

## **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

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**Seventh Annual Interdisciplinary Conference of the  
International Federation for Psychoanalytic Education  
Boca Raton, FL, November 1996**

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**Whose Psychoanalytic Education Is It Anyhow?**

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Early on in the development of my professional career, I heard a comment by Stanislaus Szurek, a psychoanalyst upon whose children's service I worked while I was a psychology intern. During the discussions of the seemingly incomprehensible behaviors we were encountering in the clinical situation, he stated his belief that "human beings have the inalienable right to be and to do that which human beings are and do, and to take the consequences thereof". This comment had a profound effect upon my thinking because it seemed, at first, so much at odds with the belief that my contemporaries and I took for granted, namely, that we were developing professional skills and abilities in order to relieve and protect individuals from doing and experiencing that which seemed, manifestly, to be causing them so much suffering, unhappiness, distress and misery. After all, as so many of our teachers reminded us, we were learning what we were learning in order to *help* people; particularly those people we had decided could not help themselves.

If I recall correctly, the occasion that made Szurek's comment come alive for me was a picnic for the children on the service that he headed. At the picnic was a large bowl of hard-boiled eggs still in their shells. One youngster, a boy of ten, who was on the ward because he was totally mute, took one of the eggs and began to eat it, shell and all. Helpful intern Hyman remonstrated "no, no", gently took the egg from the boy, which he relinquished passively, shelled the egg and handed it back to him. He, in turn, looked at the shelled egg and at the "rescuer" who protected him from the horrors of the mean eggshell, put the shelled egg back in the bowl of eggs, took one that was unshelled, and, while looking directly at me, proceeded to eat the egg and the shell. The look he gave me while doing so communicated eloquently the statement, "you eat hard-boiled eggs your way and I will eat them mine".

There is an interesting sequel to this story. As we were leaving the park where we had picnicked, we discovered that this same boy was missing. The buses waited while we conducted a frantic search for him. The search was frantic, you might guess, because most of us believed that, because he was mute and, therefore, could not communicate, he would be terrified. He was found in the lost-and-found office of the park sitting on a desk, calmly explaining to the park people who had found him that he had to go because the bus was waiting for him. Of course, he became mute again as soon as he boarded the bus.

The thesis I would like to offer you in this presentation is that we, as psychoanalytic educators, have appropriated to ourselves the responsibilities of those to whom they belong. In our zeal to be helpful to patients, to analysands, and to students we first have to designate them as lacking the wherewithal to do for themselves. Then, having so defined them, we feel ourselves free, impelled, and obligated to do for them that which we say they cannot do for themselves. Further, we have, in the service of our altruism, to prove to them, and have them share our belief in, their lack of capability. Finally, we seek to convince them that it is only through our benevolent interventions will they be able to function capably and that they should, therefore, make themselves available to those interventions.

Though I have exemplified here on how our need to be helpful manifests itself in a

clinical situation, I would like to discuss, and focus upon, at perhaps too great length, how that need impacts also on the psychoanalytic educational process in all of its aspects. I will begin with a consideration of the psychoanalytic institute as the locus of psychoanalytic education as it exists today.

In other presentations and papers, I have raised questions about the purposes and functions of psychoanalytic institutes. It seems to me such questions are infrequently raised because it is taken as a given that the only way in which one *really* becomes an analyst is through the completion of the program of an institute. While lip service may be given to the possibility of development of an analyst through other means, for example through self-directed and/or self-conducted educational experiences, the belief is usually expressed that, while such alternatives may have been necessary at one time, now that we have institutes available, institute training is the only way to go. It is my experience that that belief is rarely questioned much less put to any test. I believe that one reason this is so is that once an individual has undergone institute training, that individual would have to be extraordinarily open minded to ask if the investment of time, effort and money was the best choice. Certainly such a person would have to have remained impervious to the indoctrination that seems to be inevitably a part of the experience.

Whenever I have discussed, with institute-trained colleagues, the instances of someone's withdrawal from or discontinuation of such analytic training because that person deemed it unsatisfactory and replaced it by some other form of training, the reasons offered by my colleagues were "unresolved negative transference" or some form or other of psychopathological acting-out. I have never heard such colleagues consider the possibility that, in instances of student withdrawal or other expressions of dissatisfaction with the program, the training experience itself ought to have been questioned, studied, evaluated, or reevaluated.

I believe that there is a good possibility that institutes are, to some degree, an expression of the boast that professional status includes the responsibility to help other individuals to obtain that same status of "professional". As analysts, we want to help others become analysts and we form institutes in order to accomplish that end. We rarely ask the question, "Why do I need to provide such help?"; "What am I getting out of the effort?"; "Do these others need my help?"; or "What would I feel about myself if I didn't help?" In addition, I am posing the question, "If such help is needed, is forming an institute the best way to go about providing it?"

I have encountered the argument that institutes are needed to provide analysts with the *bona fides* necessary for professional life, which argument seems to include the proposition that possession of a diploma from an institute and membership in the organization to which that institute belongs certifies one's competence as an analyst. Leaving aside for the moment the question of the validity of that argument, aren't we faced with the paradox that a discipline that focuses on inner mental processes needs certification from without in order to establish competence. I subscribe to the proposition that the only valid certification that an analyst can obtain is that which the analyst provides to him or herself; and that the need for some sort of external validation is

something to be analyzed rather than acted upon. And, returning to the idea that institutes are necessary because they provide diplomas and/or other credentials to analysts, is to subscribe to the argument which depicts institutes as a diploma mills.

I would like now to turn our attention to some specific elements of the prevailing psychoanalytic training model and discuss them in much the same way that I have discussed institutes in general. Perhaps the best place to begin is with the selection process.

One of the persistent myths in psychoanalysis is the belief in the ability of analysts to predict human behavior. Institutes actualize that myth by adopting, in some cases, elaborate screening and evaluating processes in order to select those individuals who will "successfully" complete the training program, with "success" being defined as becoming identical, in all ways, with those who made the prediction. Yet, even with that circular criterion, institutes somehow select individuals who become problematic to them. For example, they select candidates or graduates who become neuroscientists or behavior modifiers; who engage in dual relationships with analysts; who become part of a faction that challenges the prevailing ethos of the institute or breaks away to form a new institute. I believe that such failures of predication occur with sufficient frequency to warrant questioning the purpose and value of preselecting individuals for training. It seems to me it would make more sense to admit anybody that wanted to become an analyst (as they did in the early days of the analytic movement) and then decide whether or not the person's performance, subjectively evaluated, justifies investing further resources in that individual. I doubt that institute people would favorably consider such a point of view, however, because the selection process, as it currently exists in many places, is providing so many covert gratifications in the way of power and status that it is difficult to give it up. Those agendas of power, money, status, and control which exist coincidentally but surreptitiously with the manifest purposes of the institute find their most observable expression in the institution of the "training analyst".

The position of training analyst came into being in order to spare the psychoanalytic community the necessity of analyzing and being analyzed by those with whom one had to interact as colleagues, friends, mentors, or relatives. Thus, the position of training analyst was established in order to enable the community to have an analyst who is functioning outside of those interactions. I'm aware that in some communities dual relationships existing between analyst and analysand, such as father and daughter, have not been problematic and that, therefore, the need for training analysts has not and does not exist. Over the years, the status of training analysts has radically changed. Now, individual members of the psychoanalytic community are designated by their colleagues as members of an elite group who possess the special abilities and/or qualifications to analyze those who are becoming analysts. This designation carries with it the assumption that such analysands are in need of such special treatment. This assumption seems to imply both that such special treatment exists and that it must be chosen for candidates, in contrast to their making their own choices.

I think that there is evidence to cast doubt upon these arguments and practices. The most

significant evidence is the existence of the "two analysis system". Myriad graduates of institutes speak of their need to have a second analysis by someone other than their training analyst after the completion of their training analysis. The most frequently heard reason for this phenomenon is "the first one was for the institute, the second one was for me". Here is an instance where the needs of the institute are perceived as taking precedence over the needs of the student. If the practice of designating training analysts is not crucial to the development of psychoanalysts why does it exist? I take the cynical position that there are other reasons for its existence. One of those reasons is the need to have someone monitoring the "correctness" of the analysands' beliefs and attitudes and indoctrinate them in what is correct. A case in point is the experience of a former candidate of an analytic institute describing her training analyst criticizing her for the associations that she was producing in her analysis. He felt that they were too primitive and that she ought to cease producing them. When she did not finish her training analysis, and, ultimately, her institute involvement, she was no doubt dismissed as being "borderline", and, therefore, unsuitable to be an analyst, which, by the way, she became.

Another reason for the existence of the designation of training analyst is a venal one--- being a training analyst guarantees that there will be analysands for those who have been so designated, because those who enroll in the institute have their training analyst assigned instead of their choosing her. Perhaps that is one reason why institutes need to recruit applicants to their programs so vigorously since it is a matter of having a continuous supply.

Nowadays, training analysts do not remain aloof from the activities of the institute or from the people who are a part of it. Indeed, they frequently are the governance of the organization and, therefore, are in a position to make sure that their vision of psychoanalysis will be and will remain the institute's vision as well. As senior and special members of the institute community, they are the designated guardians of its theoretical and technical purity, charged with derogating and deprecating, particularly to their analysands, those within and without that community who do not share or conform to their vision. The frequency with which training analysts have made a mockery of independent thinking within their institutes argues against this being a rare and unlawful aberration in the training situation.

Many institutes utilize the designation "training and *supervising* analysts". From the point of view I am arguing this designation opens the supervising process in institutes to many of the same comments I have made about the training analysis model. In particular, psychoanalytic supervisors are seen to have the responsibility, not only for assisting individuals to develop their knowledge and skills, but also for enforcing adherence to the conceptions and practices of the parent institute. A case in point: a few years ago, at a professional meeting, I heard a panel presentation in which supervisors and supervisees within two supervisory dyads each described the supervision that had taken place as they experienced it. In one such dyad, supervisor and supervisee spoke about a contretemps they had experienced in the supervision. The therapist was conducting a therapy with a three-times-a-week frequency of meetings. This frequency had been mandated as a minimum necessary for meeting the requirements of the institute in which the therapist

was enrolled as a candidate, and for which program this treatment was a required part of her supervised analytic work. Thus, the supervisee was simultaneously an analyst for the analysand and a student for the institute. The supervisor also wore more than one hat. He was not only the supervisor of the technical work of the therapist; he also wore a second hat as an evaluator of the therapist's performance; and he wore still a third hat as enforcer of the institute's standard, i.e., if it ain't three, or four, or five times a week it ain't analysis.

In anticipation of the coming academic year of the institute, the therapist was trying to arrange with her analysand the times of the analytic hours which were to be held during the coming year. As a student, as a parent, as a therapist, and as an individual the candidate analyst had a very tight schedule and had only a few places in her schedule into which to put the analytic meetings with her analysand. He, in turn, was beginning a new business enterprise that put significant stress on his schedule. In short, they were having a hell of time finding a mutually satisfactory arrangement. Complicating the matter further, the therapist, as student, was desperate to meet the three-times-weekly requirement of the institute; and, as a supervisee, wanted, with equal desperation, the supervisor's appreciation of her situation and his approval of her performance. The supervisor viewed the therapist's inability to get the three-times-weekly therapy in place as a form of countertransference acting-out, something to be dealt with in the supervision by analysis and interpretation. As an enforcer of the institute's standards, the supervisor could not conceptualize dynamically a therapy that was not defined by the standard of his institute. He was, in brief, not pleased with the performance of his supervisee.

As I listened to the supervisor and supervisee describe in detail their several and different reactions to the situation and to each other, it seemed to me I was listening to a poignant tale of supervisory misalliance, iatrogenically created by factors unrelated to the essential purpose of the supervision, which was the therapist's acquiring additional analytic skills and abilities.

I have described this supervisory interaction at some length because it depicts for me many of the conflicts inherent in the institute model of psychoanalytic education. The one conflict that I consider central is that the needs of the institute, as they impinge on all those involved with the institute, take precedence over every other factor. In this supervisory situation, the issue of the frequency of analytic sessions which was the institute standard made it impossible for the analyst and analysand to arrive at the most psychoanalytically appropriate solution, i.e., one that was most "realistically" appropriate and possible for both of them---for the analyst, for the analysand, and for the analysis.

Would it not still be analysis if the analyst and analysand met less or more times each week for as long as it was necessary, given their circumstances? Perhaps we have to shift our focus from what goes on during the week to what goes on during the hour.

A second issue concerns the multiple goals that exist in the supervisory situation. Just as we try to keep dual relationships out of the analyzing work, so too should we try to keep them out of the education and training of the analyst. In supervision, it seems to me, that

the only responsibilities the participants should have should be to the analyzing work and to the development of the supervisee's skills as an analyst.

In the area of curriculum, institutes each impose their order on what should be learned, when it should be learned, how shall it be taught, and by whom. While students are free to choose with which institute they wish to be affiliated, once there they are no longer so free to choose that which they would learn and from whom or when. Further, the choices that are made for them are frequently based upon considerations other than those that are best for the educational process. Teachers are chosen only because they are affiliated with the institute; not for their knowledge of the subject they are teaching. At one institute at which I taught, students described for me teachers who had been assigned by the institute to teach a particular subject, but who came to the seminar and asked the students what they wanted to talk about that day or what questions they wanted to ask the teacher. It seemed to the students that no effort to prepare had been made by the teacher who seemed to practice the pedagogical technique of presenting himself in order to permit the students to bask in his presence. While not all teachers are like the one I just described, I know of few institutes that screen their faculty for their knowledge of their subjects and their ability to teach them. And the students of the institutes, because they are a captive population, are not able to vote with their feet and avoid being taught by those whom they perceive as being less competent. There are almost no institutes who have on their regular faculty teachers who are from another institute or who have no institute background.

In this presentation, I have not been trying to describe an exercise in institute fascism, despite what you may have heard in my remarks up to now. Let me instead go on plead: At the present time in psychoanalytic education, institute programs can be located on a continuum, the ends of which are total institutional control of the educational process, and, at the other end, more or less relaxed institute control. I would like to urge an extension of that continuum toward an endpoint of *no* institute control over the education of the analyst. My reason in urging this extension has to do with my view of the values inherent in psychoanalysis. Just as we seek to provide the wherewithal for our analysands to experience themselves, if they choose, as independent, autonomous, and the sole locus of responsibility in and for their lives, so, too, should we seek to make educational experiences for students of psychoanalytic practice consistent with those objectives and the values implicit in them. I subscribe to this view both because it reflects my own values and because it fits my understanding of the psychoanalytic ethos. In order to concretize the position I am espousing and to give you an idea of what that end of the continuum is like where there is no institute control, let me invite you to imagine with me the development of psychoanalysts independently responsible for their education and training.

Such individuals, like many of us, might have first encountered psychoanalytic thinking as part of their intellectual development. I first read the *Interpretation of Dreams* when I was 13, convalescing from the measles, and having a friend lend me the book for my escape from boredom. Bettelheim, Sterba, and others describe like youthful experiences. Be that as it may, it's more likely that such encounters with psychoanalysis occur later in

life: one may take a course as an undergraduate, a course like Bert Karon's exciting Introduction to Psychoanalysis which brought a large enrollment of intellectually curious and knowledge hungry undergraduates. As another example, there are undergraduates who encounter psychoanalysis in college courses in Departments of English, History, Sociology, Art, Humanities, etc. For many people, including all of us here, psychoanalysis is an exciting subject and a focus of passionate curiosity about the human mind that continues throughout life. Such excitement and passion does not have to be stimulated with the help of others, however. I know one analyst who found psychoanalysis by the happy coincidence of coming upon Freud during his post high school self-directed self-education and then going into a psychoanalysis with Bernfeld who had just migrated to this country. Parenthetically, this person tried to further his psychoanalytic career by obtaining undergraduate and graduate degrees in psychology. Big mistake!! He learned a lot of psychology, but it contributed little to his psychoanalytic knowledge or career.

However, whenever, and wherever a person chooses to begin to pursue the study of psychoanalysis, that choice is and must be an individual one. Further, the specific manner in which one begins to implement her choice, should also be up to the student. For example, a former student of mine informed me of her decision to enroll in an institute that took total responsibility for and control of its candidates psychoanalytic development. When I inquired as to the reasons for that choice, she indicated that she did not feel that she possessed enough self-discipline to assume the responsibility for directing her own development as an analyst. While she agreed that her conclusion might change during analysis, she wanted to avail herself of her current opportunity to begin training. I am sure that there were other, unconscious, motives operating to affect her choice, but the conscious reasons she offered I felt had to be appreciated and respected. Let us imagine that this person decided to become a psychoanalyst through educational experiences at the other end of the spectrum I have described.

Depending upon her circumstances, her predilections, her interests, and after consultation, if desired, with those whose opinions and suggestions she valued, she might begin to analyze others, or begin her own analysis, or begin to study psychoanalytic theory and technique through courses, seminars, tutorials, self study, study groups, etc. with teachers and colleagues of her choice, with supervisors of her choice, and with an analyst of her choice. She might pursue these several activities sequentially or simultaneously as she determined what was best for her. Hopefully she would associate with others in the psychoanalytic community, which, I would hope fervently, would treat her as an equal, if not in length of experience, then at least in potentiality. This developing psychoanalyst would share her clinical experiences in case conferences and other presentations, and would share her knowledge and thinking in papers that she would write, present, and publish if she so chose, and she would share her time and available resources in participation in the activities of the psychoanalytic community. Or not. In which case she would be no part of the psychoanalytic scene, except, perhaps, as an observer. Whatever she did would be a fulfillment of *her* desires and not ours. As observers of her living her psychoanalytic life, we might make judgments on it, and perhaps even act upon those judgments, as, for example, electing to refer a potential

analysand to her or choosing not to send one.

And how would such a person know when she had completed her training? The answer is, as it is for all of us, never. I ask you to think about your own thinking and practice over the past years, how they have grown and changed, and how, even today, you are continuing your own psychoanalytic development.

What about certification? Well, I have diplomas from the Galactic Psychoanalytic Association and I give them to anyone who asks. But my view has always been that the need for external certification would not exist in a person who took responsibility for her own education and development. Rather, validation of herself as a psychoanalyst would come in each clinical moment as she experienced herself as doing the best she could with her analysand to understand the communications from the unconscious.

Some years ago I argued that an analyst could be certified as such by having his or her colleagues, after a few hours of discoursing with them, agree that they had been discoursing with an analyst, as in the ABPsaP diploma process. It must be obvious that I no longer hold that belief. One of the reasons is that I have come to think of the psychoanalytic enterprise in a solipsistic way---a point of view which includes the realization that nobody out there can validate you because there is nobody out there. Another reason is my observation that such a certifying process must inevitably become politicized so that the colleagues with whom you would discourse are chosen by political criteria, which, in turn, makes any judgment of theirs immediately suspect. In today's political climate, I know of no analyst, except, of course, me, who could be considered unarguably neutral.

If, then, as I believe, there are invalidating flaws in our present psychoanalytic education and training system, and in every functional aspect of the enterprise, then why continue it? Further, I believe that the educational establishment we now have denies to those it educates the inalienable right with which I began this presentation. However, while I believe it should happen, I don't think that there will be, in the foreseeable future, a burst of understanding and agreement with my thesis that will lead us to junk the institute model. I do think we might be able, in the psychoanalytic world, to modify our biases enough to respect those who elect to make themselves analysts rather than have others do it for them. I hope that we admit them to our meetings and conferences, as we do here at MSPP, and that we do not subject them, their ideas, and their work to an a priori dismissal because they are perceived as "different" from us. Thank you.