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The External Credentialing Process as a Joint Endeavor: Lessons from the Past

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I am very honored to participate on this panel this evening and am particularly grateful to Ann Louise Silver for her wisdom in arranging this panel as the opening session of a scientific program of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis. I feel both fortunate and saddened to be on this panel. I feel fortunate for the opportunity to engage in this polylogue and share some of my own thoughts with you, and I feel saddened because Robert Pyles, the president of the American Psychoanalytic Association, could not participate because of a long-standing commitment for this evening. I send you both his greetings and good wishes as well as his sincere regrets that he could not be here. I would also like to stress that my comments here this evening, like at any other scientific discussion, are my own personal opinions and do not reflect any “official” position of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Obviously, I shared my ideas with my colleagues at the American after I wrote them. Thus, these comments are not a joint production nor, in fact, influenced by any discussion with anyone else.

I am stressing this point because my paper has a very simple conclusion—a recommendation, as a matter of fact. My conclusion is that there is only one way to effectively implement a joint endeavor on credentialing psychoanalytic institutions, and eventually individual psychoanalysts. I will argue that for credentialing to occur, all of us will have to shift our focus. We need to shift away from a political orientation to a scientific orientation. It seems to me that up to now we have needed to pay a great deal of attention to political considerations because of the

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long history of interpersonal and inter-organizational as well as intraorganizational fights and the resultant hurts and splits. We will make progress only if we can shift our perspective, our ego-ideal so to speak, from political considerations to scientific considerations. It is for this reason that I applaud the Academy for scheduling this discussion during their scientific meetings.

From this perspective, and as we begin the new century, it is apropos that we look back at the first hundred years of psychoanalysis. How can we apply our understanding of past events so we can actively shape our present and future decisions in a more conscious, rational manner while understanding our past conflicts and their continued existence consciously and unconsciously? As psychoanalysts, we have all had first-hand experience corroborating two of the basic hypotheses in psychoanalysis: a great deal of mental activity is outside our conscious awareness, and the past influences the present. In other words, it behooves all of us, as individuals as well as members of psychoanalytic organizations, to try to understand the impact of old patterns on current functioning, even if we are not consciously aware that they continue to plague us. Only with such an understanding will we be able to improve our adaptive capacities in the present and the future.

An example of the continuing adaptive capacities of psychoanalysis is reflected in its continued relevance both as a theory and as a therapeutic agent. This has been demonstrated recently in the dramatic and unprecedented interest by the media in the neuroscientific evidence that is, at the very least, totally consistent with many of the psychoanalytic hypotheses about dreams. In fact, because we were able to call attention to the correlation of neuroscientific evidence with psychoanalytic evidence, we were able to

receive a great deal of interest and coverage of the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the first publication of “The interpretation of Dreams” on November 4, 1899.

As we look back 100 years, we cannot forget that despite Sigmund Freud's concern about the fate of psychoanalysis in America, the United States has been the country where psychoanalysis, as theory and as therapeutic enterprise, has been most successful during its first century.* Accompanied by Carl Jung and Sandor Ferenczi, Freud made his first and only trip to America in 1909, to Clark University at the invitation of G. Stanley Hall. At that time he received an honorary doctorate of laws for his contributions to psychology. This visit came at a time of crisis in sexual morality following the oppression of Victorian sexuality, a time of change in the structure of American family life with a move toward

* I am grateful to Phyllis Tyson, Ph.D., for the organization of the historical material.

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smaller families, and also a time of crisis in the treatment of nervous and mental disorders. Facing such pressures, American psychiatrists found the psychoanalytic focus on the emotional relations of love and hate among family members to be revealing and important. Within 10 years of Freud's visit, psychoanalysis was accepted. At first it was seen as another form of the then-current psychotherapies of suggestion. Its increasing popularity, displacing all other therapies, was a result of the public's welcome of its optimistic view of mental illness, which emphasized environmental causes, and its accessibility to “cure,” in contrast to European theories of hereditary degeneration.

The year 1910 marks two important events in the history of psychoanalysis. In his paper “Wild Psycho-Analysis,” Freud voiced alarm that the use of psychoanalytic notions by those untrained in psychoanalysis could be harmful to patients. To protect the public, and the scientific integrity of psychoanalysis, he and his followers founded the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), in which membership would be available only to those trained in the psychoanalytic method. Those few Americans who were trained psychoanalysts formed the American Psychoanalytic Association in 1911. The purpose of the American association, like that of the IPA, was to promote communication and to define what constituted a psychoanalyst in order to protect the public from “wild analysis.” Ernest Jones (who would become Freud's first official biographer in the 1950s) had written to Freud that “already in America there are many men exploiting it for financial and other reasons, whose knowledge of the subject is minimal, and who only bring discredit on the work... No one will be elected member of the association unless he has shown some competence in the work.” Freud's continuing concern led, in 1918, to the establishment of an institute for psychoanalytic education and training in Berlin, with institutes in Vienna and London following soon thereafter. These institutes offered a well thought out curriculum that consisted of instruction in the scientific theory of psychoanalysis, supervision in the treatment of patients using psychoanalytic methods, and a personal experience of psychoanalysis. This tripartite form of training came to be the model throughout the psychoanalytic world: personal analysis, psychoanalysis of patients under supervision, and didactic course work.

Some have said, and continue to say, that the main goal (or at least a major goal) of these provisions was an attempt to politically regulate the label of “psychoanalyst.” In other words, some maintain that from its origin, psychoanalysis included an exclusionary vision. Are we psychoanalysts forever cursed? Can we move beyond considerations of inclusion and exclusion that are based simply on political considerations?

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If we can shift to a scientific focus, will the issues of inclusion and exclusion have the same emotional valence?

Since our discussions in the Consortium have been focused on the development of standards, which, by the way, is by definition an exclusionary concept, it behooves us to realize that 1910 also marked the publication, in America, of the Flexner report, a startling exposé of the absence of standards in medical education. About half the existing medical schools were forced to close, and in those remaining, great efforts were made to exorcise charlatans from therapeutic activity to guarantee that a medical degree was the hallmark of proper training and competence. German and Viennese medicine was prestigious at the time, and in attempts to upgrade their standards, Americans looked to it to provide models. The fields of

psychiatry and neurology were also in their formative stages, and since the American conception of medical science was then similar to that of Freud's—that is, a reliance on clinical judgment based on observations made in the individual case—psychoanalysis brought a certain respectability to psychiatry. On the other hand, the leaders of analysis in New York believed that psychoanalysis gained respectability and prestige from an alliance with medicine that assured it a serious hearing. The American Psychoanalytic Association was eager to retain this respectability, and by 1924, under the influence of the New York Psychoanalytic Society and the concerns subsequent to avoiding accusations of quackery, the American had adopted the requirement that members be physicians. Freud and most of the European psychoanalysts protested this change. They believed strongly that psychoanalysis did not belong to medicine. Rather they believed that psychoanalysis was part of a general psychology. The issue of the training of lay analysts was an issue that refused to go away.

World War I brought prominence to Freud's theories of the irrational and the brutal in human nature. His methods and their derivatives also proved to be the most effective then available for the treatment of shell shock. Many psychiatrists subsequently became interested in psychoanalysis as a treatment method, and travel to Europe for psychoanalytic education at one of the newly established Institutes became popular. On their return, those so trained contributed to the establishment of psychoanalytic societies in several American cities. This began another chapter in American psychoanalysis. Freud maintained that although rigorous training was necessary to become a psychoanalyst, psychoanalytic education and training should be available to a group wider than simply psychiatrists. But the Americans held firm, and among those who had traveled to Europe to train at European institutes, only the psychiatrists were eligible for membership in the American Psychoanalytic

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Association. Heated international debate about this policy continued for decades.

There were major ramifications to this policy of the American Psychoanalytic Association, which virtually guaranteed that advancements in the field of academic psychology would exclude a consideration of psychoanalytic theory since psychologists who might have been interested in the integration of psychology and psychoanalysis were not given access to psychoanalytic education. This meant that psychoanalysis could not benefit from the research methodology available to psychology, and since very little emphasis was given to research in medical education until recent years, psychoanalysis has suffered from the paucity of outcome research that might have offered some validity or reliability to its theoretical positions.

A central event for contemporary psychoanalysis in the United States was a class-action antitrust lawsuit filed in 1985 by four psychologists. This group alleged that the American Psychoanalytic Association, the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, the Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research, and the International Psychoanalytical Association had “restrained and monopolized interstate and international trade and commerce in the training of psychoanalysis and in the delivery of psychoanalytic services to the public” (Desmond and Schneider, 1994, p. 322). By 1989, a settlement agreement was approved, the terms of which changed the face of psychoanalysis in the United States. (1) Psychologists and other qualified non-medical clinicians were eligible to train in the institutes of the American. (2) Members of the American were permitted to teach in non-American-affiliated institutes. (3) Membership in the IPA was now open to all qualified psychologists and non-medical psychoanalysts. As a result of these changes the American Psychoanalytic Association has become both a more inclusive organization as well as a more outward-looking organization. Part of this orientation has included the participation of the American Psychoanalytic Association in the Psychoanalytic Consortium with psychoanalytic colleagues in other organizations: Division 39 (Division of Psychoanalysis) of the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Psychoanalysis, and the National Membership Committee on Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work. The Psychoanalytic Consortium has worked jointly on a variety of social and political issues important to all psychoanalysts, including maintaining the privacy of the psychotherapist-patient relationship.

What can we learn from our history as we continue to work assiduously toward the development of a board to accredit institutes from the entire spectrum of psychoanalysis, in order to protect the high quality

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of psychoanalytic education and psychoanalytic treatment? How can we develop an inherently exclusionary body given our impulses towards egalitarianism and inclusiveness? Can we learn from the experience of the American Psychoanalytic Association? Many have stated that the American Psychoanalytic Association has suffered as a result of the “sins” of its elders. In other words, the old days can be seen as “the bad old days” from the current perspective because of an undemocratic and exclusionary structure. But was that the real problem of the bad old days? Why didn't the bad old days continue? The received wisdom of today seems to be that our elders wanted to keep power to themselves. To maintain power, those in power had to keep the “barbarians outside the gates.” Was the restrictive structure of the American of old any different in principle than the open structure of the “new” American? Was the restricted structure of the “old” American different from that of the Academy, or of Division 39, or of National Membership Committee? Was the restrictive structure of the American of “old,” in fact, any different in principle than the restrictive structure of our proposed national accreditation board?

I suggest that we consider the following proposition. As a result of its organization as an insulated fellowship society, which is what the American was, our elders in power at the American Psychoanalytic Association lost touch both with their own constituency (those they trained) as well as potential constituencies (applicants). As a result of this parochial orientation “un-understood” transferences and countertransferences interfered with decisions which should have been made as a result of scientific and academic considerations rather than as a result of personal considerations. Note that I use the word “un-understood” rather than the phrase “unresolved.” The concept of “unresolved” transference implies an ideal in which a psychoanalytic experience can theoretically lead to the elimination of all personally conflictual issues in our relations to reality. All of us would agree that such an ideal is impossible and might actually be counterproductive as a theoretical, albeit a fictional, ideal. However, we have to be wary of the pull in the opposite direction. We have to acknowledge that we cannot achieve “complete analytic resolution” of any unconscious influence on our mental activity. We also have to understand that we do not have empirical evidence as to how to define or how to achieve adequate “resolution” or adequate training. As a result of our limited knowledge, we cannot retreat from a scientific or academic attitude and attempt to resolve our conflicts over clinical judgments on political grounds.

At this point in our development, we can proceed rationally only by following the clinical judgements as they have evolved over the past 100

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years. We all would agree that a central aspect of psychoanalytic training includes a “good enough” personal analysis, so that the future psychoanalyst has a sufficient understanding of his or her own unconscious transferences in order to understand countertransferences with patients and understand how his or her personal past influences his or her present-day decisions and judgments. However, it is also imperative that the development of any accreditation board in psychoanalysis include the development of a program that provides for the empirical measures of our training standards and training requirements.

Why has this not yet happened? Looking back at Freud's development can help us understand both a source of the quandary and provide us with an avenue toward the future. In its first century, psychoanalysis has had an ambivalent relationship to the other branches of science. Freud, the scientist, opened the introduction of the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* in 1895 with the following quote. “The intention is to furnish a psychology that shall be a natural science: that is, to represent psychical processes as quantitatively determinate states of specifiable material particles, thus making those processes perspicuous and free from contradiction” (p. 295). This is the unambivalent expression of a scientist—one who is trying to understand certain observable psychological phenomena and trying to understand them within a theoretical structure that is comparable to the theoretical structures of the natural science of his time.

The *Project*, which Freud never allowed to be published during his lifetime (it was first published in 1950) was one of Freud's many attempts to explain psychological phenomena in the terms of physical science. Though the limited knowledge of the day thwarted these efforts, to the end of his life Freud retained the deep conviction that ultimately, new knowledge would bring the integration of physical science and psychological phenomena.

So why didn't Freud continue his attempts to integrate neurology and psychology? At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, there were no neurological techniques to study the functioning of brain. We now have capabilities to perform such functional studies using techniques such as

PET scans. Because of the primitive methods of neurology in his day, Freud focused solely on psychological studies and developed only psychological theories. This began with *The Interpretation of Dreams*, (1900) where he, in fact, translated some of the theoretical ideas in the *Project* from 1895 to his theoretical remarks in the famous chapter 7, the theoretical chapter, of the dream book. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a totally psychological theory, can be viewed as a completion of, or an alternative to, the neurological theory of the *Project*.

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For almost the next century, the development of psychoanalysis and the development of the other psychological sciences proceeded in a noncollaborative way. This path was heralded by Freud's (1925) convictions demonstrated in "An Autobiographical Study," when he said that "the result of the official anathema against psychoanalysis was that analysts began to come closer together" (p. 50). His wish for collaboration, however, was simultaneously expressed, as in "The Question of Lay Analysis" (Freud, 1926) where he looked toward the day "when paths of knowledge and, let us hope, of influence will be opened up, leading from organic biology and chemistry to the field of neurotic phenomena.... That day still seems a distant one, and for the present these illnesses are inaccessible to us from the direction of medicine" (p. 231). Although he considered a medical education for psychoanalysts anathema, Freud did understand the complex education required of the psychoanalyst. He maintained that the special training for psychoanalysis should include "elements from the mental sciences, from psychology, the history of civilization and sociology, as well as from anatomy, biology, and the study of evolution" (Freud, 1926, p. 252). He also "insisted that in every case which is under consideration for analysis the diagnosis shall be established first by a doctor" (p. 243) to ensure that physical pathology was not the cause of the patient's problems. He stressed a continuing ongoing collaboration between physicians and non-physicians.

The leaders of the "old" American did not promote a collaboration with either other psychoanalysts or with other scientists. Instead, they seemed to selectively follow Freud's implicit and at times explicit recommendation and "banded together." I would hypothesize that it was this lack of collaboration and lack of interest in looking toward other sciences that led to the scientific and political problems of psychoanalysis. Our leaders lacked enthusiasm in the past for attempts at empirical studies; there was also a lack of collegial interaction with competitors (those with rival theories, whether they were varieties of psychoanalytic theories or other models, such as biological). In addition, the in-grown nature of the fellowship prevented it, as an organization, from addressing scientific issues in conjunction with other scientists and in a way that would be congenial to scientists in other fields.

Could we hypothesize that it was this lack of "reality testing," an inability to confront the real world (both the world of real politics as well as the world of science) that led to a demise of the "old order" in the American Psychoanalytic Association? The stage was set for the American Psychoanalytic to change its nature from an organization that was an inward-looking fellowship organization to one in which "outside" forces were confronted in an active way without "drawing up the fences." As we now struggle in the Consortium, can we develop mutually

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agreeable standards while at the same time developing empirical methods to evaluate the prognostic value of those standards?

Many have written about the training and education of psychoanalysts. I would like to end my brief remarks with a quote from a journal that too few of us "Freudian" analysts ever read. However, the new Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing CD-ROM, a collaborative endeavor, enables us to research the psychoanalytic literature, which includes *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, and in a future version will also include *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* and *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*.

In his presidential address to the William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Society in 1963, Gerard Chrzanowski (1975) stated:

It would be folly to ignore the fact that Freudian analysis has made scientific progress, regardless of the rigidity of a few diehard partisans. Classical analysts have not stood still in spite of a tendency toward provincial, middle-class conservatism. We certainly cannot disregard Freud or Freudians merely because we object to certain phenomena of Freudianism. As secessionists—if

that is what we are—we must never isolate ourselves from a major body of knowledge. We certainly cannot afford to cut short therapeutic methods because they happen to be classical or orthodox in origin. (p. 338)

We, in the Consortium, face a future that is fraught with ambiguity and anxiety. It would be folly to ignore what we have learned from our teachers and our colleagues. And it would be folly to turn away from our historic opportunity to promote the education of future psychoanalysts. An excellent education, which includes respect for scientific principles, will promote better treatment for our patients and improve our standing with our non-psychoanalytic colleagues.

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