

## Problems of collegial learning in psychoanalysis: Narcissism and curiosity<sup>1</sup>

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*Despite clinical sensitivity when listening to patients, analysts have not fared well in hearing and talking to each other with respectful open-mindedness. Underlying factors are considered with particular focus on the interplay between self-aimed forces of narcissism and outward-aimed forces of curiosity. Included in examination of problems of collegial communication are limitations structurally inherent to the human mind (such as the need to abstract aspects of experience in order to focus attention plus the mind's tendency to categorical thinking), those derived from individual psychology (such as vulnerability of self-esteem), and those related to group dynamics (such as the problems attendant to new ideas and the allegiances they stir, parochialism and the development of radical schools, the competitiveness between schools). The contribution of cultural influences and the multiply determined uses of language are also highlighted. The core sense of smallness in the strangeness of the universe and in the presence of others is seen as a common thread.*

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Nothing creative should be excluded for the sake of any other conviction.

(Clive James, 2007)

Once more we gather from the wide reaches of the psychoanalytic world to meet in biennial congress and share what we have learned since last we met, to compare notes on our experiences and to see what together we can discover. It is a fitting task but it is also fitting to ask ourselves how well we actually proceed with that task. After a century of such convening, how well do we learn from each other, how well talk, and how well listen? We may have limited cause for pride of success in this collegial task. Too often, like characters in an Edward Hopper painting, we occupy the same space but do not connect.

As clinicians we spend our lives struggling to hear our patients as they reluctantly open themselves. Clinically we learn to listen ever better, yet the contrast in our hearing one another is shocking. The task set for this Congress is to observe the patterns of our convergences and divergences and then, as is our introspective custom, also to explore and try to master those inner forces that interfere with growth.

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Happily, despite our difficulties, analytic thinking flourishes. New ideas bloom; our journals grow. However, even as some cross-fertilization takes place among us, we see diversity bring with it Balkanization, division into smaller and even hostile sects.

New learning demands full discussion, a genuinely open debate we wish to both guard and facilitate. That we argue with passion is good, for our passion comes not merely from the vanity of vested interests but crucially from our caring deeply. Also we know that caution in approaching new contributions is particularly prudent because of a problem unique to our field, that is, that our central focus is on unconscious forces, forces that stir unremitting resistance. Aware of the subtlety with which defenses can mask themselves and knowing the sophisticated skill of our minds, we appreciate the extra care called for when new ideas challenge prior analytic knowledge.

But caution and care are not the same as defensive distrust and dismissal of what is different, unfamiliar, or new. When we look at ourselves with candor, we see something beyond benevolent skepticism. Too often we see polemics and partisanship crowd out mutual respect, with ridicule even at times rearing its malignant specter.

Tension is inevitable for the growth of a science, just as it is for that of an individual, and such growing pains are to be welcomed. Open-minded controversy does not require endings in which everyone agrees. Premature closure hides what is still unknown, while respectful acceptance of continuing differences protects the path to further knowledge. Ideas must stand and fall on their merits, not on the prestige or power of their proponents. While some new ideas will not stand up to close examination, we must leave room for and welcome those that do have merit – even if they discomfort us by contradicting more familiar meritorious views we favor.

Full growth can only come from controversy that is both unobstructed and disciplined. ‘Unobstructed’ means genuinely open; and ‘disciplined’ demands rigor in conceptualization, regard for prior learning, and tolerance in the face of unyielding paradox. For years there were battles between analysts prioritizing drives and others prioritizing object relationships, with extremists on each side repudiating the other. Those extremists fought, as do extremists today, as if paradox meant an enemy were at hand rather than that a narrow theory was insufficient. When bias shapes conclusions, whether a bias favoring the new or the old, true growth is stunted.

Problems arise in part from past success, with difficulties heightened by the vast range of new observations that we now speak of as Pluralism. Is there one psychoanalysis or many? Asked in another way, can we continue to grow and venture beyond the boundaries of our accustomed ideas and still, as I believe we must, keep central as common to all of us the core concern for unconscious forces, the orientation that distinguishes what is uniquely psychoanalytic from that which is broadly psychological?

These questions will not be resolved by proclamations of open-mindedness if at the same time our dialogues degenerate into parallel monologues. Walls separating our enclaves will not fall before the trumpeting of good intentions.

My charge is to help define our behavioral battles so that with recognition we can proceed to explore their roots analytically rather than continue to

enact them. Therefore I will sketch an overview of the patterns of our interactions. The aim of my doing so is that we then can expose and explore their underlying dynamics.

As I sketch problems evident when we come together in groups, it is useful to keep in mind the underlying vicissitudes of demands for self-satisfaction and desires for exploring outward. Behind our convergences and divergences lies the restless marriage between narcissism and scientific curiosity. When our narcissism is secure or, even better, mature, we are free to venture farthest in our inquiries. When our narcissism is threatened, open-minded, outward-looking inquiry deteriorates into a politics of identity. In closing, I will return to this crucial issue, but let us now look at those conflicts that cloud collegiality.

### Human structural limits

To do so, it is prudent to start by acknowledging limitations beyond our control that add to our dissatisfaction with others and, which we are less quick to admit, with ourselves. We strive for answers that always extend beyond our reach, for we are after all only human. We accept that we are not omnipotent, but we act as if we could – and indeed should – be omniscient, as if we could ever know all there is to be known, as if our theories could ever be unitary and sufficient. Our knowledge and our theories are remarkably good, but they always fall short, always constrained by the limits of our capacities.

For the world and its phenomena are too large, too varied, and too complex ever to be *fully* contained by individual human minds. We have no reason to believe we are the end of evolution. When we deny the constraints of our mental hardware, we forget that even when stealing the fire of the gods, still we are not gods. Our vanity is easily offended.

We face the complexities of the universe by cutting them down to size, creating conceptual categories that then lead us into paradoxes that are artifacts caused by the categorical nature of our human logic. To study the world we tease fragments out of their natural context and focus study on them. Our minds dichotomize, endlessly subdividing the categories we create. As a result, in developing science, our human way of organizing knowledge, we create maps that have artificial boundaries. Hazards ensue.

While focused attention is essential and fruitful, artificial fragmentation brings misleading side effects. In dissecting out that which we study, we isolate those excerpted pieces and thus create borders that do not exist in nature. Every time we turn our eyes toward something, we turn them away from something else. As a result, the question ‘What have we left out?’ must never be far from our minds. We may be able to think of only one approach or some few approaches at a time, but not to keep open alternative views collapses full inquiry into the parochialism of partial interests.

With no choice but to think of a piece at a time, we should be wary about taking possessive pride in personal positions, keeping “a lively appreciation of how people get stuck with a view because it has become their identity” (James, 2007, p. 601). Rightfully proud of what we add to what was known

before, we are reminded by history that it is also right to remember that others will come to change and add to what we contribute. As a Stoppard (1997, p. 53) character commented: "Every age thinks it's the modern age, but this one really is".

One antidote to such allegiance to fragments is to recontextualize what is newly learned, placing fresh observations back into the open field of accumulated experience. Such recontextualization is essential even as we recognize that the very acts of abstracting and then recontextualizing themselves alter actuality, as we have learned in clinical practice. Despite the appeal of parsimoniousness, single explanations rarely suffice. Occam's razor often cuts too close.

On guard against single views, so must we also be wary of the seduction of simplistic Hegelian dialectics, the idea that there is always a rising pattern in which a synthesis will grow from every thesis and antithesis. Contradictions are not merely to be tolerated. They merit appreciation. They must be protected, discomfiting though they be.

Furthermore, knowledge is power, a reassuring antidote to the feeling of helplessness. When confused and overwhelmed, when our knowledge feels insufficient, we fend off the horror of helplessness by calling the world Chaos. However, the world is the world, and 'chaos' is not a description of the world but of our frightened failure to conceptualize it in a way congenial to our minds. The sense of chaos cannot be dispelled either by a favored single theory or by a promiscuity of interpretations with all taken to have equal value. Such is a perversion of the principle of multiple determination: evidence must always be weighed (Hanly, personal communication). Open-minded does not mean empty-headed: evidence must always be weighed.

Respectful attention to the contrary ideas of others provides our greatest opportunity to correct the built-in limitations of our minds. That, however, demands a love of learning based on a solidity of self beyond the child's wish to be the favorite one.

### Human frailties

Now, what of frailties that *are* amenable to mastery? How could we start with other than the issue most immediately apparent – competitiveness? Beginning with an analytic quest held in common, we soon act not as if we share the goal of extending knowledge but as if we are competitors in a battle to outpace each other. Questions of theory or technique are then felt not as useful but as attacks on personal status. Vanity, thy name is everyone.

Who among us would not be the *conquistador* the young Freud was? With maturity, the narcissistic center holds and the vanity of childhood dreams of glory gives way to the satisfaction of achieving real goals. Also, as we mature, so does our scientific field. While psychoanalysis continues to grow, new growth no longer has the wondrous revolutionary grandeur brought forth by our early pioneers. That grandeur may be part of what first attracted us to this field, but now our field is different in both quality and quantity. Freud opened to us a new ocean. Neither we nor our work is

diminished by our exploring the multiple rivers that lead from that common sea.

When threatened competitively, our mastery of early narcissism regresses and too quickly we return to the hunger for pride of place. Every editor has painfully learned that even most senior contributors can quickly become childishly graceless when something in a manuscript is questioned.

Also I remind us of Wheelis's (1956, p. 172) observation that analysts "frequently describe one or another of their colleagues as rigid, dogmatic, and authoritarian; yet no analyst ever so describes himself. The inescapable inference is that some of us have taken refuge in dogma without knowing we have done so".

The painfully familiar 'narcissism of minor differences' is so apparent and so everlasting that Freud (1918, 1921, 1930) returned to it repeatedly at different stages across his thinking. Indeed, knowing the regularity with which this self-love recurs, he remarked: "One is tempted to ascribe [to it] an elementary character" (1921, p. 102).

Of course, curiosity not fed by personal investment and desire for success would be a weak mover indeed. Personal ambition cannot be denied or willed away. Instead narcissistic intensity needs taming, vanity needs to mature, if ambition is to contribute to progress. Mature love for the other, even for knowledge as an ideal other outside oneself, implies a maturity of narcissism, not its absence.

The task of exploring the sometimes converging and sometimes diverging pulls of inward vanity and outward curiosity is complicated by the unusual nature of our occupation. Even as clinical work is profoundly intimate, it is also profoundly lonely. At work we must limit our self-gratification as with each analysand in the privacy of sessions we are immersed in all emotions from apathy to ardor, moving from quiet gray to blood-red and to black as we pass from session to session, from hour to hour, from day to day.

Major adjustment is needed for us to move from these intensely private moments at work back to the world at large. Just as our eyes have difficulty adjusting from dark to light, our sense of ourselves has similar difficulty adjusting to the shift from being in-the-office to being in-the-broad-world.

It is easy to forget to leave behind the asymmetry of the analytic partnership when we move from behind the couch, easy to fall back to that clinical asymmetry of the office when we feel challenged outside the office. In dialogues with our colleagues, discussions best held on level ground, we retreat too readily to the sense of superiority that can attach itself to an interpretive position.

Perhaps unaware how often he, too, fell short of this ideal, Freud (1914, p. 49) warned: "Analysis is not suited ... for polemical use; it presupposes the consent of the person who is being analysed and a situation in which there is a superior and a subordinate. Anyone, therefore, who undertakes an analysis for polemical purposes must expect the person analysed to use analysis against him in turn, so that the discussion will reach a state which entirely excludes the possibility of convincing any third person".

The air of superiority spreads broadly. It is evident in collegial consultations when a supervisory tone replaces mutual respect (Gabbard, personal

communication), and it appears in our literature when a writer's own thinking, presented in its greatest strength, is contrasted with contrary views presented in their weakest light. Our debates are rife with such straw men.

Unsure of ourselves, we demean the other. When thus defensively self-serving, we serve neither our science nor ourselves well.

### **Problems related to group dynamics**

Acknowledgement of these, our individual foibles, leads us to look at their effects in our interpersonal realms. The movements of narcissistic self-satisfaction and of curious reaching out reflect the conflict between desires for individual self-distinction and those wanting acceptance and union. Each person wants to be uniquely separate and at the same time longs to belong, to have an identity known and recognized in connection with others. Inevitably, we face the problems of group dynamics.

Before narrowing attention onto psychoanalytic groups, it is necessary to acknowledge how our analytic groups are themselves influenced by the broad cultures from which they arise. As just one illustration, the colonial past has left a legacy of confidence of power and an air of moral superiority on the side of the former colonial powers and a legacy of defiant resentment of imposed power on the side of those whose worlds had been subordinated. This inescapably carries through to difficulties analysts from differing national cultures have in addressing each other with true equality. With such an historical background, an exchange of ideas can come to feel like a power struggle and an agreement can feel like a submission. Sadly, both prejudice and narcissistic wounds have very long half-lives.

Acknowledging this, let us turn to dynamics within the analytic universe. Ideas may be born in splendid isolation, but they need to be tested by others if they are to grow as more than private fantasies. To deepen our studies, we narrow attention to particular areas of interest, consequently removing ourselves from the open marketplace. Later taking our thinking back into the public arena, we find we have to explain how our thinking developed. It is then, unfortunately, easy to feel that being questioned is being attacked, to feel unappreciated and become guarded, finally too easy to retreat to personal provinces detached from common contact. Still thrilled by the excitement of discovery and appreciative of advances not yet broadly accepted, narcissism can overtake curiosity. In the name of the new but too often in the service of the self, we develop allegiances to our narrow views.

### *Problem of radical schools*

I begin with the extreme of radical schools, where vanity overpowers open-minded curiosity. New learning modifies prior understanding as it is incorporated into the collective body of analytic knowledge, and a multiplicity of understandings replaces the clarity of an individual voice with the rich counterpoints of a choral symphony. Yet alongside new voices integrated into the common chorus are others who insist on standing apart, adamant that their solos stand supreme and displace the rest.

At times new ideas are truly revolutionary, resulting from radical new ways of looking and of thinking. As members of one of the great revolutionary movements of history, analysts have reason to value and to protect the possibility of the drastically different. But history repeatedly reveals revolutionary causes perverted for personal gain. It is specifically that to which I refer when speaking of radical schools.

By radical schools I do *not* refer to new or unusual ways of thinking but instead to those enthusiasts discontented with even close compatriots felt to compromise the exclusive supremacy of their new ideas. These are impassioned ideologues who insist that their views supersede all other analytic learning. Calling such groups 'radical' does not disparage what they *add* but rather refers to the demand that such contributions *replace* other understandings. Even as contributions are enriching, demands for exclusivity are destructive. Old understandings are of course changed when new discoveries are brought to them, but 'radical' refers to insistence on primacy.

I offer illustrations as examples, sample specimens of a ubiquitous problem. For instance, ego psychology adds much to our understanding of the ways the unconscious is processed. 'Radical ego psychology' would have clinicians always cling solely to the surface, attending only to how a patient's mind observes itself and never venturing to the depths. For instance, self psychology adds much to our understanding of the ways a person handles essential need for recognition and regulation of esteem. 'Radical self psychology' would focus so totally on issues of attunement as never to attend to unconscious conflicts. For instance, attention to the here and now of transference interpretation greatly advances our clinical skills. What might be called 'radical concern for the present' would repudiate concern for the past as damaging to our field. The list goes on.

Splendid isolation can intensify a focus of attention to make possible ever deeper explorations and understandings. However, insularity, the failure to reconnect with broader knowledge, results in a non-splendid hermetic isolation that turns schools into radical schools and turns radical schools into cults. At such times self-satisfaction smothers true curiosity. When narcissistic rigidity replaces open-mindedness, such analysts become like the French revolutionaries of whom it was said that they built their prisons from the stones of the Bastille.

Freud (Freud, 1910, in Brabant *et al.*, 1994, p. 227) knew how difficult is valid self-criticism, writing in a letter to Ferenczi: "Self-criticism is not a pleasant gift, but it is, next to my courage, the best thing in me". Openness to contrasting views not only does not betray viewpoints but actually helps one strengthen them.

### *Problems among schools*

Still it is natural and helpful that we join together and form schools. Uncertain in the loneliness of creativity and vulnerable to the reactions of others, we turn to like-minded colleagues for support. Searching for help in developing our perspectives, we are susceptible to the criticism of extremists on one side and to the inspirational seduction of charismatic figures on the

other. We need others to be trustworthy, respectfully honest, if they are to help our self-critical capacity grow, just as we are obliged to be respectful when questioning what we newly hear.

Even when schools are not radical, they necessarily take differing and at times opposing positions. Contradictions are neither to be denied nor forcibly integrated. Rather than accept that contrary viewpoints can validly stand alongside one's own, one is tempted to retreat to the safety of a private orthodoxy. Then partisan fights ensue, battles akin to those of chemists disputing whether it is hydrogen or oxygen that gives water its taste.

This too-familiar difficulty was explored by Gabbard's (2007) incisive critique of ideology as a retreat from the demands of the principle of over-determination. Since no single point of view can suffice for full understanding, forgetting that favored views are themselves abstracted from the wholeness of experience is a retreat from respect for multiple determination. Gabbard recognized the place of theory as metaphor in organizing thinking, but he also pointed out the limits of metaphors, making clear how their derivative theories inevitably break down. Defensive retreat to orthodoxy is rooted in the universal temptation to protect feelings of certainty and the personal identity dependent on that certainty.

Our history is heavy with theories hypertrophied from concepts based on experience into proud pronouncements of identity. We see it when a theory is presented as a flag to distinguish one group from another, when debate over observations is replaced by a politics of identity. For groups as well as for individuals, it is not the narcissism of identity that is destructive, but it is its immature form, where vulnerability of self-definition retreats from the capacity to love a shared ideal.

Development of separate schools can lead to difficulties that result (a) from parochialism, (b) from group dynamics and the structure of organizations, and (c) from the impact of new ideas and new groups on language. I will say just a few words about each.

## 1. Problems of parochialism

The anxious uncertainty intrinsic to creativity stimulates the pressure for team loyalty. As a result a new group, vulnerable to the reactions of traditional conservative forces, has the regressive tendency to fall back to that early developmental position in which good is seen as inside and bad as outside.

When a paper from within such a group is not accepted by an established journal, the inference is taken that the establishment is hostile and closed. New workers, huddling in felt isolation, speak mainly among themselves. To have freer outlet for their work, they establish their own journals, thereby further diminishing exposure of their thinking to the broad community. Next, within the new group younger colleagues see their own promotion enhanced by publishing in the group's own journal, with such local journals deemed more advantageous for in-group advancement.

Both the local groups and the broad community suffer as a result. Parochialism relieves the new group from fully considering conflicting ideas devel-

oped by others. And the analytic community at large is denied the benefits of the new work, the opportunity to reevaluate and update prior understandings. While some new journals weaken and die, others become established and eventually valued for the level of their standards and the richness of their contributions.

One result is the development of two tiers in our literature, the broad and the more focused, both needed and both valuable. What might be called house organs, like the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, and the on-line *PEP* website, try to provide broad and fair hearing for all schools. Other journals, like the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, and *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (along with a full range of others), provide avenues for closer expression of each point of view. (I assume a parallel development has occurred in other national languages.) Both levels are needed, with each level complementing the other.

## 2. Problems of organizations

Beyond journals, organizations themselves both facilitate communication and, unfortunately, compound problems of exclusivity and isolation.

The analytic establishment and the analytic movement are not the same. Both are vital, forming a symbiotic as well as a competing pair. The establishment is needed to organize efficient interchange, to remove training from the idiosyncracies of an apprentice system, to maintain standards. It is conservative and is needed to be conservative. The analytic movement, in contrast, is unrestrained in its questioning all established ways of thinking and acting. It is subversive and is needed to be subversive.

The tension between establishment and movement is a sign of life, and analysis flourishes best when the two are in working balance. When either overwhelms the other, the entire field suffers. Excessive strength in the establishment leads to rigidity and a dearth of discovery. Excessive weakness in the establishment leads to license rather than liberty for the analytic movement, with laxity of intellectual discipline and wild analysis ensuing. Excessive weakness of the movement leads to conceptual stagnation and ultimately *rigor mortis*. New ideas move us forward, while testing of evidence protects us against wild analysis.

That tension between establishment and movement also colors how analysts approach each other. So it is not surprising to hear analysts say that at congresses and conventions they learn most not in meeting rooms but in hallways or over coffee tables. When colleagues from different schools talk informally, at times even feeling they do so surreptitiously, they have the sense of safety that makes open and free exchange possible.

An exemplary illustration was provided by *Confrontations*, a series of discussions over years ultimately published as *Cahiers Confrontation*. At a time when French analysis seemed splintered, analysts from different schools met independently and informally, at first as a small group in the organizing member's office. Free from the competitive pressures of their various

societies, these meetings grew and developed into an increasingly open and fruitful exchange of ideas.

Similar results are seen in other groups when analysts from different societies meet informally to exchange ideas in a setting where neither personal status nor advancement nor potential referrals are at stake. People best hear the ideas of others and best expose their own uncertainties when no one with consequential power is present. With our clinical experience, we should not be surprised.

Rather than being threatened, wise organizations recognize that they strengthen themselves as well as psychoanalysis in general by facilitating the development of such private cross-cultural discussions *away from* the power structure of the organization itself. 'In private' matters.

### 3. Problems of language

Words may be humanity's greatest yet most devilish invention. Indeed, language may be humanity's sorcerer's apprentice. Asked why opium caused sleep, Molière's physician answered that it was because opium contains 'a dormitive principle'.

Naming at times becomes a substitute for questioning, a place where the mind itself begins to doze. A name is not an explanation, yet the names we give processes and the theories constructed of those names at times extend far beyond the evidence from which they arose.

Our fragmentation into schools has a parallel problem in the deterioration of a common language into provincial dialects. We define ourselves by our language, and we do so defensively. I am reminded of an American friend who picked up a piece of cutlery and said: "It's funny. The French call this *un couteau*. The Germans call it *ein messer*. And we call it a knife – which it is!"

Knowing the multiple levels of translation needed to turn inner feelings into words and knowing the ever-changing nature of words, it is amazing that we communicate as well as we do. Indeed, the problem of language is present even when we think we are in a group speaking the same language. No two people truly speak the same language. Rather they have enough commonality of denotation and connotation to succeed, on the whole surprisingly well, in sharing ideas. Well, but only 'on the whole'.

Miscommunication occurs even with words we think we hold in common. Words change with usage so that old words newly carry different implications. 'Ego' seems so simple a word, present from early in our shared history. Yet when 'ego' is used, some hear 'second structural theory', some hear 'self', some hear 'vanity', some hear 'mental executive functions'. Words that in their youth have the strength of specificity weaken with age, often corrupting into polemical code words. With that complication present in shared words, how optimistic can we be when using words that name newly recognized phenomena?

Difficulty is compounded when we talk with colleagues outside close circles, even those within the same analytic society. Communication becomes yet more complicated when we speak with analysts rooted in other analytic

cultures. Then, naïvely, we act as if we speak the same language because we sound as if we are using the same words.

Boesky (2008) has described the impossibility of finding a Rosetta stone for our Babel of pluralism. At times we use language to expose and at times to hide. At times we create new words to give newly recognized phenomena new names; at times we press into service old names for new ideas. In addition, at times we use different words for the same phenomenon, and at least equally troublesomely, at times we use the same word when we refer to a different set of forces with a different set of implications. Difficulties abound. The temptation to coin new words for theory is always risky, and one risk is that it hides an inability to be sufficiently clear about new thinking so as to be able to express it in ordinary language.

### Narcissism and curiosity

What can we find in this survey of difficulties that we can use to enrich our continued growth? For, happily, our strengths outweigh our weaknesses, and Freud (1914) knew what he was saying when he adopted as a motto for the psychoanalytic movement that of the city of Paris: *Fluctuat nec mergitur*. It is tossed by the waves, but it does not sink.

Our task as always is to expose and explore the hidden forces lying behind our difficulties, and the two ever present in this consideration have been narcissism and curiosity. Narcissism speaks of emotional investments aimed inward, while curiosity refers to those aimed outward, even when facing unconscious forces beyond one's conscious self. Narcissism and curiosity, inner and outer – like conjoined twins, the two always go in tandem even when in conflict.

Our study of narcissism – starting with Freud, highlighted by Kohut, and contributed to by all schools – is much too complex to be captured in a moment here. However, two points are relevant. The first is that of basic security, the need for a center that will hold if one is to be able to venture forth. When that center feels attacked, one defends it as a reflex: one can only be open to disagreement when one's essence does not feel threatened.

The second point is that narcissism has its own developmental course along a continuum from primitive and immature to mature. It has been said, for instance, that a parent feels a greater pain if a child is threatened than if the pain is aimed at the parent because of projected narcissism. That phrase misleads. More accurate would be to say that the parent has the capacity for love beyond the parent's immediate self. Mature narcissism serves the self by cherishing the other, by caring about others and about ideals beyond oneself. Basic security allows sufficient sense of self to make possible exploring beyond one's narrow self-concerns. As Lao Tzu said, being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.

Curiosity, too, has its own complex continuum of development. It is present in an infant's exploring his mother's breast and his own hand. So long as helplessness is not so overwhelming as to be disorganizing, a child

reaches out to learn about the world. The child desires both to know and to have power over the world. Curiosity, with its awakened awareness of the distinction between self and other, invokes both questions: 'Who am I?' and 'What is it like to be someone else?'

With curiosity as it was with narcissism, all schools have added their own contributions, from Freud's attention to sexual curiosity and others' later thoughts about instincts for mastery on to current concepts about a drive toward knowledge. Now, however, we must respect our earlier caveat about simplistic dichotomization and avoid too tidy a distinction between narcissism and curiosity. For the child at the breast, like the analysand in analysis, there is a unity between seeking and satisfaction, between drive and defining experience. Self-concerns and experience of the other are unitary in the process of creating meaning. Satisfaction for one's own sake and reaching outward, curiosity about the world beyond oneself, can never be fully divided.

How does this apply to our problems with collegiality, and how does it apply to our desire both to share and to learn so that psychoanalysis is advanced? Mature narcissism's love of curiosity gives one entry into our universal conversation. Experience and maturity teach us that we are heard best when we ourselves can hear best. Indeed it is as we can regard the other most openly that we become most fully defined as ourselves. As Shevrin (2000) so aptly put it: "If Descartes were alive today, he would say, 'I *listen*, therefore I am'".

We also learn that we must live with irony, with the poignant awareness that growth implies loss. As the secure child grows more aware of the outer world, that knowledge brings awareness of finiteness, ultimately of mortality. But sufficient security allows acceptance, the self-respecting modesty based on a center that does hold. Recognition and regard, one's seeing oneself as seen and respected by another, are equally essential along with basic security, holding, and containment for narcissism to mature. Curiosity, desire to know and engage the world with willingness to risk uncertainty, can only grow solidly on the basis of this selfsame confidence.

Regardless of whether narcissism or curiosity dominates, the road from infantile to mature is never a Royal Road. It is one always marked by conflict, by potholes and detours. One's self is always shaped by the sense of strangeness of the universe into which one is born. The strangeness of otherness, even when softened by the confidence that comes with the security of early love, colors each aspect of one's finding one's place in the world, coloring the continuous interplay of self-definition and regard for otherness. Despite the defensive power of narcissism, despite infantile fantasies of omnipotence and would-be omniscience, the world – including the inner world – always surpasses one's own understanding and full mastery. Confidence empty of vulnerability is the confidence of ignorance. To explore is to take risks. To be open to one another, whatever the form of congress involved, is to be vulnerable.

Because no one can ever know all there is to know and because no word can ever be the last word, the courage of our convictions can never be more than the courage of our temporary convictions. The pride with which we at times present our theories suggests the fear of uncertainty and the anxiety

of feeling lessened if we accept the influence of others. The very word 'achievement' implies completion, yet we are not diminished when we acknowledge that our achievements always can refer only to what one knows *so far*. Science never simply *is* but is always *becoming*.

The feeling of 'Eureka' in making an advance in science is as satisfying as is the sense of 'Aha' in clinical analysis. Each gives cause for pride. Yet such moments are best followed by recognition that, wonderful as they are, they are never the end of understanding. New insight, like interpretation, is both a commemorative event and a new beginning. Each new advance strengthens the possibility of further advances – but only when the glow of success does not dazzle one into the fixity of conceit.

So, in closing, I offer only a signpost pointing to one path for future study. It is the study of those intrapsychic and interpersonal forces that interfere with the confidence to be vulnerable in the service of open-mindedness. When narcissism and exploratory curiosity together grow, when pleasure in generativity outweighs pride in prestige, then we and the field we love grow best. When that creative love of curiosity falters, whether in our science or in our clinical work, we have a signal to step back to explore the causes of such a change. Science and we thrive most richly when reciprocal teaching and reciprocal learning go genuinely hand in hand.

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### Translations of summary

**Probleme des kollegialen Lernens in der Psychoanalyse: Narzissmus und Neugier.** Psychoanalytiker hören zwar ihren Patienten mit klinischer Sensibilität zu, lassen es aber im Gespräch unter Kollegen an respektvoller Aufgeschlossenheit missen. Ursächliche Faktoren werden unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Zusammenspiels zwischen den selbstzentrierten narzisstischen Kräften sowie der nach außen gerichteten Neugier untersucht. Diese Studie über die Kommunikationsprobleme im Kollegenkreis erforscht Beschränkungen, die dem menschlichen Geist strukturell inhärent sind (etwa die Notwendigkeit, Erfahrungsaspekte zu abstrahieren, um die Aufmerksamkeit zu fokussieren, und die Tendenz zu kategorialem Denken), solche, die durch die Psychologie des Individuums bedingt sind (zum Beispiel die Verletzlichkeit des Selbstwertgefühls), sowie jene Beschränkungen, die mit der Gruppendynamik zusammenhängen (etwa die Probleme, die sich aus neuen Ideen und aus den an sie gebundenen Loyalitäten ergeben, aus der Parochialisierung und der Entwicklung radikaler Schulen und aus der Rivalität zwischen Schulen). Die Beteiligung kultureller Einflüsse sowie die Überdeterminiertheit der Sprache werden ebenfalls beleuchtet. Das grundlegende Gefühl der Kleinheit in der Fremdheit des Universums und in der Gegenwart anderer erweist sich dabei als durchlaufender Faden, der diese verschiedenen Aspekte miteinander verbindet.

**Problemas en el aprendizaje entre colegas en psicoanálisis: Narcisismo y curiosidad.** A pesar de su sensibilidad clínica cuando escuchan a los pacientes, a los analistas no les ha ido bien en lo de escucharse y dialogar entre ellos con actitud abierta y respetuosa. Se considera factores subyacentes, centrándose sobre todo en el interjuego entre las fuerzas orientadas hacia sí mismo del narcisismo y las fuerzas hacia afuera de la curiosidad. Dentro del examen de los problemas de comunicación entre colegas están las limitaciones estructuralmente inherentes a la mente humana (como la necesidad de abstraer aspectos de la experiencia a fin de centrar la atención, más la tendencia de la mente al pensamiento categórico), aquellas derivadas de la psicología individual (como la vulnerabilidad de la autoestima), y aquellas relacionadas con las dinámicas grupales (como los problemas concomitantes con las ideas nuevas y las lealtades que suscitan, la estrechez de miras y el desarrollo de escuelas radicales, y la competitividad

entre escuelas). También se destaca el aporte de las influencias culturales y los usos del lenguaje múltiplemente determinados. El sentido esencial de pequeñez ante la extrañeza del universo y ante la presencia de otros es considerado como una amenaza común.

**Des problèmes d'apprentissage entre collègues psychanalystes: Narcissisme et curiosité.** Malgré une sensibilité clinique lorsqu'ils écoutent les patients, des analystes ne se sont pas débrouillés pour s'entendre et se parler avec un esprit ouvert et respectueux. Des facteurs sous-jacents sont considérés avec un focus particulier sur l'interaction entre les forces narcissiques dirigées vers le soi et les forces de curiosité dirigées vers l'extérieur. Dans l'examen des problèmes de communication entre collègues sont inclus les limitations structurelles et inhérentes de l'esprit humain (comme le besoin d'abstraire des aspects d'une expérience afin de focaliser l'attention, plus la tendance de l'esprit de penser de façon catégorique), ceux dérivés de la psychologie individuelle (comme la vulnérabilité de l'estime de soi) et ceux liés aux dynamiques de groupe (comme les problèmes concomitants aux nouvelles idées et les fidélités qu'ils agitent, l'esprit borné et le développement des écoles radicales, la compétitivité entre les écoles). La contribution des influences culturelles et les multiples déterminations de l'utilisation de la langue sont aussi soulignées. Le sentiment fondamental de petitesse dans l'étrangeté devant l'univers et en présence des autres est considéré comme un fil commun.

**Problemi di apprendimento collegiale in psicanalisi: Narcisismo e curiosità.** Nonostante la sensibilità clinica quando ascoltano i pazienti, gli analisti non si comportano altrettanto bene quando si tratta di ascoltarsi e parlarsi l'un l'altro mostrando una rispettosa apertura mentale. Vengono [qui] presi in considerazione i fattori principali con particolare riferimento all'interazione tra forze narcisistiche auto-referenziali e forze volte all'esterno legate alla curiosità. Nell'esame dei problemi di comunicazione collegiale sono stati inclusi i limiti strutturalmente inerenti alla mente (per esempio il bisogno di aspetti esperienzialmente astratti al fine di focalizzare l'attenzione, più la tendenza della mente a pensare per categorie), quelli derivanti dalla psicologia individuale (per esempio la vulnerabilità dell'autostima) e quelli legati alle dinamiche di gruppo (per esempio i problemi relativi a nuove idee e allealtà che esse suscitano, al campanilismo e allo sviluppo di scuole radicali, alla competitività tra scuole). Sono inoltre evidenziati il contributo delle influenze culturali e i molteplici usi determinati di linguaggio. Il senso intimo di piccolezza di fronte alla straordinarietà dell'universo e in presenza degli altri è considerato un elemento comune.

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