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GLEN O. GABBARD

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**Part Three**

**From the Transpsychic to the Interpsychic**

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In a touching and well-researched book written in 1989, Lynn Gamwell, Director of Binghamton University Art Museum in New York State, examined Freud’s notable collection of antique art. She observed that Freud began to surround himself with antique objects of great value (primarily little sculptures) after his father’s death, in the 1890s, which were also the years of his greatest scientific and professional isolation.

Freud created for himself, in that period, ‘an attentive audience of objects, which included an Egyptian scribe, a Greek goddess of wisdom, and a Chinese sage’ (Gamwell, 1989, p. 21). ‘These hundreds of human and animal figures all faced him like a huge audience... He wrote thousands of manuscript pages facing Imhotep, the Egyptian architect who, in late antiquity, was revered as a healer... Several accounts reveal that Freud treated these figures as his companions’ (p. 27).

But these figures were not only the surrogate colleagues that at that time he did not yet have. Even after the success of psychoanalysis, continuing theoretical and group conflicts deeply grieved him; oppressed by these diatribes, ‘the beleaguered founder of psychoanalysis always returned to his desk and to his dependable, silent audience, which represented for him the wisdom of the ages’ (p. 28).

This was a world made up of external and internal objects, then, a source of comfort and of inspiration at the same time, in an illusional, intermediate area of potential creativity. At the end of his life, after a
long illness, Freud decided to die in his studio, among his little objects, ‘his ancestors of choice, his most faithful colleagues, and the embodiments of his excavated truths of psychoanalysis’ (p. 29).

Today we are less alone.

In my colleagues’ offices in other cities and countries, which I like to visit in order to be able to imagine them at work in my personal evocative thoughts during sessions, I have often seen at least a photo of Freud, sometimes of Klein, a few of Winnicott, and in some cases personal portraits of the analyst and his supervisors. Almost never – and appropriately so – have I seen images of family members, the patient’s obvious rivals behind the scenes, out of respect for the patient’s temporary centrality, and with full liberty for him to fantasize.

I must say that only very rarely have I discovered in offices the characteristics of the indecipherable and Spartan neutrality that were recommended until a few decades ago as a guarantee of the ‘blank screen.’ Today’s analysts – in their exterior settings as well – seem to have in part renounced the pretext of an ideal undetectability of the analyst’s self in the professional relationship. If anything, judging by the distinctive language of their office furnishings, they appear inclined to officially admit to their existence as individuals, in addition to their identities as those who merely fulfill a function. Nevertheless, they certainly retain their good sense and good taste in limiting themselves to a perceptible but usually sober personalization of the environment, avoiding a narcissistic invasion of the working field with the exhibition of their private iconography.

The true presences in that room, then, are those that count and that make a difference; the patients do not see them, even though for years they live with them without knowing it, because they are in the mind and heart of the analyst.

An ‘ex-officio’ presence is a priori taken for granted, and that is precisely that of Sigmund Freud, whom everyone knows and of whom patients cultivate an absolutely subjective image.

And he is ‘their’ Freud, almost never the analyst’s.

They ignore, then, those who may be the analyst’s other relevant teachers, the more loved authors, the colleagues with whom external and internal dialogues are developed, and the cultural community in which the analyst actively co-participates.

Today we are less alone, as I mentioned, and our collegial exchanges are so alive and frequent that, like Freud, we are not in need of
interlocutors in effigie concreta in such a quantity (on the contrary, I think of the various pointed comments that we would hear today about a psychoanalytic office furnished like that of Berggasse 19).

A century of psychoanalysis confronts us, instead, with the difficult richness of a complexity of theoretical models and poses a problem of abundance: that of hosting in our scientific–professional imagination the plurality of the foundational scientific presences in addition to the daily ones – a plurality antagonistic to that coveted uniqueness and unity that narcissism tends to strongly defend as the preferred dimension.

What still impedes us from recognizing and appreciating at least a little of that complexity and plurality is, at times, a transference problem (Klauber, 1981; Rangell, 1982; Eisold, 1994; Smith, 2003; Reeder, 2002; Spurling, 2003; Ambrosiano, 2005; Bolognini, 2005a, 2005b; Foresti & Rossi Monti, 2006), or one of multi-object cohabitation in confronting inspirational figures that are at times experienced not so much as parental or familial equivalents in an evolved sense (and thus with their characteristics and limitations not overly idealized), but as the archaic ‘total parent,’ unique and preoedipal – a parent who must not be ‘betrayed,’ putting him in a broader familial context, and then growing and differentiating oneself from him, but to whom or with whom one completely identifies, rather than only partially so.

In his very original work, ‘On Psychoanalytic Figures as Transference Objects,’ Laurence Spurling (2003) supports the utility, for every analyst, of an examination of his own internal relationship with the author to whom he refers. He notes: ‘The value of an investigation of one’s relationship to a psychoanalytic figure is that it is an excellent medium for revealing one’s transference, as the figure in question is not a real person but only exists through his/her writings’ (p. 31).

Spurling quite honestly analyzes his transference in relating to Winnicott, annotating the theoretical and affective changes that, with time, have developed in him in regard to this figure and his thought.

Freud, Ferenczi, or Klein, or Winnicott, Bion, Kohut, or Lacan – it isn’t important who: the transferential copy that at times can come on the scene, at a level not so evolved, in the unconscious area of the analysts’ internal world or that of psychoanalytic societies, is basically always the same. It risks leading to a restricted hypersimplification of the internal field and, correspondingly, of the professional–institutional one.

http://www.psychoanalysisarena.com/secret-passages-9780415555128
Two preliminary specifications: the first is that many subsequent observations will be read in free reference as much to the analyst’s internal world as to the offshoots and reciprocal repercussions between the internal world and the institutional world, which do not coincide but are not independent of each other either.

The second: the discussion that I will develop is not in favor of a generic theoretical–clinical eclecticism, but – I repeat – it is in favor of the recognition of plurality and complexity of our contemporary horizons, which are in continual, compelling evolution, and of their utilizability in interchanges among colleagues and in the privacy of daily theoretical–clinical reflection.

Continuing my panoramic shot of the ‘language of objects’ in the workplaces and offices of my colleagues – that is, in the institutions and society headquarters of the three psychoanalytic continents – I am struck by how the official iconography hung on the walls suggests, for the most part, two series of portraits: that of international Grand Masters, who make official the historical developments and diffusion of psychoanalytic research; and that of the more homespun and reassuring local predecessors (usually a portrait gallery of presidents), who serve as a link between the ideal and the family history, as well as a shock absorber of the tension between the dilemma of plurality and the guarantee of identity and of institutional continuity.

The fact that such portraits may be exhibited with the greatest frequency in the centers of psychoanalytic societies with the longest traditions does not surprise us, of course – that is, in those centers where time and the progressive institutional working through have permitted a calming and sufficiently serene recomposition of that specific family history, consensually accepted by subsequent generations – even though there is likely to have been a considerable degree of conflict in the first generation after the founding fathers.

Transferential oneness

It is completely natural for every analyst that there may be a theoretical choice adopted, and that one author more than others may satisfy the demands of a complex scientific vision of an individual or of a group, characterizing its scientific identity. It is also realistic that, beyond choices of final allegiance, the analyst undergoing a formative evolution may choose an author as a single beacon who signals the
way to navigators, necessitating a temporary, natural simplification of the theoretical field in order to construct the foundations of his own nascent theoretical–technical subjectivity.

But I am concerned here with a gray area, a ‘shadow zone’ that can be hidden behind certain excessive simplifications of the theoretical field, which is due to an excess of the analyst’s transference to the parental or narcissistic equivalent represented by the inspirational object and which can constitute an obstacle to a collegial intersubjective exchange.

The symptom of this shadow zone is precisely the incapacity for an interchange with the ‘non-self,’ which is unconsciously feared as dangerous and too disturbing.

This shadow zone does not at all coincide with the strong and authentic core identification that in many cases can be well constructed, using a theoretical setup based on a single inspirational figure, with a simple internal identity and, in fact, an authentic one (i.e., well individuated and separate from the relevant internal object); but it is distinguished by its symptomatology of narrow-mindedness toward an externality that may not be immediately corroborating.

It is the task of the sufficiently mature analyst to keep himself vigilant, reflective, and self-analytic in the face of a possible tendency toward an idealizing archaic transference to a specific hyperpossessive object (of the kind: ‘You will not have any other god apart from me!’), a transference that functions as a protective element with respect to the disturbing experience of plurality among the family figures.

Plurality, in fact, sounds offensive to our originary narcissism – which, deep down, intimately, would demand an exclusive and privileged union, both internal and external, with a unique parental or narcissistically confirming equivalent.

My first analytic patient comes to mind: a young engineer, the second son of four brothers, who could not tolerate that, on his favorite soccer team – the ‘Inter’ soccer team of Milan – someone other than his favorite player, Karl Heinz Rummenigge, might actually have scored a goal. This player was the symbol of an idealized and perfect narcissism and of an invincible ‘German’ technology that obviously represented the projection of his ideal self.

This patient had no peace due to the fact that, in his field of work (building engineering), there was no single, masterful person to whom he could refer, someone who was good with every technical problem. True, there was a certain Mr. Leonhardt, whom the patient
continually quoted to me, and who seemed to combine within himself the height of the profession (in addition to which, through the assonance of his name, he evoked the absolute and universal genius of Leonardo da Vinci).

But, tragically, this protective figure – though dominant – was not enough in the face of more complex and diverse eventualities. For example, having been charged with designing his town’s sidewalks, my patient noted with dismay that on this task, the immense Leonhardt had written nothing; so he would have to go to the extreme length of asking for advice from another engineer, Mr. Semenzato, an unknown colleague for the past few years. Semenzato was a few years older than my patient and had previously arranged the same sort of project in a nearby town, so he was someone who might be able to tell him something useful about it.

This prospect of consulting him seemed quite offensive and narcissistically unacceptable to my patient: to move from Leonhardt to . . . this Semenzato?! Unthinkable! ‘Why?’ my patient cried out in his session, ‘Why in the field of building engineering isn’t there someone unique and absolute who corresponds to a Dante Alighieri, unquestionably considered by everyone “the supreme poet”? ’

It is unnecessary to point out that, at the time, I was older than he by a few years, and that I came dangerously close to being the equal of this provincial Semenzato, the professional ‘older brother’ who interfered in an annoying manner with the unique and symmetrical relationship with the patient’s narcissistic ideal.

It must also be pointed out in my patient’s defense, as a mitigating factor, that true complexity and plurality do not constitute agreeable reality; they require work and a much greater interior space with respect to the elementary functions of an ‘either/or’ type.

In a paper dedicated to this formative background (‘La Famiglia Interna dell’Analista’ [The analyst’s internal family]; Bolognini, 2005a), I pointed out the opportunity to enlarge the familial field of the professional self to a broadened structure including the equivalents of grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, and analytic siblings, because the totality of these figures, of these potential interlocutors, can constitute a considerable richness in furthering the aim of internal consultation during the clinical work.

We know very well that many authors, in the past more than 100 years, have accurately described a specific aspect or portion of the mental functioning of human beings. We also know that many of
these may, for narcissistic reasons, oedipal or intergenerational, have emphasized their own discoveries and acquisitions as though they had to supplant those of their predecessors, invalidating them. Others, with greater moderation, have realized they were proposing extensions, variations of perspective and additional integrations, not substitutive ones. They (I think of Klein and Kohut) officially stated that they offered an ideological continuity of the works of those who had preceded them, but they then dedicated almost all their work to the carefully honed presentation of only the new aspects of their ‘copyright.’

In this way, they actually provoked in their readers and followers the implicit conviction of a complete substitution of the new for the old, with the predictable opposing effects of rejection in some and proselytism in others.

Today as yesterday, some psychoanalysts express themselves in their writing as though Freud (speaking theoretically) did not still constitute one of their fundamental sources of reference – which, conversely, he always ends up being, if nothing else because of their implicit assumptions of where to begin. They seem to negate the fact that Freud, first of all, certainly asked himself many questions and threw out exploratory thoughts in reasonable anticipation of subsequent verifying developments.

Others, on the contrary, maintain that Freud actually said everything himself, and that successive developments are not ‘derivatives’ (perhaps inevitably and appropriately integrative ones), but new ‘spins’ on his work. These analysts put forward stern warnings not to go beyond what they maintain to be the proper realm of orthodoxy, as though every novelty were invariably the expression of a resistance (an assumption that – if not discriminately modulated – risks being transformed into a paralyzing, viselike grip).

Conversely, what takes no notice of a priori rejections or total proselytisms is our preconscious, which – in very specific stages of treatment, or in the present moment of an individual session, in bypassing the barriers of our preferences with impudence, precisely when (and if) we do not expect it – brings to our mind this or that author, perhaps a disagreeable one, or one of whom we have taken little account. This author, with regard to certain configurations or certain developments, has written pages on that moment right there, and – damn! – they fit perfectly and, if we are honest, permit us to see or to understand something new: a little as though a not very
well-liked relative has provided us with useful tools in an unexpected and a bit disconcerting way.

It is not that the preconscious is always taken literally as a revealed truth; the ego still has the absolute right to carry out its own reflections and to draw from them some choices considered at the secondary level.

However, the preconscious is a respected interlocutor, because – if placed in a condition to express itself – it has its own unforeseen and irrepressible originality, and it is worth listening to; free association, at times, seems to gain access to theory as well, through a creative and reflective intersection with clinical work.

It falls to us to integrate or, more modestly, to allow certain unexpected and logically inconsistent connections to cohabit an intermediate, interlocutory area – connections that surprise us in sessions. Sometimes, if one has the patience, they can reveal themselves less incompatible and contradictory than imagined, more or less as sometimes happens in a family or group setting, when contributions that seem to undermine the coherence of a certain way of seeing things then demonstrate an unforeseen generativity.

And it must also be said that a presumed theoretical rigor on the logical level, in certain cases, can be a sign of some rigidity and intolerance on the psychological level, impeding contact and consultation with more of the internal interlocutors endowed with various skills (like the original mother and father, with their respective languages and mental perspectives, in the child’s formative experience and the adult’s internal consultation).

The problem that I am describing, in fact, is that of the contactability and consultability of a broad internal group that can (and I emphasize ‘can,’ not ‘must’) become part of the authentic interior world of the contemporary analyst.

I want to add that I carefully maintain a certain distinction between the ‘working ego’ and the ‘working self.’ Internal interlocutors play a part in the latter, while the working ego consults them, and in the end, if it is sufficiently autonomous and mature, it takes a position, chooses, and decides.

The complex articulation of our internal organization in the session does not constitute in and of itself an insurmountable difficulty for analysts. We are sufficiently trained, for example, in the exercise of suspending judgment, in the consideration of well-balanced points of view, in the alternating and interwoven identification with various
characters on the scene, in the continual referral of the present to
the past and vice versa – from the inside to the outside of their
co-presence, to the perception of desire behind the defense, etc. In
general we are in a sufficiently proven condition to stage a complex
mental scenario.

Certainly, others surpass us in this sense – for example, philo-
sophers, because they have at bottom a dynamic advantage: they more
often deal with abstract concepts rather than emotional experiences.
I would say that, usually, differently from us and with due exceptions,
philosophers ‘travel without baggage in hand’ – the baggage of mem-
ories, of the emotions and sensations that we always carry with us
because of their inevitable associations, since every theoretical refer-
ence reconnects them to us in sessions, in our clinical and personal
stories, in more or less painful and difficult situations of therapeutic
cohabitation.

Philosophers, our fellow travelers in thought, specialize in con-
ceptual explorations that for the most part evoke other conceptual
explorations. Because of this – being, at least apparently, less weighed
down by dense emotional charges – they seem to better tolerate
complexity.

It is also in discussing our theories that I think we analysts must
frequently tolerate a not yet rational complexity, but an evocative one,
much greater than that demanded of those who, in their rationality,
are legitimately released from continual and intense experiential
evocation.

The other highly specific point at which psychoanalysis proves to
be a ‘science with a special mandate’ resides, in my opinion, in its
acceptance of the alternation of primary process with secondary process as a
functional realm specific to the mind of the analyst.

The problem I pose is whether that is valid only for clinical activity,
or is it also valid for theoretical reflection on the psychoanalytic
mission?

I understand that, for a ‘normal’ epistemology, an answer that may
allow for a certain modality of theoretical reflection – the alternating
primary/secondary functioning – may seem unacceptable. In that
alternating functioning, the principle of contradiction can come to
be suspended, and in weighing the validity of two theories that are
not in agreement, Occam’s razor can also fail to function, since it
does not take into account the cohabitability or its lack in two theories
that are consistent in their interior, but not between themselves,
and sometimes with fruitful results, in the analyst’s real mind (not the ideal one).\(^1\)

Antithetical theories and models, then, can coexist with a certain degree of ‘truth’ (or, more modestly, of utility), even though they might rationally exclude each other. It is possible that in other cases, one perspective might seem more fertile or more livable than another, and in certain cases vice versa, so it happens that, at the present time, they may coexist (and not inappropriately) from a clinical point of view.

There is a diversity of opinions on what can be defined as ‘research’ in psychoanalysis today: there are those who restrict the term to empirical research; those who extend it to conceptual research; those who rely on clinical material as creative investigation; those who require objective, statistical, or psychometrical measurability of observable variables; and so on. Such diversity is emblematic in our field, and it seems to me to suggest a certain caution in the face of a possible categorization of methodological judgment.

One can observe, for example, the exchange of opinions between Otto Kernberg (2006) and Roger Perron (2006) in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis in regard to this topic. I am aware of stepping into a hornet’s nest there, and I will limit myself to outlining the problem.

But let us return to complexity and plurality, and to their ramifications for theory and technique. For example, a critical point for us analysts is that of the theoretical–clinical choice to ‘condense’ representations of the object to the point of arriving at the uniqueness of the underlying transferential relationship. Or, at the other end of the spectrum, of articulating, tolerating, and sharing a certain plurality of presences in the analytic scene, succeeding in playing with them in the session in a creative way, on an oneiric level as well, with the ‘one,’ ‘two,’ ‘three,’ and the ‘more than three,’ according to various situations.

The multiple figures of a discussion or of a dream can be understood as split products or fragments of a narcissistic representation (= only

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1 Occam suggested that, among the different explanations of a natural phenomenon, one would have to prefer the one that does not multiply useless entities (*entia non sunt multiplicanda*). Usually, ‘Occam’s razor’ comes to be applied as a practical rule for choosing among hypotheses that might have the same capacity for explaining one or more observed natural phenomena.
images of parts of the self) or of a dyadic situation (= images of the self and the object). Alternatively, they can be considered pertinent to more evolved spheres of organization of the internal world, such as oedipal triangulation, the family scheme, an important and meaningful group reality for the subject in a given moment, etc.

In each case, then, we work primarily to reintegrate that which is split in the self. In other cases, the dispersion of the object’s representations into multiple figures present on the scene suggests the opportunity to interpret transferentially this multiplication of representations, re-unifying the apparent plurality of figures into the representation of the object-analyst.

Yet at times we find ourselves facing the possibility of granting, or not, a certain degree of objective dignity of its own to a figure that can begin to exist in the external world and in the patient’s internal one, in continuity with the transference – of which, certainly, it is an extension. On the basis of its characteristics of continuing existence and substance, it gradually gains a different status, an autonomous right of citizenship in the patient’s life and in the treatment scenario.

A classic case, in this sense, is evident in the way of treating the patient’s development of loving feelings in analysis. According to the clinical context, the analyst will be able to appreciate the preeminence of aspects of defensive displacement from himself to an external object. Alternatively, those aspects can be seen as more mature ones – as an evolved transfer to a new, realistic, and possible object (with the analyst becoming, in that case, a post-oedipal parent who can be renounced). Or, at a much more regressive level, the analyst will be able, through a new entry, to catch on the fly an opportunity to ‘re-dredge up’ some element of the patient that – after a split, and after having been launched like a projectile far into the distance, remaining in exile and entirely remote from the confines of the self – was awaiting, for who knows how much time, the opportunity of representation and introjective reintegration into a self that can still be represented only through the image of a couple. And so on, with other possibilities.

The important thing is for the analyst to be keenly perceptive (today one works with a ‘perceptivity with complex stripes’), and to make use of a sufficiently broad array of configurations and models in his ‘working self,’ and also to characterize himself as having a certain internal mobility in his ‘working ego.’
In regard to the idea of having a sufficient endowment of models and configurations, I am reminded of a curious episode of forty years ago.

At the end of the 1960s – in tandem with the economic boom – new habits, new cultural perspectives, and specialists in new careers began to make themselves known in Italy. Among the latter (in addition to psychoanalysts) were sommeliers, refined advisors for a new sensibility in wine drinking.

I was quite impressed and admiring when, in an elegant restaurant in Rome, one of these specialists came to our table, displaying a silver tastevin around his neck, and after having taken note of the dishes we had chosen (with lamb as the entrée), he recommended, with thoughtful and focused precision, a 1965 Blauburgunder Sudtiroler, which in his words was perfect for the occasion. These were the years in which James Bond ordered an exclusive champagne vintage with a self-confident air, and I thought that this expert must have been, within his chosen field, a font of science.

I was perplexed, however, when he moved two tables away from us and I heard him recommend the same Blauburgunder, with the same concentrated haughtiness, to a couple who had ordered prosciutto and melon. I then dedicated my interest to eavesdropping on his subsequent conversations at various tables here and there in the room, only to discover that he managed to offload an entire case of Blauburgunder, regardless of whether the hapless diners had ordered the Adriatic sole or game from the mountains of Veneto.

Nevertheless, from the way in which he assumed a particular attitude and expressed himself, that guy had seemed to me to be a great professor.

Now, I suspect that it may be rather difficult to work with this internal mobility if one is not inclined to collaborate at least a little with some of the inspirational objects that are different among themselves, that may have entered to become a part of, with introjective authenticity, our interior psychoanalytic family.

These objects can function as a ‘third’ with respect to the analyst–patient dyad, or with respect to that mixture of the analyst and another internal object who is more universal: with respect to a dyad, that is, more than with respect to a couple.

I think that, at times, the analyst risks forming an excluding, narcissistic dyad, instead of a differentiated, generative couple – also in the case of a relationship with a teacher or an author of reference.

Furthermore, just as happens almost regularly in the first stages of clinical work, the internal realm of identification can work things out
such that the analyst ‘becomes’ his own analyst or his own supervisor, ‘behaving as he’ and losing contact with the self, rather than remembering them and consulting them while remaining one’s own self.

[In short], . . . the force of transference is destined to considerably condition the theoretical–conceptual openings and closings toward this or that colleague or teacher, favoring them or inhibiting them, at times, to set aside the actual value or scientific interest of various proposed contributions.

Transferences are created that apparently point toward an object-theory (Leo Rangell’s ‘transference to theory,’ 1982) – that is, transferences behind which there is always a more or less complex involvement with a figure that inspires areas of great transferential significance.

According to Falzeder (1998), who cites in this sense the American ‘filiations’ of Ferenczi and Rank, the underlying inspirational figure is usually a unique one.

(Bolognini, 2005a)²

Certainly, the analyst’s theoretical–technical harmony and integration depend on his basic nature, on his development as a person, and on his formative course during his training years. These fundamental factors come to make up a sort of ‘complex personal equation’ of the analyst, which will render him unique and specific with respect to every categorical standard.

What I am trying to indicate here is that this harmony may also be the fruit of a relative (and thus temporary) acceptance of the plurality and conflictuality of a sufficiently loving internal environment, possibly making use of an underlying, good narcissistic physiological endowment.

This latter element comes to be provided primarily by the mother and father and by their subsequent equivalents; then by the analysis; and later on – I would add – by an adequate and not unrealistic, complex valorization of the family/institution in which one has grown up, which forms a foundational internal object for the analyst.

The much-reviled larger psychoanalytic institutions, which certainly have many well-documented defects, fulfill, however, a

² Translation by Gina Atkinson.
foundational function as an antidote to the theoretical–clinical endogamy (which is, on the other hand, a risk in small groups). This, in my view, is not sufficiently recognized.

Daniel Widlöcher (2004) asks himself about the deep meaning of the enormous quantity of seminars, conventions, and conferences developed by psychoanalysts in every geographical region. While recognizing a variety of possible motives for this rather surprising fact (if ophthalmologists or surgeons had as many conventions, this would indicate enormous scientific progress, which in reality in our field is not the case), Widlöcher hypothesizes that the basic function of all these meetings may be the function of the ‘third’ – that is, the need to give notice of and to verify elaborative internal results to the individual, or to the local group, experienced as an entity that is not sufficiently ‘other.’

Plurality in psychoanalysis today

Although André Green (2005) has recently decidedly contested Wallerstein’s idea of common ground and of ‘many psychoanalyses’ (Wallerstein, 2005), the IPA Congress in Rio (in 2005) and the one in Berlin (in 2007) have to my mind confirmed the fact of gradual, substantial, community acceptance of a fertile variety of currents of analytic thought. The novelty here is not in the ‘variety’ (already noted), but in the ‘fertile’ aspect, since it can now be seen with clarity that analysts are rather tired of religious wars, and they find it more and more the norm to exchange ideas and organize panels with colleagues of different origins and varying formulations.

Fertility is evidenced by the fact that analysts of different origins no longer limit themselves to stating their own opinions, each on his own, functioning – so to speak – ‘in parallel.’ Instead they begin to exchange ideas in a spirit of curiosity, without the pretext of ‘converting’ the other, in a perspective of interchange that does not threaten respective identities. This is what verifies, in fact, the international clinical discussion groups.

The ‘monochrome’ panel, in contrast, is less attractive at meetings than it once was, and it has a taste of the provincial, sometimes risking the repeat of a self-confirming atmosphere of parochialism. Conversely, a panel regains its particular attraction when it deals with the reexamination of a strongly characterized cultural biotope that
can be utilized in the internal references that every analyst adopts to orient himself and to form conceptualizations.

These considerations are valid yet again, without too much discontinuity, for external reality just as for the analyst’s internal reality. Overall, they refer not so much to having few or many teachers in one’s own formation, as to having few or many interlocutors – and, if possible, ones who are sufficiently different among themselves, belonging to both the parental series and the fraternal one – with whom to engage in a creative dialogue on the external and the internal.

Incidentally, the ‘mono-Leonhardt’ engineer consulted Semenzato, in the end, and for better or for worse, those famous sidewalks sprang forth – the result of a collegial genesis, rather than a self-sufficient or a divine one.

For some years, moreover, as happens with many of my colleagues, I have had the opportunity of entering into exchanges with psychoanalysts of different histories, schools, residences, and traditions. I can say – with a feeling I have discovered to be shared – that the first meetings resemble those with third- or fourth-generation family branches of immigrants: there is reciprocal curiosity, some trepidation, the certainty of a common ‘old-style’/family history, and, however, at the same time – powerful and undeniable – the experience of being an outsider.

In the beginning, certain phantasms (which are at least in part protective ones) generated an initial ill-concealed tension. Even the promising diversification along genealogical lines, which in meetings with foreign colleagues could have allowed a real possibility of cross-fertilization, carried the risk – without the predictable marching in place of the usual reassuring and confirming discussions (already noted to be a sort of ‘closed farm’) – of giving rise to the construction of a preliminary defensive bastion.

Attendance at international discussion groups, with colleagues of different nationalities but especially of different schools, have permitted me to dissolve some of these phantasms, a little at a time, without having to lose my original familial identity. I have met people who are desirous of working on clinical material with real curiosity about the contributions of others, united perhaps by an implicit, spontaneous pre-selection. In those groups, people come together who are already inclined to set aside their often very particular histories and to grasp the occasion for contact and exchange in a climate of what is effectively a cultural otherness.
Much more complex is the experience of the CAPSA forum (the Committee on Analytic Practice and Scientific Activity), the initiative instituted in 2005 by the IPA president, Claudio Eizirik, to promote theoretical–clinical, intercontinental exchanges through an official network of specific invitations issued by the Association to colleagues who bring direct testimony of the diverse ways of working in the three major geographical areas of the IPA.

In summary, I can say that the few initial resistances to these interwoven exchanges came, really, from those nations strongly characterized by local theory, perhaps more accustomed to self-confirming situations and, all in all, more inclined to export their psychoanalysis than to import something of others’. The overall good start of these meetings seems to open a new era in the history of our Association.

Regarding the various ‘psychoanalytic families,’ in the following pages, I will not propose an update about ‘which Freud’ or ‘which Klein,’ which Winnicott, Lacan, Kohut, Bion, etc., one meets in visiting the psychoanalytic societies of various continents, according to local stock-exchange quotations or perhaps making recourse to the impact factors provided by the frequency of citation of these various authors. Instead, I want to report an underlying impression that has formed in me with time and with ongoing contacts and that contributes today to my overall analytic view.

To me it seems that, in many countries, a process of transformation of many ‘incompatibilities’ may in fact be taking place, not in the sense of a destructive denial of discontinuities or of different theories, but in the sense of a recognition of the existence, of the consultability and dignity, of the various psychoanalyses (in a meaningful parallel with the very recent official acceptance of the existence of different models of training in the IPA). Meanwhile, there is a laborious but progressive attenuation of conflicts surrounding the historical, scientific, institutional, familial, and theoretical–clinical figure of Sigmund Freud.

Do I run the risk of putting forth a version of the facts that is too simple if I say that Freud, in our collective fantasy, 150 years after his birth, is slowly, arduously ‘becoming a grandfather’?

3 I intend here to refer not to the fact that Freud may have been ‘surpassed’ – a problem that the press periodically suggests to analysts in a perfunctory and provocative way – but to the fact that others who came after him may have continued the intergenerational chain with the characteristics and the prerogatives of equally worthy and original forms of generativity and parentage that are their own. I think that this point – of the possible
Can we think that truly by virtue of his extraordinary (but not divine) fertility, he has many grandchildren today, and that none of them is, intergenerationally, ‘the only’ son with the right of primogeniture and of exclusive heredity to his title and goods?

Generally speaking, the recognition of one’s own Freudian line of descent is, for the analyst, the natural result of an authentically rooted gratitude and admiration.

Not only that: beyond recognition of common genealogical and historical roots, the majority of analysts do not at all repudiate the importance and substance of Freudian discoveries, but one feels encouraged – more than authorized – to extend research work into new areas also, utilizing new theoretical and technical tools – also, I intend to emphasize.

If, on the one hand, one must not lose sight of the unforsakeable pole of a discriminating, necessary rigor for a scientific psychoanalysis, I would like to contribute, in the pages to come, toward giving a dialectic representation to the other pole, within which the range of our discipline can come alive and enrich itself – a range that includes a cautious, attentive, and not indiscriminate faith in its possible developments.

I feel myself to be a son of classical psychoanalysis, which I hold dear and of which ‘I don’t throw anything away’ – but I feel a familial relationship with it, not a sacral or idealizing one, and even less a fetishistic one. This permits me, I think, to look at what is new with interest, without feeling myself to be too much at fault or too intimidated under the gaze of my ancestors.

I think that, if anything, our teachers of the past may have had the courage to explore the unknown without contenting themselves with ‘sacred scriptures’ and that we must learn from them, first of all, precisely this, while also not abandoning an appropriately critical spirit.

At the same time, I do not harbor any compulsive fervor to have to rid myself by force of the family notebooks and library; I do not ‘grandfathering,’ so to speak, of Freud into analysts’ internal world – must be well clarified. To know how to become grandparents means accepting that others, too, after us, may be generative and that, indeed, precisely the generative capacity of our successors may confirm the goodness of our original roots. We would not render Freud a good service – and not our internal Freud either – if we imagine his children and grandchildren as uniform automatons who follow canonical codes.

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feel any intolerance toward the roots from which we have come, as long as I do not feel constrained to religiously repeat them without being able to reach my personal creativity or our shared, fraternal, generational creativity. I understand our ‘post-modernism,’ in short, as the following: a substantial familial appreciation, humanizing and not idealizing, of our original psychoanalytic objects, in full recognition of our received heritage.

From here, in addition to our transference – but possibly utilizing the energy of our transference – we can proceed, moving between two poles: that of appreciation for a precious heritage that is not to be wasted, and that of courage with which to face the new that is yet to be conquered, just as Freud and his students did, the pioneers, sometimes alone and sometimes in groups.

Today we are truly no longer alone, if we choose not to be, and if we know how to utilize the presences and the resources of our field.

Precisely from my clinical encounters in recent years, I draw the most comforting thoughts. It may seem banal, but with the effort of working together, among colleagues, the push of the drives and the vicissitudes of the subject’s narcissistic equilibrium, the intersubjective implications of the encounter and the overdetermination of transference journeys, the reintroduction of split elements, the activity of reverie, and the recovery of memory – all are concepts that become less and less alien and are always less incompatible in the analyst’s actual mind (not the ideal one). Most often, analysts retain a clear ideal of the origin and distinctive relevance of concepts with respect to diverse models.

I am describing, perhaps, a complex movement or groundswell that pertains to the evolution of the international psychoanalytic community in its scientific and institutional aspects (CAPSA is, at bottom, an ‘emerging idea’ of this multifaceted project) – that is, the movement toward meeting and interchange with respect to differences and plurality.

And I would like to conclude this chapter by commenting on this subject (which – given today’s geographical diffusion of psychoanalysis – risks assuming a planetary dimension) at a more individual and possibly more homespun level: in emptying the suitcase (our already-cited ‘baggage in hand’) after a clinical meeting with faraway colleagues, we often return to our offices with an abundance of paper material.

Photocopied articles, books, recovered notes from discussions – all lie for some time on our desks, to be later thrown away or,
alternatively, placed in a bookcase or in categorized files for future usage, becoming part of that plankton that Cesare Musatti⁴ (personal communication) spoke of and through which the analyst nourishes himself, following his rambling needs and inspirations.

But another, less tangible treasure will sneak out of the just-opened suitcase, and it will follow us, invisible, all the way to our workplace: an efficacious expression, an unusual concept, a meaningful back-and-forth between two colleagues, a surprising interpretation, even a special way – for us, a little bit ‘foreign’ – to create a pause or to keep hold of an uncertainty, which will return to our minds when we least expect it and which will probably contribute to a not insignificant moment in a session.

Maybe it will be useful to us as well, provided that we are not offended, provided that we are not frightened off by it.

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⁴ Cesare Musatti was one of the early founders of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society.