right amygdala is known to register interaction, facial expressions, and movements at the subliminal level below conscious perception. This is particularly pronounced in individuals with a history of trauma [28]. The olfactory system provides subliminal stimuli from the interacting environment. These are transmitted directly to the frontal cortex and by means of the cortico-subcortical reentrant circuits [34], back to the cortex. Thus, the brain can “see” without knowing, which may be transformed into knowing without seeing [35]. The amygdala and mirror neuron system are not part of the DMN, but they have extensive communications with the subcortical areas of the striatum (basal ganglia) and the nearby thalamus, which provide information from somatic areas [36]. Thus, a subliminal signaling system mapping coordinates of another self exists. This system can provide sudden intrusive thought into the cortex, hence an ability to receive signals that may be mixed with “free” thoughts generated by the wandering mind of the DMN [37]. This may be one of many mechanisms by which one experiences synchrony with someone in relatively close physical or emotional proximity.

Psychoanalytically, Barratt affirms that for primal repression, which does not reveal itself in language [4, 38–40], FA reveals “thing representations,” which are the surface in forms of reactions, affects, or “disruptions” (in Bion’s terms). These are “chasms” that will exist during FA, between representable and meaningful archived memories and traces of the unrepresentable. This will resonate with the analyst’s own approximate internal representation. This is translatable into meaning to different degrees, but sometimes defies interpretations at all [4, 38–40]. In this sense, FA is a complex mechanism of deconstructing the repressed.

The study of the “arch-repressed” or the unrepresentable content links our inquiry to many aspects of mental life and decision-making processes under circumstances of regression. Ideas are tracible to Bergson’s discussion on memory and moral values [41]. Strohminger and Nichols [42], by studying individuals who developed dementia, have found moral traits (honesty) to be preserved with personality in patients with frontal-temporal neurocognitive impairment. In psychoanalysis, this is translatable into preconscious representation [38]. FA, in revealing initially unrepresentable unconscious fragments, may, in fact, address and reach the deep moral layers of consciousness. FA and psychoanalysis act as an onto-ethical discipline that promotes social affiliation and discourse [40]. The arch-repressed, which may reveal itself indirectly through FA (as “things”), may contain some of the ontological coordinates, which are translatable into preconscious representation [38]. Mirroring, mimicking, and imitation in group interaction may function concomitantly to create synchrony as a form of implicit “knowing” within the field of analyst and analysand [43].

4.2 Restructuring mental content

The relationship between FA and internally governing memories is linked to the self-echo, Heidegger’s description of “Being” (Dasein) [44]. Heidegger proposed that

Being (“Da-Sein”) consists of three places: Umwelt (animals and things); Mitwelt or “Mitsein” (human and social world); and Eigenwelt (inner self) [44].

Being (Dasein) “existence” is at the interface between self and “Umwelt” (Environment). In medicine and psychology, *trauma* can be considered a virtual impact between a human self and the environment [45]. The two colliding forces create an impact with an outcome that depends on factors arising from both colliding components: the self and the environment. Leffert [46] has covered extensively Heidegger’s role in inspiring modern thinking in general and existentialism, in particular. (For a more detailed understanding of Heidegger’s work and its influence on modern existentialism, see [46]).

FA may be one mechanism by which *Dasein* is deconstructed and reconstructed in psychoanalysis. For psychoanalysis, FA as a clinical method is of a particular significance as it acts at the interface between mental content of autobiographical memory and other forms of memories related to declarative, episodic, implicit memories of sensations, body memories, procedural, etc.

Thoughts undergo an adaptational mechanism similar to evolution. By means of nonlinear dynamic system processes, thought and script adaptation [1] may follow the rules of evolution. Therefore, thought and script adaptation is comprised of two interactive mechanisms: a) mutation; b) selection, adaptation by *mutation* (reshaping internal scripts in accordance with new environments); and *selection* (eliminating scripts that no longer serve social and personal adaptation). FA operates within a nonlinear dynamic in complex system theory [47]. It is my contention that one of the most significant roles of FA in psychoanalysis is its function to create recombination of thoughts to create new scripts of what we have previously referred to as “identity narrative” (IdN). IdN is a form of an implicit self-narrative [1, 24, 48–50].

Implicit self-narratives (ISN) or identity narratives (IdN) are major implicit memory foundations of identity, developed first in infancy but reshaped adaptively and maladaptively by the environment throughout life. FA in psychoanalysis may rework ISN according to the laws of nonlinear dynamic systems and predictive coding [47, 51, 52]. The analytic setting serves as the environmental holding pattern, which reshapes itself too throughout an analysis.

4.3 Interface, contiguity, and neuroscience

Examining FA in the context of recent brain imaging and cognitive science studies has expanded the horizon of exploration in contemporary psychoanalysis [1, 53–55]. The notion that the brain and mental activity continue during rest has been known and established by neuroscience for many years [56]. Raichel et al. [57] reported the significance of a number of brain areas that remain active during rest in the MRI scanner. Such a task-independent state is associated with the activity of midline structures of the brain [58]. These areas were later referred to as the default mode network (DMN). Subsequent contributions have referred to an entire range of mental activity associated with different degrees of interwoven patterns of activation, between the DMN and the executive network (EN) [53, 59] of the left prefrontal cortex [60].

As functions of the default mode network (DMN) of the brain, the different variants of spontaneous thought activity (STA) include mind wandering, stream of consciousness, creative associations, and FA [61]. Novac and Blinder [1] added free association to the list of spontaneous thought as part of a continuum that contains different levels of voluntary constraint on the thinking process. Based on a review of brain imaging findings, and on work by Bauer et al. [59] in meditators, Novac

and Blinder [1] proposed that meditation, free association, and creative chain free association are on a functional continuum. These mental states share similarities, as they all include different degrees of the functional interplay of the DMN (associated with unrestrained thought) and the EN (associated with cognitive control). They may be linked to creativity and play, which often manifests in back-and-forth oscillation between mental states, resulting in the creation of paradigm shifts [62]. The equivalent neural network activity may result in a downregulation of the DMN, associated in the literature with overall health benefits [1].

5. Future directions

I have presented a summary of more recent contributions that point to the importance of practicing a science of interface in promoting progress of the field of psychoanalysis. Some further recommendations to be considered are as follows:

1. Psychoanalytic institutes would benefit from promoting dialog with a variety of disciplines beyond what has been customary. This may lead to a renewed interest in psychoanalysis from other disciplines.
2. I would submit that psychoanalysis, a discipline that does not have its own research methodology, articulates its commitment and clarity to at least four corners of research in science and humanities:
 - a. The relevant research in psychiatry, psychology, development, and attachment.
 - b. The research in neuroscience and related disciplines.
 - c. Social sciences and humanities.
 - d. The basic sciences, including concepts of theoretical physics (chaos, catastrophe theories, etc.).
5. The need for tolerance, inclusivity, and a multidisciplinary approach in psychoanalysis is self-evident. Foremost, it is the avoidance of the risk of an inter-generational transmission of traumatic training styles among psychoanalysts, which has been perpetrated in the past in some institutes.
6. Psychoanalysis should continue to strive toward being an open system that promotes free expression.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have covered some new directions of exploration of two major areas in psychoanalysis: free association and its link to science and primal repression, an area recognized by Freud but little referred to in recent writings. Gentile [63] has previously pointed to the relationship between free association and democracy. She posits that:

The ironic definitional “rule” of free association was that there was no rule to follow and no one’s rule. If free association was to prevail, the patient had to bypass conventional rules of conventional censorship, ceding herself to the impetus yet also imperial authority to desirous voice, her unconscious desire (p. 21).

Likewise, exploring some of the aspects of the primal repressed systematically may provide access to a variety of sources of intergenerational transmission of traits and information, an area that has been of particular interest in the study of traumatic stress. It is my contention that the only way of promoting an open field of psychoanalysis is by partnering with the investigative and research methodology of other fields and promoting “joint ventures” that would give further legitimacy to a new psychoanalysis. This shall open our field to new generations of psychoanalytic researchers and clinicians alike.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author details


Andrei Novac^{1,2}

1 University of California, Irvine, USA

2 Clinical Associate New Center for Psychoanalysis, Los Angeles, USA

*Address all correspondence to: anovac@uci.edu

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Chapter 4

Psychoanalysis and Psychedelic Psychotherapy – A New Modern Synthesis?

Gita Vaid

Abstract

Our chapter traces the origins of the psychoanalytic method back to experiences of non-ordinary states of consciousness achieved through the practice of hypnosis. Psychedelic medicines have the capacity to reveal hidden aspects of the unconscious mind that include symbolic elements and early organizational structures that correspond to Freud's primary process thinking and which underpin conscious experience. These previously inaccessible layers comprise the building blocks of inner world formation, ideas about the self, and lenses, which serve to organize, construct and shape outer world experience. The chapter describes the signature features and experience of several popular psychedelic agents. Essential theoretical principles and process components found in psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy are elaborated. The author asserts that essential psychoanalytic tenets along with the subjective and intersubjective relational spaces described by Freud, Wilfred Bion and Donald Winnicott correspond to the unique experiential frameworks and psychotherapeutic capacities that can be rapidly achieved and become readily available in psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy. Psychoanalytic principles and technique become supremely relevant, even renewed, within the current climate of interest in psychedelic pharmacology and offers an array of fresh theoretical and practical applications in an emergent field that celebrates human being's inner creativity, relational creativity and innate capacity to heal.

Keywords: psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, inner healing intelligence, primary process, psychedelic signatures

1. Introduction

The profession of psychiatry has been described as a pendulum that swings between “psychological” and “biological” theories and therapies. Over the past several decades, the biological emphasis, narrowly focused on the diagnosis and pharmacological treatment regimes, has largely disappointed and failed to yield anticipated results. The advent of psychedelic psychotherapies provides a notably interesting and useful synthesis of the psychological and biological perspectives. Psychedelic medicines modulate neural systems, induce brain plasticity and potentiate learning. The brain is hence primed and receptive for psychotherapy to

be especially impactful and potent. The skills and knowledge that derive from the psychoanalytic tradition not only provide a comprehensive system and treatment process relevant to psychedelic psychotherapy but also offer a unique opportunity for psychoanalytic theory and technique to be modified and applied to a treatment context that, similar to psychoanalysis, recognizes the intrinsic healing potential of non-ordinary states of consciousness.

The so-called non-ordinary states of consciousness have been utilized in healing practices in virtually every civilization for millennia. Shamanic healing, naturally occurring (spontaneous) mystical experience, yoga practice, meditation, pranayama and trance, at times enhanced with the use of naturally growing psychotropic plants, represent a mere scattering of approaches and paths through which intrinsic healing potentials are activated within healing rituals and practice.

The origins of psychoanalysis itself can be traced back to experiences of non-ordinary consciousness through the practice of hypnosis. Sigmund Freud was introduced to this treatment modality in 1885 while studying with Charcot and Bernheim in Paris [1, 2]. In Vienna, Freud's friend and colleague, Joseph Breuer, used hypnotic techniques to regress hysterical patients to uncover the underlying origin of the symptom. Breuer discovered that a strong emotional reaction and release of forgotten traumas would often eliminate hysterical symptoms; the technique was coined "the cathartic method." It was through these early explorations that Freud postulated the presence of an unconscious mind. Freud speculated that hysterical symptoms contained protective functions as well as symbolic meaning, and he consequently argued that symptoms needed to be respected and not indiscriminately removed. Freud felt the process of hypnosis, even when effective, offered limited insight into the mechanisms of symptom formation themselves and, by extension, of the underlying conflicts that are resolved in symptom expression. However, the radical discovery that Bernheim's hypnotic method could actually recover lost memories allowed Freud to draw inferences regarding dream formation: "In a dreamer too the lost knowledge about his dreams is present, though it is inaccessible to him so that he himself does not believe it, it is not something entirely out of the blue" [3]. Freud quickly moved beyond hypnosis to develop the free association technique in which obstacles to free expression were worked through to reveal unconscious fantasies and wishes. This methodology endowed the analytic subjects with greater autonomy, and the therapeutic relationship became the central vehicle for the unconscious fantasies and wishes to be actively revived, experienced and re-lived through the drama of transference. The treatment elements such as frequent sessions, the use of a couch to promote reverie and the capture of inherent regressive forces activate the treatment situation. "Subconscious" material, dreams and fantasy expressions emerge under the analytic method's deliberate tilt away from conscious, censored thought processes. This technique essentially promotes the non-standard, deeper levels of conscious experience that color, shape and animate everyday life.

The Canadian psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond coined the term *psychedelic*, derived from the Greek word meaning "mind manifesting," to describe the inherent ability of psychedelic compounds to bring hidden aspects of the unconscious mind into conscious experience. Psychedelics induce changes in the matrix of perception, emotion and self-awareness. It has been speculated that these compounds act to inhibit the default mode network in the brain, a set of brain regions more active during rest than during the execution of goal-directed tasks. It is speculated that more dreamy states of awareness such as those encountered during a psychedelic experience, REM sleep and temporal lobe epilepsy represent an earlier style of cognition

that is qualitatively different than normal cognition [4]. This form of cognition corresponds to Freud's primary process of thinking, which is symbolic in nature and characteristic of an immature ego where representations take place by allusion or analogy, where memory or ideas may be used to stand for a whole, and *vice versa*. Several different thoughts may be represented by a single thought or image. Verbal representations here are less exclusive, and visual or sensual impressions may appear instead of a word, paragraph or entire chapter. A sense of linear time does not exist; past, present and future are one [5]. Primary process thinking is poetic and fluid and reveals sense impressions, symbol formation and early organizations of sensual and emotional experience. These building blocks create a unique creative vocabulary and poetic palette of representations for inner world formation and enrichment. Ideas about the self and the worldly surround are built on tapestries of fantasy, symbolic representation and belief that defy logic and reason and are instead linked by creative similarities typically encountered in childhood thinking and ideation [6]. It is these elements that provide the substrates of dreams and become the ingredients of the organizational structures and lenses through which we perceive and construct our sense of self and the world.

Recent neuroimaging studies propose theories of how and why the mechanisms of action of classical psychedelic medicines on the serotonin 2A receptor induce a heightened brain state for transformation. It has been speculated that up-regulation of this system, modulated through the binding on the receptor, might prime a "pivotal mental state" that is hyper-plastic for brain and mind states, and provide an enhanced rate of associative learning with the potential for enhanced psychological transformation [7]. Another speculation involves developmental *critical periods* that mark points of exquisite sensitivity to environmental inputs. Psychedelic medicines, it is suggested, may remove the brakes on adult neuroplasticity to catalyze a state in which critical neurodevelopmental windows are reopened [8].

All of these theories of brain activation capture the unique perceptual field that is accessed during a psychedelic session. Within these states, access to early life experience becomes available through symbolic representations and unique modes of knowing. The opening of these critical developmental windows can render a mind exquisitely sensitive to inputs from the treatment setting, permit a privileged set of conditions for exploration and discovery, and present novel perceptions and opportunities for impactful corrective experience. The psychotherapist, in turn, becomes available as a new object to be introjected for both enrichment and repair, but also as a *companion* to accompany and participate in the psychedelic experience, replete with early caregiver function provision.

2. Psychedelic signatures

Each psychedelic compound presents an experience with unique features, with great variability of intersubjective range, duration and breadth of noetic feeling. There are particular signatures or qualities cultivated by different compounds in regard to the atmosphere and climate they generate. The medicine dose and route of administration further modulate the experience and should be considered as distinct variables to be leveraged for coloration, depth of immersion and the desired platform of experience. Similar to geographic travel, in which every location and culture offers unique customs and traditions, each psychedelic compound affords a unique atmosphere and invitation to explore. It is through the navigation of the experiential

landscape one encounters that one enters into a specific discourse with the medicine and from which detailed knowledge may be gained about and through the self. Each medicine cultivates its own sense of the sacred, sense of wonder and access to a perspective beyond a routine self—along with the structures that inform and contribute to an experience of self—and simultaneously a glimpse of those forces that lie just beyond the margins in which we reside.

MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine) as a psychotropic agent allows one to release from fear-based protective systems held in the mind, emotions and body to support an experience characterized by safety and liberation from the dominance of thoughts and thinking. In a field where the mind is quieted, the subject discovers a connection to emotions and sensations of gratitude and awe. Prominent expressions and experiences of profound love and compassion activate an ideal field for forgiveness, repair and re-evaluation of existing life narratives. Traumatic events are able to be processed without re-traumatization. The world and past experiences are navigated in the context of the kind, loving emotional fields, free of risk or danger, to permit rediscovery of forgotten memories, dismissed feelings and fresh perspectives that encourage a reconsideration of relationships and life events.

Psilocybin has the distinct and widely-noted distinction of serving as a teacher. In his legendary book *The Doors of Perception* [9], Aldous Huxley proposed that the brain acts as a “reducing valve” to limit the outside “Mind at Large”—essentially the sum of all of reality, all ideas and sensory experience present in the Universe. Huxley speculated that the brain permits a “measly trickle” of what exists into ordinary consciousness as a measure to permit efficient survival. Psilocybin, like all classical psychedelic medicines, provides access to an expansive, sensory feast of surrounding details. All the elements encountered in a psilocybin experience present as uncannily but convincingly vibrant and alive, rich in intricacy, delight and charm. Introspective attention generates knowledge about the self-presented through the so-called “primary process” modes of knowing, such as those embedded in music, imagery, somatic sensations or at times an immediate apprehension of information in a fully formed parcel of knowledge. There is not infrequently a sense of “meeting one’s being” or entering into a rapport with the very blueprint of one’s DNA—the architect and designer of the self, and the genetic lineage from which the latter issue.

Ketamine—a dissociative anesthetic and potent antidepressant, has the potential to offer a profoundly meditative experience. In tailored lower doses, the medicine may be finely titrated to permit a gentle release from the defensive, fear-based systems operant in the mind, body, emotional realms and nervous system. The character armor and protective systems in the body typically release in a ketamine session, as the chatter of the thinking mind dissolves. The variety of components that form the experience of self—thought, emotions and somatic sensation—distill and grant access to a platform of uncustomary awareness that permits one to observe the symphony of streams that typically drive action and performance in everyday life. Deep listening to the self beyond the dominance of the mind allows access to novel forms of understanding, presented in the body through sensory domains. A capital aspect of this experience is the cultivation of pathways in the mind, body, feelings and nervous system away from fear, protective reflexes are softened, permitting the concomitant arrival of relaxed and spontaneous play fueled by imagination and creativity. Careful dosing may permit exploration throughout the self-sculpture to the very margins of self, and indeed well beyond, to mystical, unity states of oneness.

Even with this qualitative array of distinct experiences, all psychedelic medicines may be said to share several themes. Each permits an experience beyond the limiting

grip of anxiety and fear. They reveal what portion of our character and conditioned behaviors are the results of protective survival strategies that served well in negotiating family-of-origin situations. As these sclerotic structures soften, like a candle melting, they reorganize toward softer positions that are enabled within the current context where the provision of safety, care and attuned attention are offered in the treatment situation. An individual's gifts and intelligence, formerly directed toward systems of protection, become freshly available to be directed toward play and harnessed toward curiosity, exploration, imagination and joy. During this bountiful creative state, the possibility of rediscovering identity, along with a sense of essential self-energy, represents a path to wholeness—a process of integration and actualization, through individuation and growth. In *Playing and Reality* [10], Donald Winnicott describes “Playing, which cannot be dissociated from creativity and a sense of ‘enjoyment,’ is an ‘intensely real’ experience that has intrinsic therapeutic virtue, that is to say it is capable of promoting ‘self-healing.’” In the theater of the psychedelic experience, knowledge is accessed, conflicts are addressed, and developmental arrest is negotiated and solved.

Knowledge about the personal past and the creation of the existing self-architecture is discovered as an artifact in the experience itself. Information is received with highly inventive symbolic expression, analogous to the creativity of dream work, but in this instance the dream is *lucid* and the setting provides the dream elements and dream furniture. Different self-states and introjects may be accessed, to be grasped and compassionately listened to for self-reclamation, expansion and integration [11]. Narratives and storylines that have dominated belief and identity systems and which contribute to the limitation of experience are brought into awareness to afford a more deliberate self-authorship, freedom of choice and invention, and the exhilarating possibility of new experience.

Inner Healing Intelligence—The central principle in psychedelic psychotherapy is one that recognizes the capacity inherent in living systems perpetually to re-establish equilibrium, restore and recover toward wholeness and wellbeing. To activate this innate capacity, one must both remove the obstacles that inhibit healing, and provide adequate conditions for recovery, healing and growth [12, 13]. Consider human ontogenesis as a model: at birth, every infant contains the blueprint and potential for development and growth but the unfolding process depends heavily on the provision of an adequate environment for full developmental progression and mental, emotional, physical and spiritual thriving. The inference here is that as coupled living systems, we innately possess the ability to heal ourselves and each other. We require both the balance and contribution of individual and interdependent systems to obtain wholeness and contribute to collective health [14].

Psychedelic psychotherapy offers a breakdown of protective systems and positions, along with a developmental approach in which the hold of psychological arrests is released to permit developmental progression accompanied by underlying repair of foundational deficits and inner world enrichment. An analogy would be the comparison of a structural renovation of a house in contrast to interior decoration. The former improvements are partly destructive since old structures are broken down, to simultaneously clear the way for new emergent capacities that reflect an upgrade in compromise formations, creative expressions and identity narratives.

3. The psychedelic psychotherapy process

Psychedelic medicines create a shift in access to knowledge and emotional experience both internally and externally. The tapestry of internal threads of experience ranging

from mental, emotional, somatic and nervous system realms is annexed and becomes available experientially, all while being woven into an expanded sense and concept of self. Correspondingly, the intersubjective space and all the elements in the surrounding sensory field of awareness—the so-called “*setting*”—becomes expansively resonant and apprehended through multiple sensory modes in a synesthetic melange, thereby enriching and refining the experience of the outer world.

Similar to the psychoanalytic method, where the removal of obstacles toward free association provides both the methodology and healing process, experiential attention to the self-sculpture allows for the acquisition of knowledge and correction simultaneously. Various self-components that have become exaggerated are softened, leading to the correction of imbalanced protective systems. Trauma blockages and projected interferences may come to be released, which in turn permit correction and repair. Access to the knowledge and wisdom of the mind and body naturally fosters enrichment, development and growth.

4. Connection

Psychedelic medications create the conditions for an expansion of experience that extends into realms that are usually inaccessible. The intangible aspects that at once color, shape and organize subjective experience come into the field of awareness where they can be recognized and appreciated. Primordial aspects of self and experience that in the course of living have been disconnected and disregarded are now reclaimed, and in doing so often revive painful states or memories that reveal the very motivation for the earlier disconnection. This access permits an opportunity to process and negotiate earlier injuries in a real-time repair supported by the attending psychotherapist.

The revived experiences may be considered as a “screen memory” or a symbolic motif that captures the organization of the earlier wound or deficit. Stanislav Grof recognized that psychedelic experiences are organized around powerful and emotionally charged “root experiences” [12]. The revived expression is often presented at the developmental level most conducive to being comfortably addressed. The repair leads to reconnection, reconstruction and enrichment, and frequently sets into motion numerous developmental channels of repair expression following the resolution and release from the organizing complex. Furthermore, the overdetermined aspect of repair has significant implications for technique, the centrality of therapeutic neutrality and the importance of meticulous boundary maintenance. As deeper and intimate new internal connections are forged through the self, these capacities are expressed and mirrored externally through enriched, intimate connections in the subject’s relationships and with the outside world [14].

5. Self and co-regulation

Infants are born with a limited capacity for self-regulation. The mother, or primary caregiver, offers their nervous system and physiological systems to function as a dyadic pair, and together they stabilize and manage the immature regulatory functions of the infant. The maternal functioning serves to soothe, comfort and stabilize dysregulated states, typical of an immature nervous system, while simultaneously providing emotional and physical nourishment. Through the functions of care and nourishment, infant emotional regulation capacity develops through the dyadic

emotional regulatory system. The quality and success of the child's emotional regulatory system are heavily dependent and influenced by the quality of the maternal-infant dyad and maternal regulatory capacity [15]. In cultures where there is a strong family support system and extended families nearby, deficits in maternal regulatory capacity may be compensated for by proximate family members. In situations where there is limited maternal support and scarce extended family help, maternal function deficits fall primarily on and become the burden of the immature infant. Anxieties will be compensated for, and managed by, immature infantile defensive maneuvers, such as denial, splitting and disconnection as a means to cope with overwhelming painful states, with the resulting formation of brittle psychological coping systems with limited flexibility. These latter increase the subject's susceptibility to future mental problems and poor psychological resilience. In a parallel, overlapping fashion, early maternal bonding and early attachment styles along with associated difficulties lay foundational imprints to inform later patterns of attachment that dovetail into relationship patterns and dynamic formations.

Difficulties in emotional regulation typically contribute to compensations in systems of thinking and/or dissociative states as mechanisms for stabilization, recovery and equilibrium maintenance. Primitive and underdeveloped emotional systems for regulation lead to correspondingly unbalanced compensatory systems in the systems of character and thought, where dissociation strategies are frequently deployed to compensate for the underlying shortfall. Similarly, attachment style and compensations for impoverished early bonding both pattern and heavily influence the subsequent relational quality, depth and texture [16]. Such foundational deficits are unable to be easily corrected because the laying down of these systems tends to follow a progressive developmental unfolding informed by critical windows that impose relatively immutable structures on the basis of character styles and reflexive coping patterns.

Psychedelic medicines offer a radical possibility of accessing these underlying systems for repair, transformation and enrichment. In the psychedelic state, the therapeutic relational field establishes conditions similar to the early maternal-infant dyadic field. The defensive arrangements held in the mind, body and emotional structures of the patient act as protective shells rendering the underlying fields relatively inaccessible and thereby resistant to later repair. It is simply these protective systems that are released within the emotional security of the psychedelic field, and allow for states of reconnection both internally and externally. These releases render the underlying fields permeable to influence. In the open, undefended state, the natural tendency for human physiology to co-regulate and synchronize is utilized for the patient-therapist pair to revive the early infant-maternal dyadic field conditions. Such an environment provides the ideal situation to correct attachment failures, repair regulation deficits and build new emotional regulatory potentials by opening the innate capacities to discover optimal equilibriums and co-regulations. The downstream impact of such foundational repair and enrichment represents a fundamental shift in the understanding of the mechanisms of healing; it moves well beyond symptom reduction, treatment of disease and dysfunction, toward enrichment, resilience and emergence attributes, now considered to be primary indicators of well-being and health.

6. Identity/self states/transformation

Transformation is an under-appreciated innate psychological capacity that provides an ability to update and generate a coherent sense of self throughout the passage

of life [17]. To continuously mold and transform a dynamic identity and sense of self through childhood, young adulthood, marriage, parenthood, end-of-life decline and other contingencies of life is a complex process that requires a perpetual and often radical reorganization of identifications *without loss of access to earlier, foundational core self states* that define and direct subsequent experience and growth. Indeed, it is typical that during transitional life periods, individuals endure tremendous mental stress fueled by circumstances that necessitate adaptive shifts in core identity, sometimes hormonally mediated. During these windows, a heightened susceptibility toward mental illness is noted, e.g., puberty, leaving the rearing environment, marriage, post-partum, end-of-life [18].

7. Foundational identity

Introjects, identifications and a myriad of self-states from a range of developmental ages are frequently recognized and witnessed during the psychedelic experience. With careful facilitation, exploration and access to the corresponding emotional states are recognized. Recognition and integration of aspects of the self into coherent whole permits a rich symphony of developmental expressions and capacities. Organizing ideas and reflections about the self becomes available for reconsideration, review and an accurate upgrade based on current life circumstances. Identities that have retreated from expression or have not been fully elaborated, identity errors stemming from projections or compromise formations that provided solutions to underlying anxieties are able to be safely explored and reformulated within an experiential, present-moment exchange with the psychotherapist.

8. Deep listening/presence/mystical states

Similar to the psychoanalytic method of free association, where attention is brought to the unfolding productions of the psyche, in psychedelic psychotherapy the primary instruction provided is to simply focus awareness on any sensation, thought, feeling or experience that arises. Since psychedelic medicines permit expressions from deeper aspects of the self, alongside a plethora of sensory expressions, the patient needs to learn to navigate the experience, familiarize herself with and discover the modes of listening as information is accessed through the senses.

Correspondingly, listening from all sensory levels by the therapist is optimal, to provide a wide-spectrum registering and “deep listening” that flows in tandem with the patient’s as the session progresses and resolves. Psychoanalytic training provides a system of learning the psychoanalytic method through direct experience while inducing within the training analyst an ever deeper knowledge of themselves to enhance their capacity as an instrument of exquisite sensitivity and self-awareness. Similarly, a cultivated knowledge of the psychotherapist’s own self-states, character structure, components of identity and mystical experience states allow for the augmented use of the analyst’s own self as a psychedelic psychotherapeutic instrument where the deeper foundational layers of the self and the underlying emotional anxieties may be registered, addressed and developed through the substance of the therapeutic encounter.

The cultivation of a platform of experience liberated from the distractions of the noisy mind, emotions and in somatic sensation is a principal goal of meditation. Such an experience is one of awareness and stillness, notably free from routine sensory and

somatic conditioning. Access to such a state presents an achievement that is often the result of disciplined practice. In such a state, one is more able to be fully *present* in the core experience as an essential essence of self that resides beyond the narratives and life history held in the mind, in emotional life and in the soma. Such *presence* is a substantial achievement and should be considered a mystical state as it is an expression of self-energy or essence that is divine in quality. The experience of heightened presence is a consonance that resonates with the life energy within and the energetics of the surrounding world. It is the single energy that animates life and could be considered the substance of existence. A singular virtue of psychedelic medicines is that they provide an immediate portal into a state of presence. Access to this state constitutes a “sweet spot” for healing; it permits resonance with the world around, like a tuning fork vibrating in sympathy with the pulse of life, at once a correction and a tuning to the frequency of life.

Many studies have recognized the value of mystical experiences that reside beyond the margins of self, the so-called “ego-dissolution” states that permit an experience of unity and oneness with the world and universe, often permitting access to knowledge of truths about oneself, the nature of reality or the Universe [19, 20]. Such experiences feel sacred in nature and contain characteristics of the so-called peak experience [21] such as a sense of unity, strong positive emotion, a feeling of transcendence, numinosity, ineffability, insights and paradoxical understandings.

In working with psychedelic medicines, the cultivation of a state of presence *through* the self allows one to access platforms of intense experience at the margins of self or beyond ego dissolution states. These unity states, however, are arrived at by the journey *through the self* not simply by bypassing the self-states. This entails the concomitant working through trauma, discovery of previously unaccessed potentials and dormant wisdom.

During states of presence, the corresponding relational field between patient and psychotherapist becomes one where the emotional contact and the intersubjective field are at once heightened and profound. The psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion captures the profundity of such states of emotional experience in which a capacity to metabolize experience by “alpha function” provided by a psychoanalyst allows for a capacity to symbolize and create meaningful connections, and to build a rich internal and external reality at the nexus of the creation of self and the world around [22]. The concept of the inextricably linked (mind)set and the setting is a recognition that the mind simultaneously creates the setting and paradoxically, through a bi-directional, mutually informing, reciprocal matrix, the setting context elaborates the formation of the mind.

In such a relational field, the Bionian directive for the psychoanalyst to maintain a stance “beyond memory and desire” [23] to permit recognition of an evolutionary process in an unfolding session captures the essence of the psychedelic psychotherapy process. Through the shared presence and witnessing functions that the session provides, along with the emotional availability and capacity to hold and follow the session flow, the psychotherapist catalyzes the corrective experience and provides the necessary nutrients and framework for creative growth and the emergence of new potentials.

For a person to emerge into their full self, to matter and to be held in regard through the mind and heart of another, is an indispensable requirement for the free unfolding of self potentials, self-regulation, individuation and the blossoming of innate creative capacities. During a session’s progression, unrecognized aspects of emerging like the shape and form of clay on a potter’s wheel are skillfully guided by the psychedelic psychotherapist but always driven by the patient’s healing process itself.

In his Paris seminars of 1978 [24], Bion, while discussing patient selection for psycho-analysis, poetically describes the spectrum that encompasses the range between, through and beyond the self-sculpture:

*“suppose you were walking through a building and saw on the ground a pattern of colors thrown by the light coming through a window. Heredia, in the poem *‘Vitrail’ (footnote), describes the effigies on the tombs: they cannot see, cannot hear, but with their eyes of stone, they see these colors spread out on the floor. As this patient is talking to me and the light falls on this conversation, what colors do you see? Do you like them? Would you like to spend more time there? Would you like to study the window through which the sunlight penetrates to find out what sort of design there is in the glass of that window?”*

Bion’s work particularly, I feel, captures the tenets of psychedelic psychotherapy work through his affirmation of the following principles:

- a. the value of the subjective experience,
- b. the implicit profundity of every patient/psychotherapist encounter,
- c. the irreducible mystery of the experience of life,
- d. the daring adventure to know and seek the truth (beyond our conditioning and deceptive narratives) and lastly,
- e. the profound value of tolerance for the unknowable to create space for discovery and for the emergence of unforeseeable possibility.

9. Conclusion

The psychoanalytic model and the rich and rigorous scholarship of the historical discipline hold a wealth of expertise and knowledge ripe for modification and elaboration within psychedelic psychotherapy. Psychoanalysis becomes supremely relevant, even renewed, within the current climate of interest in psychedelic medicines and offers an array of fresh theoretical as well as practical applications in a field that, like psychoanalysis, celebrates the plentitude of human being’s inner creativity, relational creativity and the innate capacity to heal and restore both ourselves and others.

***Vitrail**

Cette verrière a vu dames et hauts barons Étincelants d’azur, d’or, de flamme et de nacre, Incliner, sous la dextre auguste qui consacre, L’orgueil de leurs cimiers et de leurs chaperons; Lorsqu’ils allaient, au bruit du cor ou des clairons, Ayant le glaive au poing, le gerfaut ou le sacre, Vers la plaine ou le bois, Byzance ou Saint-Jean d’Acre, Partir pour la croisade ou le vol des hérons. Aujourd’hui, les seigneurs auprès des châtelaines, Avec le lévrier à leurs longues poulaines, S’allongent aux carreaux de marbre blanc et noir; Ils gisent là sans voix, sans geste et sans ouïé, Et de leurs yeux de pierre ils regardent sans voir La rose du vitrail toujours épanouié.

Heredia.

Stained Glass (Vitrail)

“This canopy has seen ladies and high barons

Sparkling with azure, gold, flame and mother-of-pearl,

To bow, under the august dexter which consecrates,

The pride of their crests and chaperones;

When they went, to the sound of horns or bugles,

With sword in hand, gyrfalcon or coronation,

Toward the plain or the woods, Byzantium or Saint-Jean d’Acre,

Leaving for the crusade or the flight of the herons

Today, the lords with the chatelaines,

With the greyhound to their long foals,

Lie on white and black marble tiles;

They lie there without voice, without gesture and without hearing, And with their stony eyes they look without seeing.

The ever-blooming stained-glass rose”.

-- José-Maria de Heredia.

Author details


Gita Vaid^{1,2}

1 Center for Natural Intelligence, New York, United States

2 Psychoanalytic Association of New York, New York, United States

*Address all correspondence to: gvoidmd@gmail.com

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Section 3

Psychoanalysis, Culture
and Society

Chapter 5

Vicissitudes of the Oedipal Organization, and Their Impact on the Anticlerical Polemic

Paolo Azzone

Abstract

The position within the Oedipal phantasy has become a basic organizer in social conflicts of XXI century society. This development is particularly apparent in the current confrontation between the Catholic clergy and anticlerical activists. Consistently with Sigmund Freud's conceptualization of the negative oedipal constellation, the two institutionalized groups share a basic unconscious feature: an incomplete cleavage of the pre-Oedipal relationship to the mother object. At puberty, a persistent regressive tie to the mother hinders the investment of age-appropriate female partners and maintains the adolescent within the mother's embrace. Two options are available than in order to keep at bay father's control and interpersonal power. The submission to Super-ego values and the repression of sexual drives warrants the father's complacency and makes room for an ascetic life. On the other hand, a more eroticized identification with mother may bestow the adolescent a seductive interpersonal power over father's representatives. Material from an analytic case allows the author to illuminate the severely traumatic primal scene experiences often underlying a passive Oedipal constellation. In this perspective, the current heated confrontation between the Church and anticlerical activists may be understood in terms of an unconscious fantasy where primal scene anxieties are reciprocally projected onto the political opponents.

Keywords: psychoanalysis and politics, passive oedipal complex, primal scene anxieties, LGBT discrimination, anticlericalism

1. Introduction

Over the last decades, gender studies have produced a deep transformation of socially shared conceptualization of gender and sexual identity. Judith Butler [1] has challenged the ontological value traditionally assigned to dichotomies such as male/female, or straight/gay. She has argued that there is no necessary link between our anatomy and our sexual identities. In Monique Wittig's view [2], heterosexuality is not a natural fact, it is a political regime, and categories such as man or woman are normative and alienating.

Gender studies have fostered an important antidiscrimination movement, which has had a substantial impact on politics and culture the world over. For anti-discrimination activists, Christian Churches and particularly the Catholic Church have been and are the focus of a particularly heated polemic. Traditional catholic views of sexuality are very likely the main base for such ideological confrontation.

The social and political basis of such strife lies outside the scope of our competence and interests. The reader can find a comprehensive discussion of the genesis of gender theory within XX century anthropologic and sociological culture in *Le Sexe des Modernes*, by Éric Marty [3], while Clotilde Leguil relies on Lacan's thought to offer a psychoanalytic perspective on contemporary gender identities [4].

In the present paper, we will rather investigate the anti-clerical polemic in terms of psychodynamics of institutional groups. We will explore the unconscious phantasies and the developmental pathways underlying the commitment to a religious identity versus activism within the anti-discrimination movement. We will show how these conflicting human groups show surprisingly parallel unconscious object relationship patterns, particularly in the area of the Oedipal organization.

To illuminate our view, we will present and discuss a clinical case of a young man featuring both deep religious commitment and enhanced anxieties in the area of child sexual abuse.

2. A centuries-old strife

In order to illustrate our point of view, we will rely on a metaphor from the realm of physics. When water gets in touch with a different medium (maybe air or oil) through a definite surface, the two fluids do not merge. Rather, tension appears on the contact surface. Such tension is commonly explained in terms of an attraction among the molecules making up each fluid. In surface phenomena, we behold an attraction among equals and repulsion towards outsiders.

The parallel with human organizations is straightforward. A political border implies an inner alignment, and a reciprocally hostile attitude. The survival of larger or more restricted interpersonal systems requires intense cohesive forces. It requires the splitting and projection of interpersonal aggression towards an avatar located outside the group. Social elites have consistently exploited social aggression and intolerance towards foreigners and minority groups in order to foster the most lethal and dramatic of social phenomena: the war [5].

Over the last century, western society has gone through a piecemeal but apparently irreversible process: cohesive forces in groups have been weakening and then rapidly collapsing. The Communist Party, the trade unions, and the Catholic parishes have nearly disappeared and are now but shadows of what they were only forty years ago [6].

A parallel fragmentation process can be observed in family-ties-based groups. Intergenerational family is a memory, but nuclear family is getting slimmer by the day, due to dropping fertility rates, and even the sexual couple is slowly giving way to celibacy-oriented residential models.

As interpersonal ties seem to be colliquating by the day, aggression faces a unique fate: it is redirected from outside the social environment into the community itself. The immaterial chasm, which used to mark the border of the family, the village, and then the social classes, seems to be relocating inside the groups themselves and to split citizens according to preference in terms of ethical options and self-representations.

Everywhere, enraged feminists confront allegedly male chauvinistic institutions and pro-family activists, while souverainistes oppose left-wing supported migratory policies and free speech advocates rail against contemporary cancel culture.

Within contemporary society, the orientation of social aggression seems to depend on the position in the Oedipal phantasy, which each group values the most. Specifically, social identity appears nowadays to coalesce around community-shared father's representations. For instance, Antifa activists smite statues of haughty, supercilious sadistic fathers of the nation, while conservatives reverently cherish the teachings of unlimitedly powerful but wise and fair community ancestors.

The heated confrontation between the LGBT community vs. conservative Catholic movements and institutions can offer a particularly straightforward example of a social conflict where such an Oedipal allegiance plays a major and thinly disguised role. The strife between Catholic clergy and LGBT community is an old one. While the Greek-Roman civilization showed a remarkable tolerance vis a vis the most diverse sexual practices, the Saint Apostles and the Church Fathers agreed that only those who resign to compulsory bodily gratifications, including homoerotic sexual pleasures, are able to reach genuine inner freedom. In the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas censored sodomy as the most serious of sexual misconducts ([7], IIa-IIae q. 154, a. 11 co.).

The confrontation between male Catholic clergy and advocates of free sexual life came to be even more heated in the following centuries, but the power balance piecemeal swung. Seventeenth-century libertines and freemasons led a particularly fierce campaign against Catholic institutions. We can date then the onset of modern anticlerical hate. During French *Terreur*, as well as in various revolutions the world over, Catholic priests were hanged, beheaded, or shot by the thousands.

In this social conflict, sexuality played a core role. Sexual misconduct was everywhere a favorite issue agitated by anticlerical polemicists. While from the pulpit Catholic priests used to rail against sexual freedom, sexual transgression of the clergy was the focus of an apparently inexhaustible public curiosity.

Male homosexual practices and adolescent and child sexual abuse by the clergy had historically been the focus of particularly prominent blame ([8, 9], p. 81–84). Nowadays, in the age of sexual freedom, clergy's sexual misconduct is again a core issue in LGBT activists' polemic against the Church [10]. According to the radicals' perspective, sexual misconduct by the clergy would be the unavoidable product of the impossible striving to maintain sexual abstinence, which is inherent in Christian ascetics [11]. A powerful media campaign is on its way the world over against the Church, which would have covertly promoted child sexual abuse and protected perpetrators. Political supporters of the rights of homosexual people are everywhere on the frontline in this confrontation.

While the judicial fallouts of such a campaign are in the public eye, most advanced western countries are piecemeal including within their legislation some acts punishing those beliefs which could possibly foster sexual-preference-based discrimination. A similar law proposal (commonly referred to as "Zan" law) is now pending at the Italian Parliament. Such laws have elicited enhanced concern and downright opposition in many, often Catholic, traditional-family movements, which obviously perceive them as targeted to suppress their activity.

So, at the dawn of the XXI century, the Catholic Church and homosexual organizations seem to be trapped more than ever in a complex network of reciprocal suspicion and hostility. Which social and emotional forces may lie under such

confrontation? Which conscious and unconscious dynamics may keep each opponent so close to and enraged at the other? Psychoanalysis can help us answer these questions.

3. The passive oedipal constellation

Within psychoanalytic theory “Die Anatomie ist das Schicksal” (“Anatomy is destiny”; [12], p. 400). In order to unveil the unconscious Oedipal organization underlying this unique social confrontation, we need to restrict our investigation to either of the two anatomical sexes. Since the male Catholic clergy plays a core role both in Church hierarchical organization and in the anticlerical polemic which has been flooding western media for some decades now, our investigation will focus on the male child’s Oedipal organization.

In *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse*, Freud observed that “In der großen künstlichen Massen, Kirche und Heer, ist für das Weib als Sexualobjekt kein Platz.” (“In the large artificial masses, the army and the Church, there is no place for the woman as a sexual object”; [13], p. 158). In fact, Catholic priests and people with homoerotic sexual preferences share a basic anthropological dimension: their object relation organization does not allow for the sexual cathexis of female objects. The harsh confrontation we behold every day in parliament, in the squares, and in the media might actually rely on this very parallel, which warrants a careful exploration of the Oedipal constellation underlying this minority interpersonal styles.

Freud believed separation from mother was a necessary condition for a child’s proper access to the Oedipal situation. In *Eines Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci* [14] he suggested a core factor in a passive Oedipus development could be an enhanced libidinal cathexis of the mother object:

Bei allen unseren homosexuellen Männern gab es in der ersten, vom Individuum später vergessenen Kindheit eine sehr intensive erotische Bindung an eine weibliche Person, in der Regel an die Mutter, hervorgerufen oder begünstigt durch die Überzärtlichkeit der Mutter selbst, ferner unterstützt durch ein Zurücktreten des Vaters im kindlichen Leben ([14], p. 169).

In all our homosexual men we behold in the early, later by the individual forgot, childhood, a very intense erotic tie to a female person, as a rule to the mother, elicited or fostered by the mother’s herself excessive tenderness, further supported by the father’s withdrawal from the child’s life.

Freud’s theory of homosexuality undoubtedly offers intriguing insights into psychosexual development. In Freud’s view, too close an unconscious or preconscious eroticized tie to mother would prevent the later investment of age-appropriate extra-familial sexual partners. In the terms of object relation theory, we might state that access to the active Oedipal configuration is critically dependent on an adequate differentiation from the maternal object. Without a proper *cleavage* of oral dependence from the mother, she will never come to be the object of unconscious genital level libido cathexis. Therefore, Freud stated:

Endlich kommt doch nach vollendeter Pubertät die Zeit, die Mutter gegen ein anderes Sexualobjekt zu vertauschen. Da geschieht eine plötzliche Wendung; der Jüngling

verläßt nicht seine Mutter, sondern identifiziert sich mit ihr, er wandelt sich in sie um und sucht jetzt nach Objekten, die ihm sein Ich ersetzen können, die er so lieben und pflegen kann, wie er es von der Mutter erfahren hatte ([13], pp. 119–120).

However, when puberty is completed, the time finally comes to change the mother with another sexual object. We behold then an abrupt turn; the youngling does not leave his mother, rather, he identifies with her, he transforms himself in her and seeks now objects, which can replace his Ego for him, which he can love and take care of, just as he had experienced from his mother.

Unable to leave their mother, the homosexual young man would incorporate her through introjective identification. In homosexuality, then, the same psychic mechanism Freud deemed momentous in the genesis of melancholy would be at work ([15], p. 435).

In summary, inner object relationships of individuals unavailable to libidinally cathect female objects would feature a mainly dyadic and pre-Oedipal quality. Within this configuration, the mother object cannot be clearly differentiated from the self-representation. The eroticized tie mentioned by Freud can more properly be reformulated in narcissistic terms. We typically behold here a poorly differentiated mother–child relation, where the subject and the object reciprocally exploit each other with the aim of supporting his or her own self-esteem and maintaining adequate well-being.

In as much as mother's image is included in the self, her consistent emotional availability is a prerequisite for a minimal mental adjustment: she can never actually be experienced as emotionally missing. Therefore, in this interpersonal configuration mother cannot be invested with authentic erotic greed (as conceptualized by Melanie Klein, [16], p. 62).

The resulting Oedipus complex takes on a peculiar character. The father's sexual access to mother's interior is felt as harmless, inasmuch as it does not challenge the Oedipal collusive alliance with mother. Father will be perceived as weak and interpersonally meaningless. To him, the child spares the more customary unconscious murderous hate, while identification with him appears basically useless to the child's core interpersonal aims.

On the other hand, identification with mother will be unavoidable, as the only cherished love object. The intensity and quality of such identification will depend on the severity of the object relations pathology. More primitive individuals, featuring enhanced autistic contiguous traits ([17], p. 47ff.), will inevitably turn to adhesive identification and mimic the mother's behavioral style and attire.

Within this configuration, a genuine cathexis of adult female objects is clearly impossible. In the active male Oedipal constellation two forces drive the adolescent towards sexualized female objects: identification with father and the awareness of the unavailability of the mother object. Within negative male Oedipus, neither of these motivational components may prove consequential. Father is perceived as powerless and castrated, while separation from mother is felt as the utmost threat to the integrity of the self. From this perspective, attachment to the real mother cannot be given up as long as she is physically alive. Therefore, age-appropriate female partners appear particularly ominous inasmuch as they implicitly endanger the collusive alliance with her.

In essence, both Catholic clergy and male homosexuals are unwilling to establish deep permanent relationships with female partners. Psychoanalytic theory allows us

to formulate the network of inner object relations underlying such specific manifestations in interpersonal terms. The sadomasochistic entanglement sticking priests and homosexuals in a centuries-old confrontation seems to depend on a specific, shared unconscious constellation: an *incomplete cleavage* of the relation to the maternal object.

The second set of questions stays unanswered, yet. What sets these two social groups apart? Which emotional needs and strategy lead them so far away at the time of adolescence, when sexual maturity compels them to make choices about their sexual identity and their interpersonal and social life?

Relationship to paternal imago is here at issue. Within a passive Oedipal constellation father is not a competitor for mother's unconsciously sexualized body. Rather, it is basically perceived as an ethical ruler, a Super-ego regulator. The handling of the relationship to such an annoying inner object may follow two different paths.

If the father's power and authority are perceived as overwhelming, complacency is negotiated through submission: to interpersonal power figures, to Super-ego values, to powerful institutions. This first constellation fosters an ascetic access to adolescence. Sublimation may then appear as a valuable strategy to control both aggression and libidinal drives.

In some uniquely gifted individuals the explicit identification with the Ego ideal of an entire community, through the sacred orders, may offer a viable identity and a wide room for development and growth through a rich network of social relationships. Obviously, the conflict over libidinal drives is always enhanced and identification with parental ideals may sometimes be precarious and maintained through the primitive mechanism of adhesive identification.

In the other possible configuration, an identification with a seductive mother prevails, and father is radically kept at bay through manipulative strategies. The inner father, then, is castrated through frustration of sexual gratification and humiliated through the preference accorded to other younger and allegedly more attractive partners. In the manifest love relationship life, a homosexual identity is so established.

We have reported above that the Oedipal constellation typically detected in celibatory Catholic clerics and in individuals explicitly identifying with LGBT values shows an extended overlap. Inability to adequately detach from mother, intensified identification with her, inability to libidinally invest in a heterosexual object, and explicit giving up to any claim to a male powerful identification are among the most prominent features.

The Bible prophesied a perennial hostility between the woman and the snake, an obvious representative of the male genital. However, recent history gives wide evidence of a long-lasting enmity between advocates of free, unrestricted sexuality and the male Catholic clergy. The world over, LGBT movements advocate for dedicated anti-discrimination laws which appear to be specifically tailored to restrict Catholics' and particularly Catholic clerics' free speech.

According to the Kleinian model of unconscious mind, regression to paranoid-schizoid position is an available option all along the developmental path and beyond. The psychic apparatus would turn to primitive modes of functioning whenever anxiety is enhanced, and the cohesion of the self is threatened. The defense mechanisms of splitting and projection are often mentioned as the unconscious basis of hostility and reciprocal devaluation between social groups. They surely contribute to the confrontation between two parties whose intrapsychic organizations share a specific feature: an inadequate *cleavage* from the mother. As psychoanalysts, we are called to understand why psychic organizations which feature an *uncleaved* inner relationship

to mother are unstable, and always liable to regressive phenomena. Some material from a clinical case will help us to illuminate the issue.

4. The dreamer

At the time he sought treatment, Carlo was a thirty-two year old academic statistician living in a small town in Northern Italy. Before entering psychoanalysis, Carlo had received somatic and poorly structured psychological treatment for about three years, due to a serious depressive condition.

Carlo had always been a lonely child. Anxiety had prevented him from meeting peers whenever his mother had not been at hand. He had committed all his emotional energies to school, and from his excellent school and then academic performance he had drawn wide narcissistic rewards. He spent his free time playing violin and singing opera arias.

Within interpersonal space, mother had for long been the only meaningful female object. The relationship with her was still very close, but at the same time somewhat stiff and cold. Within professional life, a maternal transference toward his senior female mentor doubled in a way his relationship with mother.

Carlo was unmarried. He never met his peers. His social life showed a definitely asymmetrical quality. He met only younger males or older women. He was particularly keen to establish supportive relationships with mentally ill individuals or early adolescents from deprived backgrounds.

Over the four years of treatment, he never mentioned a sexual interest in women. On the other hand, Carlo acknowledged he was not insensitive to male sex appeal but felt unavailable to homosexual relations. As for sexual interest in underage boys, he was keen to state that it would never be an acceptable option to him.

Carlo invested a lot of time and energy in local church life. In association with a young priest, he was the leader of the local section of a Christian association of pre-adolescents. At the time Carlo entered psychoanalytic treatment, the little community was troubled by an ongoing judicial investigation for a case of early adolescent sexual abuse. In the following trial, a younger volunteer was to be sentenced for child sexual abuse, and the priest in charge of the association for diffusion of child pornography material. No charge was laid against Carlo, though he had been unwittingly instrumental in getting the victim and the two perpetrators in touch.

At the time we began regularly meeting in session, Carlo's family was going through substantial changes. Over a 6 months period, his two brothers established deep heterosexual relations and left the family house. Carlo's interaction with parents became more and more close and somewhat suffocating. At the same time, meetings with the new couples were frequent and he was overjoyed by the birth of a nephew with whom he soon developed a deep affection.

Depressive complaints were briefly in the foreground at the beginning of our joint work, but soon faded out and were replaced by the patient's pervasive and somewhat compulsive curiosity about his own oneiric activity.

In the segment of analysis which I will comment on here, the patient used to spend most of his sessions in detailed reporting of his dream experiences. Many dreams featured manifest sexual contents, which were restricted to autoerotism and same-sex reciprocal stimulation. In the latter case, adolescent partners were typically included. I will now report brief summaries from two not consecutive sessions in the first year of analysis.

SESSION A: Carlo opens the session with a couple of dreams. In the first one he is riding a bicycle, his legs are fatigued, and he is never able to reach his intended destination. A second dream immediately follows: “I was inside a garage. It was full of spiders, which used to scare me a lot. My male boss was with me. We were both naked. I would have liked to close the roller shutter, but I was unable to do so as something was getting in or getting out”. I feel a strong countertransference pressure to interpret the obvious partial object material content but realize this will surely usher a manic atmosphere into the session and leave no more room for associations.

Then, he reports how he has recently spent a day at a community for antisocial adolescents. It has been an interpersonally rewarding experience.

Now I interpret the first dream as evidence of a feeling of loneliness. When he is away from the analytic room his efforts to take care of his own emotional pain prove unhelpful. As for the second dream, I draw a more explicit parallel between the two men in the garage and the psychoanalytic situation, where he feels unable to enforce control of communication, with the associated anxiety.

Now he talks about his parents. They are a very close couple and spend most of their time together. This lets him feel cut off and is a source of substantial distress. However, whenever he can be alone with his mother, he feels controlled and manipulated, and his emotional distress gets even worse.

SESSION B: The patient announces he will report two dreams. Here is the first one: “I am attending a bizarre striptease. A man and a woman perform on the stage. They cast all of their clothes down on the stage, then proceed to strip themselves of their external sex organs, which they hand out to the audience. Spectators, in turn, hand over the performers’ detached genitalia to each other. Now the patient stays silent, having apparently forgotten about the second promised dream. I interpret the dream in light of the session of the day before, where I had questioned him about his masturbatory activity. I suggest he had felt exposed by my curiosity. He now reports the forgotten second dream. In the dream, he is talking about his depressive symptoms with a priest and feels accepted. I interpret the second dream content with reference to the transference relationship.

We owe to Angel Garma [18] a particularly valuable, though undeservedly neglected, integration of Freud’s dream theory. Freud believed the wish was the single necessary and sufficient force setting the dream process in motion. Garma called our attention to a second no less basic element in the genesis of human dreams. He discovered that at the very core of each dream narrative a traumatic situation lies in disguise:

In my opinion, the traumatic situation is at play not only in the dreams of traumatic neuroses and in those reproducing some child’s traumatic experiences, but in all dreams. I believe that a traumatic situation is an extremely important factor, maybe the most important of all, in the genesis of dreams ([18], p. 136).

In Garma’s view, a dream, like a bifrontal herm, would thrive not only on the wish to find drive gratifications but also on the memory of an upsetting past experience. Dreams from both Carlo’s sessions include obvious traumatic content. In the second dream of SESSION A, anxiety about control and self-boundaries is prominent, with

a straightforward allusion to the transference situation. The first dream in session B shows Carlo's severely traumatic experience of the primal scene and its massive impact on his Oedipal organization.

Awareness of the inner parents' ongoing sexual interaction proved so unbearable to Carlo that repression had to strip their bodily representatives in dreams of their sexual characters. Carlo's sexual identification proved so to be highly precarious and relied on purely surface identification processes. The dream narrative showed how he could easily shift between several identities: male and female genitals could be exchanged and manipulated at will, but never really integrated within the bodily self-representation.

Carlo's extreme intolerance to the primal scene was obvious not only in the dream material but also in his conscious experience. As mentioned in the report of SESSION A, a transference interpretation allowed Carlo to acknowledge he was consistently upset by the awareness of his parents' steady alliance and somewhat symbiotic relationship. In front of them, he constantly felt alone and cut off.

As mentioned above, Carlo's depression had deteriorated at the very time his two brothers had entered a stable couple relationship. We need not underscore how much such events may have contributed to his feeling of loneliness, helplessness, and savage jealousy in front of the parents' fantasized sexual relationship.

5. Traumatic primal scene

In his dreams, Carlo turned to the Oedipal fantasy whenever he was overwhelmed by feelings of worthlessness and helplessness. Carlo's dreams show that the Oedipal imaginary can serve a basically defensive function. It shelters the child's inner world from the excruciating jealousy elicited by the experience of the sexually interacting parental couple.

The constellation of wishes and fears haunting the active Oedipal phantasy entails a manic core: the delusional assumption to be able to gratify mother's expectations and bodily drives and to get rid of father's competitive threat. The omnipotent quality of such longing vis a vis the child's chronic helplessness and dependence on internal and external parents is obvious.

To individuals unable to reach a substantial cleavage of the primary symbiotic relationship to mother, active Oedipal fantasies appear – and actually are – worthless. The tie to mother is basically unresolved. No imaginary power or control may be established on her. Rather, separation anxieties are eased by clinging even more to her through primitive identification strategies.

However, at the time of sexual maturity, the passive Oedipal constellation shows all of its frailty. Increasing involvement in social life pushes the adolescent in many respects out of mother's symbiotic embrace. Wider narcissistic and competitive wishes come to be acted out in the extra-familial social environment.

These changes let a new set of fantasies surface within the individual's inner world. In a typical unconscious phantasy, the mother evades the child's control and is available to be penetrated in multiple ways by the internal fathers. In the adolescent's external interpersonal life, this phantasy is activated inasmuch as peers and siblings begin dating and establishing deeper and deeper sexual relations. The traumatic experience of the inner primal scene is so endlessly replicated in the real world.

Carlo's striptease dream shows how the reversible exchange of sexual identities through triangular seductive maneuvers may temporarily ease jealousy and rage, or

rather project them into the father object. In a classical unconscious fantasy, father is helplessly poisoned by jealousy and despair, and mother is filled with envy, while their son invites the most abusive vagrants into the garden of earthly delight of his own young and eroticized body. However, while a passive Oedipal constellation may be suited to project anxiety into external objects and temporarily contain emotional pain, it is actually unable to permanently quench primal scene-related upsetting emotions.

Primal scene anxiety thrives on the experience of exclusion from the coitus of the inner parents. The core element, then, is the desperate effort to control the access to the inside of the inner mother. However, this aim is obviously unattainable in reality, outside symbiotic or severely sadomasochistic relations.

Only an adequate cleavage of the pre-Oedipal relationship to the mother object can enable the young male to enter deep relationships with female peers. The establishment of a sexualized object relation with an adult female has a substantial impact on the configuration of the inner primal scene. The subject may finally come to occupy in phantasy father's position within the inner coitus. New interpersonal tasks can then be posed and shall be worked out, including the question of generativity and parenthood.

6. Conclusions

The human mind relies on projective identification as a way to evacuate distressing emotions ([19], pp. 89–94). Various interpersonal strategies can be relied upon in order to insert helplessness and pain feelings into suitable recipients. Within groups, this phenomenon is obvious whenever a racial or political minority gets to be the focus of irrational devaluation, hostility, or overt aggression. Within Bion's conceptualization of group functioning, such interpersonal phantasy corresponds to the activation of a flight or fight basic assumption [20].

The Catholic clergy and the LGBT community confront each other within contemporary political scenarios. They feature one and the same relationship to the inner mother, but two different strategies to handle Oedipal anxieties. The Church ministers try to incorporate the goals of the parental couple. Repression withdraws the experience of the sexually interacting parents from both the individual and the community awareness. In a way, the Catholic ascetic's choice replicates the interpersonal organization of latency when, within the family, parental sexual life is obvious, but never to be seen or acknowledged.

LGBT activists, on the other hand, are keen to make as public as possible their sexual experience. A particularly cherished goal is the exposition of the Catholic believer and clergyman to homosexual issues and ideals. Inasmuch as antidiscrimination laws generally include the enforcement of celebratory days and courses in all schools, implicitly including Church administered institutions, they seem to be designed to let the adversary group's unconscious defensive strategy organization falter and yield, to confront them with a basic feeling of helplessness and exclusion from pleasure and enjoyment.

The omnipotent and narcissistic quality of such an unconscious strategy may not be completely concealed. No doubt, it offers short-term effectiveness and can sooth basic Oedipal distress. But it will never allow the individual to change position within the Oedipal chessboard of the inner primal scene.

As the case of Carlo shows us, social life gets us consistently in touch with couples: happy, unhappy, troubled. The experience of exclusion from the parents' coitus gets


replicated ad libitum in everyday interpersonal life. Although the father's position in the primal scene is far from easy, the persistent pre-Oedipal attachment to the mother object will keep the individual feeling inadequate and left out for life.

Author details

Paolo Azzone
ASST-Rhodense Hospital, Milan, Italy

*Address all correspondence to: paoloazzone@hotmail.com

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Chapter 6

Reframing Motherhood within a Jungian Approach to Snow White: A Research Case Study Using Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)

Alison Short

Abstract

The transition to becoming a mother carries challenges to role, identity, and self-image. Myths and archetypes related to motherhood connect societal and personal expectations with individual experiences. The fairy tale “Snow White” emerged within a single session of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) therapy for a young mother in the postpartum phase. Although previously written up as a clinical case report, this example is now explored as a research case study, which is seen as a unique case with intrinsic qualities and explored via an explanatory approach. The systematic methodology developed for this research case study follows a typology of eight key elements of the Snow White fairy tale, comparing this pattern to the individualized narrative of this young mother. In doing so, variations to the original tale are explored in light of Jungian interpretations, which inform the experience of motherhood. In doing so, this contributes to a further understanding of the changes in role, identity, and self-image experienced by the new mother undergoing both outer and inner change, where the new mother works to fully reframe themselves into their new motherhood role. By understanding this change, additional support can be offered broadly to women during this important transition, and in turn, influence the experiences of current and future generations.

Keywords: motherhood, Jungian theory, archetype, fairy tale, guided imagery and music, Snow White

1. Introduction

By applying a contemporary research case study approach, this article explores the client’s experience of the change of motherhood by revisiting a previously published case report [1]. This case exemplified a whole fairy tale emerging in a single clinical session, of which few examples exist in the therapy literature. The metaphorical nature of myth and fairy tale can be well understood within a Jungian approach, and in view of this, the case remains a unique and seminal case for gaining deep knowledge and insights about the client’s inner processes. The ongoing currency of this

unique music psychotherapy clinical case report is demonstrated by the ongoing and consistent interest generated through standard research platforms and clinical practitioner responses across Jungian and broader health practitioners. Additionally, more literature focusing on the deep issues surrounding motherhood has emerged since the publication of the original case report article. Therefore, applying a contemporary research case study approach to revisit and re-examine the issues raised provides further learnings and insights relevant to current understandings and practice in addressing the many changes engendered by the experiences of becoming a mother.

1.1 The nature of motherhood

The transition to motherhood after childbirth for first-time mothers (primiparae) involves not only initial physical but also emotional and psychological changes in the months following birth [2, 3]. This period may be named matrescence, “the time of mother becoming” [4], with this term depicting the transition to motherhood and the sense of the “birth of a mother” [4–6]. The concept of matrescence covers the physical, emotional, hormonal, and social transitions to becoming a mother, which may also be considered a “rite of passage” [4, 5]. This builds on mental shifts in identity during pregnancy and the psychological birth of a mother after labor and delivery, where a new motherhood identity is formed [6] through caretaking and ritual [4]. A postpartum metamorphosis occurs in an unfolding “blueprint” plan as anticipation and expectation meet reality [6] and family roles and interactions change [4]. Even the role of the baby within the extended family system may need to be reviewed [6], and the baby acts in a transformative role in maternal psychological development [7].

Feelings of maternal attachment often develop gradually [8] and are related to parenting confidence. First-time mother talk about the impact of the child on their sense of self and becoming selfless in the bonded relationship, with one first-time mother stating, “in order to be the mother she wanted to be, she had to make changes to the person she had become” [9]. Mothers construct their own identities related to self-perception as they change to become a mother after the birth of their first child, which is related to their identity as a woman, the myth of perfections, apparent negativity towards mothering, and conflicts in maintaining what they saw as “the real me” [10]. Not only this, but women’s experience of their physical body during pregnancy and after birth undermines body image satisfaction and sets up an incongruence between mothering and wife/partner roles, affecting perceptions of satisfaction with their own body self-image [11].

In fact, changes in self-concept for first-time mothers flow through from early pregnancy right through to the time of birth and include themes of control, support, and forming a family [12]. A conceptual analysis of the defining attributes of the maternal role results in four attributes which are: nurturing, protecting, caretaking, and managing household affairs [13]. Within this typology, the maternal role can lead to the balanced fulfillment of multiple roles, maternal role strain, and role conflict [13]. Further, results of a meta-analysis suggest that maternal transition incorporates the disruptions of changes to engagement, growth, and transformation of commitments, daily life, relationships, “self”, and work [2]. The theme of self incorporates facing the past, facing oneself, and coming to feel like a mother, and relational well-being also needs to be addressed [14]. Previous experiences need to be acknowledged, including losses and the conflicting emotions inherent in daily mothering activities [2]. Creative techniques which address the embodiment of mothering and its

implications for mental health care can assist with anxiety, frustration, and insecurity of first-time mothers [15]. Creative approaches to harnessing myth and fairy tale may support inner personal change [16]. Additionally, the experiences of first-time mothers can be explored through the use of imagery within an existential framework [17].

Clearly, there is a need for psychological support and care in the transition to motherhood. This transition has been described as a time of crisis, in that it leads to re-examination of the person's life in terms of values, beliefs, and own selves in order to make sense of what has happened and to start to see their lives in new ways [18]. Some first-time mothers may face additional challenges, pre-existing at the time of birth, such as anticipating and/or coping with a pregnancy affected by infertility treatment, high-risk pregnancies, bereavement, ectopic pregnancy, previous miscarriage(s), and so on. In fact, problems with fertility related to getting and remaining pregnant may affect the developing relationship between the child and the mother after birth, and issues around the resolution of previously unsuccessful pregnancies may contribute to conflicted feelings during pregnancy and consequently negatively affect self-efficacy in motherhood [19]. Further, a previous traumatic bereavement of a child/pregnancy can create a lifelong "emotional scar of loss" for the mother [20], affecting the interactive mothering relationship with a "replacement child" [21].

A previously lost pregnancy can also have an effect on motherhood related to subsequent pregnancies and childbirth. Even more broadly, new mothers are in a state of flux and need to deal with multiple uncertainties and unresolved meanings during this transition; they many need to courageously address unresolved experiences to continue to relate to their child [22]. Psychological distress after perinatal loss due to miscarriage or stillbirth is common and typically leads to a range of coping mechanisms by the woman in subsequent pregnancy, which may impact on maternal-fetal and consequently maternal-child relationships [23]. In fact, a high proportion of women may experience elevated levels of ongoing posttraumatic stress, anxiety, and depression after early pregnancy loss such as miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy. These effects may remain longer after ectopic pregnancy than miscarriage, and further work is needed in identifying and treating affected women [24, 25]. In addressing postnatal depression, the importance of understanding each woman's story from an existential point of view to find personal meaning in their experience of motherhood has been highlighted by Donaghy [26]. For example, incorporating a baby who has died into the family story is a healthy form of adaptation and allows for the development of new relationships [27].

Women are also affected by societal views and expectations of motherhood. A generalized societal "myth of motherhood" exists, "fired by media and popular images of the attractive, perfectly dressed and made-up mother, with her happy, smiling family, an ideal which, if believed, serves to make women feel inadequate" [10], and may further be understood as needing to appear as "serene madonnas" or "capable super-mums" [10]. A strong and dominant myth endures in our society depicting women as "natural mothers, immediately able to care for their babies, and ultimately fulfilled in this role of selfless carer and nurturer" [28]. It is clear that the wide range of such ideologies and societal expectations around motherhood myths needs to be challenged, in order to support women in their individual transition to motherhood [28]. In fact, the ideal of the "good" mother which cannot be met may lead to inner conflict and can be associated with anxiety and depression [29]. Inner stressors encompass a fundamental change in identity [28, 30]. The subjective experience of first-time motherhood can be described under themes of (1) the realization of

new motherhood, and (2) coping with new motherhood [28], which include attending to the demands of the baby and adjustment to motherhood. Changes in personal consumption in terms of eating, drinking and grooming are influenced by perceived risks to the baby [31]. Conflict arises when the material reality does not meet the expectations of the myth of new motherhood, in turn leading to negative experiences; hidden feelings of failure and undiagnosed depression and social support may be lacking [32, 33]. In this context, healthcare providers need to sensitively provide ongoing support to the mother whilst the ideology of motherhood is challenged [28] and meaning-making and spirituality are explored in relation to this pivotal and paradoxical life event [34, 35].

1.2 Jungian archetypes and use of fairy tales

Cultural myths emerge as artifacts of society in form such as stories handed down from generation to generation, often then being converted into dramatic and artistic multimedia artforms such as plays, movies, ballet, music, and film. These stories may include many elements which can be interpreted metaphorically. The universality of fairy tales in crossing cultural boundaries and addressing social and generational issues within the context of child and adolescent psychiatry is noted by Wallace and colleagues [36]. From a psychological point of view, fairy tales provide “grist for the mill” in human experiences, and have fascinated writers and practitioners in the therapeutic fields such as C.G. Jung. Myths and attitudes about mothers and motherhood are pervasive and foundational across all societies, and Jung describes the archetype of the mother within an array of archetypes [37–39]. An archetype may simply be described as a universal pattern in the psyche, in a similar manner to instincts [37]. Archetypes comprise key elements often in heightened imaginal form, providing the ingredients to understand human attitudes and behaviors which in turn assist the person with changes experienced in everyday life. Such archetypal patterns typically follow a distinct goal, “the meaning of which becomes more and more clear as they unfold in their actual expressions or images” [40]. Broadly from a Jungian stance, myths are seen as both particular and universal, needing translation into the language of the audience [41]. Archetypes typically address personal complexes linked to relationship issues, thereby enlarging awareness and empowering the living of an authentic life [20].

Archetypes are important in therapy, potentially echoing themes in the life experience of a person and bringing to consciousness what was previously unconscious or preconscious, in turn leading to transformation. Beebe lists a wide range of archetypal complexes which serve as patterns for internal dialogs within the self, including the hero, good father, trickster, divine child, good mother, and bad witch [42]. This internal process of development and transformation, termed individuation by Jung, is seen as a naturally occurring process within the human psyche where archetypal complexes are typically explored and ultimately resolved [20, 37, 40]. Therefore, the purpose of an archetype is to bring materials to consciousness and in doing so enlarge experience and make meaning for the person, contributing to the overall process of psychological growth and development. Clearly, issues from the primary family and their own experiences of being mothered affect progress toward individuation for any person. Additionally, significant issues occur for “replacement children” (after the loss of another child) as they grow and develop during adulthood, in turn affect their own attachment, identity, grief, and guilt [21].

The archetypal information carried by images can be worked with during progress toward individuation. Such images are found in the form of dreams and active

imaginal reflections, which may be broken down into smaller mythologems as fragments within archetypal systems including fairy tales and mythological stories [43]. For example, a common and pervasive myth/archetype in today's society is that of the hero. The hero's journey has been particularly researched by Joseph Campbell and popularized in his talks with Bill Moyers. The hero's Journey is present in many myths and stories around the world, across all cultures [44]. It is fundamentally about meeting and facing difficulties, developing through them, and coming to new understandings to bring back to everyday life. Used again and again in stories, books, and movies, the hero's journey represents our human journey in mythological and archetypal form [45–47]. Mitchell notes that the mythological and fairy tale literature contains more heroes than heroines, and that heroines (female heroes) are much easier to find in fairy tales than in myths [48].

The archetype of the mother often occurs in an imaginal form in fairy tales as one type of archetypal myth [49, 50]. In fact, the study and interpretation of archetypes within fairy tales was largely initiated by Carl Jung [51], and has been continued by subsequent writers and practitioners [40, 52, 53]. Broadly, fairy tales have been used as a framework for “deepening the conversation about our clinical interactions and the meaning-making process in therapy” [36] and function as a continually recreated narrative [54]. More specifically, from a Jungian perspective, the analysis of the fairy tale leads to “the isolation, identification, and study of archetypal patterns and to the process of individuation played out as a whole endowed with meaning” [40]. Within the therapeutic process, clients may demonstrate or refer to the fairy tales explicitly or implicitly and may express personal associations and variations to each element of the fairy tales.

1.3 Interpretation of archetypal material

Interpretation of archetypal material assists the client in deepening the understanding of patterns within the breadth of human experience, and emergent archetypal patterns in working with clients have “a ring of universality, inherent order, or transcendence” [43]. Archetypal patterns may occur in fragmented form, and the basic core elements of mythologems (or themes) can form part of larger mythic narratives as the building blocks of the underpinning structures, as seen in fairy tales and other myths [37, 43], relating to emotionally charged ideas or images within a complex. The actual interpretation of archetypal client material is shaped by language in the form of the words used by clients to express themselves with both intentionality and action [55]. Similarly, Bettelheim sees fairytales as a more gentle way of approaching maturation and psychological growth compared to myths [41], and “cultural symbols” are seen as intermediate between personal and universal symbols [56].

Fairy tales typically begin with a deficiency, lack, or crisis and lead into the disequilibrium of leaving a calm known world into a dangerous and unknown world, reflecting conscious, preconscious, and unconscious material [57]. In reporting an image, the client may express their uncertainty about an image, where even just mentioning the words suggests that the idea/image is present and emerging into consciousness. Images and characters in imagery can carry latent and manifest meanings influencing not only the naming of fairy tale characters but also the characteristics of their actual behavior. This also links to the physical marker model theory [58, 59]. Ambivalence and contradictory feelings may be expressed and interpreted through mythical images [53].

The ubiquitous nature of fairy tales and the ways that fairy tales are adapted and re-told give further information about personal and societal viewpoints [60] linked to “the social mind” [57]. In fact, a proverb attributed to Italian/Greek culture states that “The fairy tale has no landlord”, thereby encapsulating the pervasive nature of fairy tales in society [60–62].

Attempts have been made to apply processes to fairy tale analysis [63, 64]. Applying a Jungian approach to dream interpretation to applying a Jungian approach to dream interpretation to fairy tales itself in terms of the main elements of the drama including time and place, the characters, and the storyline. Conflicts may occur as the narrative develops, generally leading toward resolution [63]. Following this, motifs or mythologems are amplified by exploring sign-based meanings within cultural expressions (literature and arts) framed within intertextuality [46]. Once the motif/mythologem is further understood, the next step situates this within its surrounding [63] in line with insights into the client’s context provided by variations from the expressed fairy tale. Finally, the preceding steps are synthesized and translated into an understanding of the psychological processes involved, typically focusing on the person’s growth and development as an integrative process [63, 64].

1.4 The tale of Snow White

Within the language and literature of fairy tales, the fairy tale known in English as Snow White was originally published as Schneewittchen by the Brothers Grimm as part of a documentation of current German fairy tales in 1857 [65, 66]. Multiple narratives, re-tellings, and variations on the Snow White fairy tale exist, including a range of interpretations and emphases [54, 67–72], and this tale is in fact found all over the world [73, 74]. For those who may not be familiar with this fairy tale, a detailed outline by Robinson [75] is found in Appendix 1. Dillingham [63] summarizes this fairy tale as follows:

The Grimms’s [66] “Snow White” tells the tale of a princess born to a beautiful, self-centered queen. The queen has a magic mirror that confirms her supremacy as the most beautiful in the land until her daughter reaches the age of 7 and usurps her... Furious, she casts Snow White out into the woods to be killed, but the child is released and finds shelter in the home of the seven dwarfs... After years of domestic service in exchange for room and board, Snow White finally falls prey to the deceitful witch who puts Snow White into a deathlike state... A prince happens upon the dwarfs’ cottage with the beautiful Snow White in the glass coffin. He falls deeply in love with her and brings her back to his castle, where she awakens by chance, and the happy couple wed” [63].

Barzilai summarizes this fairy tale even further as: “a young girl flees from the murderous intentions of her wicked stepmother, finds shelter with the seven dwarfs, undergoes three trials or temptations, succumbs to the poison apple, and is rescued from her death-sleep by a charming prince” [54]. Johnston has identified eight key elements within this fairy tale: (1) Snow White the character, (2) the Evil Queen, (3) the Mirror, (4) the Huntsman, (5) the Seven Dwarfs, (6) the Apple, (7) the Revival, and (8) Happily Ever After [68]. Many aspects of this fairy tale have been explored deeply to understand how the elements carry information about societal expectations and appropriate behavioral models [65]. The tale of Snow White especially carries cultural expectations of marriage and domestication and focuses

on family dynamics and transformation into womanhood as a source of jealousy and competition by the stepmother/queen [65]. In the final resolution, the prince is seen as essential, leading Snow White to her destiny of wife and motherhood [65]. This story carries themes of feminism, parental loss, and resilience [36], impacting issues of motherhood. Further, this fairy tale focuses on the “alterations that occur within a woman as a result of her own experiences in the maternal role” [54], and the “journey of a maid embracing motherhood” [73]. In particular, Perez [76] highlights the change in Snow White from being a princess to keeping house for the dwarves, where she “fulfills the role of the working woman who is responsible for the tasks of reproductive life” [76]. Others have engaged a feminist lens in approaching fairy tales such as Snow White [60, 70], including links to experiences of trauma [63] and gender ideology [60].

1.4.1 Key Elements

Looking more closely at Johnston’s eight key elements, and viewing this fairy tale within a clinical interpretive context, writers have focused both on Snow White herself and beyond the significance of the various elements of the story such as the role of the dwarves, the mirror, and the queen. Each of these eight elements will now be individually addressed.

Snow White is depicted as a beautiful princess whose mother died when she was very young; due to her father’s remarriage, she was raised by her stepmother. In addition to her beauty, Snow White demonstrates qualities of naivety, gullibility, and submissive maidenhood [68, 70]. Her apparently immature qualities are combined with industriousness in caring for others and she demonstrates an ability to survive against the odds when left in the forest. Her beauty inspires jealousy from the queen, mercy from the huntsman, kindness from the dwarves, and love from the Prince [68].

The Evil Queen, also known as the stepmother or the wicked witch [69, 77], is part of the mother archetype [78]. The Evil Queen is depicted as being vain in her need to be the most beautiful person in the kingdom, and she is intensely jealous of Snow White’s beauty [68, 70]. She relies on a magical looking glass also known as a mirror, to regularly determine who is the most beautiful person in line with her narcissistic behavior [70]. Bettelheim [52] comments on the narcissistic nature of the stepmother in the original story, and states that “It is the narcissistic parent who feels most threatened by his child’s growing up, because that means the parent must be aging,” with Schectman corroborating this understanding [79]. The dark and destructive nature of the Evil Queen is seen in ordering the death of Snow White and having her heart cut out as a trophy, which in some versions she also consumes. She sees Snow White as a continued competition and threat to her own survival and engages in manipulative behavior to destroy her via trickery and poison.

The Mirror, also known as a looking-glass, is seen as a magical device calibrating absolute beauty in response to the queen’s regular and classic question, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of us all?” [68, 71]. The mirror is central to understanding developing consciousness, and a healthy sense of self [77]. The Mirror can also be seen as reflecting the effects of aging on loss of beauty and reframing of self-image [80], and therefore inherently draws parallels between youth and aging. The reflective nature of the mirror links to image, self-image, and critical self-reflective practices.

The Huntsman, also known as the woodcutter or even a servant, is directed by the Evil Queen to kill Snow White and bring back her heart. However, he responds to

Snow White's entreaty to be set free in the woods and not killed, resulting in leaving her alone and without any allies [68]. In doing so, he defies the order of the Queen and deceives her with a heart taken from an animal, despite the potential impact on himself. He exercises a benevolent influence on the unfolding story of Snow White, counteracting the destructive tendencies of the Queen.

Snow White arrives at the cottage of the Seven Dwarves, whose presence is a particular characteristic of the Snow White fairy tale. She engages diligently in cooking, cleaning, and household duties for the dwarves, reinforcing gender roles to stay home and take care of children [70]. The Dwarves also take on the role of surrogate family [68] and "have the character of Snow White's sons" [70]; for example, in ensuring that they are washed, clean, and well-fed. Johnston also comments that the story would not be the same if it was "seven large men rather than dwarfs" [68] and here the influence of "little people" is evident. Across many genres, diminutive creatures often carry magical and other characteristics, such as elves, leprechauns, and little people of English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish traditions [81]. From a Jungian point of view, dwarves may be seen as "guardians of the threshold of the unconscious" [82]. At the same time, the multiplicity of the dwarves may also symbolize internal fragmentation as the opposite of inner integration, in line with Jungian thought [82].

The Apple in this fairy tale aligns with Christian themes from the garden of Eden, where it symbolizes sin and temptation, within the context of frequent warnings by the dwarves that Snow White should beware of strangers [68]. The poisoned nature of the apple as provided by the disguised Evil Queen continues the sense of dark and destructive forces, causing Snow White to fall into a deep sleep which may indicate an end of innocence [70]. Sleeping also indicates a deep unconscious level of activity and the potential for transformation [82]. After she falls into a deep sleep, the Dwarves make a glass coffin to house Snow White and constantly watch over her [70, 74].

Being awoken from a deep sleep constitutes the Revival of Snow White and a wide range of versions exist about how this occurs, most typically relating to the moving of the glass coffin and a kiss from the Prince who has found her. The Prince immediately falls in love at first sight [68], which can also be seen as a sign of increasing integration and maturity within the psyche [70].

Following Revival, Snow White finds her Happily Ever After as a victory over death in marrying the Prince with a splendid gala wedding celebration [68, 74]. Symbolically, marriage may represent inner reconciliation and integration within the psyche as part of the individuation process [82]. Within the marriage celebration, dancing is seen as an incarnation of internal energy as change and movement occur over time as a uniting and integrating function [82]. The destructive influence of the Evil Queen is destroyed forever and a positive future is anticipated for Snow White [70].

The Snow White fairy tale is essentially about change, as are other heroic myths. Opperman makes a connection between naming the Queen as also a Wicked Witch in the Snow White fairy tale [69]. Further, he outlines how a critical incident or sensitizing event can lead to subconscious conclusions and reactions which remain latent until triggered later in life by an event or events, forming a pattern of responses; the task is to "wake up" from this pattern to become more conscious and able to live life to the full. [69] Patterns of interaction in fairy tales such as Snow White may be interpreted as part of an individual's psyche, and offer insights into the psyche's pathway to maturity [73]. The story of Snow White is seen as being about the development of the feminine psyche [73]. Hockley and Fadina consider that Snow White "embraces both otherness and difference, and in so doing she follows her own path through life" [67], toward living her life in an authentic and personally meaningful manner as

conceptualized within the Jungian individuation process [67]. We now look at the role of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) as a clinical modality supporting inner psychodynamic change via the use of spontaneous imagery with music.

1.5 Exploring the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music

There are many ways that personal and individualized archetypal imagery can be evoked, and one therapeutic modality is the Bonny Method of GIM [83]. This current chapter uses the modality of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) as the vehicle for bringing out experiences of motherhood, via a unique case with a clinical series, which will be further explained in the method section of the paper. In conjunction with the temporal nature of music, the GIM method creates a narrative of inner processes, rather like the clients creating their own inner movie, where the music forms the soundtrack. As an active and interactive music psychotherapeutic method with insight-oriented reconstructive goals [84], GIM therefore provides an opportunity for exploring issues of motherhood. Inner change can be depicted using the imagery process of GIM, and it is common for imagery including fairy tales to emerge, which can be very useful in understanding what is going on for the person, in an emergent manner [85]. Within the clinical method, session transcripts are produced within the normal documentation processes of the GIM session and a range of art-based modalities can be used to process emergent materials after the imagery experience [78, 86].

This GIM therapeutic approach specifically takes people into the imaginal realm and uses carefully selected music and specific “guiding” techniques to sustain and support an unfolding of the client’s imagery process. During this process, clients are encouraged and supported to produce active and ongoing imagery in the context of carefully chosen music, rather like a waking dream, and then this material is worked within the moment using non-directive interaction occurring between the client and the therapist, which may include a wide range of supportive verbal and vocal interventions [46, 58, 87].

GIM is often practiced from a Jungian therapeutic stance [88]. It is known from clinical experience that archetypal material, in the form of fairy tales and myths, may occur within the GIM process [89, 90], but there is still a great need for more to be formally written and researched in this area. From anecdotal sources and personal experience, it seems that the manner in which the story unfolds for the client may be somewhat varied, with a tale or myth occurring in one session or over a longer series, and not necessarily in a linear narrative sequence. Clinical experience suggests that it is rare to find a whole story or archetype unfold in detail within a single clinical GIM session, and fragmented archetypal material may be produced within and across a series of GIM sessions. The client may alter the basic tale or myth at various points, in a way that is relevant to their circumstances and modes of operation. The way that clients may change various aspects of an archetypal story gives additional meaning and provides further understanding within the clinical setting. Viewing archetypal material from a Jungian stance assists the client in that the GIM therapist can encourage the client toward the next major step in the story and perhaps have some idea of how change may be achieved. For example, in order to return home when the tale is “The Wizard of Oz”, clicking feet together may well be the solution, and thus the GIM therapist may gently suggest the client looks down or considers if they are wearing footwear. Thus, both client and therapist benefit from a knowledge and understanding of archetypes as they occur in the GIM process.

Combining an understanding of the inherent changes of motherhood with archetypal understandings around the role of fairy tales within the context of GIM practice, the specific questions that this research case study focuses on are:

- How can issues of motherhood be identified and understood using imagery processes, within the GIM music psychotherapy context
- How can such imagery be understood and interpreted in the light of Jungian archetypes and fairy tales
- Can new theoretical and methodological understandings arise from the reframing of a previous case report into a research case study to provide a deeper understanding of previous client data from a case report
- How can we further and more deeply understand the psychological work engendered by matresence and the change to motherhood?

2. Method

Qualitative research approaches lend themselves well to applied clinical practice in the therapeutic field since they foreground an interpretation of the words and experiences which are expressed by the client. This can be captured in written form in many ways. Clinical case reports typically take an informal qualitative approach as a recount of the clinical session with therapist reflections which are important for developing understandings and communicating with further clinicians [91] and in the context of education [92]. However, contemporary understandings of the research case study take a more systematic approach to methodology in the clinical context. Alpi and Evans explore the differences between a case report and a research case study, where the latter is important in addressing the complexity of deep and rich data within a real-world context [93]. Case study research contributes new ways of understanding complex practices, linking conceptual understandings derived from research to applied research-based practice as a snapshot in time and space to provide new understandings [94]. The essential role of both clinical research and formal evidence-based research is considered by Szajewska as needed to contribute to improved health outcomes for clients [95]. Systematic case study research contributes valuable evidence which can describe, explore or explain a clinical phenomenon of interest within a particular context, and which can document and theorize rare events in the naturally occurring context, which in turn builds professional knowledge in a credible manner [96]. It is noted that concurrent typologies conceptualizing research case study from Stake [97] and Yin [92, 98] can be applied within the research process [96].

Following early publication of specific case report [1], further approaches exploring clinical cases from a research point of view have been explored and developed to shed light, informed by thinking about how a research case study approach can be applied to GIM practice [99]. By updating and integrating both theory and methodology, the current article aims to achieve deeper understandings of the previous clinical case report by further contextualizing and expanding the clinical information into a research case study, using additional evidence and a deeper reflective and analytical process in line with current research understandings. In doing so, this article demonstrates a complex approach of seeking to change one type of publication to another,

updating theory and method to achieve deeper understandings relevant to practice. Whilst the original case report detailed many clinical aspects and some reflective and interpretive processes based on the literature and experience available at the time, a more thorough and systematic research case study approach was anticipated to have value in deepening understandings of this unique clinical case material.

In fact, research case study methodology allows for the intensive description, exploration, and explanation of a particular case or group of cases, and can provide valuable knowledge which communicates effectively to clinicians seeking to apply new knowledge to their practice. Research cases may be selected in a number of different ways, using the context to explore what is described as an intrinsic case with unique characteristics [96, 97]. Further, an explanatory approach [92, 98] can be applied to illuminate the case in its context. A clear and systematic methodology needs to be established for case study research, especially considering multiple data sources and the way that these are analyzed. These analytic techniques include (1) pattern matching, related to observed and predicted patterns, and (2) explanation building, using an iterative process to understand the complexity of the pattern matching as based on the work of Yin [92] in order to understand all of the research and clinical implications.

2.1 Systematic approach

Combining these several different theoretical and methodological requirements, the systematic method devised for the current research case study application comprises the following steps: (1) identify an intrinsic case with unique characteristics; (2) identify a pattern evidenced in the clinical material; (3) apply analytical techniques of pattern matching, and (4) undertake an iterative explanatory approach to understand the complexity of the pattern matching and its variations. Within this, a Jungian interpretive framework informs the overall methodology, as has previously occurred in other work undertaking an intertextual semiotic approach [46]. The current four-step methodological approach is now further explained.

2.1.1 Step 1. Identify an intrinsic case with unique characteristics

This first step involves identifying and choosing a suitable case. In this instance it focuses on the Snow White fairy tale in clinical practice, stemming from a previously published case. The unique characteristics of this case are outlined according to known clinical details related to the participant, the application of the GIM therapeutic modality, published details, and further reflections by the GIM therapist. The intrinsic value of this case relates to the rarity of an entire fairy tale occurring spontaneously in a single GIM or other Jungian-oriented clinical session.

2.1.2 Step 2. Identify a pattern evidenced in the clinical material

Patterns serve as models or designs which provide predictability via a repeated or regular way that something is done which can serve as a useful guide for further work and delineates how things are usually done. In terms of behaviors, a pattern may be informative about personality or approach, and patterns in data can inform analysis within the context of research. A fairy tale is a cultural model or design which has emerged as a patterned cultural artifact. The current methodology utilizes a systematic approach to reviewing the Snow White fairy tale, expanding from ad hoc

clinical insights noted in the previous publication [1]. By revisiting current literature to inform the analysis process, an increasingly systematic approach to elements of the fairy tale is provided, specifically the eight elements outlined by Johnston [68].

2.1.3 Step 3. Apply analytical techniques of pattern matching

The pattern from Step 2 then informs the analysis process by providing a sound basis from the literature and further supports a systematic examination of the client's depiction of a traditional fairy tale and any deviations they may incorporate into their personal fairy tale. Although this was already previously attempted somewhat [1], a more detailed, comprehensive, and systematic approach now occurs at this step in the current research case study.

2.1.4 Step 4. Explanatory approach to understanding the complexity of the pattern matching and its variations

Following the results of pattern matching in Step 3, an iterative review and interpretation process takes place in order to explain meanings and implications related to the client's depiction of the Snow White narrative in terms of both motherhood and psychodynamic change related to a Jungian interpretive framework.

2.2 Data sources

A range of data sources informs this research case study. Clinical data sources include regular field notes of a full written transcript which is documented within normal GIM session practice, with associated clinical notes and observations. Additional participant discussions within the session, both before and after the music and imagery experience, are also included, as are materials from previous GIM sessions [100] within an interpretive approach based on intertextuality [46].

3. Results

Results of this research case study are now unpacked in terms of the carefully developed systematic approach used for in-depth exploration of this intrinsic case based on participant materials generated within a single GIM treatment session.

3.1 Step 1: An intrinsic case with unique characteristics

Rarely, an entire fairy tale is spontaneously reported and outlined within a single GIM or other Jungian oriented clinical session. Therefore, this selected case demonstrates intrinsic value in depicting an entire fairy tale in a single session, at the same time demonstrating unique characteristics in the way that the client uses and adapts the emergent Snow White fairytale to fit her needs, thereby providing further information about her current experience related to matrescence and the change to motherhood.

Clinical details about this case are as follows. This client had previously undergone an eight-session series of GIM during pregnancy. At this time, her therapeutic process focused on issues related to adaptation to pregnancy in terms of her body, her relationship with her husband, the resolution of prior ectopic pregnancy, and bonding with

the male fetus baby in utero [100]. This client now had a new (female) baby who was five months old, her last GIM sessions having taken place approximately six months previously. During this break, she had undertaken no other therapy-oriented session.

Since there had been a long break since her previous GIM sessions, and since there had been such tumultuous changes in her life and lifestyle in the intervening period in view of motherhood, this current session was viewed by the therapist as being novel in terms of a new beginning, expecting that the client would now be at a different point in her therapeutic process after the birth of her child. She reported that her baby had been a somewhat demanding child, that she was still breastfeeding her, and that she herself was feeling tired.

This current GIM session proceeded according to standard processes and applications [58, 101]. Following initial therapeutic discussion, routine decision-making took place with regard to the specific music program to be used. In this case, the music used was the program entitled “Relationships” [102–104]. The “Relationships” program comprises music of three different composers and is designed to promote inner interactions within the imagery process. For example, this GIM program begins with the Concertstuck for Harp, by Pierne which has flowing melodic lines, broad tessitura, and varied instrumentation which includes substantial use of stringed instruments. It carries a sense of predictability, despite a full range of dynamics and a significant climax. Instruments are used in opposing groups, with a sense of “asking and answering questions.” This GIM program allows for many possibilities to emerge and for the client to relate to them using their imagery processes, in line with Bonny’s multilayered principles in the use of music for GIM [103]. This program was extended by adding music to complete the client’s imagery experience, which was the “Pavane” by Faure, known to be a suitable music style that could be added to the relationships program. The full listing of all the music appears in **Table 1**.

3.2 Step 2. An identified pattern from clinical material

After a few transitional images to begin the imagery process, the client immediately reported a confronting spontaneous image of a witch, a typically fairy tale figure, and later little dwarves/elves. In fact, most of the elements of the Snow White tale began to emerge within her reported imagery of her GIM session. As is often the case in image-based material, the client used words interchangeably, such as witch and stepmother. Post session reflective practice brought to light the full extent of this unfolding of the fairy tale, with similarities and differences to the traditional tale providing interesting and informative clinical information. The identified pattern of the fairy tale in

Music	Length (Minutes: Seconds)
<i>“Relationships” (Helen Bonny)</i>	
Pierne, Concertstuck for harp and orchestra	14.48
Rachmaninov, Symphony No.2, Adagio	14.11
Respighi, Fountains of Rome: Villa Giulia at Dawn, Villa Medici at Sunset	9.02
<i>Additional music, from “Creativity 2” (Linda Keiser Mardis)</i>	
Faure, Pavane	6.04

Table 1.
Music used in GIM session [104, 105].

this session was noted to hold intrinsic value and unique characteristics. This unique session was subsequently written up into a clinical case report based on knowledge and experience at the time and published following peer review. Interest in this case report has continued over time, as noted by citations and research impact metrics.

Extending insights from the clinical case report [1], the current paper applies a systematic framework informed by current literature to delve further into the cultural artifact of this fairy story. Johnston's eight key elements of the Snow White fairy tale are chosen as the pattern against which to review the client's fairy tale material [68]. These eight key elements are: (1) Snow White the character, (2) the Evil Queen, (3) the Mirror, (4) the Huntsman, (5) the Seven Dwarfs, (6) the Apple, (7) the Revival, and (8) Happily Ever After [68]. All of these elements were found to occur in this GIM session and this pattern thereby sheds light on the clinical material of this client's reported imagery.

3.3 Step 3. Pattern matching in the context of client data

Employing a systematic and comprehensive approach, a methodological step was needed to identify changes and amendments to the traditional Snow White fairy tale. In order to do so, the client's narrative text from the session transcript was broken into meaning units throughout the entire transcript via an iterative process. This was then compared to the pattern of the generic Snow White fairy tale [68] as has already been identified in Step 2 within the current methodological framework. The client's narrative fell naturally into 15 parts. These include the eight elements of the fairy tale, some with a Reprise, and some additional variations called Caveats in this current chapter (see **Table 2**).

3.4 Step 4. Explanatory approach to interpreting the complexity of patterns and variations

Various observations and interpretations can be made about how the client used the Snow White fairy tale to convey information about their current life experiences of motherhood. Within the client's imagery narrative, Snow White as a beautiful woman dancing alone has a sense of being able to move freely at her own choice (E-1b). She has no children to worry about and the client is envious of being "single and childless." But then a subsequent realization of aloneness is expressed and the woman walks away, leaving this experience behind. This imagery accesses the challenges of matrescence in changing to incorporate the child into the life of the mother, and acknowledges the desire to return to individual freedom and agency in life prior to motherhood, and the "worry" of children is explicitly addressed. However, this imagery also carries reflection and comparison about aloneness, suggesting the benefits of family, belonging, and the larger picture of motherhood as an integral role in society.

The apparent conflation of a wicked witch with the Evil Queen (E-2) in the standard fairy tale suggests an ambivalence about female characters and energies. The word "ridiculous" suggests that there is something out of joint in the situation, and yet the color purple suggests royalty which links to the original tale. This ambivalence suggests that the client has further work to do around the role of her female energy and her sense of self as she grows into matrescence.

The sense of inner comparison appears in being looked over "to see if I am a good mother or not" (E-3), and this embodies a strong sense of reflection as in the Mirror

#	Element	Caveat	Text from client
E-1a	Snow White		<i>The narrative is coming from the point of view of Snow White, she is the character, and therefore is assumed at the beginning of the client narrative.</i>
E-2	The Evil Queen		I am seeing a ridiculous woman from fairy tales, with the same face as the wicked witch. Not evil, different clothes, purple. She's looking me over. Not a princess, not a witch. <i>[Does she have something to say to you?]</i>
E-3	The Mirror		She's looking me over, to see if I'm a good mother or not. She's not sure - I'm not really interested. <i>[Is there something you would like to say to her?]</i> "Mind your own business". She snickered and walked away, I turned my back.
C-1		Castle and Babies	A castle, like fairyland. Blue/turquoise surrounds a grayish castle, it is up really high. There are baby heads in all the castle windows. I feel like I have to go up and take care of all the babies, millions of heads. I cannot take care of them all.
E-4a	The Huntsman		<i>Not present at this point, see later.</i>
E-5a	The Seven Dwarves		Off to the left. I dance with mid-height fairy creatures, 4 feet high. They are dancing in a circle around me, going off to the left. I dance with mid-height fairy creatures, 4 feet clockwise, I am turning in the other direction, They are all holding hands—more and more of them, getting to be a bigger circle. It is harder to see I liked it better when there were just a couple and they were close. <i>[Can you ask them to go away?]</i> Yes, I will do that.
E-1b	Reprise: Snow White		Watching someone else dance, a woman. She is all alone, it is beautiful to watch her dance. A lot of jumping and turning. She does not have any children to worry about, or would not be doing it that way, single childless woman. At first, I am envious, but now I realize that if she stops dancing, she will realize how alone she is. She stopped dancing [music likewise] and is walking away.
E-5b	Reprise: the Seven Dwarves		The little elves are back, they were green before, but now they are all different colors. They are all asexual, just little elves. I wish I could replace them with kids, they are all the same.
C-2		The Boy	[a deep sigh] A motorized car, with a sidecar, with a little boy in red overalls, like a red pedal car. I am not having to pedal. He is on my right, a blonde boy with bangs. He thinks it is just great, going without pushing. It is going so fast and very smooth. The landscape is rolling peacefully and quickly by. I feel like I want to slow it down. I slowed it down [the music actually slowed down too].
E-6a	The Apple: Poison food Part 1		The boy is still on the right, but on the left, a sensation of sweet food. Cakes, lollipops, icings, and colorful bright pastel decorations on cakes. No chocolate [said longingly]. <i>[Can you find some chocolate?]</i> There is a chocolate bar 4 ft. high, and a man saying "forget it," I cannot have it because of nursing. <i>[Would you like to take a tiny taste?]</i> I can have a taste if someone else feeds my daughter. I'm eating a lot of it, and giving the little boy some. It's all over his face, and my face.

#	Element	Caveat	Text from client
E-6b	The Apple: Poison food Part 2		We are getting back into the car, with the scenery going by. There is something drawing me to the right. Clouds, not terra firma anymore. I am going upwards, flying upwards, and floating down on one of the balloons [from recent balloon festival]—a balloon parachute. Colored fabric, silky, primary colors, red, yellow, royal blue, green, orange. Deep and bright, rich and satiny, soft, flowing. Rolling up in satiny fabric. Colors so bright—happy colors. I am inside of the material floating around, just my head is uncovered. Like a cocoon, not tight, flowing, gently changing. Not able to see anything anymore. Dark, deep, deep purple, and green spiral, going around clockwise. I am going around the spiral from the top.
E-7	Revival		Something is stopping me from flying off to the left. I am jerked back by a force. I am tempted to let go, but still holding on, not spinning as fast, much slower, like a broken record I am going to get off. I'm stepping off, down some stairs. There are a lot of people, adults I do not recognize. There are different layers of people, different levels of people. There is white light as I go down, it is not getting darker. People are going past, looking grumpy. <i>[Is there something you would like to ask them?]</i> I do not feel like I know them well enough. They are not sad or angry, just grumpy.
E-4b	The Huntsman		I'm focusing on one of the people, with a beard and a mustache. He does not look like a real person. His hair just went from reddish brown to white and old. He does not look as grumpy. He went outside and back up, <i>[Does he have something to show you?]</i> It seems so. He is taking me back to where I was. I linked elbows with him, I am running circles around him. He says I should slow down and let him guide the way.
C-3		Baby Daughter	I am in a place with all these animals, foxes, raccoons. [Daughter's name] is playing with all the animals. It's very safe, she does not realize they are wild animals - they are safe. She's got a lot of hair, like a year old or 18 months. I do not want to startle her - if she sees I'm here, she might be bitten. She went from being a kid to a teenager with a wreath on her head. She is walking toward a castle church. She hears a noise.
E-8	Happily Ever After.		I lost that image. There is a man and a woman, dancing, and moving together. They are doing the same movements, next to each other. One is a shadow of the other, like ice dancing. It is getting lighter, like a sunrise. I cannot see the sun. I feel like watching the dancers. They are walking. Distinct, parallel steps. [end of music] They walk away into the horizon.

Note: Italics are used for explanatory comments; italics in brackets are used for the therapist's verbal interventions where they have significantly impacted the client's process.

Table 2.
Pattern matching of client data to Johnston's eight elements.

in the original fairy tale. The Evil Queen expresses ambivalence about the outcome of this assessment of her mothering skills. However, the client shows inner strength in rebutting the older woman by saying “mind your own business” and turning her back on her. Therefore, the power of the older woman over the younger woman has broken as she snickers and walks away (E-3). This imagery sequence speaks to imposed expectations about mothering by older women and more broadly the cultural and

community mores about mothering. This is directly in opposition to individual development of the mother's skills in caring for their specific baby in relation to the current time, place, and context. Writers such as Winnicott have spoken about expectations of mothering where the concept of being a "good enough mother" to the specific child cuts through expectations of perfection [106]. The fact that this client can express disinterest and turn her back on this overt comparison suggests an inner resilience in her own development as a mother.

Immediately following this comparison/assessment of her mothering abilities, a Caveat appears focusing on a Castle and Babies (C-1). The babies become more and more multiplied in the gray castle with windows with many heads and more needs. The client expresses feeling overwhelmed by more needs than she can take care of, which may link to her everyday experience of the demands of mothering. The gray of the castle may also suggest a sense of depression, and the context of the castle being up high suggests a sense of unreachable, unattainable high standards in caring and motherhood.

The Dwarves in this fairy tale are variously described as "mid-height fairy creatures" and elves, and they are described as having an asexual nature (E-5a, E-5b). Engagement occurs through dancing with them, and they circle around her with a similar multiplicity to the many heads of babies in the previous Castle imagery sequence (C-1). Interestingly, they also take on a wide range of colors, perhaps suggesting the release of emotion and feeling tones. In contrast to the overwhelming multiplicity of baby needs, the client now wants to "replace them with kids" with the implication of greater individuality. Such children are clearly older than babies and may suggest a desire to move forward from the demands of early mothering. This also serves as an opening into the next section, about a little boy.

The little boy wearing red overalls and in a red motorized pedal car appears as a Caveat to the Snow White tale (C-2), and as such holds considerable significance. He is understood to likely be a further manifestation of grieving and resolving a previously lost ectopic pregnancy. This little boy previously wore red sneakers (shoes) in a previous sequence of 8 GIM sessions, where he appeared in sessions 2, 5, 7, and 8, the last session being some 6 months prior to the current session [100]. In the current session, the client sighs, suggesting a letting out of emotion as the little boy appears. The client notes smoothness and speed of movement without effort, within a peaceful ongoing journey which is also under her control for slowing down. Her sensitivity to the little boy's emotions is indicated by "he thinks it is just great", and her mothering relationship with the boy extends into the next section by sharing some chocolate with him within her journey.

The element of the Apple in the Snow White fairy tale appears for this client as symbolized by poisoned food that is harmful (E-6a, E-6b). Given that as a mother she is nursing/breastfeeding, she is acutely aware that foods and substances she ingests as affecting the growth and development of the baby. One such food is chocolate, where the inherent caffeine has the potential to affect the baby via the lactation process. The client images an extremely large chocolate bar (4 feet = 122 cm high) which is accompanied by a man forbidding her by saying "forget it" and her own reflection, "I cannot have it because of nursing." However, she arrives at a solution—that she can eat it "if someone else feeds my daughter." She then engages thoroughly with the chocolate, eating a lot, smearing it on her face, and likewise sharing it with her little boy.

As with the poisoned Apple in the original fairy tale, ingesting forbidden chocolate leads to an opening into a transformative state of consciousness (E-6b). This is

indicated by feeling drawn away from the earth into the clouds; flying, flowing, and floating with bright colors with rich soft satiny materials. Her passive movement is followed by the sense of a cocoon, dark and not able to see, which echoes the coffin of the fairy tale but there is also a sense of inner growth in the purple and green upward spiraling movement.

Suddenly, the client experiences a slowing down and downward spiraling movement (E-7), being “jerked back by a force”, and actively steps onto a platform to go down some stairs as she awakens in the Revival to a new context of light with different “layers” and “levels” of people. She identifies a pervasive feeling of “grumpy” in the people, and this emotional tone suggests that more inner work is in process of emerging.

Through focusing on the many different people, a male emerges who could well be described as the Huntsman (E-4b), with a beard and mustache. He is less grumpy than the other people and transforms into a benevolent older man, which the client says significantly, “he is taking me back to where I was.” He encourages her to slow down, functioning as a guide figure for her (in line with the myth of the hero’s Journey) and re-orienting her to motherhood, as shown in the next section.

Once more, a Caveat appears in the Snow White fairy tale, this time the client’s baby daughter who is happily and safely playing with wild animals (C-3). In the imagery, she anticipates the growth and development of her baby into a child and teenager. Having a wreath on her head and walking toward the castle church suggests marriage and union, and here the imagery crosses over into the inner growth and development of the client. This section is punctuated by hearing “a noise” and the image changes completely.

The Happily Ever After section of the fairy tale (E-8) is depicted with a man and woman dancing in harmony together, ultimately walking into the emerging new light of the sunrise toward the horizon with a sense of happily ever after. It is interesting to reflect on the clear changes seen in the imagery from a single childless woman dancing alone to the man and woman dancing together as a seeming integration of opposites within the sense of family and motherhood. In this imagery, clear progress has been made from the single childless woman dancing alone and then eventually the man and woman dancing as an integration of opposites and also symbolic of the family.

In focusing on the role of the music within the client’s depiction of the fairy tale, as has been useful in other contexts [107], and assuming that music and/or rhythm is inherent to any mention of dancing, we note the effects of music and sounds of dancing with the dwarves, the childless woman dancing alone, her daughter hearing a noise which leads to a complete change of imagery, and the man and woman dancing closely together. In these instances, the music of dancing clearly embodies psychic movement which happens together with the imagery process itself.

4. Discussion

This paper reviews and re-works a previously published clinical case report [1] into a research case study as seen through the lens of an intrinsic case with unique characteristics, following an explanatory approach within a research case methodology, in line with the thinking of Wolf and colleagues [96]. This unique intrinsic case focuses on a client depicting the Snow White fairy tale in their spontaneously generated imagery through the progress of a single GIM session. Arising research questions are specifically addressed in relation to motherhood, the use and interpretation of imagery, new

theoretical and methodological understandings, and an understanding of the contribution of the GIM method in assisting with matresence and the change to motherhood.

4.1 Motherhood, imagery, and society

Client materials emerging in this GIM session clearly focus particularly on issues of motherhood, building from the series of eight sessions prior to the birth of her baby daughter, who is now five months old at the time of this current GIM session. A previously explored “child” of an unsuccessful ectopic pregnancy also appears within the spontaneous imagery [100], leading to further integration.

Much of the existing literature about motherhood has been about the child being acted on by the mother. However, this chapter focuses on the extraordinary inner changes needed as a girl transitions to being a mother via the process of matresence. Many changes occur in the transition to motherhood, as a new identity and self-concept emerge within the mothering role [28, 30]. In line with this, the client expresses a number of issues about her change to motherhood through the imagery as individualized within this depiction of the Snow White fairy tale and its variations.

Self-perceptions of perfection and maintaining a sense of self connect closely to the issue of being a “good enough mother,” as brought out by the Mirror of the fairy tale, and this suggests a sense of comparison along the generations, also incorporating intergenerational issues relating to changes in mothering practices with each new generation. The role of the “good enough mother” has particularly been addressed by Winnicott [106], where the mother’s abilities are influenced by the social environment and emotional support available [108]. Further, Winnicott makes redundant the idea of the “perfect” mother [109], seeing this unrealistic ideal as being inferior to improving while doing and learning from failure toward implementing best practices [110].

Another aspect of the change to mothering brought out by the client through using the fairy tale is about the problems of mothers getting what they need, including food and nurturing as their roles and daily life change [2, 13, 31]. This occurs within the context of frequently needing to deny their own needs, as brought out by the client’s imagery of forbidden food which can harm the baby. It is noted that this client is able to solve this dilemma by finding someone else to feed her baby so that she can attend to her own needs, thereby demonstrating problem-solving adaptability to be able to take in her desired food.

Accessing and acknowledging so-called negative feelings is part of a psychological re-evaluation of values, beliefs, and self in the transition to motherhood [18]. Feelings are brought out by the many “grumpy” people that the client awakens to a new transformed context after the poisoned food, and this grumpiness may indicate a general dissatisfaction and weariness caused by the implicit expectation of being an on-call mother selflessly focusing only on her baby.

The client’s imagery also brings out a clear juxtaposition of identity about what it means to be single and then to become a family, as shown by the freedom but aloneness of the single childless woman and a recognition of her current envy of the single life but at the same time acceptance of belonging and family. This integration is even further underlined in the integration of opposites as the client’s depiction of the fairy tale ends with walking into the sunrise as a new beginning.

Linking both the literature and the client’s experience, it is clear that GIM can act as a method helping bring out and track issues of the inner changes in motherhood, which can then be interpreted from a Jungian stance as a user-friendly method assisting with adaptation to motherhood after childbirth.

4.2 Jungian approach to imagery and fairy tales

Using a music psychotherapy approach such as GIM to help bring out issues about motherhood, we can delve even deeper to derive understandings from a Jungian standpoint. As Ventre notes, GIM can serve an important role in addressing the archetype of the mother by facing the “dark side of the external and internal feminine forces in her life” [78], providing case material of transformation toward holistic acceptance and power within the individuation process. Fundamentally, the Snow White fairy tale is about change, as are many myths and fairy tales containing archetypal material, as seen in the way that the client represents their journey via this fairy tale. Along with the trials and changes met in everyday life, this tracks inner growth and development and is also closely linked to the Hero’s journey [46, 47]. Therefore, the client-hero needs to find new skills and coping strategies, both internally and externally in the real world, as they confront unfamiliar scenarios and high levels of anxiety as they occur [47].

In the transition to motherhood, heroic change is needed to meet the extensive needs of motherhood. This plays out for the current client in being catapulted into an unexpected journey especially shown by sensations of moving up and down, exploring the psyche as the client encounters trials and tribulations within the imagery process and relates them to motherhood. The dual image of the benevolent Woodcutter as a Guide within her heroic journey emerges within this current research case study as an insight not previously gained from the earlier case report [1].

4.3 Innovative research approach

In reframing this clinical report into a unique research case study, a systematic methodology has been developed involving a pattern-matching approach. In doing so, it provides increased insights forming evidence to inform clinical practice within a Jungian theoretical framework. This occurred by reviewing an intrinsic case with unique characteristics, as informed by the work of Stake, Wolf, and Yin [92, 96, 97]. Using this methodology, new understandings came to light, for example, connections between the role of the benevolent woodcutter re the guide figure. Merging a Jungian fairy tale approach interpretation [63, 64] with a systematic research methodology was sustainable in deriving new knowledge at a deeper level than had been attained in a previous case report [1].

This chapter has made a clear delineation between a clinical case report and a research case study, following on from the work of Alpi and Evans [93]. In doing so, the ad hoc nature of interpretation has been addressed within the application of well-delineated patterns (in this case the Snow White fairy tale [68]). Not only this, but in creating understanding of the nature and role of the clinical case report versus the research case study has been applied across the significant time gap between the publication of the initial case report and the current research case study. These improved understandings form a fresh contribution to methodology development, and the process outlined in this paper can be further applied to other fairy tales and archetypal stories as may appear in imagery within the clinical context.

4.4 Understanding the work of matrescence

In working our way through this intrinsic case with unique characteristics in the form of a research case study, we are faced with an even deeper and broader

understanding of the inner work engendered by matrescence as the client changes to embrace motherhood within psychic development. Firstly, there is an inherent comparative aspect to mothering which occurs both intergenerationally and with peers. This has the potential to destructively affect the transition to motherhood. Within the imagery, this was experienced as both a looking over to see if she is a good mother and a sense of many people watching her as a mother.

The gaze of others links to community expectations of the role and behaviors of the mother [4, 6, 7, 10, 32] with broader societal issues seen as linking to feminism and gender ideology. In this context, poisonous destructive behavior may occur between women, and broad and diverse support needs to be offered to new mothers [29].

However, what is of fundamental importance is the mother's relationship with the child, their partner, and inevitably with their own self in order to fully embrace a mothering role in a sustainable manner into the future of this long-term commitment. A close review of this GIM session has provided an opportunity for such foundational values to surface and be acknowledged within the psyche. Broader issues from the literature highlight that the maternal attributes engendered by the change to motherhood can lead to consequential role conflict as the new mother experiences multiple challenges and substantial inner change, where both achievements and losses influence the maternal role [13]. Various aspects of these challenges amidst ongoing change have been pointed to by the current client, such as the fragmented work of mothering with many tasks and seemingly many children to constantly look after.

Darvill and colleagues have noted the need for an appropriate support network prior to birth but connecting with other pregnant mothers [12], and this could be further extended to support women as they transition into their new role of motherhood and develop a sense of agency [32]. The fact that such deep psychic change was evidenced in a single GIM session speaks to the value and immediacy of the GIM music psychotherapy method as an option to consider and suggests that further value may be achieved in offering this method to new mothers who are both managing well or experiencing difficulties, as long as well-trained and experienced GIM practitioners are available to undertake this work (see MIAA, musicandimagery.org.au).

Limitations exist with regard to the research case study approach in terms of scope of a single client and the way that the current paper has sought to transform a previous case report into a more systemized research case study. Trustworthiness has been introduced by clearly articulating preconceived beliefs and assumptions such as emerging from a Jungian theoretical approach to interpretation. This current research case study is seen as problem-driven rather than methodology driven, and in applying this new methodology approach new understandings have been derived that link established literature to interpretation within a clinical self-report process.

Within a qualitative approach, generalizations cannot be made from this research case study but nevertheless the results assists with discovering and linking unexpected issues. The research case study approach forms a solid contribution to theory, research, and practice as noted by Wolf and colleagues [96].

5. Final comments

The transition to motherhood has a powerful effect on the psyche of the mother, fostering an awareness of opposites and integration of the personality leading toward

individuation via the mother archetype. By using the vehicle of the Snow White fairy tale in this instance, the client has demonstrated a capacity to use and adapt myth and mythologems to serve the needs of her inner dynamic processes in relation to mothering. In doing so, it is proposed and confirmed that GIM can support and assist with this process and that the GIM therapist can use knowledge of archetypal material such as fairy tales to encourage and support clients in their transition to motherhood, leading to associated benefits for both the mother and their child.

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Appendix

The elements of this basic fairy tale of Snow White are summarized, see [75].


The Queen very much wants a beautiful daughter. This dearest wish comes true with the birth of Snow White. However, when the child is born the Queen dies. A year later, the King remarries a beautiful but vain woman, obsessed with the perfection of her beauty. As Snow White grows up into a lovely girl, her stepmother realizes that she is turning into a more attractive woman than she is herself. This makes her furious. She tries to get rid of Snow White, but the Huntsman/father delivered with the charge of killing Snow White takes pity on her and, disobeying his orders, releases her into the forest. Terrified, Snow White comes across a tiny, tidy house with seven of everything. Snow White falls asleep and greatly surprises the industrious Dwarves on their return from work. In return for domestic chores, the Dwarves offer Snow White protection. Snow White settles down quickly into the routine and becomes fond of the Dwarves and them of her. One day the feared event occurs. Dressed as an old pedlar woman, the stepmother arrives. Snow White, tricked by the wares of lace and ribbons, allows the old woman to lace up her bodice so tightly she cannot breathe and she faints. On their return, the Dwarves fear Snow White is dead but she is quickly revived by their administrations. Despite the Dwarves' precautions, Snow White is duped again by the stepmother, this time by the enticement of a beautiful but poisoned comb. Although rendered unconscious again by the poison, Snow White survives. The Queen comes a third time with a poisoned Apple. Snow White is unable to resist the rosy shine, takes a bite, and dies. The Dwarves are disconsolate and are unable to bring themselves to bury Snow White out of sight. So they place her in a glass coffin on a hilltop. An owl, a raven, and a dove come and sing over the coffin. One day a Prince comes by. He is so enchanted by Snow White that he persuades the Dwarves by his sincerity to part with Snow White's body. Whilst trying to move the coffin, the Prince's men stumble and jolt the coffin, dislodging the Apple from Snow White's mouth. Immediately, she awakes. The Prince and Snow White are married. The stepmother, unable to resist her curiosity, attends the wedding but is recognized and made to dance in red-hot iron shoes until she falls down dead.

Author details

Alison Short
Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

*Address all correspondence to: a.short@westernsydney.edu.au

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Chapter 7

Looking for Eros in the Long Hard Rain of Climate Collapse

Mark Furlong

Abstract

More frequent and intense fires, floods, droughts and extreme temperatures point to a progressively de-regulating environment. In so much as this reality is understood as ‘climate collapse’ we are confronted by a processing task that is profoundly difficult. Initially, the conceptual and affective dimensions of this challenge are examined. A second section develops the proposition that as climate collapse accelerates, and as the scale and timelessness of this disruption takes hold, experiences of guilt and loss, anger and despair, will tend to be amplified by pre-existing unconscious tropes, particularly the fantasy of the vengeful, all-powerful mother. Accenting the possibility psychic tumult may be held against, the implications for mental health are reviewed. A final section considers the prospects for Eros – for play and creativity, innocence and companionship – in the long hard rain of climate collapse.

Keywords: climate collapse, psychoanalysis, Eros, interiority, psychic impact

1. Introduction

So let us not talk falsely now

The hour is getting late

All along the watchtower.

Bob Dylan (1967).

Plato understood Eros as an intermediate between the human and the divine. Less metaphysically, and with differing emphases, the Freudian tradition sees Eros as representing the life force that generates the will to live. However voiced, Eros is the wellspring of purpose and delight, creativity and affinity. What is the chance this bounteous muse will live on in the presence of climate collapse?

In a future roiled by grief, in a context where there will be outlandish disorder and destruction, this a difficult question as it forces a brutal truth into view: it is predicted billions will die in a future structured by climate collapse. In the presence of this actuality, paired with the terrible knowledge that billions are currently, and will continue to, endure lives of suffering, there is a fact that, in and of itself, inevitably and horribly folds back into the psychic conditions within which we live.

In this landscape many will have, more or less, the physical resources to survive. A minority will be disproportionately privileged to such an extent that they will be able to live in material luxury. Physical variables acknowledged, all who are alive will live

within a common psychic condition: fear and despair with the latter especially lashing equanimity. Everybody will know. The good place we used to inhabit is gone. She is not coming back. Mother nature as we knew her, she is gone.

Sentenced to endless anguish and remorse, in a close-to-forsaken condition, can Eros' positive energy last and continue to nurture the human spirit? There will always be sex, but will we still be enlivened by the timeless frisson between play and actuality, imagination and action, that has long sustained us? This question is the destination focus of the present contribution.

Before Eros' future can be addressed, a prior question arises: why is it so difficult to recognize, and accept, the reality of climate collapse? In what follows this difficulty is argued to implicate (i) a formidable conceptual challenge, and (ii) a profoundly disturbing affective component. Who can come to terms with the idea that more frequent and intense fires, floods, droughts and extreme temperatures points to a progressively de-regulating environment?

Before considering the prospects for Eros two intermediate issues are attended to. The first of these examines the intra-psychic correlate of living with climate collapse. This consideration stimulated a general proposition: as climate collapse accelerates, and as the scale and timelessness of this disruption takes hold, experiences of guilt and loss, anger and despair, will tend to be amplified by pre-existing unconscious tropes, particularly the fantasy of the vengeful, all-powerful mother. This possibility is considered as a specific condition.

The second issue concerns the prospects for maintaining a degree of mental health in an environment that will be progressively totalized by climate collapse. However schematic, this sub-section argues there is some possibility private tumult might be held against, if not ever denied, in so much as, firstly, the militarization of the self is eschewed, and secondly, that collective rituals recognize loss and appropriately articulate contrition. These two intermediate interests examined, the destination focus is examined: might Eros still have a place in the long hard rain of climate collapse?

Before proceeding, a language use issue should be clarified. Throughout the paper the term 'climate collapse' is preferred to the terms 'climate crisis', 'climate emergency' or 'climate change.' This may seem an extreme position given action to reverse emissions, and to mitigate the effects of climate change, are both necessary and possible. I absolutely agree that radical action to support the environment is required, and I also acknowledge that the terms 'climate crisis' and 'climate emergency' have a potentially important role to play in raising public awareness about the need to make fundamental, climate positive changes.

This clear, the decision to prefer the term 'climate collapse' was taken because the terms 'climate crisis' and 'climate emergency' incorrectly imply that there is a definite alternative to the world experiencing the effects of 200 years of climate vandalism. Unfortunately, the research is clear. Irrespective of what is done now and into the future, the progressive degradation that is already underway cannot be reversed. More, it remains uncertain if decisive progressive action will actually be taken. Given these two facts, the current purpose is served by envisaging that, to a marked extent, climate collapse is an inevitability [1].

2. Purpose and sources

What follows is an extended thought experiment. In this exercise the task is to employ an established heuristic (the psychoanalytic tradition) to investigate the effects of a phenomenon (emerging climate collapse) on that which animates the human

spirit (Eros). The aim is to generate a density of suggestion and, more particularly, to articulate likely trajectories rather than to confirm or disconfirm a single hypothesis.

Given the sweep of the task, it is not surprising that the materials used are, to a degree, diverse. For example, lyrics from several popular songs are cited as these excerpts capture a particular mood or perspective. More technically, there are several instances where an 'extra-curricula' idea is imported because it serves a purpose that could not otherwise be advanced. This was particularly the case with Timothy Morton's notion of the 'hyper-object' [2], an idea that was imported for its ability to explicate why climate collapse is formidably difficult to comprehend.

Occasional outlier acknowledged, the materials used and, more centrally, the argument that is at the core of the work, are explicitly derived from psychoanalysis as this tradition relates to the socio-cultural field [3–5]. In this engagement the focus is on the dynamic relationship between psychic life, both conscious and unconscious, and historical reality as a material, evolving context. In this ambit, variabilities, for example, in the regimes of repression between early nineteenth century middle class Vienna and island life in the 1960s Caribbean are as relevant as are the differing material and political realities present in each of these contexts. This allegiance clear, in the current exercise the decision was taken to employ a non-specialist form of psychoanalytic thought.

This decision reflects the premise that a non-specialist level of expertise does not, in itself, disqualify the validity of an argument and, for certain purposes, may even be advantageous. For example, Pierre Bourdieu argued that academic purists can lose breadth and perspective in so much as they devolve to a 'coquettish relationship ... with selected works' (as quoted in [6] p. 39). Consistent with this idea, the current exercise avoids a partisan allegiance to, say, the conventions of Kleinian or Lacanian, classical or middle school, thinking. More positively, a non-denominational engagement with psychoanalysis has been preferred as an inclusive approach facilitates associative and divergent thinking above linear and convergent lines of thought. As the intention in the present contribution is to be inductive, rather than deductive, this preference has an explicit, if eminently contestable, rationale.

3. Why is it so difficult to recognize the reality of climate collapse?

It is relatively straight-forward to talk about climate change given this term evokes images of incremental evolution. These images have, more or less, benign connotations. This advantage noted, more than a euphemism the term 'climate change' is counter-articulate. In contrast, the term 'climate collapse' denotes a phenomenon that confronts because something large and spectral is conjured. However threatening to consider, climate collapse is a phenomenon that is both undeniable and accelerating. This fact is, and will continue to be, confounding. Why is this so difficult to recognize? Two levels of action fuse to make recognition formidably challenging to achieve. Each is discussed individually even as they present a conjoint challenge.

3.1 Climate collapse as hyper-object

Climate collapse is an example in a class of phenomena the philosopher Timothy Morton terms hyper-objects [2]. These phenomena are so massively distributed, so powerful and totalising, that their complexity defies both denial and comprehension. For example, Morton argues that human cognition cannot comprehend the fact that

radio-active isotopes have a half-life whose scale varies between the tiniest fraction of a second and millennia. For example, Uranium-238 has a *half-life* of 4.5 billion years whilst Neptunium-223 has a half-life of 2.15 on the scale of 10 to the minus sixth of a second. Both these numbers are incredible, literally beyond our ability to apprehend.

We have been intellectually socialized to assume items and events are located in time and place. Hyper-objects, in this case climate collapse, transcend localization and temporal fixedness. This state of unbounded distribution and temporal non-specificity defies common sense.

Deepening the intellectual difficulty is the fact that climate collapse involves the loss of an embedded pattern. This pattern has historically involved a steady state [7]. That is, there was a quality of homeostasis between regular features (the pattern of seasons) and an expected distribution of irregular events (droughts; storms, etc.) that occurred, broadly speaking, at an expected and acceptable frequency and intensity. This state was normalized, was assumed to be permanent, and became naturalized as our frame of reference.

Anthropocentric inputs over the last 200 years have disturbed this state. This input has triggered a greater degree of entropy – a loss of organization in the key patterns that sustain amenable existence. In this cascading complex system the only regularity is non-regularity, that is, an accelerating rate of de-regulation. One in one hundred year events are clustering, droughts are defying seasonal averages, pyro-cumulonimbus cloud conditions are propagating fires.

Even given an extended inspection, this seems like crazy talk. To intellectually comprehend this situation requires the thinker to jettison the received practices that allocate probability. Re-purposing an idea from the renowned architect Christopher Alexander, such a disruption could even be said to sunder the grand ‘pattern language’ that structures experience and imagination [8]. Again, this seems like madness. What has evolved, and become embedded, over the length of human history cannot be dismissed even as the fact that climate collapse is real is indisputable. The situation is therefore confounding.

Of course, the key issue is not intellectual; the deregulation of the material conditions within which life on earth has prospered, including but not restricted to human life, is not an abstract matter. This distinction introduces the symbolic-affective dimension of the problem with recognition.

3.2 What was always true is no longer so

Seasonal rhythms have endowed human life with structure and meaning over millennia. These patterns denote the calendar of blooms and fruits, sowing and reaping, cold and heat, that gave shape and purpose to agrarian and nomadic life. Although urbanized societies are no longer nomadic or agrarian, modern subjects are heirs to the symbolism that endures from the myths and legends of earlier times as modern citizens, and our lifestyles and economies, also continue to be subject to the vicissitudes of nature for amenity and material needs. Quoting Herman Daly, Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury said, ‘the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment.’

Modern societies to one side, seasonal regularity was the muse that elicited the visions of death and re-birth, sin and redemption, that animated, as they also shaped and reflected, the human spirit. Over time, legends, even part cosmologies, were passed between cultures. The Adonis myth from Phoenicia was Hellenized as ancient Greece became the dominant power in the Mediterranean; symbolic ‘pagan’ events,

such as the ceremonies celebrated around the spring (vernal) equinox, found their way into early Christian worship. Amongst a far larger suite, Ishtar and Tammuz, Astarte and Adonis, Aphrodite and Jesus' mother Mary, interbred. James Frazer, perhaps the best known of early twentieth century scholars of comparative religion, wrote in *The Golden Bough*: 'in more than one chapel the Cypriote peasants adore the mother of Christ under the title Panaghia Aphroditessa' (as quoted in [9] p. 39).

None greater, this power has been sung to across time, for example, in Kathleen Raine's *The Goddess* [10]:

*Some worship her as queen of angels, Venus of the sea
House of gold, palace of ivory
Gate of heaven and rose of mystery
Inviolat and ever-virgin earth,
Daughter of time and mother of Eternity.*

The seasonal calendar associated with fecundity is being disrupted and is on the way to being lost. Climate collapse has demolished 'normality' – the rhythms that have birthed and, until recently, continued to document the cycle of life. More, climate collapse signals that Mother Nature can no longer be relied on. Of course, in the past this deity may have had her occasional whims, her moments of irritation and disregard, but she could be taken for granted to be generally nurturing and benevolent. That her beauty has been spoilt, that her fecundity can no longer be assumed, is too shocking to be countenanced.

3.3 In summary

Contemplation of climate change is aversive. Any genuine engagement with the specter of climate change immediately generates fear, even panic. Isn't it better to only worry about the things I can control? The reflex is to hold the eyes shut rather than be swept into a whirlpool of dangerous feeling.

Even at this point (2022) it is well-known that bud-burst is far earlier in many places, that extreme weather events are much more frequent, that storm surges are more profound. In the next decades deniers, those who have suspended belief in science, will be exposed as the child who has pushed an inflatable ball below the surface of a pond. No matter how much energy goes into this project, eventually the child becomes tired, loses interest, is distracted. Like what is repressed, what is physically suppressed returns. When it does, the coming back is unpredictable. The more control is demanded the more what is feared is charged.

In brief, that climate collapse is an example of a hyper-object means that recognition, really taking in, the concept 'does one's head in conceptually.' What does one's head in holistically is that climate collapse will disturb every aspect of life – now and forever. Taking in this fact is not like swallowing a single pill, however big and bitter this pill might be. Rather, recognition will be an ongoing confrontation that could be likened to swallowing an ornery and unruly hairball – a restless nasty that flexes perennially as it remains stuck in the throat. Deliberately laboring the point, this means there will be a semi-continuous gag reflex, as there will be a feeling of strangulation and suffocation.

It is no wonder climate collapse provokes disbelief. Threatening to impel a jagged new totality, this prospect endangers consciousness with an input that simultaneously sucks the oxygen from the lungs, strangles the throat and poisons

the arteries. More than simply a single ominous fur-ball, it is a mutating colossus, a specter that roils digestion. How can one take in the fact that the very conditions of life are metastasizing? It is almost unfathomable that much of what we take as normality is imploding.

The recognition problem is not singly about the quantum and distribution of information. At the psychic level, a complex precondition must be realized: a tumult of primary emotions – grief; horror; anger; despair; disbelief – have to be accessed, and to a significant degree then processed, to allow proper recognition to be countenanced. This is a considerable affective task.

4. The unconscious is not a historic: there are consequences if you poison your mother

As climate collapse accelerates, and as the scale and timelessness of this disruption takes hold, there will be massive material effects: forced migrations; tremendous food insecurity; international tensions if not strife. Consideration of these outcomes is not the business of the current exercise. What is in-focus is the consequences that will befall inner life.

Broadly speaking, a de-normalized nature can be expected to fold back into, provide content for, and play a role in in shaping the flow of energies of the unconscious. Witnessing more death, pestilence, famine and flood will quicken core anxieties. It seems almost unimaginable that a radically greater experience of precarity, and a more unchecked Thanatos, will not infiltrate the deepest workings of the psyche. In this scenario it can be predicted grief and despair will be prominent. Confusion and anger, fear and anxiety too.

The situation will also summon attributions concerning fault and blame. For example, who is ‘they’ in the following?

*What have they done to the earth
What have they done to our fair sister?
Ravaged and plundered and ripped her and bit her
Stuck her with knives in the side of the dawn
And tied her with fences and dragged her down*

When the music's over
Jim Morrison (1969)

Mother Earth, the life-giving womb, has been vandalized and can no longer look after her own. This is a terrible sin, an unimaginably heinous crime. Who did this? Who is the guilty party?

Responsibility might be slated to bad luck, but assigning culpability is an ad hominem practice. In the latter case attributions can be projected out, or they can be projected in. For example, Exxon, and its public relations company Edelman, might be blamed; we know the former cynically funded climate denial programs, but less known is that the latter – the world's biggest advertising firm – organized ‘astroturfing’ campaigns to set up myriad groups, both of a grassroots and scientific composition, that advocated climate change denial.

A serious moral reckoning should hold particular persons, interests and ideologies to account. Less formally, what is salient is that climate change is largely the outcome of anthropogenic inputs. In the abstract, this means that humankind is, as a species, at fault. Variations on this attribution include, but are not restricted to, blaming those who have been the elected representatives, media and industry heavy-weights, such as Rupert Murdoch, Exxon's Rex Tillerson, all citizens over eighteen years old in the (so-called) first-world societies, and so forth. Investigations conducted, culprits could face executions and jail terms, public castigation and programs of re-education, fines and community service orders. How the dark art of fault finding should be processed is uncertain even if each of us is likely to have a more or less rational, personal view on what should occur.

More privately, self-blame is incited in the shadow of doubt. What seems very likely is that the fantasy of the vengeful, all-powerful mother will be excited in the psychic netherworlds that will exist in a climate de-regulated world. Guilt may be, or may not be, consciously denied but the infant's experience of the cold, angry or crazed mother figure is a trope that is perennially associated with, and is evoked by, the merest scent of guilt.

The threatening mother-figure takes different forms in particular faiths and cultures, fables and myths. She could be Kali, Media, a nameless animated gargoyle or the giant predatory Alien in the movie of the same name. Her method of attack also varies. She could be deadly in despising, ridiculing, ignoring or castigating. Vengefully enraged, she could smite with fire or sword, spell or stiletto. Grand in sweep, the aggression could desiccate, or flood, a whole region or, if the assault involved annihilation, the offending party could be swallowed - taken in, absorbed, engulfed, caused to disappear. And, in the event the party to be punished is male, a particular kind of gendered assault can be occasioned. The victim can be mocked, smacked, castrated or, Black Widow like, ****ed and cannibalized.

Deep in the psychic interior, these dark tropes survive as vestigial, embedded images. These animations are especially likely to be triggered when the past's dark parts echo with the realities, perceived or actual, of the here-and-now. The material circumstances of climate collapse will cue many instances of this kind of context resonance. Like the old children's game of Snakes and Ladders, these are the 'snakes', the trap-doors, that will unsettle, if not necessarily derail, consciousness.

In symbolic, and at times in material, ways climate collapse will have each of us feel vulnerable. This affect resonates with the inner experience of the orphan. In this ego state if I think, or I fantasize, that *I have done something*, or *I might have done something, wrong*, it follows that I deserve to be unsafe. More, I will feel I should be hurt rather than looked after. This one-down position invokes regression. The good mother, exemplar of moral authority, has been wronged and is the perfect person to inflict punishment on the offending child.

More generally, it can be expected that experiences of loss, anger and despair, like guilt, will tend to be amplified by pre-existing unconscious tropes. With respect to the fantasy of the enraged and dangerous mother, a particular hand-in-glove complicity brings on this specter in a climate collapsing world. You know your mother has been poisoned, and you claim you did not administer the toxin. This claim may, or may not, be credited, but you do know one thing is certain. You will inevitably be found guilty on an associated charge. You are condemned for failing to protect her.

In fantasy, and sometimes in the material world, mothers can be pushed so far that they become vengeful in their grief. This is a terrifying prospect. The yonic punisher,

it can be imagined, is perforce summoned because it is human kind that has poisoned nature. This culpability carries a terrible psychic charge, a timeless jeopardy that is worse than Sisyphus had to manage. Even if some of us have a more obvious criminal responsibility, it is us, not them, who is at fault. We know we could have done better. Like the concept of original sin, at a symbolic, if not at a behavioral level, everyone shares the sin of complicity. Nobody gets to be out of this world.

4.1 Misogyny and denialism

Broadly put, fifty years of denialist campaigning torpedoed the possibility of the world taking the actions that needed to be taken to mitigate, if not avoid, catastrophic climate change. These campaigns were motivated by commercial interests and neo-liberal ideology, but they also have a strong association with misogyny [11].

The misogynist sensibility is devastatingly split-off from source and earth and is horrified at the primacy of the womb. This is why Vladimir Putin refers to Russia as the Fatherland, just as the Nazis did in their heyday. For haters, for those who fetishize control, it is intolerable to countenance the idea that man and his precariously built environment is an epiphenomenon, a puny subsidiary, of Mother Nature's infinitely grander organic enterprise. That this nature can abolish up-starts, that human hubris relies on the indulgence of a higher power for its life, so annihilates conceit it cannot be contemplated.

Why? For 'male-stream' thinkers [12] their hatred of dependence is so visceral as to demand that the map must be read upside down. This perversity is evident in tech billionaires like Jeff Bezos and Peter Thiel investing fabulous sums into nature denying projects: artificial islands; the artificial extension of individual human life; the colonizing of space. These conceits speak explicitly to the subverting power of their aversion. These nay-sayers have naturalized an inverted version of reality, a perversion that begets sadistic callousness, ever murder, more than numb indifference. (This idea was developed by Wilhelm Reich, mindful its reception has been side-tracked by the controversies that surrounded his later life).

The same ideology was evident in early Australian explorers hot to 'penetrate' the continent's interior [13]. Theirs was the mythopathic mission to conquer and dominate. It is the dream of the phallic triumphant that represents heterosexual sex as the subjugation of the yonic by a more powerful authority. Of course, this reading can be upended. The yonic can be understood to use, to exhaust, to engulf, to swallow, and-or to mock, the tiny phallic intruder. The more civilized view understands there can be a frisson – a dialectic; a dynamo; a difference engine – in the contrast between two energies.

Whatever interpretation of sexual politics might be favored, the misogynist position entails a fear, and a simultaneous hatred, of the feminine. This ambivalence played itself out aggressively in debates about climate change between, say, 1970 and the early 2020s, and can be expected to play an even more vexed part in the world of climate collapse. In this context deniers will be subject to full force of mother nature's physical 'derelictions' as these people will also be subject to the 'return of the repressed' [14] at the deepest level of interiority. This means that aggressive projections will be likely, along with an ill-at-ease subjectivity [15, 16]. However disowned, it would be terrifying to be haunted by an angry and powerful fantasy figure that is part Kali, part Medea, part Black Widow.

4.2 Mental health

‘Mental health’ is a diffuse construct. Understandings of mental health therefore have, at least, a historico-cultural dimension if not are entirely context dependent. It follows that ‘mental health’ will be formulated differently in, say, a context where reliable social organization has broken down – think of the dystopian world depicted in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* [17] – compared to the definition that is in-play in an ordered, compassionate milieu. This difference noted, no one is an island. To a degree, climate collapse will have an impact on every person’s mental health, hubristic assertions of autonomy notwithstanding,

This degree will be regulated by several factors not least of which is location. If one lives on low-lying ground in Bangladesh, or is a farmer in the mid-west corn-belt in the USA, one’s mental health will tend to be more affected by climate collapse. More generally, those who live anywhere that is qualitatively impacted by sea level rise, storms, droughts or fires or, at a different level, are impacted by the migration pressures and food shortages that will accompany these effects, will tend to experience a heightened impact on their mental health. In contrast, those whose exposure to the material effects of climate collapse is less severe will tend to face less hazard. The nature of variables noted, if the relevant principles of decision are applied a limited set of generalizations can be put forward.

If left untrammelled, at a social level fear and blame, grief and helplessness, will fuse to form a febrile emotional atmosphere. Depression and anxiety, like anhedonia, will be stoked. It is logical to expect that keeping one’s bearings in such a fraught situation will be a serious challenge. This scenario puts the consideration of ‘mental health’ into compelling relief. Several scenarios arise.

Confronted by climate collapse, bourgeois psychology and neo-liberal ideology will conjointly advocate that the self should be militarized: personal boundaries need to be strengthened, feelings cauterized, behaviors should be strategic, and so forth. Simply put, the attractive error will be to become more amoral and more repressed.

Like the trajectory human kind has furthered in its relationships with nature over the last 200 years – strip mine; stand apart from; be heedless of the longer term impact of one’s actions – being ‘more amoral and more repressed’ is exactly what Wilhelm Reich saw as increasingly characteristic of human socialization in the so-called advanced economies nearly a 100 years ago. Thicken the character armor, augment muscular rigidities, mobilize the defenses [18]. In this movement the face comes to be hide-bound, an immobile exo-skeleton that should show no emotion. Alarmed and armed, bunkered in a hunter’s cave, the eyes of the repressed are not a window to the soul but are an impersonal instrument that is on the look-out for danger or opportunity.

The half-way point, the situation we are in now, is that the industry that has been set up to care for the mental health of citizens is miscarrying its purpose. Rather than steadying, it is overheating the appetites of its potential and actual customers. *You are not feeling positive? That is a sure sign you have a mental health issue!*

In simple terms, if the industry continues to pathologize the ups-and-downs of inner life, if the fashion to be ego-centric remains a constant or, even worse, if this trend strengthens, this will dramatically predispose the population to have ‘mental health problems’ even before the consequences of living on a darkening planet are materially realized. What is created in this scenario is a pyro-cumulonimbus psychic

cloud. The self-care imperative, the i-me-my-mine hot-house, generates the lightning and strong winds that ignite, and spread, more fire.

Like a dog chasing its tail, this is a path to pathology not mental health. The alternative is to greet the honest child in each of us and reach towards affinity and ethical relationships. This idea is explored below.

5. Can Eros survive?

‘Eros’ is not consensually understood. In at least some readings, Plato is said to have endowed Eros with a non-erotic character; this idea is still with us in the notation of a ‘platonic friendship.’ In eighteenth and nineteenth century literature, Eros was about romance; this idealization of dyadic union is still with us too. In most recent theoretical accounts, Eros is distinguished from what Freud termed libido, from an erotic definition. Differentiating matters further, Jung considered Eros a ‘feminine principle’ and contrasted this energy with logos, the ‘masculine principle.’ Taking Eros into a different register, Marcuse stated in *Eros and Civilization* that ‘(t)oday the fight for life, the fight for Eros, is the *political* fight’ [5]. On even the most basic plane of interpretation it is clear Eros can have different faces.

A working sense of Eros can be convened if three themes are clustered: life force; will to live; the desire for wholeness – for psychic relatedness. This clustering allows the question to be asked: can the life force, the will to live and the desire for wholeness survive the cart-wheeling impacts of climate collapse?

In one scenario, there is hope. In this scenario, if we can hold against emotional contagion there will continue to be a viable space for the life force, the will to live and the desire for wholeness. This ‘holding against’ stance is not the same as denying, or raging at, the tumult; nor is it about bowing down and surrendering. It involves the ‘emotional literacy’ [19] to name, and look directly at, fear and loss, guilt and anger, in order to make the place for what is positive and unwritten, for what is bright and fruitful.

In this approach loss needs to be honored. It will be ongoing, progressive and profound. Collective rituals of grieving, of propitiation, of gratitude, are part of a loving relationship with the earth as our mother. Although it will long remain unclear how much we have lost, mourning cannot be permanently deferred by putting this distressing emotion into an ‘in-abeyance’ status [20].

In this formulation psychic wholeness is not only about the integration of divergent intra-psychic energies. What profound wholeness requires is that the anthropogenic world view is de-centered. That is, psychic relatedness is a holistic aspiration linked to the motif of eco-feminism [13] more than the narrower images of Eros put forward by Plato, Freud, Marcuse and, in a somewhat differing way, to Jung. In this sense, the ‘will to live’ is re-formulated as the will to holistically connect and be at-one.

In the other scenario there is only a scant hope for Eros. In this misogynist world-view we will continue to beat our mother – to befoul, to strip mine, to vandalize. Disavowed programs of revenge, along with spontaneously erupting individual acts of revenge, will be enacted against mother earth because we are angry that she is wounded *and* that she will not continue to allow us to hurt her without sanction. This is not about the will to live but it’s opposite [16]. Misogyny cannot understand that everything that lives exists interdependently. Nothing stands, or falls, on its own.

Eros’ existential condition is relationality, as is yours and mine. The us and the we, if the understanding goes beyond the anthropogenic, are part of, not separate to, a

larger ecology. Adonis may have a seasonal lifecycle, a rhythm that climate collapse has disrupted, but he, like all beings, has a life that is in-relation. The grand seasonal tides may be disturbed but, however tragic this is, there will remain a larger living matrix.

6. Conclusion

It is deeply disturbing parents can no longer say to their children that ‘the best is yet to come.’ In the grief this truth prescribes, slogans like Gramsci’s ‘pessimism of the spirit, optimism of the will’, or Tolkien’s advice to ‘fight the long retreat’, can be recited to fortify courage. As Wiseman (2021) says, there are many ways to nurture and support the group ‘in the long emergency.’

This is important to know, *and* there is no point pretending. It does look dark, mindful there have been other times when humans have faced-up to fearful specters. Commenting on the rise of Nazism in 1930s Germany, Max Horkheimer wrote: ‘Only one thing is certain ... the irrationality of society has reached a point where only the gloomiest predictions have any plausibility’ (as quoted in [21] p. 163). Let us tell it like it is.

Climate collapse is not the rise of Nazism, even if there may prove to be political parallels. What each of these phenomena do have in common is that in each instance the conscious and unconscious life of the individual is radically impacted. Mindful exceptions and counter-trends are bound to co-exist, inner life will tend to be roiled by climate collapse in part because the unanimous culprit for the disaster is ‘anthropogenesis.’ For this crime collective psychic punishment will be meted – think unconscious fantasies of unpredictable attack and wraith-riven whirlpools – though many are definitely innocent.

Future generations bear no responsibility for the disaster. Given this innocence, what will their disposition be? Malignant anger and poisonous grief: *how could they have done this to us!* More or less, this distemper is likely to cart-wheel in and through all those who arrive from now on.

Given this bad lot what is the best that can happen? It was noted earlier that a complex precondition must be realized if recognition is to be achieved: a tumult of primary emotions – grief; horror; anger; despair; disbelief – must be accessed and, to a significant degree, processed if deep recognition is to be achieved. However quixotic it may sound, in so much as this quality of recognition is achieved, a further possibility then presents: to come to terms with, rather than act out, the disaster that is climate collapse. That is, if private and public disturbance is to be minimized personal and collective rituals need to directly address loss and articulate gratitude as well as contrition. It is only in this scenario that it is possible to envisage forms of rational public and private thought that lead to planned civilly minded action. This hope is about ‘smelling the spring on a smoggy wind’ [22].

What of Eros in this most optimistic of all scenarios? Is there a prospect the sky-bound can continue to soar, that innocence, curiosity, the spontaneous and the fresh, will continue to spark the inner breath? This dream must continue to be imagined.

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Author details

Mark Furlong

Bouverie Centre, La Trobe University, Brunswick, Melbourne, Australia

*Address all correspondence to: m.furlong@latrobe.edu.au

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Chapter 8

A Psychoanalytic Approach to Identity Politics

Jason Barton

Abstract

I intend to analyze the prevailing discursive formation of identity politics through the frames of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalyses. In particular, I will support three claims. First, identity politics possesses two competing forces, intersubjectivity and intersectionality, which nicely instantiate respectively the Lacanian registers of the Symbolic and the Real. Second, previous psychoanalytic approaches have failed to capture the unconscious death drive within identity politics (i.e., intersectionality); that is, contemporary scholars of psychoanalysis, such as Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, Juliet Flower MacCannell, Howard Schwartz, and Slavoj Žižek, neglect the destabilizing force of intersectionality. Finally, intersectionality represents the novel mechanism by which the symbolic order of whiteness, in its attempt to preserve itself, appropriates the Real. As psychoanalysis seeks to extend itself into diverse realms of sociopolitical conversation, I contend that it is imperative for a psychoanalytic comprehension of identity politics to be front and center within any treatment of the subject matter.

Keywords: critical race theory, freudian psychoanalysis, identity politics, lacanian psychoanalysis, critical whiteness studies

1. Introduction

Two approaches have recently emerged in the psychoanalysis of “identity politics”: on one hand, a series of indictments have been leveraged against identity politics through the avenues of Freudian [1] and Lacano-Marxist analyses [2], and, on the other hand, a series of segmented, fractured forays have facilitated the analysis of identity categories through psychoanalytic constructs [3, 4]. The former undermines the validity of identity politics as a sociopolitical enterprise for comprehending oppression, and the latter renders the phrase “X is a social construct” intelligible in piecemeal psychoanalytic fashion, addressing each identity category (e.g., race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, nationality, and so on) without necessarily considering the intersection of these categories. Neither pathway for theorizing identity politics encounters the Real: the ungraspable, elusive, and traumatic center resisted by identity-based discourse but around which it fundamentally revolves. Through a Derridean-inspired deconstruction, I have developed an “aporia of identity” within which two forces ineluctably conflict with one another for determining the content of marginalized identities, namely intersubjectivity and intersectionality. The Real

of identity politics resides here: the irresolvable, unsymbolizable clash between the push-and-pull of identification and disidentification with the symbolic register.

“Identity politics” refers to the progressive Leftist discursive formation that foregrounds the political experience of peripheral subject positions. It forges a binarized system for responding to the fundamental question of identity-based movements: “What does it mean to be X (e.g., black, a woman, disabled/differently-abled, and so on)?” The first type of response submits the individual’s identity to an agreed-upon signifier for collective organization against oppressive apparatuses; that is, individuals identify as “being-black” and “being-a-woman” through intersubjective engagement with political groups. These groups, however, inexorably cultivate a particular image, ideal, or paradigm of being-black and being-a-woman, such that individuals who might not “fit the description” cannot completely or sufficiently identify with the group’s implicit representation of being-X. In the case of “being-a-woman,” the politically-crafted image of womanness often assumes the positionality of white feminists, which, in the mid-to-late twentieth century, implied the positionality of being confined to (re)productive labor within their own homes. Women of color, conversely, labored outside their domiciles for decades, if not centuries, before white feminists demanded the capacity to leave the home for professional reasons [5]. The demands of white feminists in political organizations, thus, neglected the marginalized location of black women, introducing another type of response to the meaning of being-a-woman: intersectionality.

Intersectionality, as the second type of response, emerges at the crossing of the individual’s various marginalized identities, taking into account someone’s situatedness at the intersection of being-black, being-a-woman, being-impooverished, and so on [6]. In order to understand the meaning of being-X, we must also understand the meaning of being-A, being-B, being-C, etc. The aforementioned example of white feminists monopolizing the signification of “woman” demonstrates the necessity of interrogating such a signifier from a multitude of standpoints, including race and class. Even within the available categories of identification, individuals vary along further experiential axes: phenotypic expressions of color, gendered expressions of masculinity/femininity, and economic expressions of affluence/pennilessness to name a few. Discovering the intersection from which an individual’s political experience can be (re)constructed, traced, and investigated, therefore, does not guarantee the capacity to adequately signify the individual’s political experience in the social order. The meaning of being-X within the intersectional refusal of signification reveals the antinomic pole, movement, and determination of identity in the context of political engagement. The first type of response (i.e., submission to the signifier) firmly positions the individual as a political subject with respect to an established symbolic identification, and the second type of response (i.e., resistance to the signifier) loosely positions the individual as a political subject with respect to established symbolic identifications. To be clear, the intersectional inclination to constantly revise signification does not completely dissociate the individual from subjectification; rather, the intersectional push away from identity always corresponds to an intersubjective pull toward identification with additional signifiers.

The Derridean [7, 8] formulation of the “aporia of identity” appears as follows: the conditions for the possibility of being-X are simultaneously the conditions for the impossibility of being-X. The conditions for (im)possibility nominalize the action of identifying with political signifiers, which illuminate the individual’s political experience in the social order while also obscuring it. Invoking signifiers to describe one’s marginalized position, if the aim of identity politics has been accurately formulated,

will never suffice: the individual always-already exceeds semiotic circumscription in the symbolic order. There is a remainder, a leftover, a stain evading assimilation into extant identity categories; indeed, the escaping excess should not be condemned, loathed, or castigated because, after all, it fuels the discursive formation of identity politics. Imagine the culmination of identity politics; that is, through a series of hard-nosed, social scientific decisions, we accurately determine the political experience of each and every subject position. In turn, the social order could clearly and distinctly designate individuals as “being-black” or “being-a-woman,” arriving at a definitive framework for assessing whether, for instance, Rachel Dolezal is black or Caitlyn Jenner is a woman. Spelling doom for identity politics, the definitive establishment of meaning for categorical designations inspires a teleological paradox: on the surface, identity politics strives for its dissolution through the clearcut determination of individual experience, but, at its core, identity politics conceals its underlying drive for incompleteness, indeterminacy, and gappiness.

The surface-level desire communicates a Sisyphean task: following the establishment of definitions for identity categories, the objectively-excluded remainders will subjectively identify with “improper” categories, re-creating the zero-point of identity politics. The discursive formation of identity politics explicates the political experience of the excluded, those pushed to the periphery by bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Any hard-and-fast categorical demarcation of the excluded, thus, requires the conceptual distinction between extensional (i.e., those falling underneath the signifier/category) and non-extensional content (i.e., those falling outside the signifier/category), perpetually creating an excluded set of people. Trans-exclusionary radical feminists (TERFs), for example, determine the boundaries of “being-a-woman” on the basis of innate physiological characteristics for womanness, informed by the primary and secondary sexual characteristics usually attributed to “biological” women. The exclusion concomitant with the biological significance of “woman” represents the form of violence contested by identity politics, which appears at the juncture of every definition for any identity category. The completion of identity politics, in turn, is impossible: the conceptual distinctions required to neatly demarcate political experience would only perpetuate further pockets of exclusion, mandating more conceptual distinctions and categorical designations ad infinitum. What, then, is the goal of identity politics? How can we understand the progression of identity politics in relation to the oppressive organization of the social order? Psychoanalytic allusions to “the Real,” as put forth in Lacanian contexts, offer conceptual resources for pinpointing the positionality and teleology of identity politics with respect to the symbolic register.

2. The real(ity) of identity politics

The progressive deconstruction of identity categories (network of signifiers) through the invocation of individual experience (the Real) mostly occurs at the precipice of identification with marginalized groups. Consider the following excerpt from Rebecca Tuvel’s “In Defense of Transracialism” (2017) [9]: “[A]s MSNBC contributor Touré put it, [Rachel] Dolezal doesn’t share in ‘the one thing that binds black people,’ namely ‘the experience of racism’” (270). Even though Dolezal appeared to be black through her phenotypic presentation and organizational involvement in the NAACP, those who abhor her racial masquerading often cite a lack of oppression as the reason for her inability to don the signifier “black.” Yet, the chain of signification cascading

from “black” encompasses more than “an experience of racism,” especially when non-black racial minorities also confront the oppressive reality of the social order. Other semiotic sources for justifying one’s placement within a racial category might include: self-awareness of ancestry, public awareness of ancestry, self-identification, and culture (ibid). Beyond these indicators for belonging to a particular racial group, the experiential element referenced by the aforementioned MSNBC contributor explodes into an unbounded multiplicity at the intersection of racism with ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and so on. There seem to be endless possibilities for exploring the meaning of being-black in the various contexts of racism tinged with other forms of oppression, including, potentially, Dolezal’s invention of “being-trans-black” as an excluded category against which discrimination runs rampant [10]. The inexhaustible plenitude of signifiers attributed to any singular identity category raises the following question: within the discursive formation of identity politics, is there any discernible limit to the signification of being-X?

If identity politics maintains its sincere acknowledgement of intersectional modes of oppression, the answer must be “no.” Individual experience, although constrained by the existing order of signifiers for describing marginalized political experience, always-already pushes the prevailing field of signifiers to the Real’s ineffability. Therein resides the (unconscious) death drive of identity politics, continuously overlooked and neglected by previous psychoanalytic forays into the discursive formation; that is, identity politics collides with the Real in its movement toward a fundamental Lacanian doctrine: there is no Other of the Other [11]. Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks [4], in *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race*, nicely demonstrates the inversion of the death drive concomitant with identity politics through her (psycho)analysis of “whiteness,” a master signifier for organizing the racial configuration of differential relations. As a master signifier, whiteness measures the signified of each racial signifier (e.g., “Asian,” “black,” “Hispanic,” “biracial,” etc.) against the privileged, desired image of humanity implicit within the representation of being-white. In turn, each non-white signified fails to satisfy, fulfill, or complete the image of whiteness, requiring assimilation into an impartial, objective, and neutral humanistic culture and annihilation of partial, subjective, and provocative non-humanistic cultures. Seshadri-Crooks, in particular, questions the endurance of racial discourse when the biological, sociological, and anthropological metrics for assessing racial distinctions have failed to proffer an “objective” (i.e., non-symbolic) ground. Threatened by the gaps of the Real, whiteness attempts to construct a holistic, all-encompassing, and omniscient symbolic order in which racial distinctions carry the status of objectivity while, in reality, masking a logic of domination.

The unconscious desire of whiteness, thus, discloses the inclination for racial discourse to legitimize oppression in the disguise of non-symbolic, Real distinctions, which Seshadri-Crooks captures with her analysis of phenotypic designations (i.e., hair color, hair texture, facial features, bone structure, etc.) (59). Through the history of racial classification, disparate grounds have been offered for differentiating one race from another: blood (i.e., kinship), phrenology (i.e., skull size/shape), genetics, culture, and physiognomy. The objective foundation of race, in other words, has steadily shifted in its discursive manifestation, and Seshadri-Crooks locates the prevailing justification for racial categorization in phenotypic characteristics. The symbolic identities of “white,” “black,” “Asian,” etc. only maintain their legitimacy if they are perceived to carve nature at its joints, demarcating the Real within the symbolic order. By contrast, if racial categories are purely symbolic (i.e., a network of signifiers assigned to groups on the basis of pre-existing symbolic distinctions), the thin veneer concealing

the classification of non-white groups for the sake of oppression would be exposed. Underneath the supposedly, naturally-existing physiological differences, therefore, is the assumed and presupposed superiority of whiteness; that is, Western standards for humanity are revealed as being predicated on the prescription of domineering white comportments (i.e., societal injunctions to write, speak, behave, and think in bourgeois modalities) [4]. Whiteness, ultimately, strives for a wholeness, completeness, and coherency that forecloses the possibility of disruption by the Real: the unconscious drive of whiteness implies the death of the subject (i.e., the site of shifting, changing, and fluctuating signification).

As mentioned earlier, the unconscious desire of whiteness inverts the death drive associated with identity politics. I offer a two-level differentiation of “death drive,” namely in the contexts of accessing *jouissance*, on one hand, through transgressing an established organization of signification and, on the other hand, through the replication of loss (at the inception of subjectivity) within the drive itself. The inversion between whiteness and identity politics, to invoke the aforementioned schema, occurs at the level of “disorderly conduct” in the symbolic order, as whiteness transgresses the incompleteness of the racial order (e.g., a belief in respecting each and every culture, such as multiculturalism) and identity politics transgresses the completeness of the sociopolitical order. Instead of effacing differences by adhering to a universal regime of (white) humanity, identity politics affirms the fundamental indeterminacy of the social order, or the impossibility of the social order to complete, fulfill, or satisfy itself. No sense-making apparatus can cohesively and coherently package the social order into a unitary entity; rather, a remainder will always-already slip through the cracks, saturate the boundary, and overflow the cup. Intersectionality, as the unlimited, inexhaustible reservoir for individual political experience, continually problematizes the extensionality of the extant field of signifiers, perpetuating the discursive mandate to consider the “inclusivity” of categories for various marginalized groups. To be clear, though, intersectionality remains inextricably tied to the intersubjective regime of sociopolitical signifiers, establishing long-lasting anchoring points in the symbolic order.

3. The insufficiency of existing psychoanalytic approaches to identity politics

Two notable psychoanalytic interrogations of identity politics, however, dispute the existence of its intersubjective dimension: Howard Schwartz’s *Political Correctness and the Destruction of Social Order* (2016) and Žižek’s *The Ticklish Subject* [2]. Schwartz and Žižek indict the intersectional, individualistic tendency for marginalized subjects to position their particular struggles at the forefront of politics, detracting from the rational, universal character of the political. Let us begin with Schwartz, who has published a litany of acerbic critiques against identity politics for the past two decades (beginning with his original intervention entitled “Psychodynamics of Political Correctness,” 1997 [12]). Schwartz presents a Freudian critique of political correctness and identity politics along the following lines: these ideological systems dissociate the individual from the post-Oedipal symbolic order (paternal) in order to align the individual with pre-Oedipal primary narcissism (maternal). In the former psychoanalytic construct, individuals subjugate themselves to the social order for the sake of earning mother’s love, affection, and care through an introjection and identification with father’s societal position (e.g., the breadwinner); conversely, with respect to the latter

psychoanalytic construct, the individual refuses the Oedipal injunction and maintains his original relationship with mother, wherein the individual is ultimately accepted for no other reason than being himself: the unique, irreplaceable, special self (i.e., “a snowflake”). Primary narcissism, to put otherwise, substitutes the molly-coddled, unaltered, infallible self for the paternal ego ideal that separates child from mother; that is, for the paternal injunction, if the child wants to commune with mother, he will have to go through father (i.e., simultaneously foregrounding the castration complex and positioning the father as an intermediary—a becoming—for the child).

Schwartz [1], in short, disagrees with the anti-Oedipal (non-)logic of political correctness and identity politics: “What the paternal function accomplishes, the creation of social order based on mutual comprehensibility ... the doctrine of micro-aggression, playing out the anti-Oedipal dynamics of political correctness, undoes” (55). In the process of eschewing the comprehensible structure of intersubjective reality, so the thinking goes, identity politics enables and justifies individualistic determinations of meaning based on marginalized subject positions: microaggressions, implicit biases, hidden prejudices, etc. The meaning of language is displaced from explicit linguistic content to implicit linguistic suggestions, such that an attribution of “articulateness” and “intelligence” to a person of color is interpreted as offensive rather than complimentary. Marginalized individuals determine the meaning of expressions, imputing and definitively establishing a particular interpretation of language based on background presuppositions. As a result, the individual becomes the fount of meaning, truth, and reality, recalling the pre-Oedipal position of primary narcissism: “The imaginary is presided over by the primitive mother, whose love validates us in our individuality” [1]. If the marginalized individual perceives, experiences, confronts, or encounters intersubjective reality in a specific manner, the individual’s interpretation trumps any contrasting intersubjective interpretation (i.e., *esse est. percipi*). As Schwartz notes, “Political correctness is a bid for hegemony in the name of this primitive mother, expelling the father and undermining the paternal function. As such, it is a bid for the destruction of the symbolic” (*ibid*).

In particular, Schwartz rejects the arbitrary, individualized re-signification of “man” and “woman” for transgender identity. He refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of Caitlyn Jenner’s status as a (trans-)woman: “Consider the case of Bruce Jenner, who now declares that he wants to be called Catelyn [sic] ... He is a woman in a man’s body, he says ... What can it mean to say that a body is a woman’s body if the person with that body can be a man? ... It seems that the words ‘man’ and ‘woman’ have lost their meaning” (37-38). The tension within the intersectional, experiential disruption of established, intersubjective signification appears in the aforementioned case; that is, Caitlyn Jenner asserts her feeling of being-a-woman in contrast to her subjectification by the signifier “man,” which diametrically opposes the identification with womanness in the Western binary of gender. Schwartz detests the intersectional modification of signifiers in the symbolic order because the undisturbed, prevailing organization of signification makes meaning, identification, and intelligibility possible in general. If children are not presented with clear-cut, defined gender roles for emulation, they will inevitably lack a sense of self and situatedness within the world: “Am I a boy or girl, the child wants to know, and the answer to this helps him to build a sense of himself in relation to the world, and an idea of what he is supposed to do in it” (38). Unfortunately for Schwartz, his idealistic conception of the post-Oedipal symbolic order closely resembles his psychoanalytic caricature of identity politics as a replication of pre-Oedipal primary narcissism.

First and foremost, though, Schwartz downplays the intersubjective “pull” implicit within the intersectional “push” of identity politics discourse. Even if Schwartz cannot coherently envision a “man” identifying as a “woman,” he poses a false dichotomy for the meaning of signifiers, namely signifiers are either meaningful (i.e., retain the original signified) or meaningless (i.e., retain no durable, long-lasting signified). He simply excludes any semiotic process of garnering newfound meaning for signifiers. Instead of making the signifiers of “man” and “woman” meaningless, the identity category of transgender adds and subtracts a series of significations originally residing within the overarching chain of gender binarization, which conceals the discursive mandate that someone is either a man or a woman for the duration of his or her life, and these dichotomous positions cannot be exchanged with one another. The intersectional modification of gender, thus, is merely a re-signification, involving the maintenance of extant terms for describing gender while altering their linguistic content. Schwartz overlooks the intersubjective dimension baked into the intersectional process of resignification itself. Second, as mentioned above, Schwartz idealizes the post-Oedipal symbolic order in such a manner that mimics the alleged pre-Oedipal primary narcissism attributed to identity politics discourse. Both resist the destabilizing register of the Real, such that Schwartz staticizes the social order to the same degree that the narcissistic child idealizes the primordial mother.

Why does Schwartz imagine the social order, prior to the introduction of political correctness and identity politics, as a synchronized, harmonious, and infallible system? In this sense, political correctness and identity politics represent the only obstacle to society’s smooth functionality. This cannot possibly be true. There are plenty of institutional factors that prevent the smooth functionality of society (e.g., bureaucratic red tape, corruption, miscommunication, etc.), but Schwartz has latched onto the factor (i.e., political correctness and identity politics) that most acutely threatens his access to the primordial mother, the institutional legitimacy associated with his academic accolades. Schwartz reveals his personal stake in the project of discrediting and dismantling identity-based discourse: his strategy for attaining mother’s love (i.e., identification with the post-Oedipal father) is invalidated by political correctness and identity politics. If the academy is fraught with white privilege and racism, Schwartz’s accomplishments suddenly become impugned, which, in turn, calls into question his entire career. This should explain, for the most part, why Schwartz’s first scholarly foray into political correctness studied its impact on the university [12]. Just as Seshadri-Crooks’s [4] account of whiteness demonstrates its unconscious desire for achieving wholeness through a particular image of humanity, Schwartz unconsciously desires a complete symbolic order that denies the existence of Reality (i.e., the destabilizing, disruptive force of *jouissance*) and ensures the death of the subject (i.e., the lack of a lack or a missing signifier). In general, he violently assimilates the remainder of subjectivity into the extant identity categories of the symbolic order, foreclosing the possibility of the subject’s engagement in the political from her individual standpoint.

Albeit not advocating for the preservation of the extant social order, Žižek [2] takes issue with the “individual standpoint” of identity-based discourse from which demands are made upon the political. In *The Ticklish Subject*, Žižek depicts the political as a breeding ground for the universalization of particular stances, including anti-authoritarian proposals that transcend the plight of any specific group of people. For instance, Žižek invokes the example of “four journalists [being] arrested and brought to trial by the Yugoslav Army in Slovenia in 1988”; indeed, he expresses dismay at the literal interpretation of the resulting slogan “Justice for the four

accused!” because it minimized and trivialized the political struggle to nothing more than a legal dispute between several journalists and a state apparatus (207–208). Conversely, Žižek highlights the universal implications of the slogan, placing the interests of free speech, free press, and a fair trial at the forefront of political decision-making. This universalization of the particular accorded to the normal progression of politics by Žižek stands in stark contrast to the particularization of the universal by identity-based discourse: “This is politics proper: the moment in which a particular demand ... starts to function as the metaphoric condensation of the global restructuring of the entire social space ... [which diametrically opposes] postmodern ‘identity politics’ ... that is, the assertion of one’s particular identity, of one’s proper place within the social structure” (208). Žižek, however, overlooks the importance of intersectionality in the construction of identity within the political and the unconscious desire resting at the center of identity politics, namely the non-existence of the Other’s Other.

Žižek, thus, neglects the unconscious desire residing within the discursive formation of identity politics, involving the exposure of the social order’s incompleteness (in contrast to suturing – that is, attempting to complete, finalize, or totally and definitively determine – the social order in a manner that resembles the discursive formation of whiteness). Even though identity-based discourse presupposes the pervasiveness and ubiquitous nature of oppression experienced by marginalized groups (i.e., enabling its identification of transnational forms of marginalization), intersectionality routinely usurps the intersubjective agreement underlying individuals’ identifications with existing categorization schemas. In turn, identity politics undercuts itself through the destabilization of agreed-upon narratives concerning oppression, such that racism, xenophobia, transphobia, ableism, etc. function in a similar fashion across disparate contexts but differ in functionality at the intersection of individual political experience. To put otherwise, the extimate aspect of the Real belonging to identity politics, at its zero-point, structures the semiotic field of differential relations while also, at the same level, representing the discursive point at which the semiotic field loses coherency.

The neologism of “extimacy” signifies the most intimate aspect of a discursive formation, organizing and managing the semiotic relations between each term’s signified and the master signifier, and the excluded middle from the core of a discursive formation, representing the Thing around which a discourse revolves and from which a discourse requires the greatest amount of distance to maintain the fantasy of consistency. Žižek [13], in *Metastases of Enjoyment*, describes the “ex-timate” as the “inherent decentrement of the field of signification” (29). A confrontation with the center paradoxically results in a decentering of itself. In the case of identity politics, marginalized subjects strive for a clear and distinct perception into the underlying structure of the social order, rendering the patterns of oppression intelligible. The discursive formation of identity politics, in short, assumes the existence of an Other to the Other, an undergirding, discernible rhyme, reason, or pattern to comprehending the social order in its totality. In order to completely chart the experience of oppression by each and every marginalized subject, however, the individual must understand the intersection of oppressive apparatuses (and associated identity categories) for constructing her experience of the political. Intersectionality, though, irrevocably obfuscates the machinations of the social order writ large, perpetually complicating the vision of oppression to, in some cases, incomprehensibility (i.e., similar to Schwartz’s [1]

criticism of political correctness, even though the intersubjective dimension renders individual experience comprehensible once again). Intersectionality exposes the incompleteness of the social order; that is, it does not simply shuffle the puzzle pieces before the puzzle has almost been completed, but rather, it illuminates the inexorable absence of puzzle pieces that dooms the project of “completing the puzzle.”

Intersectionality introduces an aleatory element into the discursive formation of identity politics, unknowingly yet always residing in the background of signification (i.e., the unconscious). Žižek’s imputation of sterility to identity politics, then, misses the death drive lurking underneath the facade of a tranquil exterior. It is not the case that identity politics merely leaves things as they are; instead, it contains a disruptive force (i.e., intersectionality) that impugns the field of signification within the extant social order. For a similar reason, the piecemeal approach that filters identity categories (e.g., race and gender) through existing psychoanalytic concepts excludes the extimacy of identity politics, or the intersectional indeterminacy of meaning according to individual experience. Seshadri-Crooks’s [4] psychoanalytic intervention into the concept of “race,” albeit instructive and facilitative for expressing the extimacy of whiteness, emblemizes the problematic character of the gradual approach to psychoanalyzing identity politics, such that Seshadri-Crooks reveals the purely symbolic character of racial distinctions in a vacuum (i.e., abstracted from other forms of identification that constitute the meaning of racial distinctions). Her (dis)closure of racial signification within the social order denies the complexity associated with the Real of intersectionality. Furthermore, her analysis of “whiteness” unwittingly reproduces its unconscious desire by obscuring the Real(ity) of identity politics; that is, after exposing the lack of the Real at the heart of whiteness (i.e., the unfounded character of phenotypic distinctions between racial groups), Seshadri-Crooks does not necessarily produce an “anxious” reaction in its adherents (i.e., an encounter with the lack of a lack) because the Real of identity politics remains a feasible option for whiteness to legitimize itself.

In turn, a more comprehensive psychoanalysis of the relationship between systems of oppression, including whiteness, and the dimensions of identity politics, including intersectionality, must be conducted. Even though Seshadri-Crooks and others (e.g., Juliet Flower MacCannell [3], Joan Copjec [14], etc.) have blazed the trail for the psychoanalysis of identity-based discourse, intersectionality offers a novel pathway for understanding its intricacies while also, unfortunately, providing a dangerous source of justification for oppressive apparatuses. For instance, the analyses of race and gender undertaken by psychoanalysts illuminate the heinous characters of whiteness, patriarchy, and neoliberalism, but the intersectional analysis of “being-black,” “being-a-man,” and “being-impooverished,” for instance, has inspired a rational calculus for coding and assessing the likelihood of an individual’s deviance from the mandates of the social order. To put otherwise, the Real of identity politics enables resistance against oppressive apparatuses by tracing patterns of marginalization, but it also enables the smooth functionality of these apparatuses by isolating and identifying potential “threats” to its reproduction. As Seshadri-Crooks [4] notes, whiteness appropriates the Real for the sake of fortifying its logic of domination, and the discursive element of intersectionality represents another avenue for co-opting the Real in order to bolster itself (59). I will pursue a contemporary pathway to make sense of the aforementioned phenomenon: a (psycho)analysis of racism in American public discourse with respect to the murder of an unarmed black man.

4. Psychoanalyzing the public response to Ahmaud Arbery's death

A series of questions are asked by the American public when a police officer kills an unarmed black citizen. Each of these questions reveals a network of signifiers within which the prevailing ideological apparatus makes sense of the killing; that is, these questions disclose an underlying layer of assumptions pertaining to the (wrongful) actions of the deceased. The field of signification, in short, is always-already predisposed to attribute blame, guilt, and fault to the "suspect" as opposed to the law enforcer. In particular, I will analyze the case of Ahmaud Arbery, who was killed by an ex-police officer and his son while jogging through a suburban neighborhood in Brunswick, Georgia. Due to spatial constraints, I will only address one of the questions normally asked by the American public in the aftermath of a provocative civilian/law enforcement interaction. This question, however, most centrally relates to the aforementioned problem of the symbolic appropriation of the Real, namely the ways in which the master signifier claims the Real for itself and its logic of domination.

After the lethal encounter between law enforcers and unarmed black citizens, some might ask: could the deceased have avoided the encounter with law enforcement? Instead of exhibiting a pattern of racial animus, as the thinking goes, the policing apparatus coincidentally kills unarmed black citizens. It is merely a case of being "at the wrong place at the wrong time." If Arbery had not jogged through that particular residential area on that particular day, according to the modal assumptions underlying the question, he would not have been killed. This mode of rationalizing the death of Arbery, however, fails to pierce the veil of contingency that conceals the necessity of policing in its targeting and racial profiling of black citizens. In other words, the chain of signification linking "black" with "criminality" makes the racist attributions of "dangerous," "aggressive," and "unreasonable" possible across every context within which a law enforcer interacts with black citizens. The motivation for the shooters pursuing Arbery after spotting him in their neighborhood, after all, was the universal instantiation of blackness in the particular body of Ahmaud Arbery. The irrelevant spatiotemporal particularity obscures the relevant particularity of Arbery's embodiment; that is, the relevant particular is mediated by the universal and vice versa. Arbery's exhibition of blackness sufficiently incited the shooters' mobilization and persecution without consideration for his particular manifestation of blackness. Indeed, one of the shooters was accused of using racial epithets while standing over Arbery's deceased body, indicating his general racial animus in contrast to a specific concern for Arbery's presence in the neighborhood [15].

As particularity serves as an ideological conduit for universality, contingency serves as an ideological conduit for necessity. The former case demonstrates the intimate connection between the universal property of "blackness" and the particular subject who happens to bear the universal property, such that the latter becomes the central locus for explicating the authority of law enforcement and the former becomes a secondary, coincidental concern. Similarly, as Žižek [13] notes, the contingent and necessary co-constitute one another in a dialectical fashion, but the pinnacle of necessity presents itself as contingency: "the acme of the dialectic of necessity and contingency arrives in the assertion of the contingent character of necessity as such" (36). By making sense of Arbery's death through the "wrong place, wrong time" explanation, the invocation of contingency masks the underlying necessity associated with the semiotics of policing. Neither the place nor the time captures the fatal confluence of events leading to Arbery's death; rather, an explanation beginning from the

standpoint of Arbery's particular manifestation of the universal property of "blackness" more accurately pinpoints the causal chain of events culminating in Arbery's death. Additionally, the dialectical interaction between necessity and contingency appears in the context of, what I call, "statistical intersectionality." At the conclusion of the previous section, I discussed the ways in which the Real often becomes coopted by the symbolic order for the sake of fortifying itself against dissension. Seshadri-Crooks [4], for instance, identified the appropriation of phenotypic differences between races in order to validate the persistence of racial classifications in naturalistic discourse. The symbolic, in short, shapes the Real to justify its supremacy, and the Real of identity politics (i.e., intersectionality) is no different.

With the advent of intersectional analyses of oppression, the assailed symbolic order has incorporated the categorical designations of intersectionality into statistical descriptions of criminality, violence, and aggression. "Black-on-black crime" is a striking example of the symbolic appropriation of intersectionality by whiteness [16]. Intersectionality, to reiterate, foregrounds an analysis of identity-based oppression at the crossing-point of marginalized signifiers; in turn, black-on-black crime (which also carries the assumption of male-on-male violence) adopts the perspective of intersectionality (through a concerted effort to understand the political situation of black identity in America) in order to demonstrate the extraordinary violence within black communities, absolving whiteness of any historical or contemporary role. Racial injustice is not the problem, as black-on-black crime indicates; instead, the black community sows the seeds of its own destruction. There is a litany of issues with the signifier at issue, but I would like to focus on the position of black-on-black crime within the dialectic of necessity and contingency. In Lacanian terms, "contingency" represents the saturation point, remainder, and leftover component of "necessity" as an ideological narrative, an implicit extension of Žižek's Hegelian analysis. Necessity disguises itself through the semblance of contingency: black-on-black crime highlights the violence emanating from within the black community, an internal chain of cause and effect wholly unaffected by external factors (i.e., racism, over-policing, poverty, etc.). Black communities, to fully present the racist presupposition underneath the signifier at hand, are said to ultimately introduce, choose, and foster criminality within their neighborhoods, selecting a non-necessary, contingent formation of social organization.

Historical forces that constitute the overwhelming influence of "necessity" on the formation of black communities (e.g., slavery, redlining, segregation, etc.) become blurred by the rationalization of black-on-black crime as a "contingent" explication of troublesome conditions in black communities. As contingency entirely supplants necessity, black communities (in accordance with the aforementioned narrative) could have constructed themselves in a different fashion, but they simply chose to be violent, dangerous, and crime-ridden. Black-on-black crime, in effect, effaces the historical discrimination preceding and currently surrounding the construction of black communities, localizing criminality within the black body itself and again completing the chain of signification linking those signifiers. Arbery's case does not stray from the demonstrated play of necessity and contingency. The fantastical motto of "wrong place, wrong time" shifts blame from a racially-motivated law enforcement system (necessity) to a black man jogging through a neighborhood (contingency), such that citizens can inquire into the contingency of Arbery's actions while, in the background, hinting at the necessity of his vulnerability: "what was he even doing there?," "why didn't he jog in his own neighborhood?," "couldn't he have jogged elsewhere?"

5. Conclusion

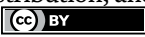
I have briefly indicated the subtle manner through which the symbolic order of whiteness weaponizes the Real for its own justification (i.e., statistical intersectionality). This analysis only arises from the presuppositions presented at the beginning of my investigation. First, identity politics taps into the Real through its dialectic of intersubjectivity and intersectionality, as the latter represents the death drive of the former. Second, recent psychoanalytic forays into the discursive formation of identity politics have proven woefully insufficient for capturing its unconscious machinations: a surface-level affirmation to discern the meaning of being-X with, simultaneously, the undermining, subterranean negation of any discernible meaning for being-X. Those who deny the validity of identity politics (Schwartz and Žižek) overlook its destabilizing tendencies, and those who embrace the validity of identity politics (Seshadri-Crooks and MacCannell) overlook the importance of intersectionality in determining (and making indeterminate) the meaning of identity in the political. Finally, the Real of identity politics has become the instrument for legitimizing the symbolic order: through intersectional analyses of violence (e.g., black-on-black crime), a series of oppressive apparatuses, such as over-policing, have been thoroughly legitimized. Future psychoanalytic investigations should adopt a similar methodological approach, namely through a recognition of identity politics as a destabilizing force in relation to the symbolic order and, resultantly, an acknowledgement of the symbolic order's manipulation of identity politics.

Author details

Jason Barton
Department of Philosophy, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, USA

*Address all correspondence to: jdb14@unm.edu

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Psychoanalysis is facing a severe crisis. Contemporary epistemology relies on an extreme materialistic reductionism and human sciences seem eager to conform as much as possible to the models and procedures of hardcore science and somatic medicine. Western society is currently harboring a deep mistrust for a discipline that fully incorporates the flesh and blood of interpersonal emotions. The standing of psychoanalysis as a basic dimension of human culture is threatened more than ever and psychoanalysis is badly in need of new strategies and new models. Unluckily, and - I must add - quite dismayingly, psychoanalytic institutions have generally appeared shy, even helpless in front of such an impressive army of critics and opponents. Nowadays, psychoanalysis appears weak. We may even qualify it as wounded. The development of the interpersonal model and of the Kleinian school in the second half of the last century has set the stage for the emergence of an original conceptualization of the unconscious mind. Within the intersubjective paradigm, the psychoanalytic situation is conceptualized as an interpersonal field to which both the analyst and the patient substantially contribute. We believe that the failure to fully integrate such an intersubjective dimension in both psychoanalytic theory and practice amounts to a core liability in 21st-century psychoanalysis. This book gathers several contributions discussing the contemporary crises of psychoanalysis and offering new perspectives. Some contributors lament that the prevailing psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice have been unable to stay true to the fundamentals of the discipline. Other chapters explore the intersections between psychoanalysis and neural sciences. Finally, the last section demonstrates how psychoanalysis can still be fruitfully applied to the understanding of contemporary culture and society, including basic issues such as identity politics and climate change.

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