

Our Unconscious, Unanalyzed Personal and Collective Transference: re-Visioning Required

Elisabeth Crim

Unrecognized, unanalyzed transference has always moved and guided individuals. The collective has always been as powerful as the personal. We find our unconscious, primal-raging, bewildered selves in 2021, feeling a time travel of sorts to many themes of 1921. When Trump was elected, I began talks and wrote about *Political Transference*. I said at the time that I saw “Trump’s election as a catalyst that has lifted the lid off of our unconscious, individually and collectively” (Crim, 2017). My *Political Transference* talks were different each time. The content of the outrage was shifting by the day, even the hour. It still is. This period of primal nonrestraint has repeatedly revealed the deeply conflicting grandiose transferences of terror verses idealization afforded the same triggering person, situation, or experience. (“*What the f--- is going on with all the before-there-was-Trump-I-assumed-they-were-sane people?!*” was the question uttered by folks on all sides of any issue.)

Since the pandemic hit in 2020, the topic of political transference only sustained. It also morphed as other adjacent categories of personal, collective, communal transference exploded like trees in a raging forest fire. Sociology returned as a genuine, relevant lens joining its favored sister, psychology. The collective advanced as an unconscious to consider, finding equal billing with the typical individual focus of psychoanalysis.

We as an American nation and an interconnected globe began living, speaking, moving, at times screaming, even punching our primal secrets out loud. Our once, more conscious transferences, personal and collective, became more unconscious, unidentified, unquestioned.

This talk names and creates space for the looming, potentially hysterical discussion, and re-Visioning this wild frontier requires. Presenter will guide this (as in previous talks) as safely as the wild collective allows.

Dr. Elisabeth Crim, PhD, MA, Psychology; MA, Theology; MA, Counseling, is a Licensed Psychologist, Certified Relax/Renew Yoga Trainer; Founder/CEO of Moonstone Center; Editor of e-newsletter, *The Healer’s Life!* With commitment to wellness and resilience, Dr. Crim offers consultation, training, professional development, and psychotherapy through a Relational Psychodynamic & Mind-Body-Spirit Integrated approach.

PSYCHOTHERAPY AT AN IMPASSE: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

Susan Burland

The theme of this presentation is projective identification. Projection and projective identification will be defined and differentiated. Projection is the ascribing to the other(s) psychological features of oneself, whereas projective identification includes the other's induced and felt experience of the projected content as if it were the other's own. These processes will be explored in two clinical spheres: the first of these is my ongoing personal analysis, and the second is a discussion of my psychotherapeutic work with a family consisting of a mother, father, and their adult children. In both of these spheres, the role of projective identification processes has turned out to be of central importance.

The clinical descriptions to be given reflect fluid, ongoing events, the outcome of which remains uncertain. Accordingly, the discussion to be presented takes the form of a series of notes on developments that are still emerging.

Projective identification binds and holds traumatizing affects that are disavowed and projected into the other who serves the need for their containment. In the family to be described, the children became, from birth on, the recipients of the parents' split-off traumatic histories. I also found myself on the receiving end of these same projective identifications.

These same processes came into play in my relationship with my current analyst, leading to a crippling impasse in our dialogue, threatening the viability of the analysis itself. I found myself increasingly invaded by what turned out to be his unmetabolized traumas, intensified by a concurrent tragic situation in his personal life. As my analyst and I struggled mightily with this catastrophic situation between us, we discovered a parallel in Ferenczi's famous mutual analysis with Elisabeth Severn, who found herself the victim of Ferenczi's disavowed traumas in his relationship with his mother.

Also considered is the question as to what is required for these lethal dynamics to be understood and addressed. Central in such a development will be the analyst's (or parent's) capacity to recognize and metabolize his/her own traumatic history, as well as take responsibility for placing the burden of this history upon the patient (or child). This protracted process of rupture, recognition, and attempted repair will inevitably include endless unconscious reinstatements of the projective identification. An understanding of these processes has important implications for the field of psychoanalytic therapy,

including recognizing the othering and intergenerational transmission of trauma which frequently takes place within our own mental health community.

Susan Burland, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist/psychoanalyst practicing in Chicago, Illinois where she specializes in early attachment trauma in family, couples, and individual therapy. Dr. Burland integrates somatic modalities such as Sensorimotor Psychotherapy (Pat Ogden) into her intersubjective psychoanalytic approach. In addition, as Adjunct Clinical Faculty, she mentors fellows at the Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy. She is a proud Board member of IFPE, and is very excited to be a part of facilitating our discussion group on Racism and Social Justice, beginning April 2021.

Final Farewell to Childhood

Peggy DuBois

Dear Children of the War,

This letter is dedicated to my life but will be wide enough to apply to any child who survived war.

War is both a real term and a metaphor; each requiring enormous personal energy to survive.

This is for the child who suffered nonexistence while facing war.

This is directed to the child who went through war whether they faced it or not.

I am speaking from my heart to your heart.

It wasn't supposed to be like this. This generates feelings of unspeakable grief.

It is wrong, inhuman and unjust. This statement also generates unspeakable grief.

Anyone who ever speaks to you in a way that does not understand this should permanently resign from your presents.

You were harmed. You were violated. You were robbed. Every moment on this planet points to the truth of this; when you have the courage to look.

My inspiration for writing such a letter began many years ago. My dear friend, Judy Vida wrote a very courageous piece of work regarding the death of her mother. Judy presented her fine emotional understanding to IFPE listeners. I could not go near this conference presentation.

But, as a woman, dedicated to her own emotionally crippled life I continued to remember my stay-awayness.

After ten years, I have come to understand my own 'why' about the death of my mother and father; my feeling of impotence in my own responses to each parent, mother and father.

As a disconnected intellectual understanding; I knew I should be willing and able to dance-on-the-graves of the toxic people who hatched me.

This year, my eldest sister suffered a serious stroke. The ambulance driver called me on my work phone to tell me he was escorting my sister Susan to the hospital and she gave him my phone number.

Peggy DuBois is a brilliant psychoanalyst who received her analytic training as a child. She works in private practice and struggles to write about her experience with a sense of writing as "the most important act she can take to express to others her experience."

Self Experience and the Evocative Object [Digital] World

Angela Facundo, PhD

My presentation will create a dialogue about whether and how individuals can engage an "evocative object world" in the time of pandemic. In his book, *Being a Character*, Christopher Bollas discusses the emergence of the self when we invest in the objects around us as we move through the world. But Bollas's assumption is that we actually *move* through the world: "As we constantly endow objects with psychic meaning, we therefore *walk* amidst our own significance" (12, emphasis added). The process of self-experiencing is enriching if fleeting: "We are forever finding objects that disperse the objectifying self into elaborating subjectivities, where the many 'parts of the self' momentarily express discrete sexual urges, ideas, memories, and feelings in unconscious actions" (17). I want to think about this possibility of self after a year of literal standstill. In a time when, in a privileged scenario, the world comes to us largely through the digital screen, one wonders what has happened to our capacity of building and encountering self-experiences. After framing the discussion theoretically, I will speak to my own experience teaching through video conferencing over the year, talking about how my students relate, learn, struggle, and cope. I want to ask participants about their adventures, if any, in object investment through digital experiences. How do people lose themselves and find themselves in this new hyperreal economy, when it's often the only access to the external world that we have? How has it shifted our capacity to work, to connect, and perhaps most importantly, to dream? After all, in *Attention Seeking*, Adam Phillips reminds us that dreams take the residue of everyday life to envision and invest in a future that we may want. What are the conditions and limits to dream our futures and selves into being during the pandemic?

Angela Facundo, PhD, is a psychoanalytic psychotherapy candidate at the Toronto Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis and teaches Literary Theory in the English Department at Queen's University. Her book, *Oscillations of Literary Theory: The Paranoid Imperative and Queer Reparative*, develops a new reading practice for literary interpretation by engaging with queer theory and psychoanalysis.