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## **On the Pleasure of Belonging: Reflections on the History of Belonging in Psychoanalysis and an Introduction to the Papers in This Issue**

**Victoria Malkin, PhD**

**This essay explores how psychoanalysis conceptualizes the desire that animates our entry into groups, and underlies our belonging. Psychoanalysts belong to a movement started by Freud and in whose history we remain embedded. Freud's history of group dynamics draws a pessimistic vision of an inevitable repetition. This essay charts the ways in which psychoanalysis helps us explore the paradox of belonging and asks how we might find ways to counteract the destructive pull that undermines its possibilities, both in terms of our entry into groups and the legacy we embody as analysts.**

This sixth volume of *The Candidate*, "Belonging," appears after a hiatus during which the group has been working through its own question of belonging since leaving its original home at the Institute for Psychoanalytic Education at NYU and creating its own space in which to belong. Our interest lies in exploring this concept, which remains mostly outside of our psychoanalytic lexicon. What psychic work does it take to belong? Analysts might be skeptical about the overt longing the concept announces. Yet, in his quest to uncover what we are forced to renounce when we enter into our social bond, Freud is implicitly always addressing the question of how we navigate belonging. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930, pp. 23-28), Freud reiterates how suffering derived from our interpersonal relationships is our most problematic source of pain. He provides a poignant meditation on how to escape this pain with a list that moves from drugs, yoga, intellectual work, imagination, becoming a hermit, and finally religion – solutions that are an homage to solitude in some form or another as a way to escape our frustrated desire and longings.

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), Freud locates our origins in the group, first manifested as the horde (pp. 90-100). For Freud, civilization moves individuals progressively towards establishing themselves as separate, able to withstand the group psychology that threatens to trap them and leave them powerless. Our groups are shot through with eros, which both ties us together and tears us apart. The more we desire to belong to the group, the stronger the regression that binds us to it. Freud translates our wish to belong into an expression of infantile needs alongside a leader to whom we submit and, therefore, who always will embody a fantasy about the primal father we both love and murder.

From this reading, belonging for Freud might be no more than a displacement of narcissistic needs onto a fantasy of a group, a desire for unity or a flight from the loneliness of separation into the oceanic oneness for which Freud could find little use. The papers in this issue all, in one way or another, show belonging as always incomplete, something never fully accomplished. Psychoanalysis suggests that the longing called forth in belonging is not only impossible to fulfill but underlies a continual misrecognition and the potential for a narcissistic wound. Freud, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, makes clear this underlying fantasy of belonging, which continues to exert its power a century later; belonging is now advocated as an obvious solution for our sense of alienation. It is popular currency in contemporary political debates that appeal to identity politics as societies grapple with questions of immigration, exclusion, and multiculturalism. This political scene exemplifies what psychoanalysis made manifest over a

century ago – that belonging exists in the realm of desire; its fantasy permits us an imaginary where our social problems could be solved if it were only achieved.

In proposing an issue on “Belonging,” we wanted to capture this paradox of belonging, and dig deeper to expose the desire that animates the demand to belong without assuming that it merely acts to disguise our infantile needs. The discussion among the authors provides us with a broader way to think about the desire to belong that permeates us all. As psychoanalysts, we are witness to our own case study on belonging. All of us have taken the path to become psychoanalysts and have grappled with our desire to belong as analysts to a community of others. What are our fantasies and desires when we take on the title of psychoanalyst? Where and to whom do we belong? As analysts, we enter into institutional arrangements with relations of authority and power. We are confronted with an authority that legitimates our desire, while we enter into a group and its history based on its own genealogies of inclusions, exclusions and claims to truth in the name of belonging.

### **Freud and Group Psychology**

From a sociological vantage point, the group is the core of social action; there can be no social life without social cohesion and belonging. Sociology grappled with the nature of the group and its possibilities, and its potential to generate change or self-transformation. In the early sociological imaginary, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim explored this question. Both men saw the group as an interplay of rationality and irrationality, but assumed there were ideal groups that could transcend irrationality, and by doing so, generate a social good. Even if human nature was seen as egotistical and selfish, the group in its ideal type (Weber) allowed for a better version of humanity. This was the story of the enlightened subject, not the psychoanalytic subject, split and haunted by unconscious desires. For Weber, an ideal group in modernity could consist of rational self-interested actors, while charisma (through prophets, revolutionaries and shamans) effected change in moments of social breakdown, leading to a consolidation of a new (rational) group. Leaders could be good or destructive in relation to the group but their power lay not in the power of their ideas but in their charisma and the possibility of emotional contagion in moments when tradition loses hold. Durkheim, less focused on man the rational actor, explored group action as an expression of a “social fact.” Social acts for Durkheim were to be understood without recourse to individual experience, as he explored in his seminal work on suicide. For Durkheim, a “collective effervescence” transports the group. Such enthusiasm, understood by Durkheim to be irrational, enables a shared affective experience, which then comes to be explained after the fact through rationalization – for example, by religion. Group vitality can trump ego-driven desires. Sociology begins with a group that has generative potential; it allows for belonging and growth, for transcendence and possibility, and in its best form overcomes man’s egotistical or self-driven interest. Here, irrationality is not necessarily in the service of destruction. Group dynamics and belonging can provide a source of meaning and a reasonable social good. Freud, writing his essay on group psychology in the shadow of German Nationalism and on the eve of Fascism, finds no solace in the group; hence, he can only fear belonging and reverses a sociological logic. Beginning with the 19<sup>th</sup> century crowd psychologists, as represented by Le Bon among others, Freud argues that the group will wreak havoc with our accomplishments, even groups (such as the Church) that masquerade as providing higher forms of ethical and moral values. All groups contain the seeds of our destruction, a throwback to the psychological

dynamics that were part of our origins. He begins with the terrifying vision of the crowd, porous and laden with affect – a virus that overwhelms our system and renders us helpless to suggestion and hysteria. This is the vision that inhabits Freud's entry into group psychology. Continuing his work from *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and consumed with the question of authority and conscience, which now superseded his earlier concern with sexuality per se, Freud explored the idea of the group as irrational, destined to carry us into the underwater of our most primitive desires for authority and submission, where our weakness leads us towards susceptibility – where group relations represent emotional contagion and we remain hypnotized by our desire for the leader.

Freud describes a group psychology that is a psychological repetition and acting out. He points us back to man, who in his first iteration lived in the horde and was ruled by the primal father (as opposed to a wandering herd held together by an instinct to unite and follow). Group psychology and individual psychology are both present at our origins, he tells us. Individual psychology manifests in the despot who takes what he wants until a band of brothers escape and then return to instigate the original murder/patricide. Freud begins sociality with a crime, and in it lies a guilt and dread that accompanies us into civilization. Our contemporary forms of belonging echo back to the primal father and our original sin. All groups, however civilized, contain the horde; all groups trick us, leading us astray from rationality. The law, and our desire for it, represents a substitute for the father, not a rational calculation to protect us from our worst selves. Unlike Weber or Durkheim, Freud believed libidinal ties lurk behind rational explanations that conceal a devotion to a leader. The group and its leader are eroticized; the leader, a “Nietzschian superhero who was there at the start of history” (Freud 1921, p. 93), lacks conflicts and leads with narcissism. Meanwhile, for his followers:

The mutual tie between members of a group is in the nature of an identification...based on an important emotional common property, and we may suspect that this common property lies in the nature of the tie with the leader (1921, p. 66).

Belonging, as described by Freud here, is animated by identifications and idealizations that are no more than seductions. Leaders have everything from sexual prowess to power; members of the group belong by virtue of their weakness. Our slavish love for our leader is compared by Freud to a hypnotic relation. A leader embodies our ego-ideal; group members are identified with one another through this relationship to their leader. This shared identification masks the envy, hostility and competition inherent within and demands equal treatment for all members of the group. Groups are fragile systems that mask the ambivalence and envy percolating underneath. The group repeats our entry into the family where we identify with what we want to be (father or mother) when we cannot have what we want. Object-love is exchanged for identification. The leader takes the reins and we follow. Relinquishing our fragile separation and autonomy, proving we are not really masters of our own house, we regress to a state of primitive longing and desire. For Freud, belonging is an infantile state and being in the group is akin to being in love. Being part of a group in its worst form leads to:

...weakness of intellectual ability, the lack of emotional restraint, the incapacity for moderation and delay, the inclination to exceed every limit

in the expression of emotion and to work it off completely in the form of action ... an unmistakable picture of regression to an earlier stage such as we are not surprised to find among savages and children (1921, pp. 81-82).

An individual in a group is subjected to its influence to what is often a profound alteration in mental activity. His emotions become extraordinarily intensified, while his intellectual ability markedly reduced. Both processes being evidently in the direction of an approximation to the other individuals in the group (1921, p. 33).

Individuality is lost when we belong, as we are dragged back towards our irrational excess. There are two ways to escape this weakness: through separation and sublimation of neurotic wishes, or through the emergence of ambivalence that might sustain a rebellion. We rebel because we hate and fear authority but not for the good of the group. But rebellion is doomed to fail because it will always install another leader to whom we submit (Edmundson 2007). The group is never an achievement. Our best work happens outside of it:

As regards to intellectual work it remains a fact, indeed, that great decisions in the realm of thought and momentous discoveries and solutions to problems are only possible to an individual, working in solitude. ... it remains an open question, moreover, how much the individual thinker or writer owes to the stimulation of the group (1921, p. 25).

Freud conceptualizes the group and its social relations as mechanisms of authority and repetitions of neurotic conflicts (Rieff 1959, p. 245). Revolutions are dismantled and transformed into conflicts and deceptions, while belonging is ascribed to false ideals. Social movements are now a historical enactment doomed to repeat. If psychoanalysis provides the cure to this repetition, it is only insofar as it brings our wishes into the light to warn us against their enactment. At the end of his life, Freud refused to draw a road map towards collective life and belonging that could sidestep these dynamics; given the catastrophe he surveyed in his final years, it is not surprising he would offer us a vision of an inevitable history that traps us in its repetition, offering us at best an option of the solitary pursuit of pleasure as opposed to collective values and growth.

### **Belonging and Identity**

Contemporary identity politics, when predicated on the possibility of belonging, is a failed project for the divided (psychoanalytic) subject – a failure because of a reliance on false identifications and unconscious desire. Yet we remain surrounded by examples of social action based on this ideal. The political sphere leads the way in appropriating belonging as a potential imaginary and championing it as the motor for a collective action pursued through identity. Even a postmodern manifesto that heralds fragmented or contingent identities still allows for a rational subject that can choose and rebel against social identities, and use these choices to resist categorizations. Belonging in this realm is prescribed as liberatory, even when imagined through the unity of a group whose existence is predicated on an excluded other. This unified subject,



rejected by psychoanalysis, belongs without ambivalence but with unequivocal belief. Psychoanalysis asks us to question such an identity politics that denies difference, or masks a devotion to the leaders (or their ideals). It reminds us that a subject's unconscious desire will undermine this very desire to belong because of the ambivalence that exists underneath a collective identification.

Freud remained locked into his phylogenic fantasy of human psychology. Social life contained the seeds of our early history (so that evolutionary and developmental history converge). If his assertion that "groups represent primitive man and children" is easy to dismiss as a misguided fantasy that civilization followed a clear developmental trajectory, the power of the group and the seduction of the promise of belonging are impossible to ignore. While Freud locates the power in the idea of the primal father and the subsequent identifications, Lacan pushes us to see belonging as intrinsic to our becoming subjects. Lacan locates subjectivity as constituted in the three registers of the symbolic, imaginary and real. Our identity is largely produced through the symbolic and the imaginary where we take in outside images (as in the mirror) or discourses (the symbolic). The subject comes to be through the Other and our desire is located in its (fantasied) demand. We make sense of ourselves through the webs of meaning supplied by the socio-symbolic system. We see ourselves, in particular our most lovable (and narcissistically pleasing) image of ourselves, in the eyes of the Other. But in this sense, we are mired in misrecognition. Our sense of unity is false (as in the unity supplied by the mirror) and hides what we lack, while our symbolic system will always fail to really capture what we are capable of. Our experience can never fully be symbolized and there is a portion that remains outside of this (the real). We are constituted through the Other. In this sense, our subjectivity emerges in this intersubjective field, but we can never be represented through it, we are subject to misrepresentation. If desire animates belonging, the pull, the affective strength that we seem to invest in these images of our self as constituted through the Other, suggests a *jouissance* that propels it. There is a pleasure that permeates our desire for recognition, that leads us towards belonging, however inevitable it is we will be misled – confronted always with the gap between the subject and its outline in the mirror, the symbol and the symbolized. Lacanian theory evokes a way of grasping for belonging that goes beyond an infantile need or weakness. Belonging is something that we strive for (as with Freud) but can never really attain. Its emotional pull towards a fantasy of unity or completeness will never represent our desire even though we keep pushing towards it.

Freud tells us we relinquish our ego-ideal when we belong and that social identities lead us to lose our individuality in exchange for a leader's recognition. For Lacan, we always engage belonging as desire is oriented through the Other, who constitutes our ego-ideal; but we are trapped through this Other's gaze, which we need to dismantle as we continue to follow our desire.

### **The Psychoanalytic Movement**

Freud would spend much of his later years devoted to his exploration of authority and its discontents, and the difficulties that we face as a group. He did this at the same time he built his psychoanalytic movement and openly embraced his leadership with what might be the same lack of conflict he imagines in the Nietzschean superhero of group psychology; "Even today no one

can know better than I do what psychoanalysis is, and precisely what should be called psychoanalysis,” proclaimed Freud in his *On the History of a Psychoanalytic Movement* (1914, p. 7). He makes clear that he alone invented psychoanalysis, and lest we think he was unduly influenced by others who came before him: “I owe the charge of making my discovery to my not being well-read,” he asserts and then compares himself to Robinson Crusoe: “My splendid isolation was not without its advantages and charms. I did not have to read any publications nor listen to any ill-informed opponents, I was not subject to influence from any quarter, there was nothing to hustle me” (1914, p. 22). Freud claims not just his ownership, but absolute leadership of the movement, and methodically tears down his defectors (and previous friends and followers) Adler, Rank and Jung and labels their dissent as resistance and/or lack of scientific rigor as they failed to acknowledge the core findings of psychoanalysis. Freud in essence gives psychoanalysis an origin myth. If one looks to his essay to ask what attributes he gives his movement that enable it to avoid the trappings of the group psychology he would describe six years later, it is through an appeal to an ideal of its value as truth – ultimately its scientific status. For Freud, always the Enlightenment thinker, psychoanalysis is based on a truth claim that is science, and science will separate it from belief and the group dynamics that belief entails. With this, Freud initiates psychoanalysis into its own paradox: its fight to be established as a truth is what separates it from the destructive dynamics he will apply to the group formed around false beliefs and despot leaders. This fight for “a truth” in psychoanalysis is a key part of its history of splittings based on truth claims, which continues today, perpetuating the very same group dynamics he so aptly described.

The idea of the discipline of psychoanalysis as a complete truth based on science seems outdated to our postmodern skepticism, even if we find scientific evidence for some of its aspects. But outside of the tired dichotomy of science or hermeneutics, is our history of the psychoanalytic movement and its origins that underwrites our development as analysts. Freud left us a movement aspiring to an ideal of scientific truth to legitimize its power to resist its own destruction. Today we see how easily it devolves into a war of leadership and exclusions. Therein we see our own repetitions – and as a group we are encased in this history. Our own problem of belonging enacts our paradox: a history that began with an ideal of psychoanalysis as truth (in science) in fact idealized as a way to permit us to supersede the belonging generated through false ideals and groups. And yet, psychoanalysis is also the tool handed us by Freud that allows us to dismantle our own beginnings (as a group and as psychoanalysts) and not be condemned to repeat.

### **The Papers in This Issue**

Few of us can live on an island and return with a corpus of works equivalent to the *Standard Edition*. We are all faced with the paradox of belonging, our desire for it and our disappointments. Thinking about belonging demands we go beyond a simple critique that reduces it to identifications and submission or celebrates its promise. The papers in this issue all do this in different ways; some authors use their personal history to explore how they have come to navigate belonging and survive its vicissitudes, others explore the institutions and cultures that set up ideals for our belonging and explore how they either constrict or enable a way to belong that is more than just repressive or narcissistically gratifying. While providing a range of themes

and debates, they lend themselves to exploration of three main themes that resonate throughout the issue:

### *The Subject of Belonging*

Some of the papers question the very notion of who or what is it that belongs. If we think beyond the idea of identifications, then we are faced with this question of the subject who belongs. Those taking up this question are the Lacanians, as they themselves explore the very nature of the subject. Guy Le Gaufey takes us on a journey through the philosophy of logic to show how the transformation of a single element “a” takes place once put into the set and surrounded by parentheses (a). These parentheses are like the lasso that contains or gives a new form, just as the mirror gives its outline. By evoking the metaphor of the lasso and its ability to transform what it holds together (in logic or in the imaginary), Le Gaufey evokes the uncertainty of who belongs. Using a Lacanian perspective, Richard Klein characterizes belonging as a “swindle” and reminds us that, for Lacan, an analysis needs to end at that place of absolute difference, where the analyst never is mistaken for an ego-ideal, compared with the despotic leader of the group. Analysis needs to dismantle identifications, and analysands enter the zone of absolute difference as they encounter their own desire. Klein highlights the possibilities of language as anchoring the subject, where he or she can survive in a zone of absolute difference that does not end up in psychosis. Using Joyce, he describes a form of heretic creativity that allows for subjectification. Finally, Martine Fourné, working in West Africa, looks at the subject who comes into being under different cultural systems where paternity and the father play a very different role.

### *The Group, Its Leaders and Ideals*

Other authors use Freud’s group psychology to explore the question of our yearning for the leader that accompanies our belonging. Juliet Flower MacCannell focuses on the question of the artificial group that Freud describes (the army and the Church) as a particular group formation and asks why there appears to be a proliferation of this type of group today. When belonging means an acceptance of one version of truth (either through the word or the leader), we are returned to the question of submission to the word/leader. While MacCannell offers more diagnosis than solution, Todd Dean, in his personal essay of growing up in the Church of Christ, gives us more latitude. Unlike Klein, who leaves us with the genius/heretic, Dean explores a childhood that demanded adherence to the literal “word” of his church, which demanded absolute fealty, but within this he saw various forms of skepticism lived out in different ways – such as his grandmother’s marriage to a divorced man, and his father’s eventual departure from the church. Skepticism enabled him to question the relationship of the “word to the thing” while still allowing him a sort of uneasy belonging – but he sees this as the only way to find out who he is in the context of his symptom. In their review of the film “The German Doctor,” Manya Steinkoler and Jessica Datema show how the desire to belong goes awry – not only because of its fantasy of unity, but because this is played out in the body, the real (from a Lacanian viewpoint). Most importantly, they argue that belonging always contains the uncanny, seducing us with the possibility of familiarity under which lurks the unfamiliar. The wishes and identifications that lead us to belonging, which we hope will make us whole, can leave us literally in tatters; the

searing image in the film of broken up dolls to be sutured by mad men reminds us of how we can be led astray by this desire and ultimately always misled through its uncanniness.

### *Psychoanalysis, Institutions and Belonging*

Many of the articles touch in some way or another on psychoanalysis and institutes, on how psychoanalysis has generated a history of exclusions and devotions to leaders and truth-telling that annihilates the other. Angelo Villa, along with Orshi Hunyady and Pascal Sauvayre, have written articles that engage these questions head on. They all explore the idea of belonging and how its origins in the family can engender traumatic repetitions once entering into the psychoanalytic institution. Villa takes the experience one step further by locating the problem in the training analysis – where he sees a potential for the identifications and transferences to be revived in the institutional setting that demands allegiance and loyalty to particular founders. Rejecting the identifications that animate institutes and their lineages, he advocates a group that is formed around the ideal of work to counter the groups that are formed through false loyalties and identifications, under the specter of the primal father, or as coined by Villa, the discourse of the despot. “Include Me Out, Please!” is his way of being involved, of signifying the ideal distance in a group for him.

Beginning in a different place Hunyady and Sauvayre explore belonging from a sense of its unachieved possibility, which they think is repressed by a belonging (to) that is structured through hierarchy and order and that demands compliance. Their premise is that we begin our lives in a group and seek ways to belong that mean we will always be in conflict with those parts of ourselves that were rejected or unloved. They imagine a group that feels hopeful where we are able to master these experiences as opposed to repeating them. Like Villa, the institute is seen as generating a more hierarchical experience, demanding a Faustian bargain where we comply in exchange for membership (and hence recognition). But they ask us to dig deeper and find the repressed meaning of belonging, the ways in which we can belong (with), a belonging that allows for difference and assumes it is only in difference that we can have the fullest experience of our self. If Villa prescribes the work, they imagine a changing and alternating power structure that dissolves and transforms and that is committed to examining the historical context in which truth claims are made. They envision a possibility of being part of the whole without being subsumed by it.

Orna Ophir, the lone Kleinian in the issue, provides an account of belonging that is a struggle with the loneliness that inhabits our core. But it is not the Lacanian loneliness, where our lack leads us to the place of absolute difference. Ophir asks us to tolerate our loneliness in exchange for belonging. Belonging is always under threat when we need to disown our bad objects and hijack the depressive position. She reminds us we have to tolerate our bad parts and not project them onto others, for it is these projections that make belonging even farther out of reach. When we accept our bad objects, we have the capacity for gratitude and love. We can belong in spite of our loneliness. Joining a group always revives the possibility of these externalizations. Communities can create enemies inside and out. For Ophir, the ideal psychoanalytic group requires the possibility of being lonely in the group, of forming a community that allows for the difference. Unlike Hunyady and Sauvayre, it is not that the group can enable lost parts of the self to emerge, it is a group that can allow for each of us with our

own loneliness, and aware of our singularity, to confront the other without annihilating it or the difference it represents. This is what Ophir sees as an ethical stance towards belonging.

The question of psychoanalysis as truth also comes into play in the short essay by Emma Lieber, playing on words and language with a personal meditation that conceptualizes our identification with psychoanalysis as a belonging anchored in the potential transformational possibilities of language. As psychoanalysts, our belief in language and its capacity to, in essence, give us the slip, frees us from the absolute certainty that a notion of psychoanalysis as truth-telling would advocate. If Lieber uses language as a way to question what it means to be an analyst, Ingo Lambrecht (a practicing psychoanalyst and a shaman) rips the psychoanalytic movement from its objectivist cover and asks us to consider the ways in which our profession and training are set up as a culture of self-transformation that relies as much on belief as does shamanism. He puts belief into the same realm as science, refusing to create a simple hierarchical relationship between the two, and invites us to consider that our own belonging as psychoanalysts is as much predicated on our rituals and practices as other things. He notes that it is these same practices that give us the comfort of belonging and the protections against vulnerability and ultimately annihilation.

### **Final Thoughts**

If some of the authors here provide their own solution to the paradox of belonging, they challenge us to come up with our own solution as to how we might find ways to belong that leave us less vulnerable to the group dynamics of which Freud warns or to succumb to the illusions and disappointments that belonging contains. If we take Freud at his word, we are given little hope that one can belong without ending up prey to one's own destructive unconscious dynamics. If Freud gave us science and solitude as his solutions, we are all left to find our own singular ways to live in this paradox, especially in our encounter with psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis can no longer embrace its identity as truth-telling – not because it is a lie, but because to advocate truth is to set up our descent into group dynamics. In finding our way to belong, we might take psychoanalysis at its word by finding our own understanding of the word. This singularity needs to be contained in the collective reading.

Belonging essentially challenges us to entertain our desire to be in the group and the work this entails. But in that work, as in the work of mourning Freud gave us before, perhaps we also might find our new beginnings, or our pleasure, not just our pain, in the social. Belonging, in homage to our origins, contains the pleasure as much as it can fall into destruction and prohibition. If some of the authors here have found ways to belong, it seems that in spite of their disappointment, they can maintain their pleasure in the group and not just survive through denial or repression. With fun in the work, and love in the relation, perhaps we might have a chance to belong – a libidinal encounter that can counter the unconscious forces that would drive us to destroy the potential that Freud might have found unthinkable or impossible to sustain as he looked out at the eruption of aggression and annihilation to come. But that does not mean that we should give up.

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## Be Longing

Manya Steinkoler, PhD

“If you don’t pick one, we won’t be your friend,” Stacey said, her sandy brown bangs dividing her white spongy forehead like a Wonder Bread crust. I hesitated. I had been hesitating for days. “*Everyone* has a favorite color. You *have to have* a favorite color.” She had mustered the troops this time. Debbie, Melissa and Paula-Gayle stood behind her, their hands folded across their chests like six-year old bouncers. So I picked one, the right one, the one I knew was the right one. Stacey nodded with reluctant approval and raised eyebrows – a strange and markedly adult nod for a six-year-old – as though at this early age she was already defending America from illegal immigration. “Magenta,” I said, giving in to what I knew would show I was a member of the United States of first grade. There. I said it. I finally belonged to “everyone.”

“Ma-gen-ta.” Stacey carved out the consonants at me as though I had been a visitor from another planet who hadn’t pronounced the magic word correctly. And suddenly, a protracted pirouette led to a military about-face and she marched away, a line of girls following, inching behind her like ducklings.

When I got home from school, I ran into my room and shut the door. I took the Crayola box from the closet. I fondled Mulberry, Pine Green and Brown, kissing them repeatedly. I placed Maroon and Black on the laps of my favorite dolls. I arranged Lavender, Bittersweet and Orange-Yellow in the toy china vase in the center of my tea set. I stood Raw Sienna in Barbie’s convertible car seat. “I’m sorry,” I told the crayons. “It’s not Magenta’s fault,” I explained. After some reparations – I let Green-Blue sit with Cornflower, and Mahogany lie under the blanket with Apricot – and considerable discussion, I had succeeded in making the other crayons feel better...but the problem remained. Who would have the courage to say Gray to Stacey? Who would say Tan? Who would say Black or India Red? What would happen if everyone agreed that Magenta was their favorite color and the other colors were lost forever? My mother told me her crayon box had different colors in it when she was growing up. Where did they go? What happened to them?

That night at the dinner table, I asked my parents whether everyone had a favorite color. My mother said that favorite colors often changed with age and mood and style. My father said one might have preferences and that preferences were not the same as favorites. My younger brother asked whether God had a favorite color. My youngest brother said that God’s favorite color was the color of his Hot Wheels cars. No one understood my sadness and sense of defeat. My mother must have noticed my distress. “Maybe all the colors can be favorites,” she said warmly. “They can’t in school!” I cried, and ran to my room, slamming the door. I hadn’t defended the colors against the Magenta Mafia. What’s worse, I was jealous of them even if I thought they were wrong. They belonged and even invented and policed belonging, never once concerned with the ones they left out. My father would call them the “Magenta Yentas” and said that I was right not to take them seriously. Later, when I was grown up and he would tell the story, he would joke that we had a “Magenta Genocide” on our hands and I was defending the “Jute” at age six. In high school, my brothers called them the “Majuntas” and the “F.U. shes” (Fuchsias). In tenth grade, when we learned about color in science class, I did the research: that

brilliant reddened pink, a rose in flames was the color of 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalistic wars. Named after the Battle of Magenta in 1860 during the wars of Italian independence, the Avenue Magenta in the 10<sup>e</sup>me arrondissement in Paris was also so named in commemoration. Scientists had invented the color in a laboratory during the same period as that of the battle and to commemorate the national independence of Italy, they renamed their manufactured fuchsia, magenta. The winners don't just choose, they even name the color!

\* \* \* \* \*

My moral and sweet childhood story is surely not so unfamiliar. The ethical concerns of children are always passionately felt and most children face some version of such a story. I would be confronted with a more difficult problem years later – not of the box of colors, but of the hole in the box of colors.

Crayola crayons proudly advertised the crayon sharpener on the face of the box with a thick arrow pointing towards the hole. The words, “Now with built-in sharpener!” were written in red across the arrow.

To love all the crayon colors is one thing – but the hole? Who could love a hole? How does this hole concern the “everyone” or “all the colors”? Do we not have favorite colors precisely to allow us to think we are far removed from the hole? That we are the superior part of the box?

If to be longing is the condition of subjectivity, insofar as we are subjects, we belong to not belonging *in* the hole but *to* the hole. Belonging *to* the hole means being able to forget it sometimes. Perhaps the psychoanalyst belongs most to the hole, belonging as she does to the as yet unsaid, to the not yet, to the part of the symptom that resists meaning, and to the resistance in all belonging. The subject is what falls out of belonging so as to join the world where he will always be longing. It is the source of the human complaint and the human comedy.

I came to psychoanalysis as a practitioner because of an encounter with this hole. We could say that the psychotic knows a great deal about the hole; we could say that the hole is him – not that it represents him – but that it *is* him. He is not a crayon, not even the color white as the presence of all colors, or the color black as their absence. He is something else. He does not belong to the colored crayons; he is the hole in the box. He thus belongs to every box as what is not the box; he is the absence included in the box, a strange and terrible kind of belonging, a pure and absolute negation. Interested as I was in everyone, I went exploring.

I knew a man for many years who belonged to all colors because he could not belong to any. It seemed we had something in common. Yet I was concerned about the “all”; he *was* the all...as well as the none. Touched and wondrous, I listened to him. He spoke to me for years ...and years. He explained that he had advanced spiritually, and was able to remember all the lives he had led, because he was an old soul. I was also such a soul, he told me, and would be able to remember all of my past lives too if I would only believe that such a knowledge was possible. In ancient Egypt, he had worshipped Anubis and Osiris and had been made divine; during the Renaissance, he had been a scientist and metaphysician; during the Spanish Golden



Age, he had been a Moorish mathematician. He had been a Sicilian assassin, a pirate off the coast of Africa, a libertine in France, a Native American, a Trotskyite, a Jew, and a Nazi officer. When he was a little boy, his mother had told him that he was “*fou*,” and that he would grow up to be a madman. A bit part film actor and professional homeopath, he was aware of the organs of the body and sensitive to their workings in himself and in everyone else. He could recite Shakespeare, Moliere, Victor Hugo and Rimbaud by heart until morning without tiring; he had studied architecture and drawing at the Beaux Arts, chiropractic, osteopathy, and nutrition at medical school, theater and film writing at conservatory; he had been a boxer, a stunt man, a professional body builder and as an older man, a tap dancer. Belonging to all things and to all time, being eternal, he belonged to no one, and to no time; and although he showed up from time to time, he was never present.

By the time this text is published, he will have passed away from terminal cancer. He does not think I need to know when he dies because his life here was only one of many he has lived and will live. He emailed me last week to say that death had arrived and he knew it. I am sure he is right; he has never been without knowledge of the Real.

How do I arrange the hole on my tea set table? How do I fondle it or kiss it or include it in my crayon arrangement?

How does one include the hole?

Where does the hole belong? For years the question seemed to bother me far more than it bothered him. And now he is going...in a sense somewhere no different from where he has always been.

What to do with the hole when I care about the box of crayons?

In 1958, Crayola made the hole part of the box to keep the crayons in working condition...so they can continue to write the world in color.

\* \* \* \* \*

My five-year-old nephew showed me his box of Crayola crayons last week while he drew pictures. He calls them his “Olas!” (His nanny is Peruvian.) Today there are 120 colors instead of 64. India Red has been renamed Chestnut; Flesh has been renamed Peach; and Black has become Night Owl...as if Black were a word we should not say any longer. Some new names are worth mentioning: Beyouthful Blue, Freckle, Tropical Rain Forest, Jalapeno, Caribbean Green, Mango Tango, and Banana Mania. My nephew drew a picture for me of a rainbow in blue and orange. “Why are there only two colors in the rainbow?” I asked him. “Because Beyouthful Blue and Mango Tango are my favorite colors,” he said. “And I’m giving them to you.”

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## Belonging / Including

Guy Le Gaufey

**“Belonging” also has a strong meaning in elementary logic. Can this meaning be useful to conceive of the relationship between the Lacanian subject and its specular image, considered as the very foundation of its ego?**

If you want to learn anything about logic, from the first pages of the manual you turn to, you will be pressed into agreeing with a starting and startling difference. You will then be told to accept without any kind of demonstration that “belonging” is different from “including.” What is that about?

This difference means that an “element” is to be conceived of as different from the class composed with this element only, called in this circumstance the “singleton” of this element. Indeed, from now on you will be invited to say and consider that this element “belongs to” its singleton, while this singleton (and only it) can be “included” in any kind of class, indefinitely. Thus, the element “a” can “belong to” the set (a, b, c) (for instance) even though the singleton “(a)” does not *belong to* this set. It will appear only if I list the subclasses of (a, b, c), that is: ((a,b), (a,c), (b,c), (a), (b), (c), (∅)). Okay? You’d better say yes, because if not, there will be no going further, and you will be definitely lost between “elements” and “classes,” that is, lost for logic.

Nevertheless, what is the difference between “a” and “(a)”? It is as clear as day: the difference is “(“ and “)”, “()”, the parentheses that isolate the letter itself. David Lewis<sup>[1]</sup> calls that a “lasso,” alluding to this kind of potato teachers draw on the blackboard when they want to show that the elements they point to are to be considered as gathered together into a set, and that they “belong” now to a new unity, something that did not exist when they were only dispersed.

What is this lasso, typographically represented by a couple of parentheses? We discover something of it perusing the previous list of the subclasses of the set (a, b, c). I indeed added in this list, silently, an apparent newcomer that was not visible in (a, b, c) because I did not pay attention to the parentheses, this “∅”, that is the mark of the so-called “void class,” a class that does not encompass anything, any “element.” When I break down such a class composed of many elements into its subclasses, I then discover that, encompassing my elements with the parentheses/lasso, I had in fact already used this void class that appears as such only at the end of my list, but that is clearly active in what frames every subclass I have made up with every element or every bringing together of some of them.

Thanks to this void class, I can from now on not confuse the very nature of the “element,” and the kind of unity of a “class” (or a “set”; here I do not mind about these different names). Despite the definite article “the” I place in front of “element” when I mean that I consider only this one, I do not know if it has any kind of unity *by itself*. When I say “*an* element,” “*this* element,” I just mean that I do not point to two, or five, or 1428, or an infinity of elements. I give to it the number one because I consider it apart from possible others, but this is

not any of its own properties; it is a relative property that speaks, too, about the “others” (they are not what I point to at that moment), a “second quality” as Descartes<sup>[2]</sup> would have said.

On the contrary, “(a)” is invested with a unity of its own, readable in the “()”, a unity that allows it to be included *as a unity* in an indefinite series of bigger unities still to come, a unity we will make apparent only if we break down the final class into its subclasses.

“Belonging to” is now the name of the mystery according to which the indefinite and uncontrollable multiplicity of an element is reduced to the unity of its singleton by “adding” to it this strange “no-thing” that is the void class. By adding this new and bizarre no-thing, I pass from the in(de)finite nature of the “element” to the asserted unity of the class composed of only this element, that is, its “singleton,” and this latter can easily be part of a calculus, while the former, which does exist, is much more difficult to integrate into any calculus, because of the silence about its relation to unity before it “belongs to” its singleton.

Enough of that. Let’s put aside this logic stuff now, and let’s turn to another kind of “lasso” the infant comes upon between, let’s say, the age of six months to two years old, when he/she realizes that the image in the mirror in front of him/her is his or hers. I therefore mean what Lacan named the “mirror stage,” which became for him, beyond the birth of the ego (in the sense he gave to this word), a sort of metaphysical event – even though to Wallon (the French psychologist who discovered it first), the same event is but a psychological and neurological manifestation that testifies to an important moment of neuromuscular integration, and nothing else. What I call “metaphysical” in Lacan’s view is that he conceived this encounter with the specular image as the very foundation of the imaginary unity he later described as “*unien*,” which is precisely something of the nature of the “singleton” we just encountered. The crucial sentence in his brief text of 1949 is this one:

For the total form of his body, by which the subject anticipates the maturation of his power in a mirage, is given to him only as a gestalt, that is, in an exteriority in which, to be sure, this form is more constitutive than constituted, but in which, above all, it appears to him as *the contours of a stature that freezes it and in a symmetry that reverses it, in opposition to the turbulent movements with which the subject feels he animates it.* (2006, p. 76).

C’est que la forme totale du corps par quoi le sujet devance dans un mirage la maturation de sa puissance, ne lui est donnée que comme *Gestalt*, c’est-à-dire dans une extériorité où certes cette forme est-elle plus constituante que constituée, mais où surtout elle lui apparaît dans un relief de stature qui la fige et sous une symétrie qui l’inverse, en opposition à la turbulence de mouvements dont il s’éprouve l’animer. (1966, pp. 94-95).

“*Un relief de stature...*”<sup>[3]</sup> Even in French, the expression is odd, and a precise and quick meaning is here out of reach. “Relief” is most certainly common in sculpture (“bas-relief,” “haut-relief,” etc.), or in geography, but in what way could a “stature” have a “relief”? Especially on the mere plane of a mirror! So that the only meaning available is to understand this word as a

way to stress this *Gestalt* as perfectly visible, something that stands out in the frame of the mirror as something possessing a new kind of unity.

We, therefore, now have two closed lines: the one that is unnoticed at the edge of the mirror (there is never an infinite mirror), and the one at the edge of this “stature” that can move when the “subject”<sup>[4]</sup> feels like moving. A fixed frame and, inside that, a sort of mobile frame, a moving “lasso” outlined by its mobility, the latter allowing it to appear as a unity despite the numerous features it is composed of, because all of them move in concert and in response to bodily movements.

But there is not any reflexivity prior to the identification (the anteriority of the agent to the act is but a metaphysical prejudice). In Lacan’s text, this identificatory event takes place at the end of our first quotation: “*dont il s’éprouve l’animer.*” The French elision reduces the pronouns to sheer letters: “s” refers to what stands in front of the mirror, “l” to the image in the mirror. They are strictly contemporaneous.<sup>[5]</sup>

The “metaphysical” point of view, then, is to consider the mobile frame of the specular image as the *die casting* of any set unity to come.

What is in front of the mirror, whatever its name can be, just before the imaginary identification, is nevertheless not a “fragmented” body in Lacan’s view. There is here a very common reading of the Lacanian mirror stage trapped in a Kleinian understanding: the child would feel first his/her body as fragmented, and then, thanks to the mirror image, he/she would discover, at last, his/her body as a unity. That is, after the schizoparanoid phase and its fragmentation, the depressive phase would bring a soothing unity, thanks to a sort of mourning, in the way of natural development progress from chaos to order.<sup>[6]</sup> Lacan’s conception is not of that kind: he starts from the idea that we cannot say anything of the way “what stands in front of the mirror” grasps his/her body *before* the imaginary identification, that it would be a mere invention to say anything about that.

A “fragmented body” should indeed be composed of “parts” and, in that case, each of them should be, like our previous subclasses, “one,” caught in the kind of imaginary unity produced by the imaginary identification and passed on to every “part.” On the contrary, Lacan considers that before such a unity, there is no kind of unity, and that consequently there are no “parts,” no “fragments”; maybe an incredible swarming, maybe only sensation and not perception – but we just do not know what kind of general feeling this pre-identified being experiences; here, I cannot use the adjective “own” to qualify his/her body, because this reflexivity is still on the verge of emerging. The only thing we can say at that point is that this anticipation of unity given by the mirror image produces, *as a result*, the feeling of a fragmented body, each part of it being then capable of coming to light as a component of the ego built with the mirror image. Lacan says:

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation – and, for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an “orthopedic” form of

its totality – and to the final donned armor of an alienating identity that will mark with its rigid structure all his mental development (2006, p. 78).

*Le stade du miroir* est un drame dont la poussée interne se précipite de l'insuffisance à l'anticipation – et qui pour le sujet, pris au leurre de l'identification spatiale, machine les fantasmes qui se succèdent d'une image morcelée du corps à une forme que nous appellerons orthopédique de sa totalité – et à l'armure enfin assumée d'une identité aliénante, qui va marquer de sa structure rigide tout son développement mental (1966, p. 97).

Once the subject is “caught up in the lure of spatial identification,” then the fragmented body can appear, trying to find its way to an “orthopedic” form of totality.

Thus, we cannot say or think much about this strange “subject” that would identify the mirror image he/she will “belong to” from then on, with, consequently, this “alienating identity” Lacan describes. This so-called “subject” is neither one nor many, neither “united” nor “fragmented,” neither “this” nor “that.” It is to be conceived of like the “element” of our previous set logic: we talk about it as “one” to differentiate it from possible “others,” but we must stick to the fact that we do not know how he/she feels “himself/herself” because there is no such reflexivity, even if for the others this baby is obviously only one being, affected by different feelings, and already very active in his/her apprehension of outside reality.

This ignorance about the quiddity of what stands in front of the mirror before the identification is crucial in analytic practice: what is to identify the mirror image and its innumerable features deserves to be qualified as “subject” because we must suppose an agent capable of supporting a close and stable (although difficult at times) relationship with this image, but this subject, we just know nothing about – neither its qualities nor its fate.

The new definition of this subject during the first session of the seminar *The Identification*<sup>[7]</sup> as “represented by a signifier for another signifier” maintains an identical absence of knowledge about such an entity “in itself.” We are taught that it is but the link between two signifiers, an effect of the signifying chain (according to a new meaning of the word “signifier”), and nothing else.

This double detour by elementary logic and Lacanian mirror stage revisited allows us to consider what “belongs to” anything, as a subject; that is, a being of a very special kind, very close to what Charles Sanders Peirce called “firstness”:

The First must therefore be present and immediate, so as not to be second to a representation. It must be fresh and new, for if old it is second to its former state. It must be initiative, original, spontaneous and free; otherwise it is second to a determining cause. It is also something vivid and conscious so only it avoids being the object of some sensation. It precedes all synthesis and all determination; it has no unity and no parts. It cannot be articulated thought; assert it, and it has already lost its

characteristic innocence; for assertion always implies a denial of something else. Stop to think of it, and it has flown! That is first: fresh, new, initiative, original, spontaneous, free, vivid, conscious and evanescent. Only, remember that every description of it must be false to it (p. 183).

Once this element “belongs to” its singleton, when it manages to identify with the *set* of features it feels composed of, then this new unity can be included into any combination because it is possessed now of the closed unity that allows us to count it as “one.” Psychopathologists can insert it as much as they want in their classification, but it would be good if psychoanalysts could not forget the impossibility to “describe” the element all that encompasses, this element being bound to be conceived of as an entity deprived of any kind of reflexivity,<sup>[8]</sup> therefore, impossible to *know* as such, according to Peirce and to Lacan as well.

You may, therefore, “include” *yourself* in any kind of association, band, batch, bevy, bunch, camp, category, circle, class, clique, clump, cluster, company, couple, congregation, faction, formation, gang, gathering, organization, pack, party, posse, set or troop, but remember that, in a remote past, you have had to add this evanescent void class to actually gather together the innumerable features you are composed of (most of them still to come, then), and that each of them lacks this void class that only you are capable of adding in. Remember, too, that the French poet Charles Baudelaire considered that two rights were missing in the French Declaration of Human Rights and the Citizen: the right to contradict, and the right to go away.

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#### Endnotes

[1] More about that in David Lewis, *Parts of Classes*. Cambridge, MA, Basil Blackwell, 1991, p. 29.

[2] If I say that lava is around 1300°F and 2000°F, I describe a physical quality referred to a physical scale, that talks about the velocity of molecules, and so on. If I add “it is very hot,” I refer then to living beings, who cannot stand such temperatures. “Hot” is a “second quality”; “2000°F” is a “primary quality.”

[3] Fink translates this as “the contour of his stature,” which is too much; the “stature” in question is not, for the time being, “his.” It is very close to becoming so, but not yet, only just *after* the imaginary identification.

[4] Another strange word here, and Lacan uses many different words in this short text to mean what stands in front of the mirror: “the human child,” “a nursling,” “the subject” (many times), “the little man at the stage *infans*,” “the *I*.”

[5] Of course, not for us, who see the mirror image as a physical phenomenon long before the “subject” notices it.

[6] Years ago, in his book *Scientific Imagination: Case Studies* (1978), Gerald Holton showed splendidly that, in the history of physics, the idea about what comes first in physical reality – chaos or order – was nothing but a prejudice he called a “themata,” without any consequence to the research itself, but founding different families of thought among scientists. We are caught in the same problem here.

[7] In December 1962, twelve years after the text of the mirror stage *Écrits*, written in 1949, after a previous text given in 1936 at the IPA Congress in Marienbad.

<sup>[8]</sup> This lack of reflexivity is a fundamental property of the Lacanian subject, but of the object (a) as well – a very strange property for any object.

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## Hostages to Identification

Richard Klein, LRCP&SI (MB, BS)

In the classical notion of belonging, for instance the social bond created by religion, the community is based on the logic of one-among-many. In 1921 in *Group Psychology*, Freud discovered the beginnings of a new social bond in the effects of the *esprit de corps*. This he based on envy of the younger sibling who knocked him off the breast. When the older sibling experiences being damaged by his own hate, a demand for equality emerges as well as a sense of duty. This sort of social bond is one step outside the monotheistic social bond but still with the same logic of one-among-many. What happened between then and the introduction of the knot by Lacan? From the *esprit de corps* to the *esprit des noeuds* (knot, *ne pas*, *Verneinung*), we have the signifier of the one-all-alone.

My interest is not in the notion of belonging to a community in the sense that social theorists like Durkheim, Weber and Mauss consider it. Their work centered on social cohesion and how it was produced in the community. I am interested in the heretic's *sinthomatic* loss of community, which we also could call ex-communication. Freud, Joyce and Lacan were convinced that the social bond was a swindle. Once one aligns oneself with these three writers, the social bond becomes more interesting. The first time Freud took an interest in belonging to a community, he drew on Darwin's hypothesis that men originally lived in small hordes and the jealousy of the oldest, strongest male prevented sexual promiscuity. The wandering younger males found partners outside the original horde. The social bond at that time was based on exogamy (Freud 1913, pp. 125-126). There was even a swindle in the so-called primal horde, namely the castration of the sons should they take any of the father's women. This led to an uprising that resulted in the murder of the father. The effect of this murder was the establishment of both the totemic system and exogamy. Women are not exempt from belonging and the swindle implied. In *The Taboo of Virginity* (1918), Freud demonstrates this. He relentlessly exposes the social bond as a swindle in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) and then in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). In this theoretical trajectory, we pass through the narcissism of no differences, the narcissism of minor differences, and a break in narcissism via absolute difference where there is no identification at all. Heresy is the *savoir faire* of this trajectory. Of course, these days there are all sorts of heresies in addition to religious ones, including scientific heresies and literary heresies. Heresy in Lacan's formulation always will involve the signifier of the Name-of-the-Father.

The guiding concepts of the paper are Lacan's notions of absolute difference, heresy and the "desire of the analyst." Let's do definitions step by step. To say something very general about absolute difference, Roman Jakobson provides his readers with a useful reference. The 12th century theoretician of language, John of Salisbury, comes close to the logic of absolute difference. He said: "Naming and signifying are two different things [...] singularia are named, universalia are signified" (Jakobson 1990, p. 318). In psychoanalytic theory, the signifier is on the side of the universal. We see this, for instance, in the ideal signifier, which represents the ideals of the community. This suggests a demographic idea of what constitutes universality, which can be logically demonstrated. The particular is how the subject finds his satisfaction, which is on the side of drive. Lacan reveals this orientation in his final teaching: from universalia to singularia, from the universal to the particular. The universal is planted in the zone of signification. Naming fixes the reference at the level of singularia. This has a logic that John

Stuart Mill called connotation and denotation, and Gottlieb Frege called sense and reference<sup>[1]</sup>  
Nomination in late Lacan is interpretation.

When a subject's identifications crumble, the subject has become an object. The object may have a presence in the zone of the universal, but it does not belong there. That's one of the first paradoxes the subject has to negotiate in reconstructing body, mind and soul. Absolute difference is an effect of this paradox; it is the difference between the signifier and the object of the drive. The object has a real status. We see this distinction most glaringly in psychosis. The status of the psychotic is that of an atypical citizen. Psychotics are very apt to suffer the imposition of absolute difference from outside while suffering it in their own psychical life as well. Jasmine, the protagonist in Woody Allen's 2013 film, *Blue Jasmine*, was a woman who needed gentlemen of substance to keep body and soul together. Having lost her husband to another woman and turned him over to the police for his criminal activities, Jasmine managed to attract a diplomat and made him interested in her. She was with the diplomat when they encountered her brother-in-law in the street. An angry scene ensued, scaring the diplomat off. Cate Blanchett's subtle performance in the role of Jasmine made the audience aware that Jasmine had been living on the edge for a long time. After this encounter, she started to wander in a fugue-like state, speaking, maybe mumbling, not signifying. She sits down on a public bench, where she has a right to sit, next to a woman already sitting there. Jasmine paid no attention to this woman. Her world had ended. She sat there mumbling. The woman, in a bit of a fright, vacated her place quickly. My hypothesis (not my diagnosis) is that her psychosis triggered following the aggressive encounter with her brother-in-law and the loss of the new man that she had ever so carefully set up. In that moment, the world had become enigmatic for her. Her identifications crumbled and her own structure was based on absolute difference. The dissolution of her identifications left her with mere existence.<sup>[2]</sup> The irony she is suffering is that of a woman who wanted to be a cut above the typical citizen as well as the wife of a substantial man. She has become an atypical citizen but not in a good way. Atypicality can only be done in a good way, that is, heretically.<sup>[3]</sup>

The analyst's desire in the transference is the desire of the Other. This is what the analysand's structure makes of the analyst's desire. The analyst's desire is not a borrowed desire. Above all, it is not borrowed from the Other. That makes it a de-Oedipalized desire. Lacan, who often proceeded by aphorism, remarked that the subject's desire is the desire of the Other. It couldn't be more Oedipal. The notion of the analyst's desire seems to have emerged from a rather loathsome suspicion Lacan harbored toward identification with one's analyst as an appropriate way to terminate one's analysis. But, then, Lacan also recognized how easily this can happen. The problem is that, on the one hand, transference operates in a direction that takes demand back to identification, that is, to a defensive position. On the other hand, in the beginning, transference is essential to get the treatment off the ground and to keep it going. Lacan has to locate another operator that leads the subject to a different direction than that of identification. He'll call it the desire of the analyst, which in Seminar XI, is the desire to obtain absolute difference (Lacan 1964, pp. 273, 274, 276). To arrive at absolute difference, one must cross the plane of identification, which is Lacan's notion of the end of analysis at this time. He contrasts the desire associated with the moral law with the analyst's desire. Moral law is desire in the pure state. This is, of course, Kant's moral law, which cannot operate in the environment of an impure desire. Pure desire brings about the sacrifice of objects of love and of the sacrifice and

murder of the pathological object (Lacan 1964, pp. 275-276). In other words, the desire attached to Kant's moral law is a lethal desire. What does it mean to say that the analyst's desire is impure? It means that the analyst's desire concerns an ethics of the real. In my opinion, it is not an ethics of virtue and vice.

I am inclined to locate the ethics of virtue and vice in the community of egos on Freud's graph from his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (Appendix). It is being used as a measure of belonging to a community, although it is a better measure of belonging to, for example, an East London gang, which is, after all, a community. Insofar as we can measure the gang with the graph, its members have put the same object in the place of the ego ideal (aka the leader). Were you to take a little risk and interview the latter, he would insist that their morality was infused with virtues and vices. To topologize the community from the point of view of RSI (in French, these letters are pronounced heresy), in its foundations we will discover virtues and vices, which we can index on the symbolic and imaginary. This ego ideal is an ordering signifier, an identificatory signifier of omnipotence. The "omnipotent" is there to designate sponsorship by the Name-of-the-Father. It arranges things. This signifier brings order among the potential members by imaginary identifications, which are specular or narcissistic, that is, a narcissism of no differences. Freud calls this a primary group (1921, p. 116). He says it is the survival of Darwin's primal horde (1921, p. 123). On the one side, we have narcissism of no differences, on the other, an ordering signifier.

Freud's graph represents the structure of the cell of a social group before it becomes too organized (1921, p. 116). It contains three agencies: the egos, the ego ideal and, emphasized by Lacan, the object (a) found outside the community of egos on the right-hand side in a place marked x and labeled "external object." The line of imaginary identification is the broken vertical line. This is the identificatory operator of the mirror stage. The object (a) becomes the object of all the egos, having been admitted to the community, internalized, put in the place of the ego ideal. The curves of the graph, according to Lacan, mark the conjunction of the object (a) with the ego ideal. Lacan says that the object is superimposed on the ego ideal (1973, p. 272). The object (a), which has a real status, is added to a signifier that is supposed to be symbolic, insofar as it is a signifier. The ideal signifier, thus, has omnipotent, identificatory functions: I + (a). I should also point out that the object (a) carries a charge of aggressivity. We can see the object embodied in the gaze of the hypnotist. Lacan says that the object in the place of the ego ideal is an object reduced to its stupidest reality (1960, p. 567). It is with such terms that Lacan occasionally treats the object. For example, Hitler's moustache can function as object (a), giving satisfaction to subjects who idealize his moustache. The ego ideal can allow the idealization of aggressivity. Freud uses the relation to the hypnotist to demonstrate the subject's relation to the ego ideal. The hypnotist *is* the ego ideal, he says. He is focusing on the symbolic value of the ego ideal to the detriment of this external object he has planted in his schema.<sup>[4]</sup> There are many consequences stemming from the relation to the ego ideal. Freud provides us with two of them in the hypnotic relation: humble subjection and the sapping of the subject's own initiative (1921, p. 114). In his graph, Freud isolates the behavior of the individual to the leader, which, at least according to him, justifies the hypothesis that the hypnotic relation is a group formation with two members in which sexual satisfaction is excluded. Such a formulation brings it much closer to the structure of a psychoanalytic session. We glean the logic that determines the end of an analysis, a devaluation of the ego ideal. It is a step in the direction of not belonging, i.e., not

belonging to the group with two members. This is more to Lacan's taste, and he says what has to happen. The analyst has to fall from his place in the ambience of the ego ideal, which leaves the object (a) to separate:  $I + (a) \rightarrow \quad + (a)$ . Where would the analyst's desire fit into this schema? Transference is not dominant when the analyst is no longer in the place of the ego ideal. The analyst's desire brings demand back to drive, sweeping away ideals to cross the plane of identification. This is the trajectory towards absolute difference. What becomes of the subject who experiences his opaque relation to the drive? We don't know, according to Lacan (1964, p. 273). Absolute difference involves a structural change at the termination of an analytic treatment, progressing from the narcissism of no differences to the narcissism of minor differences, and terminating in absolute difference, narcissism's absence. Absolute difference is outside the field of ideals and, according to Freud's graph, outside the field of belonging as well. It is intimately imbricated in the body, and to the ego as body-ego, while nevertheless remaining external to it. This shows the topology of extimacy.<sup>[5]</sup> It will tell us a little more about structure on terminating an analytic treatment. The drive is going to be managed – not by the strong ego – but by a *savoir faire* with the *sinthome*.

In Freud's fourth essay in *Totem and Taboo*, he quotes Frazer. The principal totem (which is the clan totem) represents the entire clan, and it passes in inheritance to the entire clan (Freud 1913, p. 103). In its religious aspect – identificatory omnipotence – the totem gives the subject protection, and the subject has a relation of respect to the totem. The totem functions as an ego ideal for the clan member. All the men and women of the clan put the same totem in the place of the ego ideal and Lacan calls this a signifier. This identification has hierarchical effects. Between the totem and the subject in bondage to it, there is a dissymmetry. This contrasts with the clan members among whom relations are symmetrical. This identification allows "relations of the clansmen to each other and to men of other clans" (p. 104).

The ego ideal introduces dissymmetrical relations among the egos, establishing a dialectic of symmetry/dissymmetry. This has effects of minor differences. Why would it be "narcissism" of minor differences and not just minor differences? The ego ideal is a symbolic agency representing rules. It is a paternal ideal and represents the rules of the Father. It reaches deeply into imaginary relations of the egos. In Schema R, the paternal ideal functions along the broken line of the left-hand side of the Schema up to the phallic signifier, which is the only signifier that Lacan thought had to be imaginary. The broken line represents the relation between I and  $\phi$  as imaginary. The relation between P (*père*) and I is depicted as a solid line representing a symbolic function. The ideal is the pivot point between the imaginary and the symbolic. In Schema R, Lacan shows how a symbolic function rules over an imaginary one, and why Freud calls it narcissism of minor differences (Lacan 1957-1958, p. 462).

The question of the symbolic is key. What makes something symbolic is not necessarily its place in a religious hierarchy. The symbolic does not require the Father to support it. What counts at the level of the symbolic are differences, distinctions, differentials. We have to fall back on de Saussure: "...in language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms" (1915, p. 120). We have to consider the signifier separately. If we introduce the linguistic sign with its signifier and signified, we have a positive term: "But the statement that everything in language is negative is true only if the

signified and the signifier are considered separately; when we consider the sign in its totality, we have something that is positive in its own class" (1915, p. 120). De Saussure maintains that an excessive homological effect makes the existence of language impossible. Lacan claims that the only definition he gave to the signifier is based on the principle of difference between signifiers: the signifier represents the subject to another signifier. Between "one" signifier and "another" signifier, there is a signifying difference.<sup>[6]</sup>

Freud spots linguistic value in the nominalist theory of another anthropologist, Lang. Lang considers that the necessity for differentiation compels the clans to adopt names in order to differentiate themselves from one another.<sup>[7]</sup> The proper name provides such a difference, but a positive one. Moreover, proper names are a function of the ego ideal. When you call your son "Max" because his Uncle Max died years ago, it is obviously an Ideal function. The Ideal function is necessary to belonging, and one requirement is a name. One waits for one Max to die before using the name again so as to maintain difference. This does not have a symmetrical effect (narcissism of no differences) but a dissymmetrical effect (narcissism of minor differences). The former effect has to be registered as imaginary and the latter as symbolic.

Four years after *Totem and Taboo*, Freud became enthralled with an anthropologist called Crawley. Crawley describes a taboo against oral *jouissance* among the Bakairi (Brazil) where every man eats by himself. In Bakairi tradition, when one eats in the presence of the other, it is the custom to do so with head averted, while the other turns his back and does not speak till the meal is over. When by accident one is seen eating, those who observe him as well as the one eating experience shame (Crawley 1902, p. 123). Crawley argues that each individual is separated from the others by a taboo of personal isolation (p. 124). The personal isolation lasts only as long as it takes to eat. Crawley translates the taboo of personal isolation as a taboo against physical contact. Avoidance of physical contact while eating is the taboo. It is the taboo of physical contact that leads secondarily to a certain avoidance behavior, which is then called personal isolation. Here the taboo of physical contact is at the level of the oral drive, the secondary effect of which is personal isolation. Here the oral object does not belong in the scene, just as the object in Freud's graph is outside the scene, extimate to it.

Freud describes this "taboo of personal isolation" as the minor differences between people who are otherwise alike. Between the signifier (taboo) and the object (a) (food), the effect is feelings of strangeness and hostility between them (Freud 1918, p. 199). The specular, symmetrical relations among the Bakairi are disrupted by eating and replaced by affects of strangeness and hostility. It is Freud who calls it the narcissism of minor differences. A drive producing these differences interferes with narcissism. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the narcissism of minor differences does not have an effect of strangeness and hostility between people but of a harmless satisfaction of our aggressive impulse that aids social cohesion (Freud 1930, p. 114). In my opinion, there is a little more than just an inclination to aggression. It seems to me that Freud is emphasizing the signifier rather than the drive. Crawley, however, is using the notion of personal isolation to indicate the presence of the drive, and the drive is not on the side of social cohesion. Were we to translate what Crawley is describing among the Bakairi into Freud's second topology, we would have the ego vs. id. Food is a drive object that obviously does not support social cohesion among the Bakairi. Food, however, is not necessarily a drive object in the Western world. Otherwise, there would be no dinner parties, often used to support

social cohesion. Food becomes a drive object when it is too much or too little. For the Bakairi, food is a drive object that causes shame.

Crawley's contribution is on the side of absolute difference, which is that difference between the ideal signifier and the drive object. Freud prefers to take Crawley's contribution as an ideal notion, whereas Crawley is concerned with what we now call drive. The taboo of physical contact is introduced under the heading of the psychology of disgust connected to the nutritive and sexual functions. Food, he says, can be one of man's fiercest desires, and the excreta from food produce the strongest loathing. Crawley calls it a primary nutritive impulse. It is not an ego ideal, but what we call the oral and anal drives. Disgust is correlative to satiety, that is, "too much," and is the opposite of desire and satisfaction. The fear of causing desire and disgust in others results, according to Crawley, in personal isolation (Crawley 1902, pp. 121-122). One takes this personal isolation as an effect of the drive as well as a defense against it, averting one's head, turning one's back. In this case, it seems that the subject experiences himself as identified with the drive object; you are what you eat.

For Lacan, the Other is proximate to the other. The signifier of the ego ideal is extended to the purest moment of the specular relation. In other words, the symbolic is extended to the purest moment of the imaginary. What is the purest moment of the imaginary? It is the infant's behavior at six months when placed in front of a mirror, which Lacan described in his 1949 paper. The baby gesticulates with great delight recognizing his image in the mirror and identifying with it jubilantly (Lacan 1949, pp. 75-76). The image of the little other or *i(a)* is made to sound like a species-specific trigger of identification. Not much at all happens to an infant propped up in front of the mirror. The child has to be persuaded that the image belongs to him. The scene in front of the mirror has changed. The child turns toward the person who is carrying him, appealing with a look to this witness who verifies the child's image in the mirror, says Lacan (1960, p. 568). This way the image is libidinally invested by a signifier that passes into the image. The signifier structures, stabilizes, and guarantees the image. Such an image belongs to a little subject who will one day participate in the push to social cohesion via an ego ideal. Lacan gives the ego ideal a matheme:  $I(A)$ . Of this Ideal one cannot always say where the symbolic ends and the imaginary begins.

Why towards the end of his career does Lacan use the example of Joyce as someone whose psychical structure is the best that can be expected from an analytic treatment at its end? Joyce never had a psychoanalysis of any kind, and, moreover, Lacan thinks his structure is psychotic. The secret must lie in the fact of his psychosis. What is the relation between the mad person and the termination of a psychoanalysis? Two quotes from Lacan are illuminating in this regard:

You will recall that a certain well-meaning "mass-in-hate" offered him a psychoanalysis, as one might a shower. And what's more, with Jung...<sup>[8]</sup>

From the play we are referring to he would have stood to have gained nothing, making straight thither for the best that can be expected from psychoanalysis at its end (1971, p. 11).

If Joyce is psychotic, one has to suppose that he is a psychotic with a strong subjective position. "It's a fact that Joyce chooses to be, like me, a heretic" (Lacan 1975-1976, p. 15). The heretic is no longer reading from the point of the old ego ideal. He or she becomes a heretical reader of scripture, a wrong interpreter. Heretics lose their right to belong to the community. They are excommunicated. The heretic no longer puts one and the same object in the place of his ego ideal as his former fellow postulants do; rather, he restructures his ego ideal. Lacan offers us his heresy, one of them, in any case. It is a Joycean pun, he says, and it dephallicizes all men who claim to be descended from Adam and Eve: "Adam was a Madam" (Lacan 1975-1976, p. 13). Jacques Aubert can't find the joke in Joyce's writings in quite the form the pun is found in Seminar XXIII. He does, however, find in *Ulysses* the following: "Madam, I am Adam" (Lacan 1975-1976, p. 190). When Lacan read "Madam, I am Adam," a palindrome, I suspect that he had already made his own pun out of it. That Adam has become a transsexual is, I think, a heresy that would leave Adam without descendants. A supreme and hilarious irony as well suggests that the Name-of-the-Father was not operating in the Garden of Eden. Between the heretic, Joyce, and his former compatriots exists an absolute difference. Before, he was one citizen among others, although he never was quite that. It is an assumption that the moment of Joyce's heresy is the trigger of his psychosis. After Joyce's heresy, he acquires a unique status as an atypical citizen. We return here to our earlier invocation of John of Salisbury's linguistic theory: from universalia to singularia, or from one among the others to the one all alone. For the one all alone, is there nothing to belong to? Lacan shows how the personal isolation of a heretic, as *le sinthome*, can be a creation.

There are other reasons to turn to Joyce. Joyce has no desire to perfect the social world, an often tyrannical aim. He positions himself against the tyranny of the British Empire and of the Roman Empire as reabsorbed by Christianity. His Leopold Bloom stands against the racism inherent in the notion of Gaelic purity. It has to be Joyce that Lacan chooses because he extracts no enjoyment (*jouissance*) from common sense. For Joyce, no metaphor proceeds from "I am the way," "I am the light." These only lead to tyranny. Psychoanalysis cannot be political without this principle.

Joyce is the atypical citizen. Where Irish independence is in question, Joyce equates the British Empire with the Roman Empire insofar as it was absorbed by the Church. In making this equivalence, he absolutely does not belong to the Ireland of his time. He wonders whether it is worthwhile ridding Ireland of the yoke of the British Empire while it is still weighed down by that of the Roman. At the same time, from his exile, Joyce still clings to Dublin, interrogating his Irish visitors about precise geographical details, pestering them mercilessly for information about Ireland. He either cannot give up his sense of belonging or it is all done for his art, *Ulysses*. He writes to Nora Barnacle in 1904: "I cannot enter the social order except as a vagabond." Joyce has put absolute difference between himself and his former fellow citizens. The heresy that Lacan imputes to Joyce is not far from our consideration of Freud himself. In a conversation with Reik, Freud spoke of himself as an outsider and of no longer belonging (Reik 1942, pp. 37, 119). Psychoanalysis has a tradition of non-belonging inscribed at its origins.

Margaret Drabble's survey of English literature shows how the colonized appropriate the colonizer's language. The colonized exercise their art in the colonizer's language with subversive intent.<sup>[9]</sup> This permits the appropriation of the colonizer's language while maintaining

absolute difference by way of sublimation. Joyce surely fits the bill for subversive use of the colonizer's language. He makes use of stream of consciousness, as a flight of ideas, making the colonizer's language a stream of enjoyment. He makes a litter the letter. This is a modern social bond, which has litter at its foundations. Joyce's libidinal stream became his *sinthome*, and his *sinthome* was his art. Putting Drabble with Freud, Freud's doctrine in its entirety becomes an attempt to subvert the colonizer's language, for which he was awarded the Goethe Prize. Lacan turns to Joyce to consider structure at the end of an analysis insofar as it involves sublimation and construction. Could we say this is a post-colonial end to an analytic treatment?

### Endnotes

[1] This comes from the logic of Gottlob Frege and J.S. Mill. Linguistic expressions bear a meaning. Denotation is the object to which the expression refers. For instance, the morning star and evening star have different meanings. The morning star is the bright object in the morning in the eastern sky. The evening star is found in the western sky in the evening. But both the morning star and the evening star denote the planet Venus. We could also say that meaning varies, and the object does not vary. The star in question will always have two meanings and one reference. To stop the wobbling in meaning is the same thing as fixing the reference. J.S. Mill uses what he calls singular terms to refer to proper names, specific objects and general objects.

[2] The enigmatic experience at the onset of a psychosis was noted by many French and German psychiatrists in the first third of the last century. Nevertheless, the loss of identifications is what creates absolute difference at the end of an analysis. Jasmine might not recommend it. But she does not have a strong subjective position.

[3] I think heresy involves separation from an old Ideal, that is, separation from the desire of the big Other, various constructions, sublimations which in Lacan's views do not exclude the sexual and a rereading of the orthodox texts, the latter most important in the construction of the *sinthome*. Any subject who wishes to create a psychoanalytic heresy, we would wish that the latter had a fine grip on Freud's texts. I don't think they always do. Freud did, of course, create an establishment, or Jones did. However his texts have never created an establishment. There is instability in those texts. It will also be difficult to create a theory without a theory of the signifier and of a subjective topology.

[4] Of course, Freud knows something about this aggressivity in the same locus as the ego ideal. Otherwise he would not have sunk the ego ideal into another concept, the *superego*.

[5] Any body-event wherever it is experienced will dominate in the 1970s.

[6] I have myself not yet come across any psychoanalytic writer interested in the assertion that everything in language is negative and its effects on the *Verneinung*.

[7] Freud (1913), p. 112, where Freud cites the writer as Lang, 1905, pp. 125ff.

[8] Editor's note: Klein is citing Lacan's seminar on Joyce. The French "mécène" is homophonic in French with Messe=mass, and haine=hate. He is playing on the analyst's hallowed position and clearly poking fun at its uselessness.

[9] The Oxford Companion to English Literature, edited by Margaret Drabble, Oxford University Press, 1998; see under post-colonial literature.

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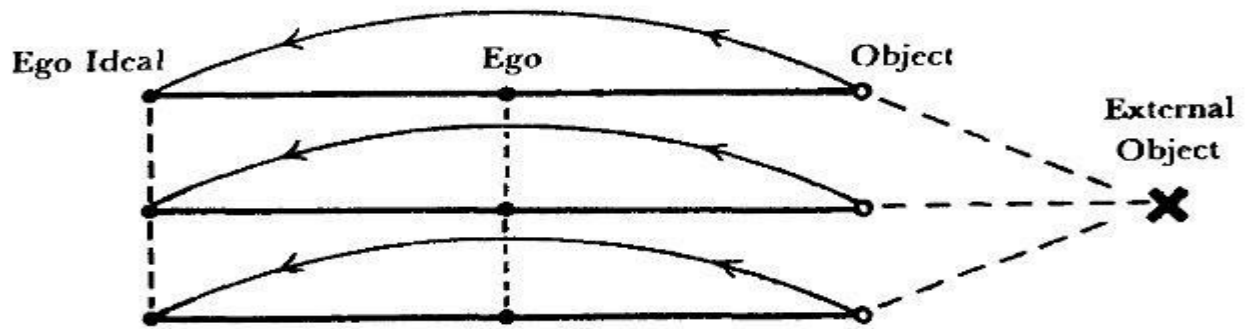
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Appendix  
Freud's "Graph"



From: Freud, S. (1921). Group psychology and the analysis of the ego. *Standard Edition* 18:65-143.

## Unclassifiable How to Symbolically Kill a Father-Child

Martine Fourré, PhD

*Ce n'est pas tellement du meurtre du père qu'il s'agit que de sa castration.<sup>[1]</sup>*

*La castration relaie de fait comme lien au père ce qui dans  
chaque discours se connote de virilité.<sup>[2]</sup>*

This formulation strictly follows an imaginary institutionalization (Castoriadis 1975) of the Modern era in the West, one that may not apply to the other social and cultural contexts where psychoanalysis is practiced today.

In 1999, I began teaching, influenced and inspired by the experience of my expatriation to Africa. In *Le deuil de l'Autre* (2002), I quoted Lacan who talked about “[les] conditions sociales de l'oedipisme” (Lacan 1966, p. 136) – “the social conditions of Oedipism” – when, as early as 1950, he depicted the decline of paternal authority. I will reformulate a definition of Oedipus to put an end to the futile infatuation with the question of whether Oedipus was universal or not, illustrated in two well-known books, *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari 1972) and *African Oedipus* (Ortigue & Ortigue 1966).

### Lessons from Africa

In Africa, the individual is not an entity separated from others as he is often thought of in the West. Rather, the individual is thought of as a composite of “beings,” and is partly defined by the animal, the totem, the djinn, and the rab, as well as a host of other divine ancestors. In one of his texts, Riesman (1988-1989) presents a study on *La notion de personne en Afrique noire* [*The Concept of Person in Sub-Saharan Africa*], where he sums up the differences in the imaginary and symbolic reference points between our two civilizations. Riesman conveys the experience of confusion in the immersion in places where the meaning and use of words that concern the body, thought, parentage, affiliation, and even social laws are so different. For me, the discomfort was so profound that I found it necessary to take a fresh look at myself and rethink the world I came from, and in so doing, reveal that my notion of “common meaning” was far more context-derived than I had previously considered (Collomb & Collignon 1974; Dieterlen 1973; Diop 2000; Fortes 1989; Ortigue & Ortigue 1966; Ortigue 2004; Rabain 1979; Zempleni & Rabain 1965; Kaufmant 2007).

While I had intellectually anticipated and considered this contrast of cultures, experiencing it called for more careful reformulation: If Oedipus is a universal fact constituted by the entrance of subjects, one by one, into the discourse of their respective languages, which in turn informs and impacts the drives, as well as the subjects' sexuality and their affiliations, the actual or specific form in which Oedipus is broached in different languages, countries and parts of the world (the Other that legitimizes the imaginary and symbolic social bond) has nothing universal about it. The representation of the legitimizing Other often differs from one culture to another. Oedipus thus depends on the un-thought encounters of a subject with the signifiers of his personal and social history, as well as those of his historical moment, even with the unlikely

encounter of a society in a constant state of reconstruction with the individuals that comprise and produce it.

In the West, for the most part, the father is this Other. He is the carrier of Oedipus, the legitimate guarantor of speech, which he introduces to the child. In West Africa, it is brothers, and the community at large, who perform that function. In this society, the imaginary register is not centered around the punitive function incarnated in the Roman *paterfamilias*. Here, brotherhood and sharing, and the non-dissolution of the group are the principal tenets of the process of relatedness and social mores. Finally, apart from the father-carrier, the guarantor of the lineage is the village chief or sorcerer, the guardian of the world of ancestors. More often than not, biological parents are figures the child shares life with unconditionally and figures he respects, more as a function of their age than as a function of authority that, in Western culture, derives from castration fear and the parents' assertion of privacy.

So, Africa has taught me (Collomb 1977) that contrary to our lamentations on the shortcomings of fathers – bemoaning the absence or waning of the father's authority – the forms and vehicles of the subject's Oedipal confrontations can vary across cultures and across subjective choices. The subjective choice can include a Western-type father figure, which might be atypical within the family culture, or may involve brothers, groups, or other formations that do not include the typical features considered in the West as canonically Oedipal.

### Lessons from Treatments

Inspired by the arts and crafts I received from the children in clinical treatment in Dakar (Fourré 2012), I became similarly receptive to the "crafts" of my patients. Several came to be cured of inhibitions,<sup>[3]</sup> humiliations, failures, and complaints about having no place in the world. However, spared of feelings of persecution and guilt, they did not feel responsible for their situation. All of them were between cultures: Europeans in Africa, Africans trained in Europe, and Anglophones, a trait shared in common with me, a psychoanalyst who was herself between two cultures. Still, I was surprised by the strange relation to the father, known to me by its function in Western culture, understood by psychoanalysis as a non-expressed sign of discontent with civilization. This encounter led me to reread Lacan.

As early as 1938, Lacan perceived the aloofness of the authoritarian father, his imaginary cohort of lawless children, and his appeal to the legislative function. Lacan directed his teachings beyond such pseudo-realities, particularly in the case of psychosis, where he considered the father figure as involved, but less as a person than as "*nom-du-non*" ("name-of-no"), a role he plays in obstructing enjoyment for the mother figure.

Lacan appears to discard the father himself, the structure of his desire, and his pleasure, as a figure involved in the psychic development of the child. This does not at all mean that he did not put forward a few hypotheses about fathers, especially as they relate to psychosis. But he always abandoned them in the name of preventing imaginary reductions of his conceptualizations (Lacan 1975). Thus, Lacan was less concerned with fathers than with the roles that "father" played in what the patient said.

In Seminar III (1955-1956), Lacan elaborates the problem of the differences between types of fathers. He says: "*L'aliénation est ici radicale, elle (la psychose) n'est pas liée à un signifiant néantisant comme dans un certain mode de relation rivalitaire avec le père, mais à un anéantissement du signifiant*" [Alienation is radical here, the psychosis is not linked to a negating signifier used in the service of rivalry with the father, rather it is related to an annihilation of meaning/signification]. Thus, in addition to the model of father who is the subject of rivalry, Lacan introduces a notion of father as annihilator of meaning, where rivalry does not function in the standard Oedipal configuration; rather, the rivalry is necessary so as to avoid being annihilated (by him).

Being negated by the father, we find the inhibition and humiliation invoked by analysands. But Lacan does not describe a specific, logical process that explains how the father, considered to be the carrier of the signifiers that are experienced as annihilating, would impose this on his children. Instead, he considers that these fathers, in the position of paragons of law, are systematically on the side of those who incite the *forced choice* of psychosis (1974-1975, p. 108), as Schreber's father did.

Lacan also describes other father figures: the father of little Hans as a wishy-washy mother (Seminar 1957-06-19); Hamlet's two fathers, one idealized, the other despised (Seminar VI, 1958-59); Leonardo da Vinci's father, a dream-father (Seminar 1957-07-03), Don Juan's father who was nowhere to be found (Seminar 1957-07-03); and Joyce's father, a drunkard (Seminar 1975-11-18). But his focus is always on determining the coordinates of the father in the unconscious and how his role generates ideas about fathers there. Lacan is also concerned with the way that the father is presented by the mother and thought about by the child, not as an abstract conception of what the father should be, but rather through the relationally-lived experience, as mediated by the mother.

At this level of analysis, all fathers are equal in Lacan's view because he conceives of them as:

*"une carence... dont la répartition ne laisse pas d'inquiéter: le père tonnant, le père débonnaire, le père tout puissant, le père humilié, le père engoncé, le père dérisoire, le père au ménage, le père en vadrouille."* [an absence/gap which, in its distribution causes no worry: [as] the booming father, the good-humored father, the all-powerful father, the humiliated father, the cramped father, the insignificant father, the stay-at-home father, the wandering father] (1966, p. 578).

The father's imaginary phallic presence in the mother's discourse constitutes the versions of father in the desire of the Other.

The term "absent" always seems to be reduced to an enumeration of flaws and fears related to the fact that these men do not use the phallic, virile power of the *paterfamilias*. Here there is an analysis of the interaction between the child and the designated *man-father* in his life, whether it is a choice or not and whether socially legitimate or not.

### Absent Fathers

If we take an extra step in this direction – what do we learn? What questions do these do-it-themselves (i.e., without parents) patients raise with their complaints of being overwhelmed and of their inhibitions? They act before agreeing, and fleeing transference without saying anything about it, they seek their own place in the world without being able to find it, a potential place beside a father they want to be potent but who they simultaneously disown and reject, extrapolating from their confusion between castrated and absent, virile and potent.

Michou, who has been in treatment for five years, is continuously returned to parental *jouissance* by his dreams. Awake, he pictures himself at the end of a corridor, exposing his nude erection to his parents, who are stunned and happy to watch him. He explains that he had to flee Europe, where there was no place for his desire; he lived as if dead, aspiring to a success that he attributes to riding the coattails of a “designated” mother, but in which he feels his life withering, his existence dissolving. His desire to live is a hope that degrades him. As an international senior civil servant with enviable professional success, he attempts to fill the emptiness of his world on a quest for an infantile love he knows to be transgressive. Always on the brink of pedophilic tendencies, fear allows him to limit himself. Because of this, he does not act; he says he does not need it: “These beautiful young boys are my living image through the eyes of my parents: a lonely little boy without any other place in their lives of great moralizing.” Fortunately, his parents sent him abroad to the scouts, the only place where, beginning at age ten, he felt dynamic, active, and able to exit the family circle, but also where most unexpectedly these kinds of (pedophilic) attractions began. He never spoke of his father except to say that he was never around, not available to him or anyone else, not limited by him; he was confronted with nothingness.

To clarify his history: more than his relationship to his mother, who he clearly described as engulfed in a depression that tirelessly tied him to her, it is the relationship to his father that is most real to him, precisely because of his father’s complete absence from his life. In this total impossibility of any encounter with his father, he cannot fantasize about the desire of his mother, who says nothing about the absence of his father, making him wonder if she is even aware of it. His father absolutely dominates the signification of his unbridled sexual pleasure, becoming present only in it – likely akin to his depressed mother’s desire – but he is only able to approach this desire through his ideological conviction of the perfect man. Michou the child knows these are lies. He knows everything even though he can’t think about it. As a subject of desire, this father has no place in his speech, except in a few rare passages, through more coerced words. So, despite the symbolic separation coming from his mother, which he accepts – “Leave me alone, I’m tired” – he always finds himself in front of or in an unnamable absence: to be that little boy for whom she has dreams of satisfaction that his father does not fulfill. This father is absent and this absence appears less through the imaginary qualities attributed to his absence than through the real absence he protects his son from, but which the son nevertheless understands: that of his sexual deviations. Alone in no-man’s land, far from his mother’s words, restricting himself to experience some of his father’s pleasure, Michou does not stray; rather, he tirelessly seeks to satisfy the desire of the loving Other, which, if successful, could remove his inhibitions and allow him to go and meet the world. So, the son cannot recognize his father as such, insofar as the latter is so bogged down in his own enjoyment that he could not bear feeling the inadequacy

necessary to allow him to want to meet his son. Michou knows his father would die from that. So he does not approach his father, tacitly agreeing to be left at the entrance to a world that is strange to him, even stranger to him than his father is; it is inaccessible. This is his son's judgment, an unconscious vantage point to inhabit where he sees without seeing what cannot be reduced to the fantasy of the desire of the mother for a husband, a vision of his father that is not impossible to imagine, but is inaccessible at risk of death. But, it is impossible to symbolically kill this non-castrated father, as it is mentally overwhelming to never answer for one's actions. As a result, his real death, and not his symbolic death, is the ultimate solution, an unthinkable hypothesis, which puts the subject in an impossible situation.

Although Little Hans's father shows his shortcomings by not being in a position to answer his son's questions, he is present and available. Joyce's father does not care about his son, leaving him in a situation where he deals with the maternal signifiers, excluded from all forms of paternal support. After separating from his mother, Michou's father leaves his son in a void, crushed by the negating signifiers and discourses of his father's sexual flight and moral lies, where Michou is made to be the specular double of this man whose infantile pleasure leaves his son speechless. Michou is inhibited from acting on his desires and is left with a semi-conscious pull toward this infantile sexuality, leaving him on a quest to realize his desire in the eroticized child that he was as the object of his father's pleasure.

Pola Kinski (2013), the German actress, tells with panic how her father raped her for about 15 years, because he considered her "his little doll."

*Dans sa manière de penser et de ressentir, il n'y a rien que lui...* [In his way of thinking and feeling, there is nothing or no one but him] (p. 205).

*Bien qu'il ait détruit le peu de choses qui m'appartenaient, qu'aucun millimètre de moi-même ne m'appartienne encore... j'ai réussi à dissimuler cette photo (de ma mère).* [Although he destroyed the few things that belonged to me, no inch of myself belongs to me anymore... [but] I have managed to hide this photo (of my mother)] (p. 218).

She is less haunted by his sexual touching and more by what it stood for: she, as a subject of proper desire, has no place by his side. Two motives keep her alive: first, the will to resist, despite the paradox of being a prisoner of his pleasure; then, to show that she exists by running away once and for all, to break up with him: "*à la recherche de son âme*" [in search of her soul].

To listen to them, we are going to consider three benchmarks.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Figuring the Father Out: Three Benchmarks**

First, we must concern ourselves with the formation of the fantasy in these cases of neuroses. The father, in his function – the father as such – cannot acquire the imaginary characteristics of a signifying chain, or the subject's oneiric play. This is because the father saturates the signifying space in the Other, where the desiring subject tries to find himself. This saturation is expressed by Lacan's phrase: "*signifiant néantisant*" ("nullifying signifier"), that is

to say, a Master Signifier (S1=S2) by which the subject is nullified, inhibited, or mistaken for the father-child. Fantasy is not invested with imagination when the father is too present, as in Kinski's case, or else, as is the case with Alexandre Jardin (2013), the subject is overwhelmed by imagination because the father is never present. In both cases, it is hard to perceive an object of desire, to snatch an object from this grip, because these fathers, who saturate the space in the Other with a too-real phallic nothingness, or total presence, force the subject into a constant search for him. This search becomes a real amputation of the part "father," taken from the subject's own body (and can include scarifications and other tattoos, and even diseases) as a way of widening the emptiness to signifiers.

The second concern regarding these fathers is separation, which appears as a breach, allowing the subject symbolic elaboration of his capture by the Other. Knowing that he has been castrated, there is no other solution than to elaborate upon his deadly relations to paternal pleasure, which is a paradox insofar as it is at the same time a quest for the recognition of a legitimate father the subject can accept and listen to.

These cases teach us that the legitimate outcry of a father is not enough; the subject still has to be legitimately acceptable in society by him. The tragedy of these subjects is to always cross-examine the very legitimacy they are so eagerly looking for, and even to destroy it, except if they themselves accept the deprivation that the father did not, a privation they consider necessary for their lives. If this does not happen, death will catch up, in the same way it did with Sandor Ferenczi (1932) or Guillaume Depardieu (2014), and so many others.

The third and final benchmark concerning these subjects and the father is about the symbolic ways they invent their appeal to the father, in the transference to their analyst and to discourse in general.

In *Mes trois zèbres* (2013), Alexandre Jardin talks about his inhibitions, his quest for a beyond-the-father; he also talks about stifled ease. About Sacha Guitry, he writes:

*"... il avait imité Lucien (Guitry) parce qu'il ne pouvait pas se passer de sa présence ... il se l'était incorporé en imagination ... j'ai moi-même aussi dépensé une passion extrême à ressusciter par écrit mon père. Absence incomblable ... l'imagination est ce qui tend à devenir réel ... je n'ai survécu à ce drame absolu – la rupture d'un lien vital fusionnel – qu'en continuant à faire vivre le personnage éblouissant de mon papa grâce à ma plume."* [...he had imitated Lucien (Guitry) because he could not do without his presence...he was part of himself in his imagination...I myself have spent too much mental energy trying to resurrect my father through my writings. An inconsolable absence. Imagination refers to all that yearns to come true. I have only survived this absolute tragedy – the breaking of an intensely close and vital tie – by continuing to bring to life the dazzling figure that my father was, with my pen] (pp. 102-103).

Let us put it more clearly: because he did not have a father, he himself was that very father. However, he was no fool; he knew that he was cheating his own truth, and that in his



enjoyment of that absolute Other, who was dead, he was misleading himself. "*Cet homme empêché qui me navre*" [That forcibly prevented man upsets me] (p. 74). So, as an act, the book records his quest for, and encounter with, a castrated father –who, as a result of the writing, is symbolically dead. This is like those historical figures whose very historical reality has allowed them to become fallible, and as a result, acceptable and legitimate. As a historical and symbolic figure, the father becomes castrated and is no longer a threatening emptiness.

Jardin testifies, like the hero of Steven Spielberg's "Catch Me If You Can" (2002), that in his breaches or flights that create an edgeless world, the subject resorts to the law, less for the limits that the law can impose on him than for the flaws inherent in the law. It is this imperfection in the law that stands in for the absent words of the Other and allows for castration. Contesting and opening breaches and gaps in the contradictory certainties of discourse is not an empty word or a gaping void, but the site of a true desire. His unconscious knows that this work depends on him, on his own castration, and this worries him. Like Jardin, he inhibits this movement more often than not; he is guilty of becoming, by way of it, the father of his own father, giving shape to his life, and to life in the larger sense of the word, i.e., "*s'auto-cr  er ouvertement*" (Jardin 2013, p. 149) – to openly create oneself. As Michou says: total inhibition – "I always have a good excuse *not to* live by my desire" – to flee from being the double of my father-child and of my depressive mother.

To become subjects at this crossroads in their lives, these beings have to face the ethical requirement that consists of finding again the emptiness filled up by the enjoyment of a father-child, as though he is not to be blamed, and he does not have to grow up himself. These fathers also have to stop demanding their wives be absolute, flawless mothers. To become subjects, the children of these couples have to resort to their fathers while not imposing an unbearable castration on them, nor can they kill them by imposing an emptiness they cannot bear. In this regard, Jardin says about Guity: "*La loi ne le concernera jamais*" [The law will never concern him] (p. 84). As a son, he makes it clear for himself: "*Je ne suis pas hors-la-loi – je n'en ai ni le courage ni les ardeurs – mais un loin de la loi... Elle ne m'inspire aucun d  sir, ne me vivifie pas*". [I am not an outlaw – I have neither the courage nor the ardor – But I am far from the law... It does not inspire any desire in me; it does not invigorate me] (p. 84). As a matter of fact, if the law did not concern his father, he himself was nevertheless spared by it. The law did not provide the vigor of an openness onto desire that it could have had in a more simple neurosis not marked by such paternal peculiarity.

No matter the structure of the desire they have "chosen," these subjects know that the law pacifies the only emptiness that articulates it to desire, but the access is complicated for them, hence their varied achievements.

### Unclassifiable

All these beings who spend their lives looking for their doubles rarely find them. They are still caught up in the urgent necessity to be seen and recognized by the world. In place of the father, should the world give them the recognition they deserve? Should the trap close around issues of symbolization? Overcoming their inhibitions consists of acting on their emptiness, by targeting what is not thought of until it becomes thinkable, and finally recognizable, in place of

the Other. They become unclassifiable, regardless of the laws they learn to abide by in order to modify them, or to do without them. They use these laws as their *too-absolute* and strange *name-of-the-father*.

When they attain the truth of their desire, these unclassifiable subjects become budding nonconformists, true nuisances, revolutionaries without revolt, hard-working inventors who are completely mistaken, but who are not so mad. Because African culture does not produce such loopholes, its discontent is that of sibling jealousy. I have understood the way the father's authority in Roman law had, right from the start, produced fathers without limits, and ultimately edgeless and unclassifiable children. Can we see the anchorite as a paradigmatic figure of such unclassifiable subjects, the *sine qua non* of civilization's certainties, a recourse to silence that leaves open the stream of signifiers? These patients made me realize that beyond the void of their lost fathers, other social as well as individual father figures are invented every day in our world in which administration – a function that conceals civilian identities – can be a path of negotiation despite its blindness.

The administrative function is not without consequence on the psychoanalyst's praxis with people of all ages and psychic structures. This praxis teaches us to pay attention to the subject in his grappling with the representative(s) of the paternal role and the way he questions and invents for himself. It also teaches us the necessity of deciphering the social issues at stake in the new paths of Oedipus invented on the basis of these encounters. In the current affairs of our societies, where and how, and for what ethical hope, do subjects seek psychoanalysts?

As psychoanalysts, we are expected to welcome in life, in our schools, in our practice these subjects and their inventions to ease the autocratic tensions that engendered the history of Oedipus and psychoanalysis in Europe. On the social side, it is the way psychoanalysis is able to be accepted as part of everyday life: psychoanalysis makes a space, and serves as a crucible of invention of space-to-be, paths of Oedipus whose nonsense keeps us occupied, lending to the 21<sup>st</sup> century discontent of these hollow fathers, the creation of figures that are always renewed afresh, opened towards a breathable world, a world that we recreate again and again, differently.

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#### Endnotes

[1] Lacan, J. (1976-1977). Séminaire XXIV: L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre. Lesson March 13, 1977. "It is less about the murder of the father than about his castration."

[2] Lacan, J. (1973). L'étourdit, in *Scilicet* no. 4, Paris: Seuil, p. 16. "As a bond to the father, castration de facto takes over from that which connotes virility in each discourse."

[3] On this point, I refer to the distinction made by Freud between inhibition and symptom in the first chapter of *Inhibition, symptôme et angoisse* (1926; Paris: PUF, 1951): "An inhibition can therefore be also a symptom. Consequently, the terminology used is about inhibition, in the case of a mere diminution of the function, and also about symptom, when it comes to an unusual modification of this function, or to a new type of functioning" (p.1). "In this respect, any in-hibition (reference to castration anxiety) that the self imposes on itself can also be called symptom" (p. 69).

<sup>[4]</sup> The pun is lost in translation. Repères means benchmarks, in the original as re-pères, playing on père as father.

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## Group Psychology and the Violence of the Non-State Actor Today

Juliet Flower MacCannell, PhD

Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* provides a template for analyzing the recent emergence of violence by non-state actors, e.g., terrorists. In Freud's view, in "artificial groups," there is an absence of the regression to immoderation and lack of emotional restraint found in ordinary or common groups – mobs. The author analyzes the structure inherent to these types of groups for the light it may shed on contemporary artificial groups such as ISIL and the violence towards those outside them that they generate.

Sigmund Freud, in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), notes that alongside "common groups" (which conservatives label "herds," "mobs" or "masses"), there exist other groups – "artificial groups" such as armies, bureaucracies, and churches where the regression to earlier mental activity that marks common groups (e.g., immoderation and lack of emotional restraint) can "to a large extent be checked." Artificial groups make moral demands on their members that exceed those of ordinary social censorship and condemnation (Freud 1921, p. 117). Such groups handle the eternal conflict between individual impulses and the demands for ethical conduct in a way that seems to attenuate it: they are remarkable for the harmony among their members, who willingly comply with the group's demands for conformity to behavioral, dress and ethical codes that go well beyond the norms required for ordinary social co-existence. (These groups, Freud notes, are the first to prohibit all forms of sexual activities and to eliminate all gender distinction in their rules (Freud 1921, pp. 140-141). Corporations, armies and churches frequently demand subordinating sexuality – as behaviors and as specific gender identifications – to the military's, church's or company's needs.)

The artificial group is neither a mob nor a complex society, but a strange amalgam. It is peculiarly marked by the unexpected absence of hostility toward it – the hostility to social co-existence Freud often attributes to the sacrifices of libido required by any civilization (Freud 1927, p. 13). What is puzzling is that the demand to go beyond ordinary moral imperatives meets with no resistance, and even fosters enthusiasm on the part of those who are being restricted by severe rules for sexual restraint, far purer than pure religious practices, etc.

By the time he reaches *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), Freud will explain that the ego is induced to forgo satisfying its libidinal impulses in favor of the collective (even where the collective wealth produced by this sacrifice does not benefit the individual) by a process of narcissistic identification with the ideals of his/her civilization. This justly famous sentence, "No doubt one is a wretched plebeian, harassed by debts and military service; but, to make up for it, one is a Roman citizen...,"<sup>[1]</sup> has its explanatory roots in *Group Psychology*. Today people owe allegiances to multiple groups, rather than a single primary (family or clan) or superior group (e.g., the Roman Empire), and yet artificial groups demanding that their members focus almost exclusively on them have recently exploded – literally in some cases – into view on the world stage: guerrillas alongside regular armies, corporations alongside fundamental religionists, and terrorist organizations alongside all of these – ISIS is the latest and most egregious example. Why?

Freud notes that such groups require a mental alteration above and beyond what is in every other case necessary once a group ethos is forced upon the ego. To socialize the ego, it

must be made to identify with an ego-ideal that is also the agency of the ego's sacrifice of its libidinal impulses toward the object – the external object with which it first identified. The original libidinal object is repressed through the censorship exercised by the agency of the ego-ideal, but its power to impede impulses is entirely a result of a secondary identification that develops: the ego-ideal draws its power from the dual sources of love for and resentment against the parent on whom it is modeled.<sup>[2]</sup> The ego-ideal redirects the ego's libidinal energies down paths productive of collective wealth, even though this splits the ego into two antagonistic parts.<sup>[3]</sup>

In the artificial group, the process works otherwise: Freud's new discovery is that the ego-ideal is displaced in favor of a new object-identification. How do artificial groups manage, maintain and even strengthen powerful counterimpulses to the libido's? Examining the mechanisms of identification in the absence of the traditional ego-ideal, Freud finds something rather startling: these new groups, which are often morally high-toned, actually represent the return of the libidinal object, in a move that dislodges the individual's ego-ideal to become the single and singular focal point of group unity. This object is embodied in the "Leader."

Human groups – societies – are essentially structured on the first model, says Freud in *Group Psychology*, although he never loses sight of the fact that society must precede the forming of individuals. "...the psychology of the group is the oldest human psychology," Freud writes (p. 123); "individual psychology" postdates the compulsory entrance into group life, not the other way around. The split that defines human psychology is both caused by and is mirrored in the conflictual (and virtually Oedipal) relation the members of the group have to their Leader, who forbids their access to enjoyment and at the same time protects them from violence and aggressivity toward each other – in the struggle for the libidinal object – that would reign in his absence. The Leader is thus the pivot point between individual and group psychology.<sup>[4]</sup>

Indeed, Freud says, it is impossible to understand any group psychology without reference to the group's Leader. But once he focuses on the Leader, he discovers something entirely new to social formations: the artificial group is characterized by a uniquely loving, harmonious and decidedly non-Oedipal relation of its members to their Leader; they do not want to murder him. This immense alteration in group-formation could only be possible if the relation of ego-to-object and ego-to-ego-ideal is fundamentally reversed. Freud finds that the artificial group turns the process of creating individual psychology around, "healing" the split in the ego; a new level of psychical unification is made possible by the fact that the object, the lost, external libidinal object, reappears and dethrones the individual's ego-ideal. It is embodied by the Leader who is the object of all the members' unalloyed love.<sup>[5]</sup>

At this higher power, the original sexual object becomes fused with the ideal part of the ego-ideal, so the Leader becomes the ideal libidinal object. He embodies all the missing satisfactions of the "lost object" – but in a way that still inhibits the ego's libidinal drives in their aim – for all libido must be now invested in the Leader who becomes the treasury, holding and modeling the total libidinal energy made available by impeding individual satisfactions. This Leader is no longer just a metaphor for all the enjoyments the collectivity affords yet cannot let the individual partake in. Instead, the Leader is the very metonymy of this *jouissance*; he is part and parcel with it. For he does "return" this treasure to his people imaginarily: through his "equal

love” for them all. No one in the group wants to kill this kind of Leader – even if those who are excluded from the group surely do – because “he” is “us.” Osama Bin Laden and President Bush: no matter what you thought of either, both postured successfully as a Leader, hypnotically beloved by *their* “base,” *their* group; they spoke only to that group, no matter if they courted universal appeal or national level voters. When we heard that President Bush was playing to his “base” of evangelicals and right-wingers, it indicated that rather than viewing his role as that of the traditional statesman who must balance conflicting interests in and competing claims on the *jouissance* of the whole, he comported himself *precisely like a non-state actor*, that is, he played to the group psychology of a single group, which claimed to be “holier than thou.” Additionally, because the Leader-as-libidinal-object must supplant the original object, such groups must make their appeal mainly to adolescents, in whom, as Freud points out, the original object returns to break the effective restraints that have kept it from them until they reach puberty. In its stead, the Leader-as-object takes its place.

Today’s CEOs, the Donald Trumps or Freddie Lakers, become the very embodiment of our collectively hallucinated enjoyment. Christian evangelical leaders in the United States participate in this aura: the most famous, Billy Graham, was reported to put glitter in his hair so stage lights would lend him a quality of absolute brilliance, wealth and angelic spirituality combined. Another mark of the powerful growth of these groups constituted by imaginary identifications (Freud’s synthetic artificial groups) is the fact that movie and soccer stars are now considered viable gubernatorial or presidential alternatives to those with a lifetime of political experience, e.g., Arnold Schwarzenegger or Ronald Reagan.<sup>[6]</sup>

The elevation in power and prestige of this group psychology in the world of politics could be seen as a reaction to the complex world of multiform allegiances demanded of us today. But are they a solution to world problems? Hardly. Indeed, Freud says, in the end, all this “lovingness” is 1) a cover-up for the fundamental envy and hostility that ultimately motivates it and 2) this group is only an idealistic remodeling – a repetition – of the terrifying moment when the individual was first forced into group psychology by a superior, threatening, and quite frankly hated Leader.

The artificial group marks, then, not a moral advance but a regression. In group psychology, we return from normal “Oedipal” group life to the “first” moment where the “herd” became a “human horde.” The primal father (Freud calls him “the Leader”) elevates his herd into human horde status by “forc[ing] them, so to speak, into group psychology” (1921, p. 124). The alchemy that transforms the herd into the horde is each member’s particular relation to the primal father: they fear his strength, but he alone ensures the group’s continued existence. Their ambivalence toward him models our fundamentally fraught relation to “civilization” (the entry into group life): a compound of rebellious and destructive attitudes commingled with fear of losing its protections.

In other words, at the base of group life is a fundamental disharmony, an envy of the satisfactions the primal father/Leader enjoys at the expense of the group, yet whose very hoarding of enjoyment has a protective character; as Lacan so humorously puts it in Seminar XVII (1969): knowing how hard it is to satisfy even one woman, the father’s obligation to “all

the women” demonstrates the impossibility of the sons’ dream of directly enjoying them sexually should they break his exclusive hold over them.

Thus it is that the Leader makes no lavish display of the wealth he embodies; instead, it can only be hinted at, through some object (Lacan would say “object a”) that almost inadvertently emerges from his person and offers a “hook” for identification. Lacan cites “*le petit moustache du Führer*” as one such point; analyst Diana Rabinovich has told me the “mutton chops” of Carlos Menem in Argentina functioned similarly. It is also there in the know-it-all smirk of former President Bush, paralleled by the same kind of knowing smirk of the late Osama Bin Laden.

Freud says that his analysis of the Leader of the horde shows that Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* stands not at the end of history but at its origin: “He, at the very beginning of the history of mankind, was the ‘superman’ whom Nietzsche only expected from the future” (1921, p. 123). He is the first to acquire individual psychology. Superior in insight and cunning, he “forces” the members of the herd into group psychology – by impeding their destructive impulses toward the object. He effectively bans, represses, sublimates, or otherwise diverts their aim (consumption) from their (sexual) object. Therefore, Freud concludes, the modern, artificial group is a “remodeling” of the original group formation: a return to that first moment when group life was made possible through the power the Leader exercised to cut private satisfactions and turn their energies toward the creation of collective wealth. But, Freud emphasizes, it is an “idealistic” remodeling of that original moment; it substitutes a beloved Leader for a hated and feared primal father and a group made up of mutual love for the repressed envy and antagonism inherent in all societies. That this is a regression, idealistically remodeled, is proved by the fact that the new Leader is once again holding in his person all the enjoyment that has been sacrificed to found the group (hence the insistence on the sacrifice of sex among other moral requirements).

Only this time around, no one wants to murder the Leader – because they *identify* with him. All the power resident in the identification of the ego with its sexual object and with its ego-ideal has been transferred to him. The traumatic entry into group life is repeated – as farce, Marx might have said – as if it were simple and easy. Still, Freud discerns in its *élan* and its *esprit de corps*, in its repression of sexuality, the dark original and antagonistic relation of self to other that informs original human psychology. Freud writes: “...the group...[is] the revival of the primal horde. [...] ... the psychology of the group is the oldest human psychology” (1921, p. 123). The group’s egalitarian *esprit de corps* remains firmly based on primal envy – on the fear that one or another among a group of peers might be singled out for special attention or affection. On this basis are “stars” created who have no relation, personal or affectionate, to those who grant him or her stardom. Freud’s example is the girls lingering around the piano of a crooner who are all passionately in love with him, but who would revolt against him should he select one among them for particular or specific notice.

### Conclusion

I think that the surprise eruption of such groups today has at least some relation to the dominance of world discourse by the structure of capitalism. Lacan wrote in *Télévision* that capitalism begins by getting rid of sex (1974, p. 51).<sup>17</sup> This is not an idle claim; it makes clear



that capitalism requires a new relation to the object of satisfaction, and that the artificial groups that proliferate under its universal aegis are part and parcel with it. It is not simply that globalizing capitalism has severely disrupted a sense of local community, for this cannot be the full explanation. After all, the spread of industrialism and colonialism once prompted nostalgic returns to peasant or nationalist roots, reviving local handicrafts, and framing xenophobic laws. These also occur now, but the proliferation of this kind of group psychology also signals a new element in play. Capitalism, which is structured around the immense accumulation of commodities and the amassing of enormous surplus satisfactions, is constrained to embody all the profit, the excess, and the waste socially produced by society. The only hold it can maintain over those who cannot, structurally or really, share in that excess is “identification” with those who do possess the excess: the wealthy.

“What is wealth?” Lacan asks.

Ever since there have been economists nobody, up till now, has – not even for an instant ... made this remark that wealth is the property of the wealthy. Just like psychoanalysis which...is done by psychoanalysts.... Why not, concerning wealth, begin with the wealthy? (1969, p. 94).

Why not? Because its answer is tautological: “wealth is an attribute of the wealthy.” Groups that form under their universal aegis mirror this identificatory process.

A real distinction needs to be drawn in the political realm:

1) The social group that is based on the split or divided ego that must temporize with its drives, represented by a “statesman-Leader” who symbolizes the social contract that renders all satisfactions only partial – it demands deferral of satisfactions for the benefit of the collective whole. Like the father and ego-ideal, it stands in the way of explosive, cataclysmic satisfactions. But its time seems now over.

2) Then there is Freud’s artificial group, whose Leader does not so much represent as embody the totality of satisfactions, the collective wealth, made possible by the sacrifice of individual impulses. He “effectively” so to speak, has all the women, all the enjoyment; but no one resents him for it: for this group is singularly marked by its absence of hostility toward and complete identification with this *nouveau père jouissant*. This Leader is less a statesman than a cheerleader for his group, which is made up of members who, through him, identify with each other: they dress and look alike. And, Freud adds, they identify with each other and with the Leader on the basis of a “single trait” (e.g., their white skin, their clothing choices, etc.) – a trait the Leader embodies (“*le petit moustache du Führer*”). For them, this little “object a,” this trait, is the index of the enjoyment that he makes available to all (*jouissance en toc* that it may be) – only through him. It may be time to rethink both models.

#### Endnotes

<sup>[1]</sup> Questions Freud opens here eventually culminate in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), chief among them a strange alteration in the vexed relation of the ego to the human group.

This identification of the suppressed classes with the class who rules and exploits them is, however, only part of the larger whole. For, on the other hand, the suppressed classes can be emotionally attached to their masters; in spite of their hostility to them they may see in them their ideals. Unless such relations of a fundamentally satisfying kind subsisted it would be impossible to understand how a number of civilizations have survived so long in spite of the justifiable hostility on large human masses (1927, p. 13).

<sup>[2]</sup> Nurturing or sexual – the object is ultimately linked to one or the other parent, making the parental figure the pivot point between the split fractions of the ego; for the parent is both the original sexual object “lost” (or repressed) once it is given up in favor of another identification: with the parental figure whose critical negative stance (the *Nom du père*, Lacan calls it) prohibits the enjoyment of the object. This figure is the ego-ideal, the voice of conscience, of authority and ergo, the internal representative of society and its claims.

<sup>[3]</sup> Subsequently, Freud says, the ego falls into two pieces:

...one of which rages against the second. This second piece is the one which has been altered by introjection and which contains the lost object. But the piece which behaves so cruelly is not unknown to us either. It is conscience, a critical agency within the ego, the function of the ‘ego-ideal’ (1921, pp. 106-107).

<sup>[4]</sup> Jacques Lacan makes much of this peculiar group psychology in Seminar XVII, *L’envers de la psychanalyse* [The Other Side of Psychoanalysis]. He finds it stunning that only in *Group Psychology* does Freud frame a father or father-substitute who is not the object of hatred, rivalry and murderous designs.

<sup>[5]</sup> Thus the Leader of the new, artificial group is no longer modeled on the family whose parental figures are forsaken objects of sexual drive, but on the “lost object” somehow “re-found” through a Leader who embodies the object of enjoyment. This is the function of idealization in the turn toward the origins of group psychology. This object is not treated in the same way as our own ego, whose narcissistic libido is invested in the object, and where the object stands for the unattained ego-ideal of our own (1921, p. 112). Instead, Freud says, the object becomes overvalued when the “object consumes the ego” in the state of “being in love”: “the ego has enriched itself with the properties of the [introjected] object.” Freud then asks: “Is it quite certain that identification presupposes that object-cathexis has been given up? Can there be no identification while the object is retained? Is the object put in place of the ego or the ego ideal?” His hypothesis, that sexual impulses inhibited in their aims achieve lasting ties between people, drives group psychology to the structure of love, where “a number of individuals have put one and the same object in the place of their ego-ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego” (1921, p. 116).

<sup>[6]</sup> Please see the argument I make on the golden calf/capitalist Leader comparison in my essay, “More Thoughts for the Time on War and Death: Lacan’s Critique of Capitalism in Seminar XVII” (2006). I wrote:

Wealth is the discursive quilting point (*point de capiton*) the leader automatically embodies. His identification with collective wealth makes his powers seem as if they were not created by the father’s restrictions on *jouissance*... His *jouissance* appears endless and without origination because, as Freud notes, the leader draws all libidinal investment into himself, returning it in equal measure to each of the group’s members as echoes and mirrorings, multiplied infinitely because “imaginarily.” A mesmerizing figure, the leader embodies the aggregate assets of the community without having actively to acquire or produce them.

Nonetheless, Lacan reminds us, the image of a painlessly accumulated *jouissance* remains a fake: phony *jouissance* (“*jouissance en toc*,” Seminar XVII, p. 95).

[...] The leader is a discursive, if auratic, disavowal of the master’s discourse – disavowal that its wealth originates in pulsations of lack and excess. A purely imaginary – openly counterfeit – surplus enjoyment becomes the official, true coin of the realm, because no real energy was expended minting it. Formed of this sham substance, the leader is very

much the Golden Calf in Hosea that so intrigues Lacan in Seminar XVII; a Golden Calf of [an economy that] denies anyone ever has to pay...

<sup>[7]</sup> Jacques Lacan, in *Télévision* (1974), wrote:

Le propre de l'ordre, où il y en a le moindre, c'est qu'on n'a pas à goûter puisqu'il est établi. C'est arrivé déjà quelque part par bonheur, et c'est bon tout juste à démontrer que ça y va mal pour même l'ébauche d'une liberté. C'est le capitalisme remet en ordre. Autant donc pour le sexe, puisqu'en effet le capitalisme, c'est de là qu'il est parti, de le mettre au rancart (p. 51).

See also my forthcoming chapter, "Lacan's Imaginary: A Practical Guide." In *Lacan and Politics*, eds. S. Tomsic & A. Zevnik. London: Routledge, 2015.

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## On Belonging: Words, Things and the Church of Christ

Todd Dean, MD

**Belonging to groups is a complicated business. The author attempts to illustrate this from his own experience, arguing that belonging is both a challenge and unavoidably necessary.**

*...that less apparent syntax which causes words and things... to “hold together.”*  
(Foucault)

An older man, talking affably to people he has just met, seeming to have all the time in the world, asks eventually, “So what church do you folks belong to?” It is a surprising question – but, in the middle class milieu of suburban Texas in the 60s and 70s, not a rude one – and the man has been so friendly, so open and unassuming. His interlocutors usually give a straightforward answer: Methodist or Baptist or Presbyterian, almost always some mainline Protestant denomination. Without missing a beat, the questioner replies, “I hate to tell you this, friends, but you are going to Hell. The only church that saves is the Church of Christ.”

I used to hear variations of this story fairly regularly, usually right after I told somebody that my family had belonged to the Church of Christ when I was growing up. We always laughed – how crazy could people be? The Church of Christ was a small group of Christian congregations that grew out of the Second Great Awakening at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, intending to return Christian faith to its biblical roots by strict observance of the letter of the Bible and ignoring all post-biblical counsels and creeds. In other words, it assumed a reading of scripture by each individual that was unmediated by anything that came between the believer and the Word. The novelty of this is hard to communicate today, at least it is hard for me to communicate it to people who have no idea what I am talking about, who assume I am describing some kind of fundamentalism, and of course everybody knows all about that. But it would not have been acceptable to a true believer to call the Church of Christ “fundamentalist.” That would mean people would have to formally agree on what the fundamentals of Christian faith are. For that to happen, there would have to be some kind of organization that would mediate for the faithful, and that would be unacceptable: a true believer is someone who understands God’s word without having to be instructed. To even have a leadership role in the church was anathema. Each congregation was run autonomously; all shared the belief that it was only through the individual’s direct engagement with the Bible that one could know the truth and be saved. Thus, the church could more accurately be called “literalist” rather than fundamentalist, but I doubt anybody ever said that, because to say a particular reading of the Bible is literalist implies there is another reading of it that is not. Within the Church of Christ, such a reading would be less than useless.

Thus, we can understand how the affable man’s claim was true, in terms of the teachings of the church. Christ had said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). The problem is, there is no way to say “in terms of the teaching of the church:” those teachings were just what IS – there could be no other perspective. So, it was *literally* true: you could not get to Heaven except through the Church of Christ. All those other words – Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc. – were beside the point, even

idolatrous. The fact that you would even pay attention to them is proof that you don't have sufficient faith in God's word: go directly to Hell, do not pass Go.

Such was the stark simplicity of doctrine in the Church of Christ that even Christmas was seen as a secular holiday; nowhere in the Bible does it say Christ was born on December 25th. I remember my grandmother hearing someone sing "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" and becoming indignant at the line "Remember Christ our savior was born on Christmas Day." Worse for me was the December 25th that fell on a Sunday when we were visiting the other side of the family: I had to sit through an interminable service where the holiday was never even mentioned before going home to open presents. To link Christ to Christmas was idolatrous.

The same simplicity applied to everything. The leaders of a given congregation were the elders and the preacher; there could be no "pastor," no shepherd to lead the flock, because the Word did not need a shepherd – it was sufficient unto itself, so long as somebody proclaimed it. And the preacher did, in hour-long sermons and prayers that were not much shorter. I was happy to learn years later that "preacher" derived from the Latin for "auctioneer" – there is this salacious fragment by Catullus about a "praeco" eyeing up a rent boy<sup>[1]</sup> – because preachers were often as not con men, poachers who would be arrested if they ever showed up in a Tanzanian airport again, or revivalists who left with more than their share of the collection plate. Because there was no larger hierarchy, they always ran free, but this was never discussed among the faithful.

Moral teaching in the Church of Christ was straightforward. There was no need for any gradations of sin. If you died having committed a sin for which you had not sought God's forgiveness, you went to Hell. It didn't matter what the sin was – murder or stealing a cookie – if you died after committing it, you received the same punishment. Also because it was the Church of Christ, there were some fairly special sins. For example, you would go to Hell if you danced, or drank alcohol, or did not go to church every time the doors were opened, or if you married anyone who was not a member of the church.

It was the last of these moral absolutes that eventually caught my attention. Both my grandmothers, devout members of the church, married men who were not. My grandfathers were Baptists, in fact, a denomination I remember thinking of as almost libertine, because it allowed instrumental music during services. This contradiction was rarely noted, but never addressed within my hearing. I did occasionally hear that some elder's wife had said one or the other grandmother would go to Hell for marrying a heathen, but nobody in the family, to my knowledge, ever responded to this charge. Still, it was a mystery: if the Church says "don't," and my grandmothers always do what the Church says, why did they marry pagans?

My paternal grandmother, the most pious member of my family, once even told my mother that my grandfather had been quite a catch, riding into town on his beautiful horse. But she also told her daughter-in-law that if she didn't leave church feeling chastised, she didn't feel like she'd been to church at all. Long after she died, my parents learned that my paternal grandfather not only was not a member of the Church of Christ, but *had been married before* – a shock, because my grandmother must have known this, as they both lived in the same small town. It goes without saying: to knowingly marry a divorced Baptist would qualify one for

damnation more than almost anything else. You could rape, murder and pillage all you wanted, so long as you repented afterwards, but if you married a divorced, unbelieving man and didn't leave him, then you carried your sin with you for the rest of your life. At least, the preacher at my grandmother's funeral was charitable: he allowed that the fact that she had been such a good woman might have saved both her husband and herself from eternal damnation. But the question remained: what does it mean if you both break the rules and expect to feel chastised every Sunday? There could be no explanation.

I became conscious of the problem of words and things in the teachings of the church – all the mysteries of my family and of those other people who didn't live by all those straightforward rules – just as my parents were themselves becoming skeptical of those teachings. My father would decide to leave the church when I was still in grade school. I have to assume that my dawning confusion was a reflection of their struggle with this skepticism. Thus, I remember once telling my mother that I had learned in Sunday school that the fact that a member of our congregation had won the 100-yard dash in the district track meet was proof that he was favored by God. I don't remember what she said, but whatever it was, it left this notion very much in doubt. Another time I told her a classmate at my grade school had announced that only members of the Church of Christ would go to Heaven. She said she thought that was a horrible thing to say. This was interesting, but also confusing: yes, on the one hand, it did seem horrible to condemn all my Baptist and Methodist classmates to eternal damnation in the pit of Hell, but on the other hand, it was entirely consistent with what we heard in church every time we went, which was every time we could. It was also striking that, while my mother was the one who I experienced as most openly critical of church teachings, it was my father who first decided to leave the church; it was some time before she could follow him. These experiences gave me a lot to think about, enigmatic messages that kept me curious all through grade school.

From where I stand now, though, I am simply grateful my mother said anything. This questioning of what was going on was for me the dawning awareness that what Foucault calls “that less apparent syntax,” the hidden link between words and things, exists. Thus, the persistence of all the questions that comes with Baptist-marrying grandmothers and the rest of it.

Besides these questions, the unmediated relation between what we were to believe and what the Bible said fell apart without much effort: why, if drinking was a sin, did Christ choose for his first miracle to turn water into wine (John 2:1-11)? If David could dance – drunk, no less – before the Ark of the Covenant (I Chronicles 15:29-16:6), why couldn't a high school student dance at the prom? The more I paid attention to these discrepancies, call them, between what the Bible said and what the church demanded, the more I became aware that there was a disconnect between what I learned in Sunday school and what I saw in the world. Now I can say that the church created a profound *jouissance* out of guilt and suffering – this was its real driving force, hidden under a spurious devotion to some half-baked notion of unmediated truth. At the time, I just had the sense that there was something not quite right about how words and things added up. For years after my family left the church, I expressed nothing but sarcasm about the whole thing. To be sure, there was a lot to be sarcastic about, but this attitude was more defensive than useful, allowing me to gloss over the enigmas, like transgressing grandmothers and my parents' real struggles with the church that I had been exposed to for years.

But it is that tension between the latent and manifest, in the behavior of my grandmothers, for example, and between words and things, in the indoctrination I was exposed to, that has stayed with me, of all the things I heard in those interminable church services and Sunday school classes. This became the model, for me, of what it means to belong. From within the group, there is a clarity that can be seductive. But there is also some way to get perspective, some tension that obscures the clarity of the group's teaching – thank God. What saved me from that group and gave me some perspective was the talking and questioning of it, what I heard going on in all those conversations with my family and others.

For years after the family apostasy, I didn't give the church much thought, except as something to be ridiculed. But then I was assigned to read Book 11 of St. Augustine's *Confessions* in a Medieval Latin class, and came on the following:

But if [Moses] could speak Latin, I would know what he was saying. Yet even then how could I know that what he was saying was true? If I did know that, it would not be on his word that I relied. Within me, where my thoughts are at home, truth itself would speak, not in Hebrew or Greek or Latin, or any uncouth tongue, it would speak without the body's organs, without mouth or tongue, without the sounding out of syllables. It would tell me that Moses spoke true, and I would confidently assent to your emissary, admitting that he spoke true. (Wills, p. 260)

This blew my mind. Just as I remembered from my time in the church, the topic here was the unmediated communication of Biblical truth. What was different about this was that Augustine was actually *thinking* about that idea – I had never realized thinking about this sort of thing from within its own premises was even possible; it had always been something one either accepted or not. Here Augustine asks what would the conditions have to be for the unmediated communication he assumes. Amazing. In the Church of Christ, to even ask that question would have put one at risk of damnation: God's word is what it is! Further, Augustine says the body's organs would not be involved; *that* is interesting: why not? Whether organs will be used in the unmediated communication of truth or not, Augustine is saying that the body matters in relation to spiritual truth and to speech, even if only in a negative way. It is something to ponder.

So I got more out of belonging to the Church of Christ than an obnoxious conscience and a distrust of glib auctioneers. I doubt I would ever have paid attention to Book 11 of the *Confessions* had it not been for my early religious indoctrination. It was a sensitivity that served me well. Several years further on, I heard a famous "descriptive" psychiatrist indignantly ask, regarding Oedipus, why anybody would think an ancient play would be relevant to mental illness today? His question was meant to be purely rhetorical, but it did, again, raise that old question I learned in Sunday school: what do words have to do with things? In this case, what do Sophocles's words have to do with mental illness? Of course, it also spoke to a latent ideology, no less than the church's teachings on guilt and sin: the psyche could be regulated and normalized, fixed, with proper diagnosis and medication.

So, descriptive psychiatry, like the Church of Christ, was unambiguous in its approach to certain mysteries. It offered a straightforward understanding of how one should act, of what

constitutes normality, based on a theory that was touted as atheoretical: the psyche, when it is disturbed, is a site of illness, an illness that can be delineated and categorized through close observation. This is, in fact, the (a)theoretical underpinning of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* since its third edition. But I found in my work as an academic psychiatrist that there seemed to be many exceptions to this rule. Most striking to me was the way some patients held on to their symptoms; it became impossible for me to believe that wishes at some level were not part of the problem I was seeing.

In a curious way, I was seeing my patients do something like what my grandmothers did, marrying outside the faith: while they were going to a doctor ostensibly to help them get over an illness, very frequently I observed that they held on to that illness for dear life. My patients could not give up their symptoms the way my grandmothers could not give up their sins. Of note, both sins and symptoms had a lot to do with sex. How does descriptive psychiatry explain that?

On then to psychoanalysis. Near the end of my formal analytic training, some years after I had left the academy, I found myself getting increasingly anxious at the idea of being done with schooling. “I haven’t *learned* anything!” is how I finally put this anxiety into words. Immediately after, I remembered a sentence by Adam Phillips I had particularly liked, from before I started my training: “Of course, in psychoanalysis you don’t learn anything.” It was a revelatory moment for me, to catch myself lamenting the very thing I had come here for in the first place, the freedom to not have to know, to not have everything figured out, in order to function. Like my grandmothers, I opposed my own manifest beliefs; like my patients, I was working hard to overcome a symptom I was determined to keep. My institute was just one more in a long line of groups I belonged to that I hoped would tell me what to do – and maybe this time I would not find any reason to leave. But at least this moment stuck with me. In the dream the night before the last session of my training analysis, there were several references to the Dylan song “Nothing Was Delivered” – and at no point did I think of that as a dismissal of the analysis or the analyst; rather, it was the necessary condition for whatever success it could possibly have.

Thankfully, getting through analysis in no way cured me of my symptom: I’m still grappling with my groups. I can be rueful about all the groups to which I belong, but without all those others (and Others), where would I be? Without engaging these groups, how do I figure out who I am? I think it is a meaningless question now: there would be no I without them.

See you Sunday.

#### Endnote

<sup>[1]</sup> “Seeing an auctioneer with some fetching young creature/One can only assume the lad’s desperate to sell – himself.” Catullus 106 (Green, p. 205).

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## Belonging Is Uncanny: *Wakolda*, or *The German Doctor*

Manya Steinkoler, PhD, and Jessica Datema, PhD

**The authors critique the notion of imaginary belonging and underline its relation to the Uncanny through a close reading of Lucia Puenzo's novel *Wakolda* and viewing the film made from the novel, *The German Doctor*. Issues of femininity, the mother-daughter bond, and the paternal function as differentiated from ideals of power and ideology, are developed with reference to both the novel and film.**

*Wakolda*, or *The German Doctor*, both as a novel (2011) and a film (2013), serves as a critique of the imaginary: of ideals and ideology, and most importantly, of the fantasy of belonging. It demonstrates the *unheimlich* confrontation between a neurotic wish for phallic being with a psychotic certitude, incarnated here as the Nazi imaginary. That such certitude had cultural power as legitimate, as an officially sanctioned *weltanschauung*, was already shown to be waning at the historical moment at which the novel is situated. The story takes place *after* the war – after this fantasy of belonging or of “taking one’s proper, fated place” was exposed to the world with all the unprecedented criminal horror it authorized. It is not simply the souls and the minds of people that were implicated by this totalizing ideology, but the Real of the body, which, experimented upon and supposedly “bettered,” was reduced to real matter – matter to be changed, “ameliorated,” and even discarded.

Directed by Lucia Puenzo, the film is adapted from her own semi-fictional 2011 novel about Josef Mengele's encounter with a family in post-war Argentina. After ingratiating himself with the family's adolescent daughter Lilith, Mengele also begins experimenting on the mother, Eva, who is pregnant with twins. Even though Lilith's father, Enzo, expressly forbids Mengele's experiments, the mother and daughter participate in secret and we are shown how the paternal function is rendered powerless as the neurotic wish meets up with a psychotic answer. The film poignantly underscores the fragility of paternal doubt when confronted with the certainty of the doctor's Real response, a failure implicated in the rise of fascist ideology itself. The wish is rendered even more present in the young protagonist's life by way of maternal demand from which she is barely separated. Who would possibly say no, after all, to finally and really belonging?

The historical setting of the film allows us to see our current ideological challenges. The persistence of the vitality of Nazi fallacious “science” after the war serves to illuminate our contemporary moment in which subjectivity is jettisoned in favor of the satisfactions of an ideology that supports and sustains narcissism. Today, we are constantly enjoined to belong to an imaginary set of standards and demands and to sacrifice our better judgment. Set in Argentina after the war, “home” to the fled Nazis, we become all the more acutely aware of the uncanny nature of the drive to belong in this Nazi diaspora. In the story, the Nazi push-to-perfection confronts the wishes of a 12-year-old girl, on the brink of becoming a woman. The encounter betrays our own secret wishes in our post-capitalist moment wherein femininity is ensnared at the imaginary and real level to support phallic hegemonic ideology. With technology, the Real female body can be used nowadays in ways heretofore unthinkable. In this regard, the significance of the main protagonists' names, Eva and Lilith, with their reference to *Genesis*, emphasizes that what is at stake is a lost paradise – a place where we (not just Nazis – but all of humanity) are presumed to have once “belonged.” To find one's proper place, then, is the

promise of paradise. The name Lilith, and her mother's name, Eva, call attention to the difference between the maternal and the feminine, further underscoring this original "Edenic" loss. According to Lacan, the woman is "not-all" as distinct from the mother who, insofar as she is a mother, is always in a fundamentally phallic position. Lilith was *not* an actual biblical figure but one presumed to have existed by apocryphal rabbinic interpretation, according to which she was the first "woman." Supposedly ousted from God's original creation, scratched for Eve, Lilith is invented to explain the double creation of woman in the two *Genesis* stories. In the first story, she is not named; woman is simply mentioned as such. Lilith is thus retroactively imagined as the scrapped woman, as though God had made a mistake when creating woman and had to do it over again to get it right. Lilith, therefore, does "not exist," she never "existed," to parody Lacan's thesis about Woman; her name in Hebrew comes from the word "night."

Our Lilith, the protagonist of the film/novel *The German Doctor/Wakolda*, is 12 years old and concerned, as is her mother, by the fact that she is the shortest girl in her class. A foreign, handsome stranger, a doctor, will promise her not only growth, but great height, one he tells her she was destined for. Such a promise of narcissistic phallic restoration is comparable with those proffered in our contemporary world to women by industry and medicine, and not only by surgical enhancement, but nowadays by genetically producing a more "desirable" outcome. In this sense, Lilith is a woman precisely insofar as she has "never existed" and "falls short" of the imaginary standard of what "woman" is supposed to be.

### The Mysterious Stranger

The film opens with the family traveling to Eva's first home in the heart of Patagonia following the end of the Second World War. Little do they suspect that this journey threatens a real "return" that concerns not simply an imaginary wish, but an encounter with a doctor, escaped from Auschwitz and living under a false name, who will promise that such a "return" to the German language as well as to idealized physical perfection is possible. This mysterious stranger posing as a bookish veterinarian is full of secrets. He was the one who ran a famous medical laboratory not long before and was known as "God" in Auschwitz and Birkenau (Lifton 1986, p. 353), who, in the name of bettering the race for the good of the Reich, had absolute power over the life and death of his subjects. He was the one whose "passion for research made him totally blind to the misery of the camp" (p. 356), and whose "commitment to the principle of murder-selection was inexorable" (p. 343). In short, he was one for whom the return to paradise *was no dream*.

The film and the novel are called *Wakolda*, named after Lilith's childhood doll. The film was renamed *The German Doctor* for American audiences, playing on America's fear and hate of Nazis, hoping to boost ticket sales. The altered film title, alluding to Mengele without naming him, only underscores what Lifton, in his book *The Nazi Doctors*, claims about the infamous "monster," namely that "No war criminal has evoked so much fantasy and fiction" (p. 338). Not "naming" the doctor only gives him more imaginary power by way of suggestion and produces anxiety: Is he *the* doctor? Our own excited and prurient curiosity should give us pause as we wonder what precisely we are trying to discover via naming him.

## The Doll

Wakolda means “Mapuche” or “Mapuche doll” in Spanish. Not a name that evokes drama or intrigue for the North American audience – less market-friendly. The Mapuche were a group of indigenous Indians inhabiting southwestern Argentina, including parts of present-day Patagonia, an area devastated by Spanish conquistadors years ago and subsequently again by colonization. The doll is described in the novel as having “long black hair, down to her knees. Her face, hands and feet were carved from wood, and she had gigantic black eyes. Her nose was straight and her lips were thick and she had a swollen belly and wore a handwoven tunic” (Puenzo 2011, p. 56). This doll is a “native,” a non-ideal doll, her thick lips and swollen belly exaggerating her reproductive traits like the ancient Stone Age Venus figures. The doll used in the film, however, is not a Mapuche, but a fair blonde doll with blue eyes, like the film’s blonde protagonist, Lilith. The difference in title and in the figure of the doll between the film and the book is worth considering. The film – with a more global mass market appeal in mind – had to make the doll blonde; the Mapuche doll could not be loved or as easily identified with by a filmgoing audience for whom loving a doll is impossible unless it is a blonde and blue-eyed one, a girl, rather than a sexualized dark-skinned woman. Perhaps we might wonder about the role America has in exporting and promoting imaginary ideals of belonging, and the power of “American Girl” (a doll whose sales have even surpassed Barbie globally for the past several years). Girls are more phallic than women because unlike women, they do not lack; they are still phallic for their mothers who are intimately invested in them and they, in turn, in their mothers’ investment. While not twins, this mother-daughter passion is nevertheless another mirror that the German doctor seeks to restore to them by way of his “cure.”

The story circulates around the exchange of this doll between the doctor and Lilith, the film’s narrator. Her narrative voice becomes her response to “being the doll” as an assumed feminine destiny – although we could think of the fate differently in the film and the novel. In the novel, the sexualized, native Wakolda doll is Lilith’s love object, one that differs from her but to which she is attached. She has to separate herself from the doctor and his aims in order to care for that doll *as lost*. In the film, however, it is the doll as the idealized narcissistic object that she must separate from; in either case, it is Lilith who must learn to doubt her own wish; this is achieved with the help of the school librarian and photographer/archivist, Nora Eldoc. Eventually, by way of her narrative, Lilith subjectifies an encounter with a traumatic plenitude, wherein a neurotic wish and a maternal demand were co-opted by a psychotic “who knows.” Her art, namely the novel and the film, is to be distinguished from the imaginary perfection promised by the doll and the restoration of the mirror relation between mother and daughter. The doctor promises an acephalic infinity, depicted in the film as the mass, factory-produced doll he offers to finance. Lilith’s beloved doll was handmade by her father Enzo, an artisan who makes dolls in his spare time, and who, importantly, unlike Eva and Lilith, does not speak German. At first glance, the German doctor is “superior” to the artisan father; he is more handsome, more elegant, more worldly – and he is wealthy. He can improve the doll by making it in great quantities, and as an all-powerful doctor, he can even improve on the father’s creations – his daughter and his twins – correcting human beings’ “defects.” The ethics of the film concern the giving up of such imaginary quests – a lesson for our time. Instead of achieving Mengele’s promised end – either in terms of Lilith’s hoped-for growth spurt, or of the establishment of a booming doll manufacturing company – Lilith tells her story. She leaves a testimony of her

encounter at the age of 12 with “an omnipotent rescuer and concerned physician” (Lifton 1986, p. 347), one wholly dedicated to the “noble goal” of “advancing the search to unlock the secret of multiplying the race of superior beings destined to rule” (Lifton 1986, p. 359). To leave a testimony is the only way to grow up, and it does not concern her size.

When Mengele proposed the mass production of dolls to Enzo, he offered Enzo a particular role: no longer the maker of each doll individually, he will have the role in the proposed new company of winding up every mass-produced doll’s heart, and placing it inside the doll’s torso himself. A perverse and literally Faustian offer, in exchange for financial gain, Enzo will have to bear the fact that such mass-produced dolls will nonetheless have hearts, and because he was the one who put them there initially, he will become an artist reduced to a mechanical “heart giver” on an assembly line. Enzo will be made to realize what he has done when he goes to the factory and sees the monstrous rows of heads, legs, and torsos all detached. Mengele has turned Enzo’s beloved artistic creation into a mass-produced doll, now a fragmented body – and he has done the same in his treatments of Eva and Lilith. Ultimately, when Enzo realizes his mistake, he tells Lilith she doesn’t need to be tall; there is always someone taller, blonder, or more “perfect.” He shows his daughter how the dream of bodily perfection is a fallacy by relishing the idiosyncrasies of each doll and encourages her to enjoy her own differences and to consider these imperfections as what makes her and all of us unique, like Wakolda.

As the film’s title and as Lilith’s favorite doll, *Wakolda* suggests that belonging necessarily concerns nostalgia, one that evokes the wishes of childhood. *Wakolda*, like the indigenous Mapuche Indians who were cast out, shows the impossibility of feeling fully at home or restored after becoming an exile in one’s own homeland, whether as an indigenous people to a land or as a young adolescent to a body. Real changes in the body occur during puberty and one is ousted from one’s own bodily “home.” The German doctor’s promise of belonging would “restore” the place and the body of Lilith and by analogy, that of the *Wakolda* doll, a symbol of restoring an entire people to its birth place, and even to the idea that a birth place is a proper place. It is the false promise that the Machupe would finally belong to their birthplace – or that anyone would ever finally “belong” as a destiny, anywhere. It is a false promise that Lilith is destined to her phallic place and body, as though the lack that marks the feminine body and the desire it arouses could finally find a phallic solution; as though the puberty that Lilith was beginning to experience as a separation from her mother would be remediated and mother and daughter would be united again in their maternal *unheimlich* homeland; as though the German people would finally take their rightful destined place in the world order; as though “American Girl” would finally be the best-selling doll in the world...and it is!

Mengele meets Lilith after she *drops* her doll, and seeing it fall, he picks it up for her. The “dropping of the doll” is an over-determined metaphor: for puberty, for becoming a woman, and for relinquishing the phallic place she held for her mother. A fall, it sets up the drama of the film, namely the relation of the doll to an imaginary ideal that Lilith (literally) falls short of, one that Mengele promises to restore and that Lilith’s mother desires for her – “normalcy” above all. Here, Lilith’s growth into womanhood is only considered as real, *not* as subjective. Mengele is in the position of restoring the imaginary phallus to the Other, to the “health of the master race,” and his particular madness encounters a wish of mother and daughter: of restoring Lilith as

phallic to her mother and to her mother's dream for her daughter and thus for herself. His power over them is obvious; they are both fascinated by him and intuitively know to keep their relationship with him a secret from the father. The doctor's slightly erotically-tinged looks at the young Lilith are as intense as they are ambiguous. Lilith, like the many children Mengele experimented upon, thought herself to be loved by him, only to discover that his passion pertained only to his own mad vision, one that had nothing to do with her except as a "scientific" specimen for furthering his "research." In such a promised paradisaical restoration, the doll would never be lost. In fact, there would have never been a human being to begin with, only raw material for the making of the ideal. Nothing would ever have to fall; nothing need be lost. Do we not sense something of the promises of Botox, plastic surgery, juice fasts and enforced exercise? If paradise is restored, we will never have to age...

### The Uncanny

For Freud, neurotic anxiety concerns a fall, a *Niederkommen*, which gives birth to lack. In the film, this lack is *literally* sutured by the doctor, who sees such work as his great mission. In this sense, he fulfills the promise of the imaginary plenitude that Nazi ideology sought to ensure. Illustrating this fact is a short scene when a dog bites off the doll's leg and the doctor stitches it back on. While stitching up the doll, the doctor "knew immediately that he had found a solution for his nostalgia. It was of no importance that the baby was porcelain; he could do what he wanted with it without raising anyone's suspicions. Watching, Lilith held her breath, her attention fixed on the dance of the needle as it wove in and out of the bandage, seeking out the holes made by the teeth and joining the foot to the rest of the body" (Puenzo 2011, p. 48). We are reminded of Hoffmann's doll and the evil Coppélius who had power over its dismemberment, as he "bleated" over the famous "mechanism of the hands and the feet" (Hoffmann 1982), not to mention the eyes. While Mengele sought the restoration as the "solution" to his "nostalgia," Lilith sought out the holes, curious about the lack or the maiming itself, rather than its repair. For Mengele, Lilith is a doll to be repaired, making him all the more the "evil twin" of the father of the Freudian uncanny. Mengele was even called "Father" in the camp because of his air of authority (Lifton 1986, p. 338). As the absolute master of the selections on the ramp, he earned himself the title "The Angel of Death." The ultimate doctor of the Final Solution, known for his "absolute ideological firmness" (Lifton 1986, p. 342), Mengele was always restoring the imaginary plenitude of the Other, suturing all lack in the name of the ideal. The German doctor imagines himself able to cure life itself. It is no wonder then that he was a murderer on such a grand scale, since the only real cure for life is death.

The position of Mengele in the camps was that of a god, one promulgated by his presiding over the selections. He remained enigmatic and mysterious, even to those close to him, further adding to his lofty position. "Nobody ever really understood what he wanted" (Lifton 1986, p. 372) and people spoke of the principle of "unfathomability" (Lifton 1986, p. 374) that surrounded him. He was reputed to have had "no sense for women" despite the fact that many prisoners compared him to a "Hollywood actor" and even to "Rudolph Valentino" (Lifton 1986, p. 343). He was able to seduce while sustaining his position of being unaffected and beyond all desire. One inmate said of him: "He always carried an aura with him of some terrifying threat...I have found it nearly impossible to transmit the edge of this terror" (Lifton 1986, p. 353). One prisoner-doctor put it simply: "He wanted to be God – to create a new race" (Lifton 1986, p.

359). Exiled in Argentina, the novel shows the doctor left to enact his magic in secret. He is already less powerful, having been made so by the judgment of the world.

The distinction between the normal and the pathological is a major theme of the film, underlining their uncanny infection of one another as it becomes impossible to isolate either. What Lifton calls the “healing-killing paradox” that epitomized the overall function of the Nazi regime is just one of the many uncanny paradoxes that we see in the unfolding of the story. Such impossible dualities abound, including some particular to Mengele himself, notably a strange combination of “affection and violence,” as well as a strange *mélange* of disaffected superiority coupled with an excited passion for “research.” In the “medical” journal he keeps of Lilith’s “progress,” the doctor notes: “First signs of pubescence,” as though he were noting an aberrancy. Mengele aims to “treat Lilith’s dysmorphia,” yet being short is hardly dysmorphia. The actual Mengele would draw a line at 5’-5’2” in the children’s *Lager* in the camps and tell them they had to reach this height or else they would be selected (Lifton 1986, p. 346). He also was known to have collected dwarfs among his twins and to have “relished” his dwarfs “ecstatically” (Lifton 1986, p. 356). Being short for her age, Lilith inspires the doctor’s passion to “cure,” always imbricated in his equally ardent passion to kill.

We further glean the bizarre nature of the doctor’s medical interventions in his criticism of Eva, when he indicates her pregnancy with twins is in jeopardy and she requires his medical intervention. In the film, he uses the twins against one another, feeding one less than the other, fascinated by the permutations of the mirror relation. The guiding idea behind his “medicine” – or more aptly the Nazi biomedical vision – is an attempt to stabilize the mirror. Mengele studied twins for their genetics and cultivated his passionate personal commitment to bringing science to the Nazi vision (Lifton 1986, p. 340). His passion for sameness was apparent in his notorious fascination and experimentation with heterochromia, a condition where one eye differs in color from the second. He was known to extract and collect eyes from such subjects, enthralled as he was by this anomaly. His well-known obsession with twins, a passion he will remain notorious for in perpetuity, was the logical outcome of Nazi ideology, because if a mirror could finally exist without a stain – without any difference or lack – the promise of imaginary perfection could finally be achieved, and the first alienation that would portend human subjective post-lapsarian existence would be rendered null and void; we would never have to leave the valley of the dolls.

In the film, Mengele constantly creates a series of doubles in an attempt to give meaning to his life’s work, a paean to the “mirror in perpetuity”: with Lilith and her doll, with her father’s dolls, with the twins, and even with the farm animals. Mengele is perpetually doing the same work – trying to construct a stable, faultless mirror. Nazi ideology is a paranoiac; an ideal ego rules and anything less than ideal is duly exterminated. Hence, Lilith and Eva – *like all women* – are in the position of always being the “not big enough” or “right enough” ego – especially if we consider the feminine in Lacanian terms as that which cannot be signified but concerns a hole in the structure. Mengele sees himself as “doctor” to this imperfect ego, i.e., this nascent feminine, one on the brink of puberty, which is – *and only is* – himself. Or, we could posit that the passion that fuels this work is a way of staving off the “push to the woman” that one encounters in psychosis and that is why his passion is so totalizing. After meeting Mengele, Lilith narrates: “The first time he met me, he thought I was the perfect specimen.” She is reduced in his eyes to a “specimen,” a scientific experiment, meeting with every girl’s desire to be something Real for

someone, although she could not know how. His proposed “cure” for the deficient feminine Real is an imaginary bereft of any symbolic anchor. We see his structure as psychotic in his attempt to fill and sustain the w-hole of the mOther and to avoid the feminine via the phallic nature of the child.

The tropes of doubling, the mirror, the doll, and even the narrator as having her vision intact (like Hoffmann’s Klara) continually mark the disturbing and anxious world of the Hoffmannesque uncanny. In this unstable world, the doll is shared by the neurotic and the psychotic; the difference, however, is that for the neurotic, the object falls; for the psychotic, it must be sustained infinitely because there is no separation, no *Niederkommen*, no fall possible. In psychosis, the subject and the object are sutured, or as Lacan says, the psychotic “has the object in his pocket.” Mengele’s work aims at imaginary perfection, which can never be fulfilled in its aspirational exceptionality because the very possibility of that exceptionality is destroyed by the fact that the ideal requires the work of infinite doubling. The “final solution” of the perfect mirror has to be repeated infinitely and as such, can never be final or a solution at all.

Mengele compares himself to an artist, stating that he reduces creation to weighing and measuring, a purposeful degradation. When Lilith asks him what he keeps in his journal, he replies: “Poets write about what they see, painters paint; I measure and weigh what interests me.” Mengele avers that he is not making art. But what is he doing? It is a strange kind of knowing – measuring and weighing – as though the other could be summed up, reduced to his size and weight, reduced to his Real materiality with no remainder. The historic Mengele was notorious for weighing and measuring everyone to the very last detail; it was a fact attested to by all the survivors of his medical experiments. This passion was so great, after the war fellow Auschwitz doctors commented that Mengele seemed to have become “lost in the details” to the point where he “detoured from the aims of science.” Weighing and measuring were his greatest enjoyment. Don’t we see in this activity the very aim of Nazi ideology? What else is there to do but reduce a person to her parts and reduce those parts to inventory, to raw material that can be categorized, filed away and stored. The film shows us the uncanny nature of his mind by giving us a peek into his journals, where he is revealed through the monstrous “medical” sketches, which are neither art nor medicine, but a bizarre mix of both, and belong to a logic entirely his own. His “scientific observational sketches” of Eva, Lilith, and the twins are more “real” to him than the actual people he encounters. We could say he never encounters people. Lifton shows how the only people Mengele considered as people were *other doctors*; this designation was so fixed in his mind that he would take the Jewish doctors off the ramp in Auschwitz and employ them in his laboratory. The only “people” for Mengele were doctors, doubles who allowed him to see himself as a person. These “medical” sketches make us nervous. The nervousness stems from the revelation of his medicine as uncanny, as having nothing to do with science (a shared discourse), but as showing evidence of a personal enjoyment – one that science is precisely supposed to eschew.

After receiving several injection “treatments” from the doctor, who has “masked” himself as a veterinarian, Lilith touches her lower abdomen to discover a rash. When she questions Mengele about the rash, he says it is a “good sign,” and doubles the medicinal dose. Ignoring the real symptoms in her body – not her size – but her reddened abdomen, Mengele pushes forward more excitedly with his project. The real signs of failure only spur him on, rather than providing



any kind of limit. In a perverse logic, his failure only further ensures that the ideal is pursued more voraciously. In the romantic tradition of the mad scientist, Mengele never for a second changes his aims. The ideal is not subject to “reality testing”; its frustration only ensures it is held onto more tenaciously. Moreover, the doctor’s series of injections into Lilith’s pelvis and into her mother’s pregnant belly are ways of making holes in them that are not sexual, holes that avoid their own feminine holes. This hole is the way he can sustain the mirror, and imaginarily master the genesis of life itself without sexuality, because sexuality – a use of his own hole – would only confront him with his position as man, as mortal, and as lacking.

### The Heim and the Unheim

Many Nazi refugees fled from Allied and Soviet punishment to Patagonia after the war. In the story, the hotel and hospital are set in Bariloche, Argentina, where German immigrants lived in nostalgically constructed 19<sup>th</sup>-century wooden Alpine houses. Adolf Eichmann, Josef Mengele, and Erich Priebke (The Economist 2013) were just some of the important high-ranking Nazi refugees known to have resided there.

The etymology of the word Patagonia means “big feet.” During his circumnavigation of the globe, Magellan witnessed the inordinately tall people in that region, and called them “*patagoni*” (Italian). People thought that a mythic race of giants existed in a far off place and this, for Jews and Christians, would recall the unexplained giants, the *Nephilim* in the Bible (Gen 6:4, Num 13:33, Eze 32:27). “Patagonia,” the land of giants, is ironically the very place where we meet a 12-year-old girl who is too short! The Nazi ideology of Aryan perfection adjuncts the Argentinian myth of giants, which adjuncts the biblical reference. Patagonia is yet another potential paradise of which the Nazis could dream, a place once inhabited by giants; perhaps the *Sonnenmenschen* will be found there – and if not, they can surely be engineered. The Andes look enough like the Alps after all. The race of giants is always a child’s wish since giants are modeled on our lost powerful parents and denote both an anxiety and marvel at their power, one we would like for our childhood selves as we look upon them with envy and awe.

The German language plays an uncanny role as that which is both “home and stranger” at the same time, allowing the doctor to speak with the mother in secret, leaving the father out of understanding and awareness. Eva had learned German in Bariloche as a girl at her mother’s hotel. On their arrival, Eva pulls out photos of herself at age ten and shows them to her daughter Lilith. These pictures are evidence of Eva’s having grown up as *both* Argentine and German. Bariloche is where she learned to speak the language and where many students in her school were saluting “*Heil Hitler*” during the early ‘40s. When Mengele realizes the wife speaks his language, he asks her quietly whether her husband understands them. Enzo overhears, and in an ironic reply, intones that he did not understand at all. Eva and Mengele communicate their secret fertility assistance plans beyond her husband’s purview, i.e., beyond the father. As in Hoffmann’s “The Sandman,” again we note the two “fathers”: Enzo, the biological father of the children is also the father-maker of the doll. The “father” of “perfected children” and of the mass-produced dolls, however, is the German doctor.

Mengele convinces Eva that he should treat Lilith with bovine hormone, and shows her charts that depict her daughter as abnormal. Ignoring Enzo’s warnings and concern, she meets

with the doctor in secret to give him her consent. A devoted mother, Eva will do anything for her daughter. Even as Enzo reminds his wife that Mengele is not their family doctor, she remains persuaded by Mengele's promise to abolish Lilith's "deformity" and fortify her own unborn twins. The partner of the psychotic doctor with "the answer" is the mother's wish for healthy, and more importantly, "normal" children.

Eva and Enzo have a normal marriage but in a move that undermines their trust, Eva subscribes to Mengele's promise of paradise and narcissistic tyranny where the psychotic gives back the phallus to the mother. Mengele promises to "abolish the cosmic polarity of the male and female principles." This promise is related to the metamorphosis of the mother and daughter into "complete life forms," restoring them literally, including Lilith's size, in a break from neurotic lack.

The doctor promises Lilith that she will grow to be a *Sonnenmenschen*, and the dwarf shall become a giant. Fascinated by the drawings she finds in a Nazi book in the hidden library and by her promised place, Lilith believes in Mengele's treatment. She wants to be the fantasy object for the *Ur Vater* and we see how this is imbricated in separating from and relating to her phallic place for her mother. Lilith asks the librarian about the meaning of *Sonnenmenschen* when she can't find the word in the dictionary – already an important moment because the word is not in a shared vocabulary. This question introduces an important character in the film, the librarian and archivist, Nora Eldoc, who gives Lilith information about Nazi "supermen." Eldoc was an actual historical person, who in the film is placed on the side of meaning and the symbolic for the girl, allowing her to begin to question the message she has received from this seemingly all-powerful other. We might point out that her family name suggests another kind of doctor, underlining language rather than the real, and assisting attempted capture of Mengele and the later narrative of Lilith.

Mengele is drawn to Patagonia where, while in disguise, he stumbles upon Lilith and her family. They meet at a filling station and the doctor asks to follow them; the road leads the family far from their previous home, and gives rise to an irresistible feminine urge to "return to the Real" (Žižek 2002, p. 19). Thus, the caravan commences upon a path through the desert, which lacks markers and is hard to navigate. Enzo, the father, replies: "Foreigners are always afraid of this route" (Puenzo 2011, p. 24). This remark intimates that Enzo already knows Mengele may not be who he appears to be and one should be cautious. Even though Enzo hesitates, he agrees to continue in convoy and a kind of uncanny chaperoning begins.

Enzo has been shown to be inadequate in his ability to support the family. The trip to the mother's childhood home is a solution. As developed in *The Unconcept*, the uncanny is associated with the "notion of *Heim*, [and thus] with the secret (*Geheimnis*)" (Masschelein 2011, p. 57). The maternal home and the maternal line include Eva's deceased mother. We could suppose that the "motherland" is precisely the secret that uncannily reveals itself beneath the dream of the *Vaterland* as Freud's "return of the repressed." Significantly, this maternal home is a hotel, underlining the fact that there is no home or real belonging, even to the mother, except in death. The maternal hotel, both home and not home, is the quintessential uncanny topos. Mengele follows the family on the desert road to find out their secrets, and in following them, he becomes part of their secret. He discovers where they are going and eventually insinuates

himself as their first boarder. The stranger appears suspicious, but he offers them money – something he will do continually, a temptation they cannot refuse. Against his better judgment, Enzo is able to be bought. The uninvited guest, the doctor makes the hotel and neighboring environs into an uncanny space for secret experiments as well as for the secrets he keeps with the mother and with the daughter, the least of the secrets that surround his person. Even more eerie, in a further uncanny irony, the hotel resides next to a hospital for the disabled that serves as home *both* to the handicapped (the very people Nazi doctors euthanized) *and* the escaped Nazi doctors. Still, the strange doctor is the first one to get a room and his presence in the not-yet-open-for-business hotel threatens the family's own sense of belonging, especially as he experiments on the mother and daughter in secret. Who do the women owe their allegiance to? The family's return to the maternal homeland and family hotel provides no hoped-for belonging, but only more anxious encounters.

### The Symbolic Intervenes

Nora Eldoc is first introduced to the family in Bariloche at an inaugural school party. As the adult double of Lilith, she functions as an antidote to the doll. She is also importantly a double-agent who works for the Mossad, and as such, places a limit to the overriding theme of the uncanny, because despite being “double,” her affiliation is nevertheless clear. She provides bits of information to Lilith about Mengele and helps her realize the pernicious and threatening nature of his experiments. Eldoc secretly takes photographs of Mengele, eventually reporting his presence there to the Israeli authorities. Eldoc's character is based on an Israeli spy and survivor of the Holocaust with the same name who worked to extradite Nazis in Argentina until she was eventually killed under nefarious circumstances (Jewish Telegraphic Agency 1961). From the beginning, Mengele always suspects Eldoc of not being “one of us.” He is able to recognize his adversary *as a woman* who thinks and who knows – a woman who sees and is not blinded by any phallic desire to belong. A woman who is no longer a child or subject to childhood wishes, threatens him. The doctor only has influence on women who long for a wholeness that castration makes impossible. The historic Mengele was famous for his ability to see “through” others. Even an assistant who worked for him and other doctors at Auschwitz, who claimed that it was easy to manipulate the doctors and get them to do what she wanted, said of the particularity of Mengele, “I don't think for a moment that I could manipulate him, ever ever” (Lifton 1986, p. 344). People intuited that it was impossible to fool him. It was simply more expedient to tell him the truth as often as possible.

Eldoc's photos create a record of Mengele, who was thought by many to be lost or dead. After she receives a letter alerting her (in code) to Eichmann's imminent arrest, she carries on photographing Mengele with renewed verve. We see Eldoc's “project” as the antipode to the doctor's; they both become more impassioned after they see the real effects of their work, he by the rash on Lilith's abdomen, she by the knowledge of Eichmann's capture, which affirms the social value of her work. Eldoc compiles a record to expose Mengele's identity and whereabouts. Ultimately, this will cost her her life. Mengele attempts to displace such identification as deceitful, by ensuring that it is Eldoc who remains the dangerous threat.

In the film, Mengele twists Eldoc's arm and threatens her life while the frightened Lilith looks on, unseen by either of them. Lilith's gaze and resulting skepticism is a turning point in the

story – she becomes fearful of the doctor because she identifies with Eldoc and trusts her. Lilith follows Mengele up to his office where he is packing his bags. Mengele senses their “relationship” is about to come to an end and asks Lilith if she would “do anything” for him. For the first time, she answers, “No.” In response, he does not ask why or what’s wrong, but decrees: “You will not forget me.”

It will in fact be hard for the family to “forget” the experiments done to the twins, Eva, or to Lilith as they have a permanent effect on their bodies. Eldoc opens Mengele’s journal to the uncanny sketches of deformity and of the family, including drawings of the twins, Enzo, Eva, and Lilith. The journal reveals how the doctor thrives on manipulating the Real to rid the world of its supposed deformity. Eldoc shows Enzo the journal with drawings of his own head indicating its size and diameter. She shows him the doctor’s drawings of his wife depicted naked and pregnant. The journal reveals that Mengele has been experimenting on the twins, with one baby as a control for the other. Eldoc’s evidence finally convinces Enzo of Mengele’s identity and he realizes in quiet horror what has transpired between Mengele and the women in his family. In this way, Eldoc shows how Mengele doesn’t belong in Patagonia. In terms of the narrative of the film, while Mengele promises an ideal-ego, Eldoc’s symbolic work allows her to become an ego-ideal for Lilith, which ultimately constructs a document (photos, film) that shows Mengele’s true character.

The doctor warns Eva, “hereditary diseases skip a generation” but “you must be careful, it could happen again.” The fomented fear of genetic inheritance effectively replaces mothering as symbolic with mothering as zoomorphic and biological. One is no longer held to any symbolic authority to produce ethical subjects – one’s role is completely reduced to an imaginary vigilance – who needs parents at all?

In the end, the film shows how Mengele’s experiments on Eva’s body – with her complicity – cause real damage. Enzo realizes there is nothing he can do to get Mengele out of his house when, because of a storm, they must ask Mengele to deliver Eva’s twins. Enzo further realizes how Mengele has actually operated inside the bodies of his wife and daughter – a realization of the uncanny breaching of the “*heim*,” and of his own powerlessness.

Mengele would like to continue working on Eva’s twins but he realizes he must decamp after a nurse informs him that Eichmann has been captured and he is in danger. When the nurse presses him to leave, he replies: “Not yet, my work here is not done!” He believes so much in his calling that he is ready to sacrifice himself for it. At this point, the babies are in plastic bags making an oxygen bubble. Looking apprehensively at her suffering newborns, Eva says that the babies are “best off with him [Mengele],” adding, “I don’t care who he is!” Enzo replies importantly, “*I do.*” The scene shows the place the newborns have for their mother – one wherein she would sacrifice her symbolic and ethical position – and do anything to keep them alive. This is clearly not Enzo’s position. It cannot be. Lilith’s “No” to the doctor and Enzo’s limit to “doing anything for the children” mark the end of the film – a limit is made.

Lifton opines that “The Auschwitz self was the means by which the Nazi doctor could bring to his killing the mana of a shaman, a priest, a magician” (Lifton 1986, p. 431). The “Patagonia self” was the means by which the Nazi doctor made it even more clear that the self is

already other – and that shamans, priests and magicians can only work their magic in fairy tales, travelogues or concentration camps. In Patagonia, the “Nazi biological revolutionary” (Lifton 1986, p. 377) that Mengele “exemplified” is revealed as less magical, less shamanistic, and more simply what he was, criminally insane. If, as one prisoner-doctor testified about the infamous doctor, “He had no problems – not with his conscience, not with anybody, not with anything” (Lifton 1986, p. 344), in exile and in disguise, problems were had with him. Ultimately, the film shows us that there is no self and there is no belonging despite the power of the Nazi imaginary. In the end, the father finally acts on what he sees – and the daughter does the same to grow up, become a woman and to write the novel.

To find one’s proper place, then, entails the loss of paradise and the invention of a limit via art, in this case the creation of a novel and a film. On the one hand, the art object testifies to the fact that “belonging” in some maternal uncanny paradise, sustained by Mengele’s promise of perfection, is fake; only death belongs there. The art object, on the other hand, gives life to a subjective truth and dignity to a traumatic past that was never written into history, bringing death to the side of life where belonging, however much wished for or nostalgically cherished, is never perfect.

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## Editor's Introduction: Psychoanalysis, Institutions and Belonging

Michael Stuart Garfinkle, PhD

I was always a good student, but unwaveringly preferred independent work to group work. Group work generated too many encounters with social loafing, an unhelpful force given my natural social wariness. An exception to this trend was in the small group readings in college of Freud, beginning with the "Project for a Scientific Psychology" through *Civilization and Its Discontents* and "Mourning and Melancholia." These small groups recalled the mode in which we learned Talmud in high school – in pairs, examining controversies evoked by the text, rather than searching for God's truth in every letter. This particular foundation in critical reading prompted me to read Freud as an important beginning for independent thoughts about psychoanalysis.

By the end of college, I decided that being a psychoanalyst would be the best way to combine an interest in healing, previously thought possible only by becoming a medical doctor, with the ability to remain flexible enough to change my practice based on evolving philosophical beliefs. I became involved with the New York Psychoanalytic Society & Institute with the hope that I would find conservative psychoanalytic thinkers interested in reading Freud carefully, with an intent to study the gap between what is said and what is knowable. To my ultimate dismay, the number of smart, engaging conservatives I met were dwarfed by the heavy hand of orthodoxy, most prominently seen in an unyielding, rigid bureaucracy. Readings of Freud were exegetical and left little room to be curious; rather, there were obvious solutions to every problem, a compromise formation around every corner. There was a form for each incoming candidate to sign where some sort of promise was made to not describe oneself as a psychoanalyst until the Institute administration decided you were "kosher," a phrase used all the time by Jews and non-Jews alike at NYPSI, which I found particularly unwelcome given my origins. How bizarre, I thought, that in a state that allows people with doctoral-level training to use the term without training, this place demanded loyalty and the relinquishing of entitlement for the sake of becoming meat Jews can eat.

Belonging tends to be thought about as a positive aspirational or declarative: how nice it would be to belong to x, or, it's so nice to belong to x. Sometimes it's used to enforce politesse, as in: part of belonging to a family means seeing your mother-in-law. Seldom is it used to describe the burden of belonging, except when used as a threat: if being your daughter means listening to this, I'm leaving home, or Groucho Marx's "I don't want to belong to a club that would have me as a member."

For psychoanalysts, trained to engage the mind of the individual under the auspices of a profession, a larger group, the question of what it means to belong has been neglected.<sup>[1]</sup> Instead, and in keeping with fashionable ideas, much discussion has been dedicated to analytic *identity* and the like, while far less has been discussed in terms of the *Civilization and Its Discontents* in our profession.<sup>[2]</sup> The idea for this issue came into being precisely because the nature of belonging to a psychoanalytic group and its related phenomena, like attachment, identification,

etc., needs a closer look, and because psychoanalysts ought to know that the most interesting possibilities lie between defiance and compliance, dependence and independence.

#### Endnotes

<sup>[1]</sup> There is a much-discussed, poorly-documented observation of the disappearance of courses on Freud on groups from the Institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association in New York, and other reports that suggest the same is true elsewhere.

<sup>[2]</sup> A noteworthy exception is the New York-based group, Das Unbehagen, which has among its adherents several members of the editorial board of *The Candidate*.

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## **“Loneliness and the Sense of Belonging” – Thoughts about Immigration, Loneliness, and the Communities of Those Who Do Not Belong**

**Orna Ophir, PhD**

Drawing on unpublished material from the Melanie Klein Archive in London, this paper argues that as result of the interminable work of integration in the intrapsychic world, one can never fully belong to oneself nor, as a consequence, belong to others. It is only in the mourning of the illusion of belonging that this latter could turn into a good object in one’s inner world, leading one to create responsible communities while being responsive to others.

“The working title that came into my mind on reading your paper was ‘Loneliness and the Sense of Belonging,’ ” wrote Elliot Jaques (1917-2003), the Canadian-born British psychoanalyst, in a letter to Melanie Klein on June 1, 1959,<sup>[1]</sup> regarding her paper “On the Sense of Loneliness” (Klein 1959). Klein was to present this paper, which turned out to be her last, at the International Psychoanalytic Congress in Copenhagen, on July 27, 1959. This was also the paper that she planned to give during what would have been her first visit to America, in November 1960.

Although her ideas were gradually but greatly marginalized by mainstream American psychoanalysis, a group of psychiatrists from the Institute of the Pennsylvania Hospital, working with severely disturbed schizophrenic patients, invited Klein to teach them her theory and technique. In their letter of invitation they wrote: “We are most eager that all here at the Institute of the Pennsylvania Hospital may have the opportunity to learn from you personally, and earnestly hope that we can prevail upon you to make this contribution to the understanding of your ideas by American psychiatrists.”<sup>[2]</sup> Planning her visit, Klein chose her paper “On the Sense of Loneliness” and, in the “revised version to America,”<sup>[3]</sup> she emphasized in greater detail the very sense of loneliness that the schizophrenic individual feels and that is part of mental illness more generally. Klein had to cancel her planned visit because of illness. Very shortly after the aforementioned correspondence, on September 22, 1960, Melanie Klein passed away in University College Hospital in London.

My earliest clinical interest in Klein was similar to that of many mental health professionals who work with individuals suffering severe mental illness and search for a psychoanalytic frame of reference applicable to this kind of endeavor. Fortunate enough to be working in a hospital setting that was psychoanalytically oriented when I began my work there in the early 1990s, I was introduced to Klein’s ideas about early infantile anxiety situations and to the application of these ideas to the treatment of patients with schizophrenia. Even when a neo-somatic revolution in psychiatry culminated in a significant decrease in the number of psychoanalysts on the staff and to a far greater emphasis on the biology of mental illnesses, the hospital was still psychoanalysis-friendly and remained so, even when I left it 18 years later. During these years, it was notably Klein’s theory and the insights of post-Kleinian theorists and practitioners that allowed clinicians to think psychoanalytically about very disturbed patients, as their clinically grounded concepts offered hope in a field otherwise full of despair. The knowledge Klein had gained through her study of psychic mechanisms, anxieties and defenses, operative in earliest infancy, radically changed the view that schizophrenic patients were incapable of forming transference relationships and, therefore, could not be psychoanalyzed.

Although she clearly understood the role of the infant's early emotional life as illuminating the fixation points of adult psychosis, Klein also acknowledged that the psychoanalysis of schizophrenic patients needed much further exploration. Yet she believed that the work done by psychoanalysts who treated schizophrenic patients in psychiatric settings, clinicians such as Hanna Segal, Herbert Rosenfeld, and Wilfred Bion, "seem[ed] to justify hopes for the future" (Klein 1955, p. 140).

My historical interest in Klein's ideas began when I was writing my book about the ways in which mainstream American psychoanalysis gradually and increasingly deserted schizophrenic patients, as it withdrew itself from psychiatric hospitals and universities and invested its efforts in private practice and psychoanalytic institutes (Ophir 2015). Although American psychoanalysts, especially in the Washington-Baltimore area, devoted themselves to work with schizophrenic patients, they broadly defined their work as a form of dynamic psychiatry that was more eclectic than traditional psychoanalysis. As shown in my book, this trend was possibly one of the reasons why they found themselves struggling with the rise of neo-somatic psychiatry, which soon gained jurisdictional hegemony in the domain of mental health.

It seems that the hopes that Klein held out for the future of the field, and which inspired generations of British psychoanalysts working with severely disturbed children and adults, were not shared by mainstream American psychoanalysts. Along with rejection of Klein's work, they showed resistance to working with the kind of patients who displayed precisely those layers of the mind Klein and her followers had been studying. My second book project, *Klein in America – The Marginalization of Melanie Klein's Thought in American Psychoanalysis 1924 -2009*, uses the double meaning of the German word "*klein*," which, translated, means "small," to study what Martin Jay (1986) has termed the "selective hospitality" (p. xiv) shown to the German intellectual immigration, by applying his concept and its far-ranging implications to the mixed welcome that Klein's thought and legacy encountered among mainstream American psychoanalysts.

Immigration is a complicated, multifaceted process that affects not only individuals but also ideas. Although Klein's ideas were initially enthusiastically welcomed by early American psychiatrists, interested as they were in psychoanalysis and in European thought more generally – representatives such as Smith Ely Jelliffe and Adolf Meyer come to mind – there was a gradual decline in the appreciation of her theory during the mid 1930s. This soon escalated and her theories would be fiercely rejected during the second wave of immigration of analysts from Europe, beginning in the late 1930s and increasing throughout the immediate postwar period. Although her ideas were reintroduced in America by psychoanalysts such as Otto Kernberg and Roy Schafer, notably at the beginning of mid-1960s – and even though her thought and work remained very influential on the West Coast, where Kleinian analysts such as Segal, Rosenfeld and Bion taught during the 1970s (and where analysts trained by them, such as James Grotstein and Albert Mason, continue to teach to this day) – Klein's original proposals, especially those regarding infantile sadistic phantasies and the death drive, seemed too difficult for American analysts to swallow.

Aware of American psychoanalysts' reaction to her work, and perhaps anticipating this eventual difficulty, it is not surprising that of the many papers Klein could have chosen to

present during her long-planned trip to America, she selected the paper “On the Sense of Loneliness,” which, after all, is also a paper on the sense of not-belonging. It was when she was finally invited to the place that embraced her nemesis, Anna Freud, and where her own theories were considered “un-American” (Kernberg 2008), that Klein decided to read a paper about the sense of inner loneliness that persists, to some degree, irrespective of external circumstances of *de facto* acknowledgment and experienced love.

Klein sees the manifest conviction of some individuals that they belong to no person or to no group as communicating a more profound feeling. She writes: “This not belonging can be seen to have a much deeper meaning. However much integration proceeds, it cannot do away with the feeling that certain components of the self are not available because they are split off and cannot be regained. Some of these split-off parts . . . are projected into other people, contributing to the feeling that one is not in full possession of one’s self, that one does not fully belong to oneself or, therefore to anybody else. The lost parts too, are felt to be lonely” (1959, p. 302).

According to Klein, we never achieve full and permanent integration because some polarity between life and death instincts always persists, and the death instinct, the aim of which is to disintegrate unities, is always operative, keeping parts of the self, disintegrated at its core. This was the reason Klein saw the loneliness of the fragmented schizophrenic, in whom disintegrative processes are extremely intense and particularly destructive, as the utmost misery of feeling left alone by one’s own internal objects. The lonely schizophrenic individual, distanced from his good internal objects, is, Klein suggests, left only with external hostile objects, which in a vicious cycle create more loneliness and, hence, ever more disintegration.

Although Klein is clear about the pathological sense of loneliness emanating from states of disintegration in mental illness, she devotes most of her original paper to a sense of loneliness and of not belonging that afflicts more integrated, healthier individuals as well. One can say that the kind of loneliness she discusses at length in her paper and this sense of not belonging that arises from the very same psychic dynamic is an integral part of mental health. Klein begins by depicting the sources of the sense of loneliness and of not belonging in the depressive position, in which the reality principle prevails and one is more integrated, as are one’s internal and external objects. There is the realistic fear of the death of one’s own loved objects and of oneself, and the thought of such ending, losses and death, intensify loneliness. Integration is also accompanied by the pain of loneliness and not belonging that derives from the acknowledgment of one’s own destructive impulses, and thereby of the danger and the possible loss of one’s good objects as a result of one’s very own aggression. Another source of the sense of loneliness in the more integrative state is directly related to the greater sense of reality one holds. As the sense of reality grows, one is deprived from one’s sense of omnipotence and of idealization. The loss of an omnipotent self and an ideal object contribute, once again, to a feeling of loneliness. Finally, the conflict between the male and the female elements in each person and the integration between these two are related to the working through of the attack on the female/mother and the male/father, and the respective identifications with these contrasting elements likewise contribute to the sense of parts not belonging to the self and to the feeling of loneliness.

For Klein, then, some of our parts will never belong to the self, and this will always be a source of a sense of loneliness and deprivation. The self is deprived of these parts and these parts, in turn, “feel” lonely. This ubiquitous sense of loneliness and not belonging varies in intensity only because of the presence of some mitigating factors. Among these factors, Klein mentions the innate strength of the ego, which is less liable to fragmentation and more capable of a good early relation to the primal object and the internalization of a good object. All of these are central to the capacity to modulate the pain of loneliness and the sense of not belonging. Where that is the case, Klein notes, love can be given and received: “There is always a connection between being able to accept and to give, and both are part of the relation to the good object and therefore counteract loneliness” (1959, p. 310). Gratitude, creativity, and generosity are further mitigating factors in the sense of loneliness. For example, even when one feels alone and frustrated, one can reach for memories of happy times, and the feeling of trust this inspires, in turn, mitigates loneliness.

But, all these factors that can diminish the sense of loneliness “never entirely eliminate it” (1959, p. 311), Klein insists. Moreover, all aforementioned factors also can be used defensively, such that loneliness is not consciously felt although it remains unconsciously operative and damaging. One of the many defensive ways one protects oneself against the pain of loneliness is an extreme dependence on the mother. A flight into the internal object, such as hallucinatory gratification, may similarly serve the very same aim. Likewise, precociousness could be defensively used in order to overcome loneliness. Whereas in old age it could be the preoccupation with some idealized past that denies loneliness, in young people it can be the sense of an idealization of the future, and so on. The trouble with these defenses is that when loneliness is not consciously experienced, it does not become a stimulus towards object relations and thus interferes with the very opportunity to find an object that could possibly mitigate the sense of not belonging and of loneliness.

Although Klein puts much emphasis on the inner sense of loneliness, which derives from inner processes and relations to internal objects, she does not ignore the external influences, beginning with the discomfort of birth. But, in the end, she first and foremost concentrates on the importance of the inner world: “Although loneliness can be diminished or increased by external influences, it can never be completely eliminated because the urge towards integration as well as the pain experienced in the process of integration, spring from internal sources which remain powerful through life” (Klein 1959, p. 313).

When Elliot Jaques, with whose suggestion to Klein we started out, offers his comments on Klein’s paper, he emphasizes the sense of “belonging,” which Klein addresses but only obliquely. In his letter to Klein, Jaques writes:

- (a) The greater the integration, the greater the capacity of feeling that one belongs to oneself as well as to one’s internal parents, family, etc.
- (b) At the same time, the sense of belonging is not inconsistent with the feeling of loneliness; for, as you point out, greater integration implies acceptance of loss and hence toleration of a certain amount of loneliness.

Jaques adds that he finds in Klein a clear expression of the circumstance that “the capacity for greater toleration of loneliness in itself reinforces feelings of belonging and the capacity [i.e., to tolerate loneliness, O.O.] allows oneself to belong, that is to say, to commit oneself to good objects.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Thus, Jaques supplements Klein’s argument with the suggestion that a state of internal integration, even though never complete, implies an acceptance of the losses (both of external objects and of parts of the self), just as it entails a person who can belong to herself, even if she is not, and will never be fully, herself, and yet can also tolerate a certain amount of loneliness. This tolerance of loneliness, in turn, reinforces a feeling of belonging, such that one could allow oneself to belong and to commit oneself to one’s objects.

Jaques continues and offers Klein his analysis of her paper within the larger framework of her entire oeuvre, as he sees it: “I think you will find, if you look through your paper, that just as the theme of gratitude was in fact already in your previous paper, so here is the theme of the sense of belonging.” He concludes his letter with a suggestion that Klein, who had solicited his comments, would nonetheless not adopt: “The working title that came into my mind on reading your paper was “Loneliness and the Sense of Belonging.”

It is clear that both Klein and Jaques are discussing loneliness and belonging in intrapsychic terms. It is an “inner sense of loneliness” or an “internal state of loneliness” that is the result of a “ubiquitous yearning for an unattainable perfect internal state” (Klein 1959, p. 300). Likewise, as Jaques suggests, it is a “belonging to oneself as well as to one’s internal parents, family, etc.,” and a commitment to one’s good internal objects. Because full internal integration can never be attained, we can never feel that we fully belong to ourselves and thus we can never fully feel that we belong to others, be they individuals or groups. The only hope one can nourish, according to this theory, then, is to be integrated enough to tolerate losses, to begin with the loss of the very option to fully belong to oneself and to others.

As internal states find their representations in external circumstances, if one cannot fully belong to oneself, one can surely never fully belong to others. The wish to fully belong, to become a “full member,” of whatever relationships, groups, clubs, or institutions, is also the wish to do away with the pain emanating from the work of integration, which is never fully achieved. The need to fully belong appears to be a universal feature of a state of mental health. Yet the feeling that one has arrived, that one has in fact achieved this belonging, might well reflect a dangerous denial (be it a manic defense or a paranoid-schizoid defense) of the primary violation done to the split-off objects and their subsequent external representation to presumed, non-included “strangers.”

When Zygmunt Bauman (1993) writes about modern society, he emphasizes that every community produces its own strangers, those who are located outside and who are perceived and characterized as well as excluded as (cognitively and morally, ethnically or aesthetically) alien to it. If we think of a community as a self, further, if a community comprises those who have something in common (whether it be birth, gender, race or any other shared predicate or characteristic), then the strangers are those that are split-off and excluded. But these split-off parts, these strangers, do not disappear and the community can either assimilate them, or – in

Bauman's (somewhat Kleinian) description and corporeal terminology – annihilate them, “by devouring them and metabolically transforming them into a tissue indistinguishable from one's own.” Alternatively, so the analysis continues, society can rid itself of them by “vomiting the strangers, banishing them from the limits of the orderly world and barring them from all communication with those inside” (p. 201). In sum, those who do not belong, the strangers, appear as a problem to be overcome, either by making the stranger similar or by making their strangeness invisible, unnecessary to have any further dealings with, work with, or work through.

The alternative to such identitarian (or is it communitarian?) communities is rooted in the acceptance of the painful truth that we never actually entirely overcome primitive anxieties; in other words, that we are never fully integrated and will always only partially belong to ourselves and thus to others. Mourning of the phantasy to fully belong could in and of itself lead to a different kind of community, one in which we are and remain in a fundamentally strange and estranged sense, strangers to ourselves and thus strangers to each other. In Georges Bataille's view, such would be a community of those who do not belong to any community; for Maurice Blanchot, it would conjure a community whose members are those of a “we who cannot completely say we;” in Jacques Derrida's understanding, finally, we would from here on aspire to a “we” whose existence must (can and ought) even be doubted (Morin 2006).

When the inability to belong to one's self – to one self – and thus also to others, when the impossible wish to fully belong to a community is not so much mourned but instead caught in denial, the inevitable, if unintended, result is that of a community that activates primitive identificatory mechanisms, defining those who belong to it and those who do not. The latter “community,” if one can still call it that, survives and thrives only insofar as it marginalizes, isolates, and does away with the stranger. By externalizing the conflict and projecting it onto others, there is a deep-seated wish to do away with one's internal sense of not belonging and the correlative strangeness of oneself to oneself.

Klein, who was born in Vienna, immigrated to Budapest, Berlin, and finally to London. In her unpublished autobiography, she writes that although she felt sympathy for the people who struggled to establish the state of Israel, and although she was proud to confirm her Jewish origins, she would have hated to live in Israel itself: “In my attitude of sympathy with Israel also enters a feeling which though it may have originated in the state of persecution of the Jews, extends to all minorities and to all people persecuted by stronger forces. Who knows! This might have given me the strength to be always in a minority about my scientific work and not to mind and to be quite willing to stand against a majority for which I had some contempt, which in time has been mitigated by tolerance.”<sup>[5]</sup>

My own contempt and tolerance were put to the test when I relocated from Israel to the United States in 2008. A “foreign” candidate and a “resident alien,” I was lucky enough to meet a group of other candidates who, even if not foreign to this country, had similar difficulties in fully belonging to psychoanalysis in its institutional form. They, too, felt the duality of, on the one hand, wanting to belong to the long tradition of psychoanalytic theory and practice about which they were deeply passionate, but, on the other hand, not being able to recognize themselves in the forms its institutional life had taken. Realizing the inevitable discontent that is inherent to the existence of individuals in groups and societies, we formed what we hoped to be a

different kind of community. It was named *Das Unbehagen*, after Freud's famous 1930 book *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur (Civilization and Its Discontents)*. Resisting any form of material exchange, any kind of hierarchical organization, any form of committees or gatekeepers, not to mention any adherence to one way of thinking theoretically and practically, the individuals who comprised this group created a unique community in the psychoanalytic world. It is a community that does not expect anyone's belonging and does not excommunicate any individual who wants to belong to it, even if he/she charts a singular course. One might say that the term "belonging" is always in brackets in this group as, at times, it seems that it is a community of people who have very little in common (Lingis 1994).

*Das Unbehagen* – a free association for psychoanalysis, as it is called – has served and continues to serve individuals as an important reminder that even when one formally belongs to a psychoanalytic school or to a psychoanalytic institution, association, or tradition, one should never forget that such belonging is, at least partially and perhaps necessarily, somewhat illusory. By contrast, belonging, to those who, like oneself, never feel that they fully belong, is an emancipatory gesture aimed at building an ethical psychoanalytic community in which everyone can be and is welcomed as a "stranger" and, in this sense, as strangely singular, indeed.

I truly believe that it has been my strange belonging to this unique community that has allowed me to be the otherwise dutiful and conscientious candidate I was expected to be and remain at my institute, fulfilling my commitments and obligations to the best of my abilities, but also with a more realistic sense of self and others, both internal and external. After all, it is only on the basis of this kind of belonging to those who emphasize a different kind of belonging that one can, perhaps, learn to respond to genuine others in a far more responsive and also responsible – and, I am tempted to add, professional – way.

As with other illusions, and following the lead of Joshua Durban, the editor of the translation of Melanie Klein's works into Hebrew, it is only in embracing with love and longing the more primitive illusion of fully belonging that this illusion can turn into a good object in one's internal world. Instead of becoming a destructive identificatory claim for an idealized form of complete belonging upon oneself and others, this illusion may act instead as a good internal object directing the individual to seek the only realistic possible belonging, that which is only partial. Such good internal company can serve as a mitigating force that may reconcile one with the inevitable state of loneliness and not belonging, and accept and respect it in others.

#### Endnotes

[1] A letter from Elliot Jaques addressed to Melanie Klein (Melanie Klein Archive at the Wellcome Collection, London, UK). Thanks to the Melanie Klein Trust for allowing me access to this material.

[2] From the original invitation extended to Melanie Klein, signed by Lauren H. Smith, physician-in-chief and administrator of the Institute of the Pennsylvania Hospital, July 19, 1960 (Melanie Klein Archive at the Wellcome Collection, London, UK).

[3] Melanie Klein Archive at the Wellcome Collection, London, UK.

[4] Letter from Jaques to Klein, June 1, 1959.

[5] Melanie Klein's unpublished autobiography (Melanie Klein Archive, Wellcome Collection, London, UK).

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## Belongings

Emma Lieber, PhD

**This essay associates to the idea of belonging as it relates to the analytic space, and what is inside of it.**

Some people have offices and some people do not. Like other recognitions of difference, this realization was sufficiently traumatic that, as a child, I renounced it. When my preschool teachers asked what my parents did for a living, I proclaimed that my mother did housework and my father helped her, even though my school was on the same college campus where he was a teacher and administrator, just five minutes away from his office.

To me, the idea of belonging always has centered around this figure of the office: the space of official doings that announces your membership in an institution and your productive participation as a citizen, the place where you pronounce yourself necessary and wanted by the community and, by extension, the nation, world, universe. So, I presume, ran my fantasy of phallic wholeness. My father worked in the same office for 30 years, with the same framed Hopper prints adorning his walls, helping students through their various academic and personal difficulties. Everyone knew him on campus. My mother did not have an office. And so I grew up with some vague question about what women had and where they belonged.

But no one can really *have* the office, so to speak. My father's stable and long-lasting endowment belied a correlative anxiety about membership and one's proper belongings – a game of possession and dispossession that I now live out in order to prove. I seem to shed offices almost as soon as I am given them, and the rooms themselves evoke this strange dance. When students walk into the university office I now occupy, transiently, as a postdoctoral fellow, they invariably comment on how weird a space it is: up two flights of a winding, steep staircase, one flight of which is divided by a door that periodically hits someone when you open it, in a small Victorian-era house that runs cold. The room itself is entirely bare except for a few books that I've left there after we're done with them in class, and as the pile grows, I get more and more worried about how I'm going to get them all home at the end of the year, when my tenure in the office is up. Any fullness or accumulation seems to be a problem here. I sit perched on an uncomfortable chair, with my laptop on my knees because the table space is taken up by a desktop that I can't get to work. In the winter I wear my coat. Whose space is this? students must think as they enter. What, exactly, is she doing here? How long will this place be hers? Who else occupies it? Who was here before? Like language, these spaces are the instruments of whoever happens to be inhabiting them, words passed along from speaker to speaker. Belonging to no one, retaining the residue of past use and the shadows of former occupants, they elicit the sensation that there are ghosts here.

Psychoanalysts have offices. Don't they? Their work hinges on the possession of an office, a private space, a piece of property with the proper adornments: couch, chairs, clock, tissues. And yet, my analyst's old office was a museum, and the only thing that was clear to me about it was that its offerings long predated her arrival. On the walls hung relics, art works made of found objects—sea shells, broken bottles—and a photograph of a woman and child that only after four years did I realize also contained a man. Some of the works were labeled but I could

never make out what they said, and the obsessional quality of those tallyings was offset by the fact that many of either the labels or the pieces hung askew. I had no idea who made those pieces, who hung them in that office, or who failed to correct their unevenness. I couldn't figure out what the building was besides that it had a strange name and a cherished past, or who ran things, or who else occupied it from day to day. There seemed to be a set of men constantly coming and going, working on something in the back, leaving shaving equipment in the bathroom, and they showed up in my dreams as lumberjacks. Weird items would be left in the hallways by someone: something that looked like a surfboard, once, in some kind of protective carapace, and once a thin bouquet of flowers wrapped in a newspaper. I think that either the flowers were dead or the newspaper was the obituary page, but probably neither is true. This was a space with strange traces, communications from the beyond, that belonged to no one, although it's only now that she's moved – divested of her office as quickly and mysteriously as, it seemed to me, she acquired it – that I've made my own mark on the analytic space, staked my own transient claim on the environment in commemoration of dislocations past and future. Perhaps this also marks the beginning of my questioning of how to position myself, as an analyst, in an office, when the time comes.

I say this because it seems to me that the question of belonging for psychoanalysts must hinge on the question of what belongs to psychoanalysts, and because the belongings most visible to analysts are and are in their offices. It is all too easy to see the office as some kind of visible essence of its owner; hence perhaps the impulse to photograph analysts in their offices. Yet something like *50 Shrinks* must, I think, in some way play on the disjunction between the desire to discern a symbiosis between shrink and surrounding and the very disjunction staged by the photographic medium – like language, the photograph evoking nothing so much as the absence of the thing itself, as well as the distance between audience and subject. For to whom, in the end, do the objects in these offices in these pictures belong; does not the work done there hinge on that uncertainty; and might not the colloquial “shrink” be understood as self-reflexive, that is, as referring to the kenotic self-emptying of the analyst, who disappears in space? Freud's office may be said to have evoked this gesture in a kind of deferred action, the emptying out of Berggasse 19 retrospectively revealing the tenuousness of all those attachments in a room stuffed with books and over 2000 pieces from antiquity. One wonders what sort of heritage Freud was claiming by curating those pieces, creating what was already the Freud Museum, or in what way that affiliation was complicated by the fact of his exile, the result of another identity altogether. The things were transferred to London of course and replaced, in the current-day Freud Museum in Vienna, by a series of photographs.

In any event, it seems to me that if analysis is to make a space for longing, then the space of the analyst cannot be too cluttered with what announce themselves as belongings. If it is to teach us that we are not self-possessed – not kings of our own castles, not administrators of our own offices (or perhaps, only administrators) – then it cannot evoke any immutable attachments: to affiliations or ideologies as much as to places or possessions. Given the analyst's ghostly presence, she presumably cannot operate on the register of having. Or, the operative organs that the analyst does possess are empty orifices – ear, mouth – and the fillings of the room must pay homage to these vacancies. If there is any affiliation, it is to the unconscious and to language: to the words that are in the analyst's mouth for a moment, which are taken up and transformed, returned to them but not quite, in an ongoing circuit of passage, stealing, and gift. It seems to me

that to claim the title of analyst is precisely to announce one's fealty to language over titles. If the analyst belongs to anything, it is to language and the desire that accompanies it, which is forever moving and can be taken up by anyone.

This is not to say that there can be no sense of community. I always think of Nabokov here, one of the authors I teach, although I am also chastened when I remember his invectives against Freud and Freudians as well as his smirking contempt for the notion of the unconscious. Maybe I have something to prove to him, too, especially because one would think he would have been at home with the notion of self-exile. The consummate aristocrat, he lost his homeland, his house, and his stuff in the Russian Revolution and spent his life in perpetual expatriation. His gift for language may have been a response to all that loss, words becoming the only property, his astounding mastery of several languages marking the assurance of fitting in or settling down anywhere. Yet all of his books are about people who don't belong, and every word resonates with its own self-insufficiency, the impossibility of getting back to one's home and one's things, as well as with a passionate pleasure that must, somewhere, admit the possibility of overthrowing masters, dethroning kings, and unseating authors. One of his greatest novels, *Pale Fire* – about a psychotic who, believing himself to be the deposed king of Zembla posing as an academic in America, steals a poem from his neighbor, a great professor and poet – features a vision of community founded on radical unhaving. The psychotic lives in someone else's house and the poet is killed in an act of mistaken identity – so much for academics and their various fantasies of possession, royal or otherwise – and yet something beautiful is born of their neighborliness. We are all exiles, bereft of our kingdoms by one revolution or another, thrust out of Majesty into language and desire and always on the move, and it is only here that we can register our allegiances. The poet and the psychotic take long walks and have long talks, because at least we can speak and listen to each other.

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The other night I had a dream. It was the night before I was to sit for my readiness for clinical practice exam, which will allow me, soon, to start seeing patients. In the dream, I walked down the street, trying to get home, pushing against an invisible force. I came upon a construction site, or perhaps it was a crime scene, and crossed underneath the barrier, where, below me, lay a peculiar creature – gray, spongy skin, elongated head, naked and sexless – on its back, looking up. It tried to speak to me and there was both a leisureliness and an urgency to its enunciation; but it murmured quietly and I couldn't hear above the hubbub. At its feet lay another similar creature, smaller, unmoving, face down. I wondered whether the first had given birth to the second, and whether the second was dead.

Is this the analytic space? The place was in ruins, and yet the construction workers – or maybe it was the police – could not help this thing. What a strange environment in which to do one's work, open to the elements, broken objects all around, a half-formed alien lying supine, asking to be heard. The baby belonged to it and yet also didn't, and I was out of place in the scene. I got nervous, ducked out, and continued home, to the things and people that I comfort, or, perhaps, fool myself, belong to me. I hope in the future I will have the courage to stay longer.

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## **Belonging To vs. Belonging Together: Change and Stability in Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Institutes**

**Orshi Hunyady, PhD, and Pascal Sauvayre, PhD**

The authors explore the combination of our powerful internal needs and the external demands of the social organizations to which we belong. They then discuss the idea of "belonging together," a form of belonging that they differentiate from "belonging to," which can lay the foundations for creative and imaginative possibilities. The authors highlight how institutionalized practices, of psychoanalytic institutions in particular, too often stray from this form of belonging that lies at (in) the heart of the psychoanalytic endeavor.

We belong to the William Alanson White Society and are graduates in psychoanalysis from the William Alanson White Institute; we are part of this community. How does that define us? How does that shape our psychoanalytic identity? And how do we, in turn, shape and define the Society and the Institute?

In this essay, we explore not so much the specific contents of these questions, but how belonging is structured. In particular, we illuminate some of the less obvious deeper links that structure belonging and identity, both intrapsychically and socially; we then explore how this applies to training and membership in psychoanalytic institutes. In our exploration, we outline the powerful internal needs that underlie our interdependence as subjects, and which, in combination with the external demands of the social organizations to which we belong, lead to the dominance of belonging's more oppressive and insidious qualities, specifically obedience and conformity. Hopefully, we do not have to remain hostage to this dynamic; instead, we can draw on these same sources of interdependence and develop ways to belong "together," a form of belonging that we differentiate from "belonging to." Without foregrounding the hierarchical aspects of "belonging to," belonging together can lay the foundations for creative and imaginative possibilities, which in our opinion lie at (in) the heart of the psychoanalytic endeavor, and from which its institutionalized practices all too often stray.

### **Belonging (To)**

Belonging appears at first to be a dyadic phenomenon between the person that belongs and the "it" (another person, group, system, etc., henceforth called "entity") to which one belongs. But the definition points to a boundary between those who belong and those who do not belong (us vs. them); therefore, the presence of a third party, the outsider, is also always evoked. Even when there are only two people actually present, the relevance of a third is implied – if only through absence; in other words, belonging always takes place in a context; it is actually a triangular event.

The triangular nature of belonging is not readily apparent when we look at the main definitions, which, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, include:

- To go along with or accompany as an adjunct;
- A thing connected with, forming a part, appendage, or accessory of another;
- The fact of appertaining, especially a person's membership in and acceptance by a

group or society.

These meanings define the nature of the relationship between the one that belongs and the larger entity (to which one belongs) as well as the nature of the boundary between inclusion and exclusion. When we talk about belonging, what we hold in our conscious mind is the bond between us and the entity. The bond is stated in terms of positives: we have/do/are something in relation to the entity and, therefore, we are acknowledged and seen as part of it. But what remains implicit is the surrounding “others” – the context – those who do not have/who are not/who do not do what is required in order to belong. These meanings (definitions) demarcate the line between inside and outside, even though they make explicit reference to the inside only.

Drawing these boundaries provides a roadmap to membership (from outside to the inside). While these boundaries are arbitrary in and of themselves (like the geographical borders of nations), the rationalizations used to draw them often become experienced as possessing inherent value. These borders entail compliance with multiple standards, rules and regulations, first to determine acceptance into the community (such as candidacy), followed by standards to maintain that membership (e.g., graduation). These rules or regulations specify ongoing qualities/attributes/behaviors that rule out others as necessary conditions for belonging, and once one complies with the rules/regulations, one does indeed “belong to.” If, for example, the bloodline is the defining quality of belonging to a family (as graduation is to an institute), then those who were not born into the family (or did not graduate) are excluded. Those born into the family belong, no matter how they experience that belonging or participate in family matters, and regardless of whether they ultimately wish to belong or not. Indeed, the strong bonds that tie family members are often used to describe the analytic lineage to which we belong. Criteria for belonging (or leaving) can be, of course, more or less complex and demanding. As a counterexample, belonging to a gym requires only the ability to pay the entry fee (or ceasing to do so).

By complying with the rules and regulations of the organization, a sense of legitimacy and relevance is provided in return through “social personhood,” one of the psychological benefits of membership. In all of its meanings, however, the one who “belongs to” is part of something larger than oneself. Hierarchy is implicit in this arrangement; there are rules and the rules are set forth from the inside. A power-differential is inevitably present between the members and the entity, and the insiders and outsiders are segregated. With hierarchy and rules comes an idea of *order*: the one who belongs has an appropriate place in the larger whole, which is denied to those who do not belong. This place is defined in terms of privileges, obligations, possibilities and non-possibilities. The internal psychological benefits (or drawbacks) are part of the complementary intrapsychic dimension of social personhood, discussed in the following section. The person who belongs feels part of something, maybe even feels necessary to the entity, often in some sense purposeful. From the perspective of the entity, those who belong are always constitutive and hence functional. This, of course, automatically creates the possibility of transgression – of rules, of regulations; with having a place comes the possibility and fear of being out-of-place. Transgressions, in turn, create their own functions, purposes, and incentives. Most importantly, rules lead us to experience similarity among those who belong and among those who do not; and this sense of similarity is an unfortunately fertile ground for splitting and “othering” of the excluded. Further, because the very purpose of the boundary-defining rules and

regulations is to create order, we tend to use them to avoid further inquiry into the genesis, usefulness, clarity, and meaning of the distinction they carry.

By making this explicit, we see how this plays out in psychoanalytic institutes where, just as with other organizations, a set of rules defines roles and status. On the face of it, these rules promote a fair meritocracy, they convey a consensually validated objective standard, and through compliance provide the means for rising through the ranks. They aspire to define boundaries between those who belong and those who do not, and seem to imply that promotion is fairly accessible to all on the basis of objective standards. While psychoanalytic institutes – again, just like any organization – are products of their times, the political pressures of the era, current levels and nature of available knowledge, and theorizing in the field, a critical exploration of the contextual circumstances out of which the rules and regulations emerged is generally discouraged. Their examination suggests their inherent instability and arbitrariness, which undermines the sense of order and structure (and sense of safety) that the rules provide and represent.

### **Intrapsychic Implications of the Triangular Nature of Belonging: The Bonds That Tie**

Belonging – in its dominant usage – provides order. Parts fit together, and parts fit in(to). The subjective conscious experience of belonging is often one of harmony. “Ideally,” the criteria one meets and the rules and expectations with which one complies are ego-syntonic, so to speak. Identity is dependent on membership, in fact it emerges from it. The internal order fits with the external and a fantasy about belonging may become one of being fully seen (as a “whole person”) and being accepted by/within the entity. In spite of this fantasy, in reality what probably happens instead is that one is seen and is accepted *in those ways* that fit (or are made to fit) with the needs of the larger entity/order.

For a child growing up in a family, this enforced adaptation takes place so early and so pervasively that it is taken for granted. Analogous to the acquisition of language, we tend to appreciate the child’s progress upon forming words and conveying meaning, and we fail to even notice those sounds (and linguistic possibilities) that drop out imperceptibly of the child’s repertoire. The personality, the intrapsychic and interpersonal functioning all are shaped and influenced by the family system’s pre-existing order that is passed down by the older generations. In all groups, including those to which we “choose” to belong, those aspects of the self and functioning that fit with what the entity needs in order to stay stable will be cultivated and privileged, and those aspects that do not fit will be ignored, repressed, or judged and punished, because these could destabilize and generate change. Each one of us, of course, has a relationship to this very process of being selectively acknowledged and reinforced. Arguably, we psychoanalysts (with our many years of additional “training”) have self-selected ourselves to make belonging (and its accompanying compliance) a more central, a more elaborate, and more psychically “deeper” (internalized) process than most.

We not only exclude those who do not belong from the group in the external world, we live with excluded parts within us; belonging generates a process within the psyche so that certain transgressive, subversive, discordant, inconsistent aspects are unacknowledged, excluded, vilified, othered, etc. In other words, compliance with what one’s place requires, similarity that is

drawn and experienced among people in the same position within an organization, easily can lead to the splitting off of certain aspects of the self; from there it is a short step to attribute those aspects to the excluded. All this – it seems to us – is an inevitable byproduct of order(ing) and consciousness; the developmental and emotional need for acknowledgment and validation, alongside the need for order, are powerful oppressive forces. This process occurs imperceptibly. Just as certain sounds drop out of the infant’s repertoire, so there are selective parts of ourselves and attitudes (say, a “beginner’s enthusiasm”) that simply recede to privilege other attitudes or states (for instance, “professional remove”). Like the sounds of infancy that do not fit one’s “mother tongue” can only be recovered with great difficulty, if at all, certain parts of ourselves (let’s say “subversive or creative enthusiasm”) often necessitate a break (whether temporary or permanent) from the “mother” institute (a very common phenomenon after graduation). Just like it may become impossible to pronounce certain sounds, or to speak a foreign language without an accent, it also may become impossible to think, let alone act, outside of one’s analytic lineage, at least not without having to experience significant amounts of conflict.

This dynamic is less likely to occur, one would think, where the belonging is simpler and entails a narrow and specific goal or function, e.g., going to the gym. In contrast, when the entity fulfills (or claims ) a central role in an aspect of one’s life, the dynamic may be more pervasive and may create/activate more defenses. When there is a need to belong in order to gain access to important resources or develop an identity, the pressure to conform (externally) and to split (internally) is much more intense.

Early in life the infant is normally defined by the immediate family, but later, as she encounters more entities, the possibilities for divergent growth multiply. Her participation in other systems and family structures allow for more selection, eventually introducing *choice* in belonging. These choices mean that belonging can function both creatively and defensively. The developing person can choose to belong to one entity *in order to* ward off the awareness of particular ego-dystonic aspects of the self, or as a defensive solution for an internal conflict, where one side of the conflict is chosen and the other repressed. For instance, this is the case when choosing an institute (or supervisor) simply confirms a particular perspective or way of being. Other times, entities may be chosen to expand an experience and compensate for aspects of the self that were excluded, inhibited, or judged in the original family structure. Belonging to conflicting external groups may express internal conflicts in such a way that the various “belongings” can complement one another.

The more an entity makes a claim to provide a significant part of the person’s identity (this can be seen in graduation speeches when an institute director might thank candidates’ families and friends for “giving their loved ones to us” for the duration of the training), and the more the individual hopes that a major part of their personhood will be obtained and provided to them through the entity (this is also reflected in graduation speeches, this time from the candidates, which mention their “sacrifice” and devotion to their training, not to mention their personal “transformation”), the more the conflicts of belonging are pushed away internally. The extent of the demands of the institute and of the needs of the candidate may reflect each other. Therefore, if belonging to a psychoanalytic institute confers our identity as a “psychoanalyst,” then the feeling of a coherent identity is conferred upon us by the institute, and any conflicts that threaten this coherence must be internally contained – of course at the cost of valuable



transgressions. In the more extreme cases, belonging can become so syntonic, so unambivalent, that the conflicts disappear from awareness, and we no longer even recognize ourselves as conflicted.

These processes can easily be identified when it comes to psychoanalytic institutes that play a formative role in candidates' professional and theoretical development because they "offer" to "train" candidates in analysts – to confer on the graduating candidate the identity of analyst. However, we rarely acknowledge the extent to which this is achieved through ongoing and pervasive restrictions of the candidates' knowledge, openness, and creativity. Ironically, the origins of many institutes occurred through a burst of creative energy powered by a process we refer to (in the next section) as "belonging together," a process that broke through (or apart) the fossilized and crystallized remnants of a pre-existing "mother" institute, which the founders of the new institute "belonged to." In turn, the new institute, having separated from its context in an effort to differentiate and legitimize a new identity, eventually fossilizes and inhibits itself from further growth and expansion. Is that inevitable?

In sum: emotionally we need acceptance, while cognitively we need conscious coherence (order in the world and in our minds) to feel sane and to be able to function. We need to fit in, in some sense, otherwise chaos would ensue and the anxiety would probably be overwhelming. Thus, we selectively develop, first in our families, the context for the initial blueprint of our emotional and intellectual understanding of the world and ourselves in it, and this blueprint consists of often implicit, unsaid, but enacted definitions and restrictions. As we grow, we absorb not only how we personally (as children, siblings, cousins, etc.) belong to the larger entity of an extensive, multigenerational family, but we also absorb and are imprinted by the complementary roles within this same entity. Over time, we take on other roles as we relate to how each role is defined in the family, we identify with "how it is done," and we repress and dissociate dissenting wishes and experiences as they exert pressures to be acknowledged coming from the unconscious. A similar process takes place, we think, in the professional development of candidates in terms of theoretical approaches and actual clinical work. The experience of belonging always splits off as much as it expresses. This is the cost of any basically stable structure, costs that any entity (including ourselves as its members) would prefer to overlook or minimize. It represents order and focuses our attention on fitting in or not to a pre-existing and defined order. An inherent part of any kind of complex learning, this process is of particular relevance to psychoanalytic training and institutes if we consider the core of psychoanalysis (both as an intellectual and a clinical discipline) as the removal of psychic limitations and rigidified order. Specifically, an inherent contradiction exists between the demands of belonging to an institute (fitting into an order) and the aims of psychoanalysis (removing the limitations of an ordered status quo).

### **Belonging Together(ness)**

Among the meanings of belonging, one that is less prominent (the OED puts it in sixth and last position), is that of "belonging together(ness)." In this definition, a hierarchical relationship is *not* implied, unlike the previous definitions of belonging (to). It is interesting to note an intriguing change in the usage of "belongings," from old English where it designated

“relatives” (the parts are not organized vertically,) to its current meaning of “things that I own” (as a hierarchical extension of myself).

The etymology of “belong” includes the words be + long, with the archaic meaning of long (as a verb) being “to be suitable or meet,” which we find in the phrase “belong together.” Belonging here refers to a quality of being *with* another, which is not governed by pre-established rules. “Being with” does not imply a hierarchical relationship between the one that belongs and who/what one belongs to. The boundaries develop over time (and “be long”-term), through the continued participation/togetherness with one another. This meaning may be the basis for some of our fantasies about belonging, insofar as we think of it as the antidote to aloneness-loneliness, isolation, separation, and in some sense, death. In being together, *being* is shared; *being* is together (and by extension, not being, as well). There is no logically implied power differential; if anything, in togetherness the sharing of it is mutual, without hierarchy and, therefore, without the possibility of a transgression of a prescribed order (as described above). If there is any transgression, it is through lack of participation – as in violating the only tenet of togetherness.

If order based on rule/regulation/standard is not the central principle, then disorder does not exist the same way, either. Belonging together(ness) seems to allow for a fuller participation of the person who belongs, where (maybe this is idealistic?) multiple sides of the conflicts can be experienced, albeit not necessarily simultaneously, as long as they are experienced with the other. It may be a good way to capture presence for both members of the psychoanalytic dyad – as a receptivity to the emergent and ever-changing flow of unconscious experience, which is only possible to achieve if one does not superimpose order onto what might be brought up by the process (such as overly rigid elements of the frame). The more the two people in the room are able to be with one another (i.e., partake in belonging together), with all their histories, feelings, knowledge, social roles, their sanity and insanity, the less distinction and boundary will be drawn to hold onto some kind of pre-set order, and the more potential openness exists in the situation.

We want to emphasize that our understanding of belonging together does not preclude order and ordering. The belonging together of relatives (of “belongings”) is what allows the family entity to exist and be continuously redefined. The order and the boundaries, however, *change over time* between the participants. Through continued belonging together, then, stability exists in this entity through the emphatic togetherness and participation and not through any of its specific components. When two people belong together, their progression, their stagnation, the level and nature of their engagement in their conflicts, while never leading to a state of sameness and perfect alignment, permit a process where they are in sync and mutually affected by each other to emerge.

“Belonging to” essentially captures the dynamics of conditional acceptance. If one complies with the rules and regulations (conditions) set forth, one is accepted into the ranks. In “belonging together,” as we understand it, there is no condition placed on the members, except for continued participation. This difference has profound implications for the nature of change that can occur among participants: whereas “belonging to” orders and guides change with specific standards required as a condition for belonging, “belonging together” facilitates change precisely by *not* relying on regulations but on participation. Change has a prescribed course and

nature (even tempo) in the first case, and it takes a more spontaneous, unpredictable, divergent, and fluctuating form in the second case.

In our field, the admixture of these distinct dynamics might look very different when it comes to belonging to an institute versus belonging to (gether in) a peer study group. In the latter, the lack of a dominant pre-existing structure tasks the group with the creation of its own (and, therefore, the structure belongs to the group), which is accomplished through involved, ongoing interaction. The sharing in the making of a structure then promotes a meaningful bond between participants. In the former, belonging to and belonging together more easily become at odds with one another, given that the structure is a pre-existing, independent force that can come to “own” (both literally and metaphorically) the participants who now belong to it, thus eclipsing the belonging together of the participants who created the structure in the first place. In order to belong together again, the participants must deconstruct (at least through questioning) the order they belong to (or else that order has come to own them).

We think of construction and deconstruction as cyclical phases that follow one another in the life of an entity, ideally fluctuating between the dynamics of belonging to and belonging together, between stability and destabilization. Belonging together becomes threatening and destabilizing when it puts the dominant order (and the need for stability) into question, when it investigates how order has gained primacy over togetherness (and tolerance for anxiety that change brings). Deconstructive activities are often vilified when the structure is too rigid, and in the name of preserving some alleged value expressed by the structure/institution, these activities become excluded, defended against, judged, and so forth. If members do not go along with this kind of splitting, they have very limited room left to actually participate at all, because dissent is not accepted. In turn, members’ remaining desires to participate and feel validated are often used as a motive to enforce compliance or submission to the institution. These dynamics heighten fears of isolation and ostracism, and disengagement can be the safest reaction. Study groups then can drift away (and sometimes against) the institution that the members of the group belong to as a solution to the conflict between wanting to grow and remain engaged in the field together with others without submitting to a particular organizational structure and its ideology of growth and participation.

In sum, therefore, the central proposition of this paper is that “belonging together(ness)” became the repressed and the unconscious that lie below the conscious, orderly and static meaning of the word “belonging,” as it is more commonly used. As all unconscious meanings, it lingers and interacts with what we consciously understand, and certainly colors our subjective experiences of “belonging to.” Belonging together represents a vantage point from which our status quo, with its rules, regulations, axiomatic meanings and assumptions, may be questioned and examined, potentially leading to the deconstruction of our current order – with, however, an inherent implication of creating space for a new order that will inevitably emerge. In this process, both parties (members and entity) are implicated and mutually affected and changed. We further suggest that this quality of belonging together underlies the ability to grow, adapt, and survive, maybe ultimately even thrive.

### Manifestations at Psychoanalytic Institutes

At first blush, it may appear that things that belong together do so because of their sameness (perhaps dictated by the uniformity imposed by the entity to which they belong), but the more interesting, and we believe important, aspect of their belonging together is their difference, which underlies their complementarity. Just as it is a crucial feature in two articles of clothing, “going well together” is their difference, even if small, upon which they play off each other so as to reinforce the uniqueness of the parts to the whole. Therefore, a central function of each person belonging together is to pick up on, live, and reflect back what the other person has excluded (i.e., consciously and unconsciously). This process goes both ways and ultimately may result in an experience where the two parties involved form one whole, and they flexibly hold different parts of the “entity.” This is important. The acknowledgment of mutuality in having both our individual “orders” as well as our split-off/excluded aspects, which then hopefully would get integrated over time, is essential to the process. This presupposes a fundamental equality (but not sameness) between the two parties involved, although it does not necessarily define the participants’ roles in a symmetrical way. But we see this mutuality and equality as inherent and essential to the psychoanalytic process, a process that is in conflict with the static nature and defined structure of psychoanalytic institutes as entities, where “belonging to” is based on compliance with regulations and predetermined criteria.

When we state that belonging together is the unconscious and repressed meaning of “belonging to,” we mean that it is the context, the excluded third to our order represented by belonging to a psychoanalytic institute. There is a tension here that we think is worth contemplating: institutes are organizations that have a self-stabilizing need for clear definition of what they do, what they consist of, what psychoanalysis is, how it can be measured and quantified (analogous to the frame in a treatment); all the while, institutes are supposed to stand for, cultivate, and represent tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity to idiosyncrasy, openness to and understanding of the context, and especially openness to change (analogous to the process of treatment).

Frequently, the frame and institutes are thought of as necessary structures that allow for the psychoanalytic process to unfold. The various positions one could occupy within the structure of an institute, for example, are thought of as promoting the individual’s own process of change in terms of professional activity and identity. Advancing, that is, meeting a series of requirements in order to belong to the institute, is one way professional development may be conceived of and described, if one believes that the meeting of increasing requirements is a reflection of the maturation of an analyst. In this picture, the structure of the institute is frequently conflated with the structure for the growth experience itself; it creates the necessary benchmarks (often thought of as objective measures) to establish the progress one makes (or fails to make).

However, we have to bear in mind that belonging to an institute (just as any other institution) involves submitting to a process that selectively reinforces splitting and exclusion (both externally and internally) and, in its most dangerous form, may come to equate growth with compliance and entity-serving self-presentation. A recent example comes to mind here: in a training committee that had convened to discuss the candidates, the concluding comment on one

particular candidate was that it was “such a relief and encouraging sign of her progress” that the previous complaints about this candidate being challenging and oppositional had disappeared, now being replaced by evaluations that emphasized her “positive attitude.” Not one of the dozen or more senior analysts present questioned whether this was merely a sign of compliance, to the detriment of the candidate’s acknowledged creativity. By providing (imposing) an essentially uniform developmental path to follow, the process of becoming an analyst and member of an institute may be insensitive to (and even stifle) each participant’s differences and individuality, which is precisely the creative source found in “belonging together.” (The society of friends meeting in Freud’s living room on Wednesday evenings, as a thrilling study group in the early days of psychoanalysis, may come to mind here, before the process of institutionalization took over and it became the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1909 – as these groups capture two very different types of belonging). The dynamics of belonging together are more likely (but not automatically) to be found in our study groups that locate somewhere “outside” of the institutional frame.

The power of institutionalization, by prescribing rules and regulations of practice, may end up undermining the spirit of the practices the institution allegedly promotes. For instance, technical “standards,” ranging from session frequency, to duration of sessions, to duration of treatment, and so forth, eventually come to quash the mutuality (belonging together) of the analytic process. Caught between the demands of the institution and the ever-changing movement of the dyad, the analyst must choose between pathologizing any or all modifications to stay “in line,” or risk throwing away the security and conferred legitimacy of “belonging to” in favor of the uncertainty of belonging together of the dyad. All too often, we choose the former. This is not simply because under these circumstances we need to protect our own conscious views and beliefs, but because we may be so distant from our own conflicts that we are not able to recognize them, let alone validate them in our work with our patients. More broadly, if success, progress and growth are defined in concrete and inflexible ways in and for the analyst, then she will be less open to alternative, creative questions and solutions.

Finally, as with all structures and definitions, institutes may not recognize and/or appreciate certain forms of creativity that fall outside of the bounds of their immediate interest. This may happen on the level of the institution itself, but also on the level of the individuals who belong to the institute, and psychologically adapt and mirror the needs of the entity. While this is inherent to all institutions, for us, though, because of the content around which our institutes were created (psychoanalysis), it is more important to reflect on this.

To keep these institutional dangers in check, we may want to consider the following: the specifics of the frame and of institutional regulations have a history of changing, and this change reflects an important process in itself. Any given hierarchy, structure, and order can be thought of as a snapshot, a particular constellation observed at a particular point in time, which will inevitably pass. We can certainly see this in our organizational structures, and we propose that they should be deconstructed and contextualized, be it through their specific history, sociocultural surrounds, or national/international context, etc. Other fields, such as medicine, law, business, developmental sciences, or the arts also may serve as such contexts. The context may be how our relationship to structure, rigid roles, and hierarchy has changed historically

across the board. The context also may be our patients' understanding of the arbitrary nature of length of sessions or fees, as mentioned before.

The contextualization of our current practices and regulations becomes possible only if we do not set agreement and compliance with the status quo as a condition for participation and belonging; instead, we rely on the members' belonging together through the interaction of their own minds and psyches, which by definition is wider and more expansive than the uniformity of the entity they belong to, and encourage contributions that are outside of the current metaphorical box. We then of course have to allow for the anxiety that emerges in face of the idea that there are no absolutes in terms of meaning and consequent structure, especially in our field; that all our assumptions, convictions and current rules, regulations, and orders are subject to change over time as our entity creates its own split-off aspects, divergent or subversive elements in its interaction with its context, which elements will inevitably push for recognition. While such a thing as the fixed order of the frame or of the institute may be an important and integral part of psychoanalysis (at least institutionalized psychoanalysis), we believe that the ever-changing creative dynamism will always reside in the belonging together of its members; that is where the center of gravity of its identity is to be located, and that is where the ultimate key to our survival is to be found, although perhaps not in the institutionalized forms we currently recognize and belong to.

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## Include Me Out, Please!

Angelo Villa, PhD

**The author addresses the complexity of the relationship between the analysand and the analyst at the close of the training analysis. On joining a psychoanalytic association or institute, the analysand may experience a reemergence of the dynamics that led to his original symptomatology in the context of his family and development. Through a critique of the splitting and false identifications that arise in psychoanalytic institutes, the author advocates for a psychoanalytic group that is formed around an aspiration of work.**

I will begin with a question that, for me, opens up a way to reflect on a problem I have thought about over the years: the problem of belonging to psychoanalytic associations. The question is quite simple: what does a person experience during his analysis? First, as Freud makes clear, the Ego is not the master of his home. The proof of this is that the patient is led into treatment by a symptom, which leads him or her to demand a cure. Second, this non-mastery eventually leads the subject back to his dependence on the unconscious demands of his immediate family, and even further back to previous generations. As Lacan says: the unconscious is the discourse of the Other.

To summarize: the patient, or rather the analysand, finds that while he thought his psychic life was under his control, through further investigation he sees this is not so. Rather, he realizes that it belongs to others; it is connected to their history and their unconscious drives. Above all, it is connected to his family – the family from which he believed he had separated, or, at least, was in the process of doing so. This non-mastery does not refer to any mysticism tucked away in a dark corner of the mind, unfathomable and unmentionable, but to the oppressive weight of his entry into the family's discourse, of which the patient carries the signs. In the end, this non-mastery is a thin veil that obscures the belonging, or the subjection, of the individual to the legacy of others. The more the patient strains to understand the essence of his being, his symptoms, secrets, desires and ghosts, the more he finds that his motivations, his will, maintain a strict link with what someone else (a mother? a father?) had wanted for him, in one way or another, through him and, in a sense, within him. The symptom, inexorable, indicates the precise point where the patient's pain is fixed. He would like to overcome it with all his strength; he would indeed! Autonomy, derived from the ancient Greek, means "to give oneself to one's own law." But the unconscious shows us a psychic system already at work, following a law that is already established and capable of being iniquitous, or even worse, cruel.

Consequently, what kind of work is the patient doing in his therapy, if not the immersion in his history in his family's history? It is not a choice or a desire; the patient is driven by a necessity. He needs to begin to feel that his life belongs to him. How is it that we undervalue, in the end, the deep sense of his analysis as the attempt to loosen the vise of a belonging that absorbs him, that squashes him? A belonging that obliges the patient to endorse another's unconscious requests.

If a person is not self-made, and his unconscious is history in the sense of one's causal genesis, it is the unconscious that introduces us to the relationship between history and the patient. The capacity or the incapacity of subjectification is also an index of the pathology of the patient. I will try to explain. We can make reference to a classic Freudian distinction between

memory and repetition. The first concerns our psychic life, in one word: the mind. The second refers to the body and action. Memory is, perhaps, a possibility more than a choice. It involves psychic work and, more precisely, the possibility for the patient to re-read the events that have marked his life. Or, memory also may permit the reinterpretation of events in order to escape from their weight. Repetition, on the contrary, is a silent and unacknowledged memory. The patient acts, in his real life, more or less mechanically, with the signifiers that bind him to his mother's or father's *jouissance*. Repetition emphasizes the strength that dominates the subject. Freud, in fact, spoke about the compulsion to repeat, elaborating on it with the idea that repetition is in fact the repetition of a failure. We can say there is a double repetition: the patient's failure, but also the parents' failure, to which the repetition returns us. But there is more: we could situate this problem in relation to a temporal axis, both chronological and logical. Childhood defines a period of life in which a person is subject to his parents' demands, especially the mother's, in a more or less complicit way. More generally, he is subject to the demands of the familial institution, inasmuch as the symptomatic expressions are hidden in that same structure, where they are reabsorbed, ignored, or tolerated. Usually, the most difficult moment is adolescence. During this period, the malaise is often now expressed in opposition to the adult's order and the respective family structure. Many times, this attempt to separate turns out to be a disaster, deceptive and clumsy. The step forward, the escape, reveals itself as incomplete, and sometimes even transpires as a source of ambiguous or dangerous experience. Frequently this attempt leans toward a messianic or libertarian rhetoric, where such charismatic figures and their alluring discourses are appealing precisely because of their anti-familial stance.

It so happens that, in this description, I can recognize the journey, the painful experience that leads to the dramatic emergence of these personal difficulties, which open the way for the symptom: a symptom secretly cultivated during childhood, presumptuously eluded during adolescence and then, voilà, arriving in full force in the moment we are called to seriously enter into the world, namely in the encounter with sexuality. Paraphrasing Hegel, we could see it as thesis, after the childhood and familial institution, antithesis, after teenage rebellion and synthesis: the symptom arrives. And through this, we see that the process of separation from the family has not happened, or at least, it has happened in an incomplete way.

As Dante highlights in *The Divine Comedy*, it is necessary to find a Virgil in order to descend into the Inferno and try to reach the Purgatorio and finally, maybe, glimpse the glimmer of light, not of the Paradiso, but of that dim light that desire makes us appreciate. In other words, analysis sets a deep sleeping subjectivity into motion, to the extent that it dismantles or, in Derrida's words, deconstructs the viscous bond with the family. Only in that moment is the patient able to detach himself and let his own voice emerge, a voice that no longer passively clings to the previous figures who influenced him inside and outside of his home. The recovery of subjectivity interrupts a cycle of repetition that marks a decrease of the belonging in which the subject is enmeshed. Something is loosening, something is moving, something is starting to breathe again.

When analysis is working, the word assumes the value of a unique discovery for the individual. Based on these findings, the subject moves towards the world, whereas before he assumed it was the world that should move towards him. This internal path often finds an external confirmation: familial relationships redefine themselves, some love relationships and



friendships end, and some others begin and so on. Sometimes, finding his own desire in his analysis, an analysand decides to start an analytic career, moved by a desire that the treatment revealed.

In this case, the analysand inevitably will become part of a psychoanalytic association. In effect, if it is true, as Lacan said, that the analyst authorizes himself, it is also true that he has to confront others and participate in a scientific community. Emerging from the unconscious and determined belonging – the familial institution – the analysand is now called to enter another institution that maintains a subtle continuity with his former one. More precisely, he becomes an analyst through the re-elaboration of his own story of belonging. How will the new belonging be constituted? What shape will it take?

### **The Trauma, on the Return**

I think it is important to stop here with these questions, which highlight two essential points. First, while the analyst authorizes himself, this does not mean he can practice without colleagues or without participating in activities that sustain psychoanalysis and analytic research. Alone, he is not going anywhere; the risk of falling into a narcissistic auto-referential delirium or withdrawing into oneself is very high. That is why being part of an association is a logical and ethical necessity. A mandatory passage, I would say. The second point is precisely this passage: it requires a change of perspective that is not insignificant or harmless.

When we discuss clinical material, we rely on theory. Theory gives a direction that orients our considerations of therapeutic treatment, our diagnostic formulations and so on. In contrast, when applied to institutions or associations that are active, theory suggests a set of principles and ideals that clash with the actual history of an institution. The discrepancy can appear as schizophrenic, as if theory and history did not have much in common. Theory becomes a hostage of rhetoric or Kantian enunciation. It also could be used as a misleading weapon according to the situation: a stereotyped ritual or an instrument with which to settle an internal feud.

This is what happens, and what has happened, here and there. It could be useful to compare *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels with the history of the communist movement or the Evangelists with the history of the Church to understand the great distance between theory and reality. Psychoanalytic associations do not escape this destiny; on the contrary, they even pay an excessive price. In spite of this price, the discrepancy is rarely investigated.

A central point of the psychoanalytic principle is the role of the word at the center of everyone's existence. Not the word in and of itself, but the word as it sustains a certain relation to the truth. As often happens, the analysand, while investigating his familial roots, often discovers their hypocrisies, or even their explicit lies. Similarly, in his encounter with an association, the analysand may recognize that the theory, which was thought to provide a realistic representation of reality, as far as it is possible to observe in our clinical practice, appears to be inadequate or even misleading, thus leaving the word to itself as a purely suggestive expedient.

This is the reason why I advocate a phenomenological analysis in this situation, as opposed to using a theory, which might be used in other contexts. Phenomenology provides us with the crucial terms for describing experiences and the sense of belonging to an association better than what can be ascribed to theory. The rest does not count that much, even though it is often called forth in discussions. It is a cover, nothing more.

Now, the switch from theory to phenomenology, as a test for two different languages, can be traumatic for the analysand because it constitutes his authentic initiation into a “new” belonging. The quotation marks I put here are essential to indicate the ambiguity of this change. The difference between theory and phenomenology marks the difference experienced by the analysand – both with respect to his analyst and to his own word. During analysis, he had discovered a freedom based on this word, thanks to the discrete listening of the analyst and the absence of his personal question. And now?

That word he was looking for, that word he was grasping at, together with the possibility of expressing himself – he is now forced to stop, to retrace his steps. This is not because he does not know the distinction between the public and the private but because he encounters (unexpectedly?) something already experienced, even though the analysand or the ex-analysand may struggle to recognize it at first. A phenomenological element to be precise, that I have observed time and again from beginning to end: the analysand joins, at least at the beginning, the same association to which his analyst belongs. Most of the time, it is the analyst that “introduces” him. From here, we see how the problem of belonging to associations emerges: the analysand is legitimized by his analyst who becomes his implicit or explicit guarantor. In exchange, the analysand spontaneously offers legitimation to the analyst – I recognize you as far as you recognize me – a reciprocal use, as a colleague of mine defines it. It is an operation that supports an extension of a transference, maybe badly analyzed or perhaps still pending. The evidence for this is in the frequency with which we observe, not surprisingly, how the lines of continuity between analysand or ex-analysand rupture and break. Above all, when the analysis is over, the ambivalence towards the membership in the association emerges, whereas it may have been suspended during the analysis; it now can erupt in a post-analytic showdown. This could concern the transference, even retroactively, or even beyond to the subject’s relation with castration and loss.

The psychoanalytic association becomes the scene in which the cut takes place: a sudden and maladroitness cut from belonging. An enactment, *de facto*, placed as a rupture of a subjection previously celebrated. It is as if, in the end, there were just two choices left: remaining on the same path as the analyst or being situated in opposition to it. The association often becomes a transitional object with a type of either-or belonging.

Therefore, what is sacrificed for the sake of the belonging is the negative aspect of the transference: on the one hand, the negative transference developed towards the analyst; and on the other, the negative relation of the analyst towards the others. The enemies of the analyst are now potentially placed to become the enemies of the ex-analysand. For co-option, automatically. In other words, the negative does not encounter a citizenship in the word when it fails to be addressed on the outside, outside of that dialectic transference that initiates the subject's entrance in the analytic institution.

Belonging to an association thus allows the question of the transference to be posed once again. Most importantly, belonging, apparently or ostensibly idyllic, ends up reproducing that opposition between word and freedom previously experienced by the analysand in his family. In this new context, the analyst takes on the role of a potential liberator but in an even more complex way. The “new” belonging recalls something “old.” Will the analysand or the ex-analysand betray his analyst, disappointing his expectations? Will he be ungrateful or, as I once heard, not grateful enough? Will his belonging be a way to re-edit a dependent logic, now even more unbearable than before? Will he become even more alienated in exchange for professional advantages, or even worse, for unlimited infantile gratification?

Willing or not, the familiar returns. That familiar to whom the patient belonged, in the passive sense of the term, even more than it belonged to him. Inhibition reappears in the most clever way, hiding behind a veil of calculation or even, more deeply, behind the cynicism that animates it. Lacan himself wrote about the end of analysis in this way, evoking a *sold cynique*. But the familiar, we know, is a light cover for incest. And so? Could belonging to an association pose a risk of triggering a dynamic that works in a counterdirection to the desire that orients an analysis? The phenomenology of relationships in the associations gives us a snapshot of reality much more complex and exhaustive than the one offered by theory.

### **The Group and the Training**

Does this return us to the point at which the analysand started? Truth be told, the situation is not easy. A psychoanalytic association sustains a cause, precisely the one of psychoanalysis. There is no association that does not have this affirmation in its bylaws, supplied by Lacan's and Freud's suitable quotes. But a cause is an immaterial entity. In order to promote a cause, one needs to collaborate with other people, and in this case, with other colleagues.

Many associations orient themselves around the same psychoanalytic authors. Significantly, the strongest disputes happen between “sister” associations. Differences among these groups do not revolve around theoretical debates but around which people belong to which group. This results in selective references of who cites who in the respective groups and the creation of “us” against “them” and so on.

The concrete references to the cause effectively translate into a belonging for a group and, consequently, generates a link. Or more to the point, a movement occurs, a transference from the analyst to the analyst's analyst, upward to a key point. This leads to the mother of all misunderstandings, the one that mistakes the cause (psychoanalysis) for a person. Usually, this person is the founder or leader, the center of the association around whom the same group revolves, and who at times even politicizes analysis. If I think about my early years, along with my peers, I could say that my sense of belonging morphed into a militancy (from the Latin *militare*), without articulating this connection between a cause and the individual.

I encountered a difference between belonging to a public institution where I was working and the psychoanalytic institution where I took my first steps. I have always wanted to work in a public institution because that was my interest. I loathed the academic profession. Being in a public institution meant I could be directly involved with the socially disadvantaged, creating

unique interventions or closing repressive institutions. It was a clinical desire but also a political one. Within the institution, no one asked me about my desires. I maintained a bureaucratic belonging, a formal fact. The important thing was that I performed those tasks I was given; anything else was my personal quest. In contrast, in the psychoanalytic association, the connection was reversed. Desire had to be shown obsessively, pushing it to perversely change into a superegoical construction. The demonstration of the desire led to militancy and, consequently, it became subject to acclaim or reward. But militancy... for what or for whom?

This question is crucial. If a person can embody the cause, as was confirmed frequently in public speaking, indicated through the use of a name and surname, the problem becomes more complicated in the same way as it, paradoxically, becomes simplified. The cause is reduced to a person, just one. It is not by chance that when someone tries to understand an association, one often uses an expression like “that’s the one of...,” specifying the name of the founder or the psychoanalyst who is the leader. This issue is a difficult topic, rarely engaged, or when broached follows a predictable path – the elusive issue is democracy, or more precisely, the nature and the consequences of democracy in an analytic milieu. Such is the case because, above all, egalitarianism is a trap that works against historical, prestigious and transference differences within the group and its functioning. For this reason, it may be that recalling one person simplifies the picture. In this way, the leader of the group is *a priori* compared to the father; leading any protest against his position or actions is subject to oedipal interpretations. I will elaborate on this to problematize my somewhat hasty sketch.

The first observation is a well-known fact: German intellectual thought gave a central role to the figure of the leader, in the political and social organization of the masses, from Clausewitz to Max Weber, with the only exception being Kelsen. Nonetheless, the equivalence between the leader and the father is not automatic. First, the leader is not the normative oedipal father, the one who castrates the individual. Rather the opposite is true: history gives us the tragic examples of some of the so-called “fathers.” Second, the leader is not a copy, a reflection, of an effective father for those members of the crowd that enthusiastically claim him. The family man, Freud *dixit*, is someone who really loves his sons or who should love them; he does not participate in the seductive deceit that bonds the masses to their leader.

We could also refer to the psychological portrait of American president Woodrow Wilson, which Freud drew when he wrote about the very important role played by “mad men” in history when they were “assigned full powers.” Or, we also see this in a short text, “A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis” (1922), where Freud compares the primitive father to the devil and not to God, as was usually done. Therefore, our question is not that easy.

It is important to add a fundamental detail. First, I frequently heard the argument that transference generates power used as a justification of the power dynamics within psychoanalytic associations. And if this is true, so is its opposite. In other words, power nourishes the transference, whether it is authentic or not. Marc Bloch, a historian, described the medieval kings’ miracle worker praxis, where the political powers of the king guaranteed him his therapeutic virtues.

The second observation is linked to a certain style in associations that I would define as preemptive and disagreeable, used by the leader analyst and some of his favorite pupils, some of whom might still be in analysis with him and who seem to be engaged in an endless analysis, offered as a guarantee of fidelity. It is a tradition that is obsolete or at least abnormal and that I never found in a public institution; it would not be tolerated if it appeared. Paraphrasing Lacan's famous discourses, in my small way I tried to find a formula that could synthesize it: I called it the discourse of the despot. As pathology teaches us, it presents itself behind a mask of love or kindness as the expression of a request, which could reach the point of blackmail. It generates terror, not because of its threatening features, but because it induces fear in the individual, exploiting his fragilities. The fear of being abandoned and cast aside becomes, in this case, even stronger than the fear caused by intimidation. Intimidation allows one, at least potentially, to mobilize defensive coping mechanisms to deal with an enemy who is visible and well defined, coming from the outside. Abandonment, instead, carries the phantasms of loneliness: "Can I do it all by myself? Will I be able to? And what if other people were right? What if my attempt to separate leads to my expulsion from the group? And what if I need help? Can I still ask them or will they shut the door in my face?"

I would write the discourse of the despot in this way: it can use both a rhetorical degenerative "paternal" and a "maternal," interchangeably. The phenomenology changes, but the substance does not:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S1 & & \$ \\ \hline & \rightarrow & \hline a & & S2 \end{array}$$

In the place of the truth, I've put an "a," or so to say, the reality of a whimsical satisfaction not really questionable. In the place of the agent, the despot, I have written an S1, causing the other to be the hostage subject of the discourse. This is what puts the subject in the position to create an understanding but...what type? The one of getting by? The one of adjusting?

This second observation of the despot concerns the misunderstandings and ambiguities of transference. Consequently, it highlights the paradoxes that are revealed in the public space of the association and its so-called social relationships, or better said, its political ones. Let us go back to the question of belonging, which is different from the desire, and, above all, it is irreducible to it – this is what makes the question unfailingly circular, constantly repeated. In particular, during the more or less traumatic encounters that the individual experiences throughout his life, I highlight one fundamental aspect: when the demand is about to emerge, it conserves the drive of overturning through its opposite, that is to say, as it begs for satisfaction. In other terms, the demand of the Other tends to transform into an offer to the Other, in an almost unperceivable way. It is as if this offer constitutes or reveals itself as the real aim of the question of belonging. It is an aim for the longed-for effective "response." From here, the vicious circle leads the subject from loving, to wanting to be loved, to finally surrendering to the *jouissance* of the Other. As object and victim of an alienated satisfaction, the subject looks for and, in a masochistic way, gives himself love. Gladly or, at least in an almost intuitive manner, the subject gives up a potential satisfaction in exchange for that of the Other, joining and mixing up his *jouissance* with the Real or supposed one of the Other. The subject throws himself into the

Other, as if he is lost or sacrificed to the Other, when, with Heidegger's words, being thrown in this world is unbearable.

This regressive path will then reinstate the original historical sequence. Indeed, if the existence of the Other, the maternal in this case, is the condition for the subjective existence of the child, then the love for the Other precedes, temporally and logically, love for oneself. This is, sometimes dramatically, illustrated in the treatment of childhood abuse, where we see how the child can be offered as a sacrifice to defend an Other for the damage that was actually done to himself, without even minimal protection. What changes is the style, the way, or the quantity, but it is always the same issue.

### **Taking and Giving**

Therefore, what does being a part of a psychoanalytic association mean? A friend of mine, paraphrasing Sartre, said "Hell is other people, the colleagues." The large amount of quarrels among analysts confirms this. I have never seen as much resentment, bitterness, and malicious gossip as that which I saw within the psychoanalytic association: the delegitimization of the other is a daily practice.

This highlights the danger behind this attempt to regain an experience of belonging, which the subject already discovered as alienating: his entry into narcissistic drift. I was able to observe the splinter pathology that characterized psychoanalytic associations as evidence of this danger, and which demonstrates Freud's findings of the repeated comingling between the psychology of the masses and the narcissism of small differences. This is one sure way to decline belonging. On some occasions, this leads to the ridiculous: an obstinate and paranoiac closure that follows Carl Schmitt's format, friend or enemy. Being a friend means sustaining a narcissistic specularity, and being an enemy means being an embodiment of everything negative. Of course, one forgets that the worst of enemies were previously the best of friends. But that's how relationships and political dynamics work.

Naïvety is a serious analytic error from which an analyst should be immune. From Balzac to Donna Tartt, literature has given many examples about the disenchantment resulting from our entrance into the adult's world. The naïf is the good boy who doesn't want to know about the *jouissance* of the other or, even worse, who supposes that his fidelity to the familial ideal (or more frequently, the maternal ideal) will protect him from the voracious and inhibited impetuosity of other people's demands. This position will be a mere lonely act, where his conviction in respect to conforming to these ideals will end up a cold comfort.

Being a part of an association, then, entails a more complex relational game. It can push the careerist, although not necessarily the best of them, to participate even more intensely in the association and some even get to the point of considering it as their own business. The same dynamic pushes others to the margins, again not necessarily the best. The association's internal dynamics tend to assume a typical configuration (the ones writing, the ones speaking, the ones controlling, the ones...); what is important is that they remain rigid.

Therefore, it remains essential to understand how we can encounter a belonging that is neither an alienation nor a narcissistic compensatory solution. Here, analytic theory – especially Lacan’s – offers us enlightening formulas. However, as I said above, it is exactly in these associations’ dynamics where we see a tremendous divorce between theory and practice. Recalling what Hannah Arendt said in a different context, we need more experiences than theories.

This belonging (in the psychoanalytic association) puts the subject in the middle of a crossroads – between identity and work. When belonging endorses an ideal of identity, relegating everything else to a subordinate position, a range of conflicts emerge and pushes the association towards a group dynamic of “us against the other,” as guardians of the word against the heretics, and so on. The history of psychoanalysis is full of these kind of episodes, especially the Lacanian history. In contrast, if instead the actual work is endorsed, identity can recede into the background. Lacan himself talked about the transfer of work as a foundation for an analytic community. So with a transference to working, we have an answer to the mourning of the personal transference. Easier said than done.

Throughout the life of an association, we see different dispositions. Those that follow the cult of an identity tickle a bulimic drive of taking, while a central focus on the work allows for giving as opposed to taking. To say this in a less emphatic way, it is our personal energy or interest that is needed to lead the way in order to keep an association alive: developing research, encouraging fields of interest or, in other words, resisting the commonplace idea of what it means to be an analyst today.

Furthermore, an association needs to address the unsolved question of training analysts; this is an implicit aim of the association. While analysis has an end, training does not. The analyst authorizes himself, Lacan *dixit*. Nonetheless, authorization needs to be constantly measured within a research environment, unless it is to become a self-referential act. This is not an easy question because it concerns not only our work but also its *quality*. Who or what can judge it? This topic affects the association’s structure itself. The problem of orthodoxy or an untamed clinical speculation is added to the problem of elaboration. In the first case, the association has a more closed and exclusive nature, proclaiming itself as the warrantor of the correct interpretation of psychoanalytic teaching. In the second case, the association doesn’t explicitly want to “monitor” the production of the case material. The association assumes an inclusive shape or, better said, an extensive one, but to the detriment perhaps of its scientific rigor. It is the archipelago against the monarchy and vice versa, or is it dispersive plurality against arid compactness?

So it seems that the structure and functioning of the association, intimately linked to the training process, is always in tension, unless the association takes a purely instrumental stance and dispenses with titles that can be exhibited publicly. In that case, belonging would be worthless.

Returning to the starting place, participation in an association is practically obligatory for the analyst, but what guides this choice and shapes his or her membership? This is not a theoretical question; we have all worked through this. During a tenacious debate between me and

my symptoms, the question was: to belong or not to belong? I repeated it to myself, as if a new Hamlet. I was experiencing a kind of belonging that pinned me to an alienation I couldn't stand. However, non-belonging threw me into a loneliness I refused. I have met colleagues who developed careers within the associations; others, instead, left them, and became lost in their isolation. The first option I disliked, so shameless and conformist, and I couldn't stand the second, so stuck in the predictable, but ineffective, complaint. And what about me? I opted, of course not consciously, for a symptom, or as I just described, a compromise in the Freudian sense. Hence my title for this essay: *Include Me Out, Please!* In other words, I am in an association because I am unable to stay out of it but, at the same time, I am not able to place myself within it. I am on the edge, in a sort of reversed extimacy. But at the same time, the pain of my body (ouch!) knows something about this.

This was how I arrived at the question of belonging and its relationship to the choices I made, and the question of how to separate this from the ambivalent bonds that are sustained in the transference. I will try to get to a conclusion...if a conclusion exists. In my opinion, it doesn't. There is no conclusion because there is no solution. Every social bond simultaneously includes both what it negates and what constitutes its truth: why should we be amazed? Why should it be different among analysts? Just because they've been in analysis? Why has this made them any different, dare I say better, from the rest of humanity?

Clearly, it hasn't. It is useless to engage in historical in-depth studies; we would be disappointed. Analysts are cut from the same cloth as any other human being. Therefore, if a solution doesn't exist, it is because, on the contrary, there is only one possible position, which will always be a singular one. Freudian, one by one.

What does belonging to a psychoanalytic association then mean *to me*? I have laid out my critique, and now it's appropriate to examine this through a self-critical lens. A disenchantment in the association faithfully copies the disenchantment in the world, and from which we can never be anesthetized. One limitation of the critique is that it is directly derived from the ideal. It can be a way to give voice to the Hegelian beautiful soul that rests in every one of us. I have nothing against the beautiful soul. I don't share the ironic attitude, so close to sarcasm, that Lacan shows in his interpretation of Dora's case. Yet, within an association, it is an unproductive position. Is it better to situate ourselves outside the association, proudly claiming a non-belonging, running the risk that the "I my own" becomes the "I alone" (against all)?

Another limitation of the critique is that it emerges as a product of nostalgia, or the (rancorous?) return of a disappointment. Whatever the reason, there is the sense that we live in a climate of perpetual expectation, frequently disguised in different ways. As such, we revert to "magical" citations, as if the appropriate quote could ward off the real, hard encounter with the others. The citation is more a metonymy than a metaphor for an absent father (or mother?). A place to which we always return. Moving through our disappointing relationships, we arrive at a transference that can seem almost religious in its anticipation of what is yet to come, or of what we can predict thanks to a quote. And while this critique may seem to be free of aggression, belonging should entail a negation of this transference. The analysis can endow the analyst with the wish to participate in an association, but not to be an active part of it.



For belonging does entail an identification; I suggest that the turning point must be made through the difference between a passive identification and an active one. As far as the analysis delves into a familial bond, it allows the patient to return and find a new place in his personal history; a different place from where he had been placed by his symptom, along with those symptoms belonging to others. In other words, the analysis doesn't break the belonging (how would it be possible?) but it allows the patient to introduce into it his own subjectivity, to have the chance to finally re-write his belonging. This is what needs to happen in an association, too. Belonging to an association should entail the possibility of affecting the life of the association. This is the only way toward a belonging that resists alienation. Of course, there are the others, as always. And not only the friends, the ones we admire, the ones who...

But an association can't be formed through friendship alone because friends often end up revealing themselves to be enemies. From my point of view, an association has to maintain an institutional dimension in order to work. The bonds between people don't have to be too close. As with Schopenhauer's hedgehogs during winter, the hard part is finding the right distance. Too far from each other, they die from cold – and maybe they get paranoiac; too close, they pierce themselves with their quills. This new belonging requires experiencing the association as both a personal group and a shared one with participation, but also freedom and a bit of loneliness are indispensable to avoiding the typical fusion of exasperated groups.

Ultimately, belonging to an association means having a place where one can give more than one takes. It is a place where one can put something personal: ideas, thoughts, elaborations, acts, etc. It is a similar realm of personal that was part of an analysis that enabled the patient to emerge, now... impatient. If analysis enabled the patient to go into himself, the association also enables him (or it should, so that each one chooses the most suitable association for him) to use that experience in his journey in the association, which in return will also be impacted. But, I repeat myself: the time taken by the work of the association is not easy. It is exhausting and interminable, and honestly, this should be acknowledged. But are there alternatives to the social bond? And finally, at the end of it, whatever I can say about others, is it not just what the others can say about me? Belonging to an association entails the possibility of working on that belonging, to use Gramsci's words, with the optimism of the will and the pessimism of the intellect.

After all, alone, one doesn't conclude much.

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## Belonging: A Shamanic Tale of Death and *Unbehagen*

Ingo Lambrecht, PhD

For shamans, the indigenous healers, death has always been related to the transformatory process of becoming a healer. This article explores this complex and close relationship between death, belonging and culture, and how this involves an *Unbehagen* in the establishment of a new identity, be it a shaman or a psychoanalyst.

### Introduction: Belonging in the Face of Death

For shamans, belonging to a culture of healers requires a transformation that involves death: the death of one's previous life allows a new one to arise. Among shamans, the connection of death and *Unbehagen* (discontents) has always been explicitly acknowledged as intrinsic to the transformation process; below I will use examples from shamanic material to illustrate this. Becoming a shaman involves difficult changes and psychic work. And, I would argue, this is also the case for psychoanalysts. I use this transformation from layperson to healer to show the relation between belonging, culture and death. While the connection between shamans and psychoanalysts might seem unusual, Lévi-Strauss (1963) claimed the shaman as the first psychoanalyst. Both professions demand that those who wish to belong, and become healers, have to experience and endure their own transformation through their respective healing processes. Exploring these changes from a psychoanalytic framework allows us to think about what these professions share. The psychoanalytic lens is applied here not in a reductionistic manner, but rather as an invitation to think about these processes in one way among many other possible understandings.

### Belonging: Death in Relation to Culture

For psychoanalysis, belonging to a culture is not a simple or obvious achievement. Freud described this relationship as containing a fundamental tension – a tension between civilization and the individual – that arises out of the conflict between an individual's desire for instinctual freedom bumping up against culture's opposing demand for conformity, a demand that requires us to repress our wildest instinctual forces. Our socialization and belonging to a culture creates an ongoing discomfort, a discontent, our *Unbehagen*. The term *Unbehagen*, often translated as “discontents,” fails to capture that sense of terrible unease suggested by the word in German and that I hope to evoke in this writing. Discontents and dread as *Unbehagen* hover within us, the price we pay for belonging, safety and productivity in culture; an *Unbehagen* generated through guilt and the law, a product of the superego, the same superego that becomes the container of the death drive (Freud 1929).

Death holds a problematic position in psychoanalysis. From Freud, through Jung, over Klein, Kohut and Lacan, death has been minimized, reduced, pathologized, or repressed altogether (Razinsky 2014). Freud formulated the death drive, which is fueled with a self-destructive ethos (Freud 1920), but death drive and death are often merged even though they are clearly two different concepts. Freud was at first dismissive of concerns, or fear, of death (thanatophobia), interpreting them as expressions of unconscious fears such as castration or abandonment. Only one of his articles, which received relatively little attention, places death in

the forefront. Published in 1915 during a most horrendous and traumatic war, he presents his “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death” (Freud 1915). It is a discussion on attitudes towards death, which comprises a rejection and denial of death in the “cultural-conventional attitude.” For “primeval man,” and in the unconscious, death is wished for when it is the death of another, but is denied in terms of oneself.

However, he later contradicts himself in this text and minimizes death, stating it has no place in the unconscious because it cannot be represented, and because fear of death is always secondary to other psychic factors. Freud goes as far as claiming that humans could not fear death because they have not experienced it (Freud 1915). Indeed, our grief and the processing of the death of others, loved ones and ancestors is no reflection on death itself. Nevertheless, Freud’s belief that the unconscious is unable to hold the positivity of death is debatable. Processes in the unconscious do not need the positivity of form or image to have an effect. We fear death without having it represented to us. For the infant, the powerful strength of a baby’s attachment results from the threat of non-survival without a parent (Bowlby 1969). The fear of death is present at the moment of birth, likely even before. This fear is a central response and has a profound impact on the relation of our unconscious to consciousness in the form of severe splitting or dissociations when we are faced with trauma. These powerful self-protective processes imply that our brains and bodies shut off and protect us from those overwhelming experiences that threaten our survival.

Bowlby (1969) explored how the abject terror of unmet needs, and ultimately death, form the infant’s attachment. Babies are comforted through touch and caring, by the mindful presence of the omniscient parent (Schore 2003), who through their reverie or acting as a container, can help metabolize these terrorizing affects (Bion 1962) and create a safe holding space (Winnicott 1971), providing a secure base for belonging. Socialization and enculturation take place before children have the cognitive or emotional capacity to understand this process. But early on, children come to equate being good with safety, and being bad with anxiety (Sullivan 1953). Feeling safe and secure leads to a blanket of comfort and the possibility of keeping our terror of death at bay. For adults, the comfort of psychological equanimity against the fear of death is achieved by transferring this sense of security from parents to other “parental” figures, institutions, groups, cultures, beliefs, religions, and philosophies. Belonging, then, allows us the safety that protects us against the dread of death, or the haunting of *Unbehagen*

Freud described the *Unbehagen* in culture as emerging from civilization’s repressive function. However, following my argument, belonging to a culture also can be understood as providing a sense of safety. It is a belonging that defends against a fear of death, a defense upheld by strong adherence to a culture, nurtured by feelings of security. This intense belonging, and the accompanying fear of exclusion, helps us understand why we can form such deep attachments to cultures, institutions or groups that become constitutive of our identity. Not belonging, risking exclusion, can trigger dangerous, risky and deadly outcomes – think of the early hunter-gatherer societies, where social exclusion led to certain death in the wilderness. On the individual level, internal feelings of dread against the ego, unleashed by the superego, because of transgressions (whether perceived or real), as well as the terror of loss of relationships that keep us safe, are powerful dynamics that keep us in line, following the law, belonging to institutions and identifying with societal roles. Belonging is now understood as seeking to

survive in the face of a denied or split off fear of death. *Unbehagen* emerges into consciousness as soon as the individual is at risk of being excluded.

Rank (1941) brought death to the center of psychoanalysis.<sup>[1]</sup> His existential slant was already historically embedded in Europe through Kierkegaard's (1844) work, in which he argued that human existential awareness of death leads to an overwhelming "dread," as he called it, that we will inevitably die. For Rank, this dread not only propels us towards belonging in spite of our instinctual urges, but also becomes part of the productive and creative process of art, myth and philosophy, which are creative acts that manage the primary separation anxiety of the birth trauma. Culture, for Rank, is the creative attempt to master the fear and pain of separation anxiety, where death is the final separation. Rank creates a dialectical model, where we move between union and collectivity, and separation and individuation, and neurosis is the unresolved compromise of these two fears, the "fear of life" (*Lebensangst*) and the "fear of death" (*Todesangst*), "a fear of both going forward and of going backward" (Rank 1929–1931, p. 124), so common in neurosis.

The "fear of life" is the fear of separation and individuation. The "fear of death" is the fear of union and merger, the loss of individuality. Both separation and union, however, are desired as well as feared because the "will to separate" correlates with the creative impulse and the "will to unite" with the need for love. Between these two poles of fear, the individual traverses a life, thrown back and forth. Unlike many psychoanalytic theories, for Rank fear cannot be traced back to a single root that can be overcome.

The anthropologist Ernest Becker (1973), in his work *Denial of Death*, incorporated Rank's emphasis on denial rather than Freudian repression, and formulated a denial of death in the development of art and culture. Interestingly, Rank's dialectic of fear of life and death has been experimentally tested in the form of the Terror Management Theory (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski 2004), which demonstrates a direct link between fear of death and a rigid conviction in relation to one's worldview and ideology, thereby resisting different and, therefore, threatening worldviews. A challenge to our worldview triggers a fear of death that is masked though various defenses and emerges as a call and defense for our truth. "Acknowledging the validity of an alternate conception of reality, [...] would expose them to the unmitigating terror of death that their cultural worldviews were created to mollify. [...] From this perspective, humankind's long and sordid history of violent inhumanity to other humans is understood as (at least in part) the result of a fundamental inability to tolerate those who do not share our death-denying cultural constructions" (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski 2004, p. 18).

Rank (1932), therefore, raises this important point of what makes it so difficult to shift cultures, when unlearning or breaking out of our conditioned paradigm from the inside is "a separation [that] is so hard, not only because it involves persons and ideas that one reveres, but because the victory is always, at bottom, and in some form, won over a part of one's ego" (p. 375). Our identity becomes merged with what is true, and thus to challenge my truth, is to trigger a fear of death, which is managed by a strong defense of my truth, which at times can become fierce, irrational and deadly. These close and emotional attachments to culture and theories are witnessed among both psychoanalysts and shamans – certainly no less than any other religious, political and philosophical positions. Observe psychoanalysts at conferences, and the

way some (not all) interact, with such intensity, ruthlessness, and biting critique, all in the name of truth, of course. *Unbehagen* stalks psychoanalytic conferences with glee. Observe some *sangoma* (shaman) meetings and you can appreciate Kleinian envy rippling through the relational networks. It has little to do with rationality. People do not shift cultures or beliefs because of reason and logic but rather because of attachment or belonging.

### **A New Belonging: A Passage through *Unbehagen***

When belonging allows us a secure attachment and a defense against a fear of death, it begs the question: What happens when a person adopts a new culture? For example, how does an ordinary person become a shaman, or a psychoanalyst for that matter? What psychic work does such a transition entail? It is at this point that it is necessary to go beyond *Unbehagen* as merely being the result of a fear of death, but also to postulate and highlight the productive and creative aspect of this dread, as proposed by Rank. Rank (1932) formulated the function of creativity in art as a process of “stepping out” of a frame, a form of unknowing in the context of a prevailing worldview or ideology. He was the first to suggest that creativity enables us with the capacity to separate from internal mental objects, neurosis, beliefs, and internalized institutions. New ways of seeing and understanding emerge for the artist and viewer, giving birth to fresh perspectives and insights. It requires a form of unlearning and unknowing, which for Rank was a form of birth, a separation that is productive, even if anxiety and terrible unease, or *Unbehagen*, arise. Such *Unbehagen* arises as the secure safe base of old ideas is left behind, and the risk of being excluded from a culture is triggered. The very act of creativity holds within it the possibility of a new space, a space outside of culture, and thus dread or *Unbehagen* arises in such a space (Rank 1924-1938).

In shamanism, we can appreciate this clearly, where this notion of shifting from one culture to another is often symbolized in terms of death, and expressed in stories, symbols and practices. In fact, to become a healer is to die and leave one’s ordinary life and become born anew. This is not a new tale – traditional societies have made this connection to death in the developmental process of becoming a shaman and have spoken of this since ancient times (Walsh 2007, Winkelman 2010). We see this, for example, among the Plain Indians of North America, where the experience of death and rebirth is found in the vision quests; among the Siberian Yakut, where the shaman becomes an observer of her own death in the form of dismemberment; among the Aboriginal wise men, who in visions see stones being placed in their skeletons (Halifax 1982); and among the South African shamans, the *sangomas*, who believe that the ancestors transform the novice from an old form into somebody new (Lambrecht 2014). For the *sangoma*, becoming the shaman requires the death of one’s previous life through an apprenticeship (*ukuthwasa*) that allows you to take on your new identity, but this process is feared, as it entails madness, insane pain, and acts of wild behavior; the more you resist the call, the more severe this process is. Death through madness is a real danger in this rebirth needed to become a *sangoma*, a process that resonates with Rank’s view that the core of madness contains the fear of death. During this crisis, the overwhelming and terrifying death anxiety, this *Unbehagen* has to be tolerated creatively through therapeutic work to form a new life.

Just as one has to go through his or her own analysis to become a psychoanalyst, apprentices enter a shamanic path by undergoing their own healing of the initiation crisis or

illness. In my personal trajectory towards the *sangoma* tradition,<sup>[2]</sup> which provides a living example, this began, as it often does, with an act of divination or reading to understand an illness or mental anguish. With this reading, comparable to a form of diagnosis and formulation, the illness, crisis or reason for referral is revealed to be the call from the ancestors to become a *sangoma*, to give up an old life and create a new one. *Sangomas* are accustomed to the resistance that many potential apprentices will have towards this call. But refusal is dangerous; it can lead to prolonged illness, deformity, madness or even death (Hammond-Tooke 1989). Such resistance forms part of the initiation crisis, bringing on further pain as the ancestors increase the initiation illness. The ego resists, does not want to give up an ordinary life, and often prospective apprentices mutter that the training is too hard, too alienating, too weird, and too expensive – familiar protests during a training analysis. The resistance is fueled by the realization that a radical life change will occur once the “call” is accepted. Among the Zulu, such an acceptance is called the *ukuvuma idlozi*, “the acceptance of the ancestors,” the beginning of life as a novice (Berglund 1976).

An apprentice usually knows what it takes to become a shaman; your old life will be discarded, you will be cleansed internally and externally, and you will be separated out with various taboos around sex and food (prohibited from eating with others, no sexual contact), and different clothes, among other prohibitions. Old relationships will wither as new ones arise. Internally your world changes to the rhythm of fierce drumming and trances, while medicine dreams fill your nights. The aim is to create a new being that can be a clear vessel for the new relationship with the ancestors; new relationships with different parts of self or inner objects are all part of this journey and the shamanic healing process.

Many cultures and forms of training have integrated and navigated such shifts and thresholds in belonging through specific rites of passage. Maybe this structure is a way of making the *Unbehagen* of our transition bearable. With Van Gennep’s (1960) conceptualization of the “rite of passage,” rituals act as thresholds between life and death. Therefore, the rite of passage found in the training of the *sangoma* occurs in the context of a supportive as well as charged environment (Berglund 1976), similar to Winnicott’s notion of holding.

In this psychoanalytic reading, during the dialectical struggle of becoming and being, the *ukuthwasa*, as an apprenticeship, embodies, and can be interpreted, as a particular crisis of a person who is experiencing a dysfunctional relationship with the ancestors. The crisis is about the novice shifting from the old life into a new set of relations, namely those with the ancestors. In some ways, the *thwasa* (the apprentice) inhabits a liminal space – “betwixt and between” as Turner (1977) puts it – and in this space, *Unbehagen* arises. The crisis experienced during this process is an identity crisis, where the family and the old social identity are on one side and the new identity as an apprentice with the teacher on the other. This can cause and erupt into struggles of old identity and new belonging, as Rank predicted in his dialectic. The rituals for each stage play a part in the resolution of this conflict created by afflictions, separation anxiety, identity crisis and a continued feeling of ambiguity, along with ambivalence of the “betwixt and between.” The rituals function as stabilizers or containers of dread in the rite of passage. As an intrapsychic conflict, the ancestors could be viewed as directing the person towards a vocation, namely being a *sangoma*, in order to heal the split functions or aspects, or part-objects of the psyche.

The story of the *sangoma* Nomsa highlights this. She told me of her long resistance towards entering the *ukuthwasa*. She fought off the call of the ancestors, until her fear of killing her own child through her maddening pain, as well as coming close to committing suicide, made her take up the training that healed her pain. Resistance to the unconscious material in opposition to the conscious material finds its reconciliation in the acceptance of the call to become a *sangoma*. The acceptance leads to an *Aufhebung* or resolution of the dialectical struggle, or resolution in the form of a creative and unique synthesis in the dialectics between complex unconscious and conscious needs during the initiation illness and training (Lambrecht 2014).

In this regard, it is important to bear in mind Mircea Eliade's emphasis on the fact that a shaman's initiation crisis is not central in and of itself, but rather its purpose is paramount. He noted that the shaman "is not only a sick man, he is a sick man who has been cured, who has succeeded in curing himself" (Eliade 1964, p. 27). The shaman becomes the "wounded healer," which many psychoanalytic schools consider to be an essential component of healers or psychoanalysts. Through the healing of their own pain, they are able to empathize, understand and heal more effectively the wounds of others. The way of the shaman as a "wounded healer" is an inner journey "resulting from a crisis of death and rebirth, a transformation of the profane individual into one who is sacred" (Halifax 1982, p. 4).

In the revealing words of one *sangoma*, the aim of the training is "to remove everything that connects the pupil with his old life. We want to make a new man of the future member of our guild. [...] We want to create another heart for him, a heart as the spirits like it. For this purpose we apply a cleansing process of the inner man by emetics and purgatives until nothing of the former substance that kept the person alive is left in him. Then we clean the outer man by extensive washing and by inducing perspiration with the help of blankets and hot stones. We also apply the smoking cure, and by the time this is all over the pupil is as soft as wax bodily and mentally" (a *sangoma* quoted in Schimlek 1950, pp. 101-102). In this context, the novices learn about who they are, where they are coming from and where they are going (Hirst 2005). The *Unbehagen* during this shift is worked through in this therapeutic rite of passage.

Not dissimilarly, the ancient and modern shamanic tale of belonging and becoming finds echoes in the path of becoming a psychoanalyst. For the analyst, an initiation illness or mental anguish drives him or her into analysis, where the strange experiences of free associations, interpretations and analysis lead to old parts dying off, withering away or being transformed, while new inner relations arise. Here, too, a new being emerges with different relationships to inner ancestral parts.

As with *sangoma* training, by the time you have successfully become a psychoanalyst, the training and analysis could have paid off your mortgage. You accept taboos around sex and food, such as who you can't sleep with, and who you can't have over for dinner, even if you like them and often see patients more often in the week than family and friends. You can never lead a normal life again, and so you go to reading groups and conferences with other psychoanalysts, who understand how mad your world is, not dissimilar to shaman meetings, where your strange and ambivalent position in the community is appreciated. This entry into such a healing profession carries with it a discontent of being, an *Unbehagen* of where we come from, and where we might be moving towards, namely a new culture of healing.



### Conclusion: Parallels in Passages

Speaking as a shaman, I realize this paper could be read as psychologizing or psychoanalyzing shamanic processes. There are, of course, important differences between shamanism and psychoanalysis. I hope to avoid an either/or position on this, but hope to acknowledge and consider the psychoanalytic processes. If anything, I might be shamanizing psychoanalysis – perhaps to highlight the conscious awareness of *Unbehagen* and death in the process of becoming a healer. Both healing professions, from my personal vantage point, express their destructive and creative edges in an amusingly similar manner when it comes to protecting their culture in the face of *Unbehagen*.

Shamanism could be said to share with psychoanalysis an offering to the patient of a myth or imagery, be it traditional or psychoanalytic, such as Oedipus. Not so different from the analyst, a shaman, as a “protagonist of flesh and blood,” becomes a “medium for transference” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 219). Both professions have their own structured initiations – psychoanalysts have their training analysis, shamans have an initiation illness – often relegated to a “culture-bound syndrome” by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5* (American Psychiatric Association 2013, p. 749). More kindly, it could be viewed as a spiritual crisis or a “spiritual emergency” (Grof & Grof 1989; Lukoff 2011), a strange entanglement of madness and the transformation, finding its expression in the *ukutwasa* of South African *sangomas* (Lambrecht 2014) or the *matakite* among Maori *tohungas* (Bidois 2012), all of which are analogous to the “dark night of the soul” of many Christian medieval mystics. The training analysis as an initiation illness is its own culture-bound syndrome, emerging from its own time and place.

Accessing the world of ancestors is somewhat reminiscent of psychoanalytic work. Psychoanalysts equally hark back to their ancestor Papa Freud, while adhering to further lineages and creating new genealogies that coalesce into different schools – as do shamans. Psychoanalysts venerate the words of their ancestors in the holy texts of dead psychoanalysts, setting up institutes or temples in their honor. Instead of hearing ancestors as do the *sangomas*, the psychoanalysts read their words and stay true to their practice through veneration and training. Veneration is practiced in the name of survival and self-interest, purity, science and practices, through institutions such as specific schools, supervision, conferences, reading groups, and certificates. All of which reflect both the belonging and becoming of a psychoanalyst.

In regard to the psychologizing of shamanic practices, therefore, more of a both/and position has been taken here, and to use a shamanic symbol, this process of dying in order to become a healer is addressed from a “middle world” perspective in this paper. Visualize the world tree, found in many stories across the world, with the dark, painful, pathological underworld at its roots, the ordinary normal life of the middle world above ground, and the sacred upper world in the high branches. Shamans, like psychoanalysts, have traveled for themselves, and for their patients, from the pathological underworld to the normal middle world. This was the focus of this paper, namely what do shamans and psychoanalysts possibly share in relation to culture, death and belonging, with *Unbehagen* in the ordinary or middle world? Shamans are specifically trained to access the upper world through trance states, where death and

*Unbehagen* are experienced even more acutely. This upper world of the sacred and paranormal is, of course, historically a touchy and ambivalent taboo subject for psychoanalysis. For shamans, this is a necessary world in terms of their training and identity. Perhaps psychoanalysts will come to familiarize themselves with it as the profession evolves.

As I have shown, one way to consider the relationship between belonging and culture is to wonder how the role of death and the related *Unbehagen* propel us. The aim in this paper was to highlight how the fear of death, articulated in a dialectical manner by Rank, explains the hold cultures have over us, and why we are prepared to fight and die for ideas and beliefs. Furthermore, the dynamic also highlights our creative capacity to escape or enter other cultures, and how this becomes a rite of passage across at times stormy dialectical processes filled with *Unbehagen*. This *Unbehagen* occurs both at the point of loss of culture and in the transitional rite of passage towards a new belonging.

From my shamanic perspective, the processes of becoming and belonging to a healer culture are always revered and honored, perhaps partly because these processes make us aware and ask us to overcome the *Unbehagen* that accompanies the change and transformation from layperson to healer. Dread and death, therefore, have always been part of a healer's path. Perhaps in understanding this, embracing psychoanalysis and becoming an analyst could be understood as mirroring an ancient tradition, a tradition that has richly captured this process in stories and practices.

#### Endnotes

<sup>[1]</sup> Otto Rank, (1884-1939) was Freud's right-hand man for over twenty years. Especially relevant for this topic, he was a member of the secret committee or "ring" that defended itself against the heretics of Adler and Jung (Grosskurth 1991). Fearing for the survival of psychoanalysis, belonging to the "ring" becomes a defense against a fear of death, death of ideas, attachments, power, and identity of a specific psychoanalytic culture. This is often a denied and repressed part of psychoanalytic history, namely the cultish aspect of its culture, still unconsciously expressed by some followers today. However, the term "cult" is often used disparagingly by the establishment against competition. It is worth noting that without a dominant metanarrative, one person's culture is another person's cult.

<sup>[2]</sup> It is, of course, beyond the scope of this article to outline and capture the complexities of becoming a *sangoma*, as described fully elsewhere (Lambrecht 2014). Only some aspects of this process are brought to bear on this topic.

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