

EDIE G. BOXER

Living Within the Surround of Death: Regulating Trauma/Dissociation/Self and Other in the Analytic Encounter

This paper/presentation describes what is increasingly on my mind: the inevitability and finality of death. I am aware that my worry about dying is alerting me to a sequestered knowledge that trauma can always occur, and that it seems more than my mind can tolerate.

In conference with colleagues, my analyst, and with a specific patient, I became awakened to traumas that I had not been able to think about or process for a good portion of my life.

As I was going through this process of self-discovery, I became more enlivened and curious about my patient, whose psychological survival and self-imposed feeling of impending death puts him in jeopardy on an on-going basis. His thoughts and fears are expressed in such a way that mental health professionals who have treated him term his behavior "psychotic." While we were piecing together some of his history, I began to hypothesize that his unarticulated traumas were active contributors to his elevated level of fear helping me to see his seeming psychosis as a dynamic interplay of these dissociated experiences.

I hope to demonstrate the usefulness of the analyst's on-going selfreflection and willingness to discover, not only one's own metamorphosis, but also all that that means in the whole of the analytic surround. Therefore, as I continue to embrace my fear of dying, I hold the hope that we will ultimately find the way for my patient to live.

Edith (Edie) G. Boxer, M.S.W., PSY.D. has a background in early childhood intervention and prevention at both on-site and home based agencies. A graduate of The Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis, Los Angeles where she graduated in 2001, she is currently co-chair of the Admissions Committee, a Board member, and a Training and Supervising Analyst. Clinically, Dr. Boxer is very interested in contemporary psychoanalysis as it emphasizes the collaborative healing capacity of the analytic relationship in order for the dyad to incorporate the patient's unique, subjective experience as well as engage both the analyst/therapist's and patient's subjectivity. Building on this context, she credits Phillip Bromberg's work on trauma and dissociation as well as Judith Vida and Gershon J. Molad's Autobiographical Seminars as instrumental in her clinical thinking and its application.