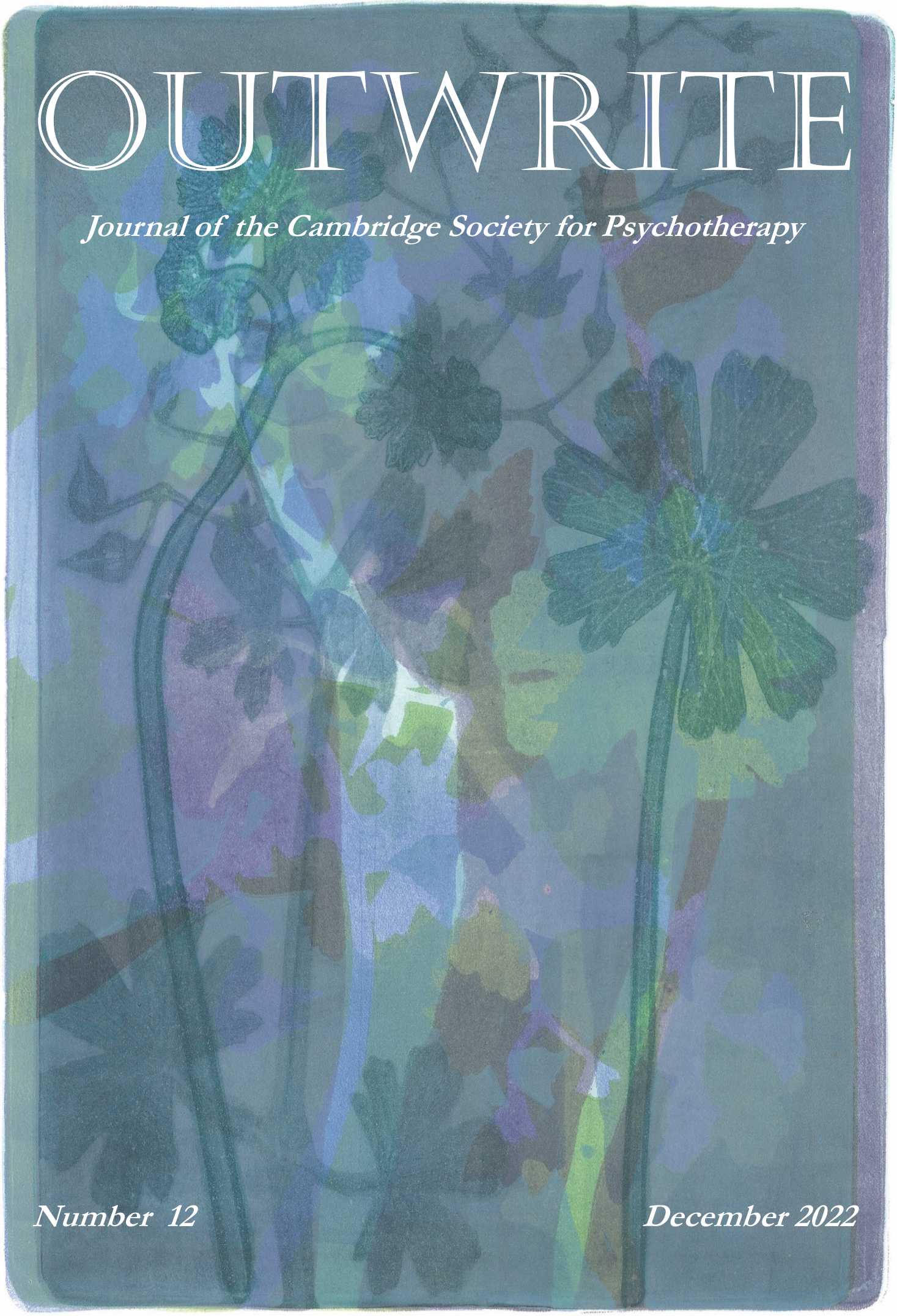
OUTWRITE

Journal of the Cambridge Society for Psychotherapy



Number 12 *December 2022*

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Editorial

Welcome to the first digital edition of Outwrite.

Apologies to those of you who may hanker for the aesthetic and tactile pleasures of a physical journal with its distinct cover and pages you can turn. Printing it online and in-house, however, has been so much easier and more efficient as well as cheaper. It has allowed us to include as many pages and coloured plates as we wanted without worrying about cost.

Since our last edition the world has been in considerable tumult, facing ongoing crises on many fronts. Compiling Outwrite, by contrast, shows the enduring characteristics of Peter Lomas' original vision for the Cambridge Society: the editorial group has included both student and trained members – the latter once referred to as 'hangers on' to emphasise that the Society and its training are student-centred/student-led. The contributors to this edition range from relatively new students, through to our two remaining founder members with the technical side being completely dependent on the student end of this spread. Referring to the term 'hangers on' is a reminder of the way that rather jokey, throwaway remarks have persisted. The name or deliberate non-name, 'The Outfit' is what the Society is known by way beyond ourselves, and local therapy circles, and the journal name Outwrite followed on from this.

We would like to thank all the contributors. We are especially grateful to Sian Morgan, Loveday Worzencraft and Tara Sampy (Alistair's partner) for their artworks which I am sure you will all agree, are really beautiful. So many, many thanks to them. We want also to make particular acknowledgement of Sara's skill in compiling and arranging both text and illustrations.

Finally, we want to encourage people to write for our next edition *now*. We very much hope to produce another edition this coming year and avoid the long gap we have had between issue 11 and this one. So, please turn your inchoate ideas into prose, poetry or art. We look forward to reading them.

Lucy King, Isobel Urquhart, Bella Stewart, Alistair Cormack & Sara Collie

Sara Collie

On Helping

A subject that often arises in our discussions in the student group is what it means to "help." We often read, or are told, that our aim as therapists should not be to "help" our patients: that to try and do so is to overlook the complexities of the therapeutic process. What, then, *are* we doing? What is therapy for? Is it so wrong to want to feel helpful – are there different kinds of helping, some of which are acceptable in ways that others are not? How to know?

As I have started working with my first patients I have been noticing how often the incidental things that happen in the room are some of the most intriguing and revealing moments of a session. Every tiny gesture, every Freudian slip, every offhand comment about the weather at the start and end of the hour as a patient settles into the space, or bustles back out of it, can be analysed for potential meaning. And I've started to wonder whether my patients may well be doing the same thing with me – analyzing things I do or say that are not connected to any psychoanalytic interpretations that I might offer or techniques that I may have learned. It brought to mind a small incident in my own therapy that I found to be incredibly helpful. It wasn't a moment when my therapist was doing something in particular to "help" me, therapeutically speaking, but rather a fairly incidental and practical gesture that resonated with me very deeply all the same (so much so that I wrote the poem overleaf about it).

With this in mind, I am trying to remember that whatever it is that I am learning to do in the room with my patients as I train – listen attentively, analyze them, hold space for them, bear witness to their lives, be present with them, challenge them, accept them, explore meaning with them, to name but a few – what turns out to be "helpful" for them may well be small, seemingly insignificant, unplanned, "ordinary" things that happen in our sessions along the way. As Peter Lomas put it,

> Is it not possible that the moments of therapy of supreme significance are elusive and contain a quality which cannot be pinned down any more that a poem or a sonnet can be satisfactorily dissected? (1981, 8)

Maybe this is why we are so often warned off the idea of trying to help since exactly what will be "helpful" cannot (always/ever?) be known about or planned for in advance: it can only emerge spontaneously in the room, in the relationship.

The questions I started with above about what it means to help are big questions. I have barely begun to scratch the surface here. Perhaps I will never be able to answer them definitively: I can only hope that I never stop asking them and exploring the as-yet unknown spaces of reflection that they open up in the work to come.

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Sara Collie

The Intruder

It burst into the room, metaphor made into matter,
erratic and unhinged, its loud buzzing disturbing

whatever flow of associations I might have been making
on that particularly unsettled afternoon.

My therapist didn't flap her arms or panic or fuss
the way people so often do around bees. Instead, palms

outstretched, she stood up to let it land on her open hands.
Slowly turning ninety degrees, she started it on its way

towards the window. There was no struggle, no sting.
Sometimes, I think the only thing that will ever save me is

a small gesture like this.

Therapist and Bee, Sian Morgan

Alistair Cormack

Interpretation and Change

How might the perspective of change help to explore the idea of interpretation in psychoanalytic psychotherapy? Change is troubling for interpretation because, while positive change must be its avowed purpose, the fluidity the notion suggests places interpretation in question: if that which is being interpreted is subject to change how can we maintain firm notions of truth and accuracy? Furthermore, we might ask what sort of change does psychoanalysis have in mind when an interpretation is offered. If we keep fidelity to the strictures of theory is it change in a pre-ordained direction, a change perhaps tantamount to a form of suggestion, or can interpretation be used to bring some form of 'newness' into being?

To begin we need to be clear what we mean by psychoanalytic interpretation. In an essay characterised by marvellous clarity, entitled with a tactical simplicity, 'What Analysts Say to their Patients', Charles Rycroft briefly outlines the theory of psychoanalytic interpretation as it has come down to us from Freud. Rycroft begins by suggesting that interpretation involves analysts asserting 'that what their patient has been telling them has wider implications than the patient has appreciated.' (58) I will return to this very first definition later. The paradigm for such interventions is the interpretation of dreams, where the analyst suggests an explanation for the condensed and displaced nighttime images the patient presents, the accuracy of the interpretation being tested against the recollection by the patient of an event or a feeling which might accord with the explanation offered by the analyst. Psychoanalytic interpretation developed two further techniques: the interpretations of defences and of transference. Rycroft wittily ventriloquizes these latter two forms of interpretation thus: 'you are using such-and-such a defence to prevent yourself remembering such-and-such a wish, feeling or memory' (66) and 'you are using such-and-such a defence to prevent yourself becoming aware of such-and-such a feeling towards myself, to whom you are reacting as if I were your mother or your father.' (66) So these are the central forms of psychoanalytic interpretation: the interpretation of dreams, of defences and of transference. Rycroft's essay turns when he makes what I consider two separate comments indicating the limits of the classical model of interpretation. First he notes:

> … this view assumes that the analyst is an external, objective observer of the patient's intrapsychic processes, that interpretations are interventions from outside the system […] (61)

He goes on to argue:

> It is, however, possible to look at psychoanalysis [in a way] which assumes that there actually is a relationship between therapist and patient, that interpretations constitute a special class of communication between patient and therapist, and that they are one of the several kinds of things that therapists say to their patients while relating to them. (61)

I want to deal with the first element of Rycroft's criticism of interpretation, turning to the second element as a form of conclusion. The first element hinges on psychoanalytic interpretation's claim to a sort of quasi-scientific objectivity – its sense that it is an intervention mounted from an outside that explicates an inside. The view that this is not really what interpretation is or how it works has a long history and can be ascribed to a number of otherwise opposed psychoanalytic thinkers and schools: that is to say, an opposition to the notion of scientific objectivity in interpretation can be held for very different reasons. For

instance it is a position held by figures such as Rycroft, who worked in the Winnicottian tradition who might view psychotherapy as a more down-to-earth activity than the name science implies. It can also be seen in the tradition of psychoanalysis inaugurated by Jacques Lacan, who felt that interpretation as such was a problematic category, as language does not so much communicate a content as compel misrecognition. I do not intend to get bogged down in retracing the various turf wars that have characterised psychoanalysis since it was inaugurated. I will just mention that Peter Lomas, who was a close associate of Rycroft, commented in a moment of uncharacteristic fury that Lacan 'is not one of my favourite boys'. (Morgan 33)

So, the idea which is shared by many who have come after Freud is that there is a problem in the assertion within psychoanalysis that it offers a form of interpretation that claims objective truth. There are a great deal of complex works whose subject has been the problems or indeed impossibility of interpretation. Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* perhaps represents the high point (or low point depending on your point of view) of the post-war critique of interpretation and meaning. However, as I have already suggested, in our case we not need have recourse to complex theories such as deconstruction to establish the philosophical 'problematic'; just a mention of our theme – change – and the technical difficulties for psychoanalytic interpretation become clear. In a unsually practical exploration of Lacan, Bruce Fink comments, 'Truth has a funny kind of temporality in psychoanalysis.' (76) Something said in one session by either therapist or patient that seems true and of enormous importance, can come to seem not quite so striking, perhaps a touch hollow, or even completely untrue in another.

Freud himself was aware of this phenomenon. In his essay 'Constructions in Analysis', he approaches the notion from the opposite point of view, that is, from interpretations which a patient feels are untrue, but the implication is the same. 'A patient's 'No', he comments,

> is equally ambiguous, and even less usable than his 'yes". […] Since every such construction is incomplete and contains only a small part of the forgotten events, we are at liberty to assume that the analysand is not actually denying what he has been told, but is basing his resistance on the part of the material that has not yet been revealed. (2002, 216)

In a rather off-hand manner Freud here asserts that an interpretation *can never be complete*, can only be provisional, that what is offered can never be the whole truth. Thus, though what is offered by the therapist might be accurate in a local way, because material is left unsaid, it is rejected. What we might infer from Freud's comment is that the reason why something said might come to feel hollow is precisely because it has *been* articulated. The spoken is always in danger of ossifying into dead matter – the obvious, the uninteresting. What feels alive still, what feels like the truth, is always just out of reach, yet to be said.

Nevertheless, if change is the problem, perhaps it also offers us a solution. To return to Bruce Fink. He comments:

> If there is some criterion of accuracy or truth beyond the analysand's subjective sense […] what would it be if not the changes that actually occur for the analysand? (77-78)

An interpretation in the classical style that offers to explain one intrapsychic phenomenon in a one-to-one correlation with a pre-existent tenet of theory is unlikely to foster change. Given the aim of transformation the purpose of interpretation is not to pin meaning down but to open it up. As Lacan commented 'An interpretation whose effects one understands is not a psychoanalytic interpretation.' (Quoted in Fink, 81) One way to explain what Lacan has in mind is to suggest that an interpretation that comes from a position of prior knowledge and certainty runs the risk of imposing finality, order, monolithic deadness on material that is vibrant, polymorphic, and unending. Another approach might be to focus on the role of interpretation in bringing to light the unconscious itself. We might briefly consider Freud's dictum for psychotherapy: 'Where id was, there ego shall be.' (1973, 112) In this understanding, the therapist's role is to tame the irrational, to turn the challenge of the unconscious into something conventionally understood. Lacan's approach seems to seek to allow the unconscious to remain unpredictable, to encourage its ability to destabilise and unsettle the ego.

I suggested in my opening comments, an interpretation that sought to replace the id with pre-existing theoretical knowledge would be tantamount to a form of suggestion – a demanding of assent from the patient. We are now ready to return to Rycroft's first definition of interpretation: 'that what their patient has been telling them has wider implications than the patient has appreciated.' The word to focus on is *wider*; psychoanalytic interpretation only happens when the implications widen rather than narrowing.

Interpretation cannot simply be the assertion of a meaning by the therapist. It occurs in a mobile situation; in facilitating change it, so to speak, signs its own death warrant, but only to allow its own rebirth in a new and unpredictable form. Stephen Frosh writes of interpretation in exactly this way:

> the interpretation has effects that result in changes in the thing interpreted, making the original interpretation immediately out of date. Something is communicated between interpreter and interpreted, between analyst and patient, making it possible for the latter to share and engage in the interpretation that has just been offered. Something occurs, therefore, which is more than just revelatory; it is also constructive and transformative. The analyst gives an interpretation, the patient hears it and works on it, absorbing it and making it her or his own. In the process, the patient is changed

> and something new appears in the place of what was previously an absence, a failure to own or understand the voice which was speaking from within. In this newness, there is more material for interpretation because it is in the nature of human subjectivity that the unconscious is never exhausted and that fantasies keep pumping away, reimagined and continually active. (113)

Frosh begins with the idea we have already encountered of the immediate 'out of date-ness' of an interpretation. However, if the interpretation has allowed change, widened implications, something 'constructive and transformative' occurs. The ownership of the interpretation means that it is absorbed into a new and fundamentally different concept of self. But this does not finish the process, it begins it anew.

Frosh uses the language of communication and of sharing and this points us back to Rycroft's second criticism of classical interpretation: Rycroft would have us see it as a form of communication within a relationship; that psychoanalysis is not a matter of an objectified patient being intellectually dissected, but rather a matter of more or less equal individuals entering into a close rapport in the hope that one can assist the other in alleviating mental distress. In Adam Philips book on Winnicott he comments that

> under the aegis, though not the leadership, of Winnicott, a Middle Group emerged … of whom Masud Kahn, Charles Rycroft, Marion Milner, John Klauber and Peter Lomas are the most distinguished […] For Winnicott and those who were influenced by his work, psychoanalytic treatment was not exclusively interpretive, but first and foremost the provision of a congenial milieu, a holding environment analogous to maternal care […] the patient does not undergo authoritative translation – but is enabled, as Winnicott wrote, 'to reveal himself to himself'. (10-11)

So the Middle Group, influenced by Winnicott, valued relationship over interpretation and assisted self-revelation over authoritative explanation. I want to finish by looking at an example of this approach to interpretation in the work of Peter Lomas. In *The Limits of Interpretation* he describes a rather shy young woman whom he has been seeing for a few weeks asking 'May I use your loo' shortly after arriving for a session. Lomas replied 'Yes of *course'* emphasising that she was welcome and need not be so hesitant. He then comments:

> I could later have made what is commonly called an interpretation. … 'I notice that during sessions you are at pains not to be a nuisance to me. You never show any aggression, you speak little and quietly, you try to be "good". May it be that in going to the loo just before the session you try to get rid of the messy, dirty, unacceptable bits of yourself in case they emerge in some form during the session.' […] However, I made no comment. (52-53)

His reason for not offering the interpretation is that it might have made her feel criticised, or suggested that he did not want her to use his loo, or that he did not like her body, or indeed her; furthermore, it might make her think the relationship was based entirely in his careful scrutiny of her. He presents his quite spontaneous interaction – his agreement to her visit to the loo – as, in a way, analogous to an interpretation.

> I am saying to [her] 'I believe that your view of yourself, or our relationship and of the way people can best behave towards each other is mistaken […] I am surprised by your diffidence, for which, as I see it, there is no need. (53)

He adds that she may have read other implications as well:

> My body is more acceptable to him than I supposed. He doesn't regard me as an intrusion into his life even when I don't confine myself strictly to the agreement that I am allowed into his consulting room.' That is to say, the comment would probably have symbolic as well as overt meanings … . (53-54)

The criterion for the interpretation is not whether it is true, but what the outcome is and that can only be judged in the relationship – are they ready to hear this? Can they work with it?

Is it likely to close things down, or open things up? This can only be judged case by case. Something that seems clever may well backfire, a simple act of kindness may well enable insight. It is certainly true – and indeed a truism within psychoanalysis – that a premature or mistimed interpretation is likely to receive a defensive response. With change and not accuracy as our guide, it is essential that a therapist think carefully about the relationship that is being developed. However, Lomas does not seem simply to be making that point. Instead he is making the broader point that a non-interpretive intervention – really just a way of relating that seems normal, spontaneous and intuitive – can be just as effective, if not more so, than interpretation as it is usually understood.

Just as a last thought, I want briefly to investigate this notion which is so key to the Middle school – as Philips puts it: emphasising the 'holding environment' over interpretation. I just wonder if it might be the case that without an interpretive intervention even on some distant horizon – when she might be ready to hear it and work with it – Lomas's young woman might come to feel that there is an unwillingness on the therapist's part to examine or confront the depths of experience; that the therapist might unwittingly communicate that he is as afraid of or repelled by the dirty, unacceptable parts of her that dwell in her unconscious as she is? Might this unwillingness potentially threaten the 'holding environment'? Indeed, is there possibly a danger here of developing a safe, intimate stasis in the relationship that might not offer the possibility of change, even though some form of transformation was precisely the reason she entered therapy? I will finish with words from Ian Suttie's *Origins of Love and Hate*, which seem to me to capture a mixture of 'holding' and interpreting. He asks what characterizes all analytic treatment:

> Impeturbability and perfect tolerance on the part of the analyst, his inexhaustible patience and unfailing interest in the patient's mental processes (highly reassuring to infantile anxiety), a ready memory and responsiveness of mind that makes the patient feel at one with the therapist and valued by him and an unerring insight that not only gives the former confidence in the latter, but convinces him ultimately that there can be nothing in his own mind wholly alien to the mind of the analyst, or alien to those other patients from whom the analyst has learned. (251)

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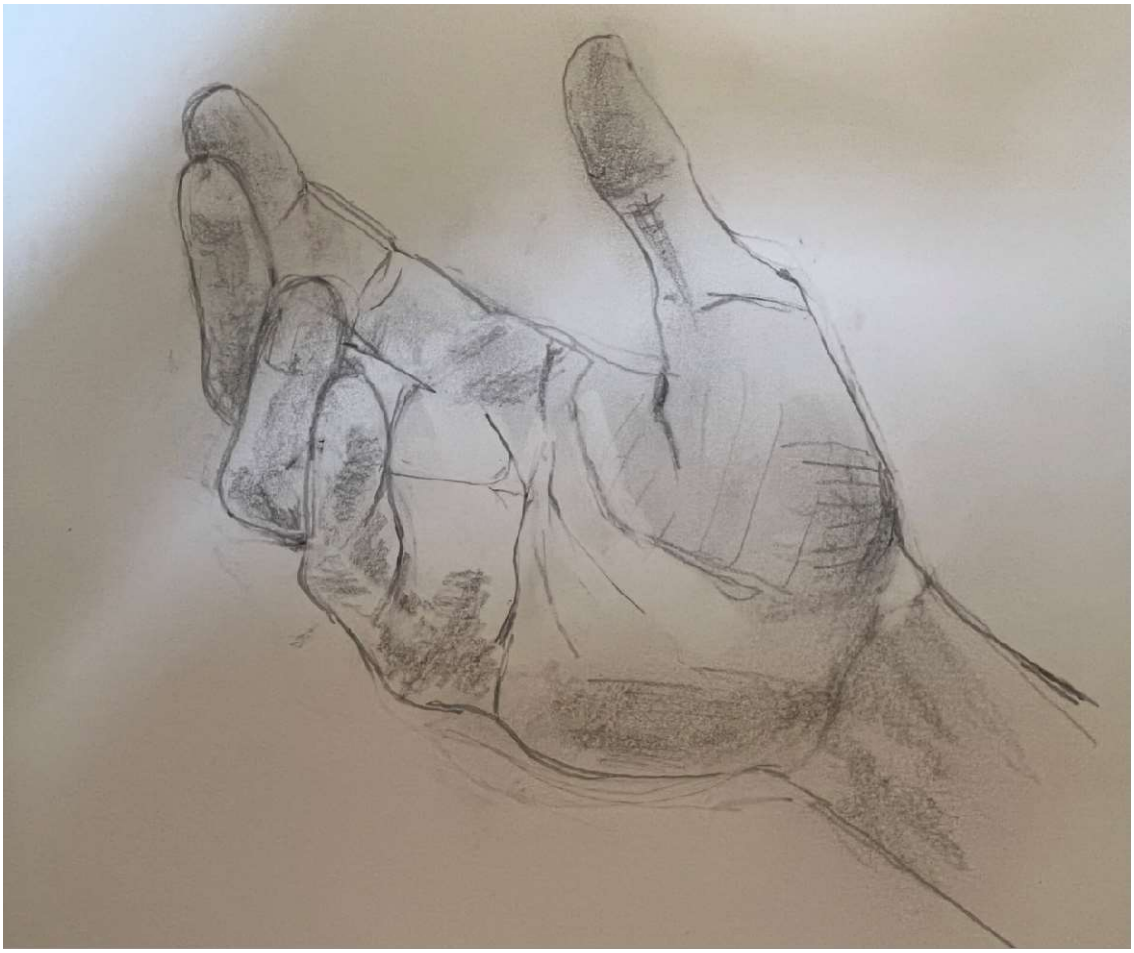

The drawings of hands that accompany this piece are a response to Alistair's text.

The first drawing (on page 6) represents a sense of the analyst being in the position of 'the one who knows' of telling the patient what they are unconscious of. Often this rather authoritarian stance results in premature interpretation and comes from a position of a superiority of knowledge.

The second drawing represents a desire in the patient for holding, connection and feeling assured of respect and a feeling of common humanity. It represents a desire to share playfulness and the development of a shared creative space which also provides separation between the patient and analyst/ therapist

- Sian Morgan

Pat Tate

Working when Older

Working when older is quite a lot like working when younger. I am thinking of working when older as a bridge – but from where to where? To my younger self, certainly, but that assumes a span over something, to the very first experience of work. That was at age 16, a summer job working in a hospital laboratory, in a small town twenty miles of cornfields away from the even smaller town where I lived. My GP neighbour approached the hospital and set it up, but at whose instigation? Mine? My Biology teacher's, who'd had his eye on me for several years? My best friend also got a job at the hospital, as a nursing assistant, but in her family it was clearly stated to all eight children: you WILL go to University and you WILL finance it yourself. No such pressure on me, however. Friend and I paid for a daily lift (picked up at 7am to arrive for 8am to 3 pm shift) with an older girl who had a car. I had one white nylon nurse-style uniform which I washed and ironed every evening.

Two summers of that – lovely, earning money and pretending to be grown-up – then, at age 18 I was selected as one of forty national 'Future Scientists of America', which brought with it the possibility of different and distant summer work, at the Westinghouse Atomic Power Division in Pittsburgh, where the engines for the Nautilus had been developed and built. Three summers of that (essentially, working in a chemistry lab) during university, plus a bit of part-time work during university terms, using the typing and shorthand my mother had advised as a safety net, "in case all this science doesn't work out".

Marriage at 21, then to London as a PhD student. And then: continuous work, with only a few weeks or months off to have three babies – another undergraduate degree, in medicine, and onward, ever onward. Does that suggest a treadmill? No. It just has felt right, all along the line.

The gist is: never stopped, never thought of stopping, this is life.

Lately, I needed to help out a daughter by standing in for her for a fortnight. I felt a small panic at the thought of all those days without work. So I assembled an assortment of useful activities that could be done without patients, computer or usual surroundings. I came up with a good assortment (writing this being one of them).

What has changed between 16 and 85? The body: stiffer, weaker, with sight and hearing augmented. The memory files (both conscious and unconscious) piled up with much more data, getting a little slower and more erratic to access. Belated gratitude to the mother who wasn't sure about all this science stuff, and pushed for learning to touch-type at 16. It is a continuum – it is my life. Something will happen to make me stop working (and I have two younger therapists watching me for signs of change) but my guess is that the something will be external to Me (to me, as a dualist, the body is Other, my transport system). When that happens, I hope to negotiate it with some grace, and I will probably come up with a list of Useful Things To Be Done, once work is excluded. H. L. Mencken pointed out that conscience is the inner voice that warns us somebody may be looking.

Perhaps this should be a piece about the Manic Defence? It is probably significant that the piece of music I have chosen to represent Work in my memorial concert is the Allegretto from Karl Jenkins' Palladio. Listen to it: that says it all. It is inexorable.

Working when Older, Sian Morgan

Print 2, Tara Sampy

Pat Tate

RULES
The Michael Balint Memorial Lecture, April 2017

On two days each week, I walk to and from school with young grandchildren. One day, the 9-year-old girl was talking about how much she looks forward to being allowed to walk to school on her own. Without much thought, I said, "I suppose there will have to be rules." "What do you mean, rules?" "Well", I said, "for example, Don't run across the road without looking. Don't forget your book bag, and so on." She got the drift and added, "Don't lose your gloves" and we were quickly into a game of devising more and more exciting and unusual rules: Don't steal someone else's scooter, Don't lie down and roll in a mud puddle, Don't climb a tree, Don't throw stones at the school custodian, Don't break a car window, Don't put dog poo in your pocket, Don't shout at old ladies – until she said, "Don't do anything stupid on the way to school." Ah. At this point, the game was over, and we had returned to the sober adult world from that of the transgressive child; we had come to The One Rule That Rules Them All.

What the 9-year-old was using was Rule Utilitarianism – the idea that deciding on the utility of many individual acts to maximise pleasure, and minimise pain, is impractical. So, one should act according to general rules that tend to lead to the greatest good. (Another example of Rule Utilitarianism is NICE guidance on clinical priorities.)

The authors of the Rule Book I was given in 1955, when I moved into a Women's University Hall of Residence, would have been well advised to think along those lines, for I was quick to notice an omission; among the various detailed proscriptions about radios and gramophones, there was no rule against having a baby grand piano in one's room, and playing it all night. The scale of neither my room nor my budget made that practical, but I was delighted that they had forgotten to forbid it. And this illustrates one aspect of our relationship with rules – the enjoyment in finding one's way round them. Freud said, "Happiness is the belated fulfilment of an early wish. We are only really happy when we satisfy a childhood wish. And one of our childhood wishes is for the kind of pleasure that is essentially transgressive."

Adam Philips points out that getting away with things is always a pleasure, however brief. We like to do it ourselves, and we like to hear of other people who do it. At its most minimal, getting away with something – not paying on the train, insider dealing, cheating successfully in an exam – can be thrilling. Adam and Eve found out what happens when you break rules, and, importantly, they found out that it was indeed possible to break rules. It is not simply that rules are made to be broken, but that the rules tell you that there is something to break. If there were no law, it would be impossible to transgress. The rules, whatever else they might be, are an invitation to find out what rules are.

Every time we react to the transgressions of others, we relocate ourselves, firmly and safely, within the rules, within the protective walls of our society. In these moments, we are reminded of how the world should be, and that someone who knows the rules, and can enforce them, is looking after us. It reassures us to see that we clearly know what the rules are, because we can then be outraged when they are broken. In Alan Bennett's play, 'Getting On', a character says, "We started off trying to set up a small anarchist

community, but people wouldn't obey the rules."

The Victorian poet, educator and devoted assistant to Florence Nightingale, Arthur Hugh Clough, delighted in going against the popular religious and social ideas of his day. He wrote a satirical poem, 'The Latest Decalogue', an alternative version of the Ten Commandments - these, surely, being the rules which come to us on the most potent authority of all. Clough's paraphrase of The Commandments goes like this:

> Thou shalt have one God only; who
> Would be at the expense of two?
> No graven images may be
> Worshipped, except the currency.
> Swear not at all; since for thy curse
> Thine enemy is not the worse:
> At church on Sunday to attend
> Will help to keep the world thy friend;
> Honour thy parents; that is, all
> From whom advancement may befall:
> Thou shalt not kill; but needst not strive
> Officiously to keep alive:
> Do not adultery commit;
> Advantage rarely comes of it:
> Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat,
> When 'tis so lucrative to cheat:
> Bear not false witness; let the lie
> Have time on its own wings to fly:
> Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
> Approves all forms of competition.

Phillips suggests that perhaps as part of growing up we need to break rules, just to be able to find out what rules are made of, and why they matter. Should then parents or schools be saying, "Our rules are made to be broken, because we know that, for at least some of you, only transgression or risk will make you feel fully alive?" Adolescence is the time in people's lives when they begin to notice that there are other things you can do with rules rather than be bound by them. An adolescent senses herself to be a potentially serious rulebreaker.

In thinking about this lecture, for the last few months I have asked every clinician I encountered – general practitioner, consultant, therapist, nurse, even my dentist – their first reaction to the word, "Rules". You might want to do so now for yourself. What I found was that about 3 in 4 people had a negative association. They said things like "school", "constraints", "break", "bollocks", or "ugh". ("Break" was the offering of a Jungian psychoanalyst.) About a quarter of the sample, in which I am included, said things like "security", "structure" or "safety". For some of us, rules must be sought and clung to, like vines across a crocodile-infested swamp. My working hypothesis about this highly unscientific data is that those of us with a superego on the harsh side find comfort in knowing rules, so that we are less at risk of wrongdoing. In fact, I may have stumbled here upon a simple, near-patient test for the harsh superego.

Because of our ambivalence about rules, and the risk of negative reactions, we often go to a good deal of trouble to avoid using the actual word, utilizing a richness of synonym and euphemism. "Protocols", "boundaries", "principles", "algorithms", "precepts", "maxims", "codes", or "technique" somehow feel less frightening and controlling. The Balint Society does not have rules for group leaders or rules for group members – it has 'conventions', 'guidelines', 'aims', an 'agenda'. The leader has 'responsibilities'; an optimal group session is described on the website, but there are no Dos and no Don'ts. "Ground Rules" is one Balint Society website entry, but these are the gentle general rules of all groupwork, touching on respect and confidentiality. Perhaps, it could all be summarised as "Don't do anything stupid in a Balint group."

Another little girl, aged 7 and, like my 9-year-old granddaughter, in the sexually tranquil period of latency, is Alice In Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass. Her latency opens an array of alternative worlds, and realises fresh impossibilities. Alice encounters ridiculous rules and peremptory injunctions, which parody the highly constrained life of a Victorian child. The books are preoccupied with rules, and delight in identifying them, as well as in breaking or reversing them. The Alice books explore profound affinities and contradictions in

childhood experience. But the heroine is definitely a child, not an incipient adolescent. From latency, she can challenge a good deal of adult wisdom about child rearing, as well as adult categories of knowledge. (Gillian Beer's recent engaging commentary, 'Alice in Space', offers playful insight into these books.)

Throughout the two books, Alice is always seeking rules: rules for 'shutting up like a telescope', for having jam for tea ("The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today.") or sneezing ("Maybe it's always PEPPER that makes people hot-tempered," she went on to say, very much pleased at having found out a new kind of rule.") Or, as the White Queen hopes, for being glad. "I wish I could manage to be glad!" the Queen said. "Only, I never can remember the rule." Most of the creatures Alice meets operate by rules that exaggerate and satirise the various struggles of alienation in adult life. Alice is continually concerned about fair shares and proper behaviour: in the croquet game she exclaims, "They don't seem to have any rules in particular; at least, if there are, nobody attends to them." Or, in the Courtroom scene, when 'Rule 42' is declaimed, (you may recall that Rule 42 is, "All persons more than a mile high to leave the court") Alice cries out, "That's not a regular rule, you invented it just now!" and is told, "It's the oldest rule in the book." To which she replies, "Then it ought to be Rule Number One."

In Wonderland, the child has the power of logic and is able to assert it. When the Queen rebukes Alice with, "Speak when you're spoken to!", Alice rejoins, "But if everybody obeyed that rule (she was always ready for a little argument) and if you only spoke when you were spoken to, and the other person always waited for YOU to begin, you see nobody would ever say anything." The child-mind is learning to understand the world and itself, and there is a dawning conception of consequences, order and reason.

The Alice books are a refreshing contrast to the 'improving' children's literature of the time. Before this, children's books were educational tracts, preaching conformity and obedience, and indeed, the edifying verses of 'Divine and Moral Songs for Children' by the Rev. Isaac Watts DD, which Victorian children learned by rote as lessons, are satirised unmercifully. When Alice, as a reality check, tried to work out if she had been changed into someone else, she "crossed her hands on her lap, as if she were saying lessons, and tried to repeat "How doth the little...", which in the Rev. Watts' original reads, in part:

> "How doth the little busy bee
> Improve each shining hour,
> And gather honey all the day
> From every opening flower!"
>
> In works of labour, or of skill,
> I would be busy too;
> For Satan finds some mischief still
> For idle hands to do.

However, for Alice on this occasion, the words do not come out as she had learned them:

> "How doth the little crocodile
> Improve his shining tail.
> And pour the waters of the Nile
> On every golden scale!
>
> How cheerfully he seems to grin,
> How neatly spreads his claws,
> And welcomes little fishes in,
> With gently smiling jaws!"

Although Carroll's day job was as a mathematician and logician, both elements, whimsical imagination and rigid definition, were present in the one person. Carroll disclaimed any interference in the writing from his conscious mind, saying that the books "came of themselves". Wonderland was published in 1865, so there could have been no influence from Freud; however, Carroll was very broadly well-read, and the catalogue of his library includes 21 works on psychology or the mind, including the first Psychiatric book published in Britain (in 1860), and Henry Maudsley's 'Physiology and Pathology of the Mind'. William Empson wrote, "To make the dream-story from which Wonderland was elaborated seem Freudian, one only has to tell it."

It has been suggested that, even 150 years later, the reason that the Alice books interest present-

day children is because they face the same challenges and issues regarding rules, a reasonable view of the universe, and growing up, as Alice does. In more recent literature, one of William Golding's schoolboys in Lord of the Flies says, "We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English, and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right thing."

Freud has now, by my count, crept into our lecture three times, so perhaps we should acknowledge his rightful and important place in any discussion of rules.

Freud brought something unique into being with the creation of the Psychoanalytic method. He introduced the Fundamental Rule of free association (*Grundregel*) for the first time in the second of his six technical papers, "The Dynamics of Transference", in 1912. This is the very basis of psychoanalytic practice and is, seemingly, very simple, but its application is not. Rycroft has described the fundamental rule in his 'Critical Dictionary' as, "the injunction that the patient do his best to tell the analyst whatever comes to mind without reservation". The fundamental rule is in effect an agreement that each patient is asked to accept at the beginning of analysis; Freud called it a pledge or promise. Free association is more easily recommended than performed; when asked to "talk about anything that comes into your mind without censorship, however irrelevant or inappropriate", one can imagine the patient replying, "If I could do that I wouldn't be here in the first place."

For the analyst, the counterpoise of the fundamental rule was the rule of listening with neutrality, described as evenly poised or suspended attention. This 'rule of abstinence' also required that the analyst should not satisfy the patient's desires, such as curiosity about the analyst's life.

Rycroft emphasizes the historical context in which the fundamental rule was originally conceived, which was at the point when Freud introduced free association as an alternative to hypnosis. Subsequently, Freud did not publish a comprehensive work about technique - the papers that emerged between 1911 and 1915 did not lay down firm rules, but were rather formulated as 'advice'. They were also, as he would later notice himself, "entirely inadequate", helpful only for "beginners" and "essentially negative". Other elements of analysis, such as use of the couch, or the duration and frequency of sessions, became generally accepted, but were not seen by Freud as rules.

I think it is fair to say that there has been much more written about Freud's rules by others than by Freud himself, an example of how slippery a thing is the ownership of a rule.

Here is another instance of that. J.D. Bernal recounts, "In my own field, x-ray crystallography, we used to work out the structure of minerals by various dodges which we never bothered to write down, we just used them. Then Linus Pauling came along to the laboratory, saw what we were doing and wrote out what we now call Pauling's Rules. We had all been using Pauling's Rules for years before Pauling told us what the rules were."

In psychotherapy, clearly, the purpose of rules is to establish order, safety and efficacy. The analytic setting is ordered so that it can contain the process. Freud made particular recommendations about the setting that he found useful, but he prudently suggested that those recommendations might not suit all analysts, or all patients. The very nature of analytic rules seems to require that they be flexible, that we mould them to our own personalities, as Freud moulded them to his. Taking rules too literally risks denying the spontaneous and creative nature of analysis, and indeed, its purpose.

Freud's views on technique became more relaxed as he got older; this seems true of many analysts, and suggests that age may bring a degree of confidence. Since his death, the analytic community has disagreed with Freud in his lack of rigidity, and Freud is sometimes accused of not having been 'classical enough.' It seems that perhaps Freud was not an orthodox Freudian.

Writing to Ferenczi in 1928 about the technical papers, Freud said: "The recommendations on technique which I wrote long ago were essentially of a negative nature. Almost everything positive that one should do I have left to 'tact'." He was certain, however, that one could not devise a rule on how to be tactful.

The final ambiguity is the contrast between Freud's practice as we know it from his case records and his analysands' recall, and his 'official' position on rules as it appears in the technical papers. We know that he chatted with patients, addressed them by nicknames, sometimes complimented them on their insight, and made friends with several of them. We know that he served food to the Rat Man, offered money to another, walked around the Ringstrasse with another, gives a set of his collected works to another. And John Dorsey, who was in analysis with Freud between 1935 and 1937, related, "I recall during a session his leaning over the couch and singing one or two strains to me from Mozart's Don Giovanni." As Ernst Falzeder has said, "It almost seems as if with him these aberrations are not the exception, but the rule."

Abram Kardiner quotes Clarence Oberndorfer, speaking of his analysis, "The fact that Freud talked to me excited a good deal of attention in Vienna, so much so that one day I was honoured with an invitation to tea by James Strachey and John Rickman...John Rickman said to me, 'I understand Freud talks to you.' I said, ' Yes, he does, all the time.' They said, 'Well, how do you do it?' I answered, 'I don't exactly know...How is it with you?'. They both said, 'He never says a word.'"

An interesting English translation of an analysand's diary appeared only last year, entitled, 'What Is This Professor Freud Like?' It consists of session-by-session recollections of what each party said, and casts a spotlight on Freud's actual treatment methods in 1921. This diary gives a picture of Freud as an accomplished conversationalist, who covered a broad range of topics in a wide variety of styles, in a fluid fashion.

M.G. Thompson, in his work 'The Truth About Freud's Technique', says, " When I read Freud, I see a man whose rules are not etched in stone. His recommendations about the practice of analysis were uncommonly flexible by today's standards. We, in turn, are invited to do the same, whilst using our heads."

In other words, Don't do anything stupid in the consulting room.

After the Technical Writings of 1912 to 1915, Freud scarcely touched on technical problems in his writing, his interest turning to fundamental psychoanalytic ideas and theories. His last work on technique already showed the influence of Ferenczi, who, in his 1919 papers, "On the Technique of Psychoanalysis" and "Technical Difficulties", dealt with the resistances that can attach to the rules of free association and free-floating attention. Ferenczi observes how rules themselves can lead to resistances, and that by following the model too closely, the analyst might well repeat some of the patient's traumas. He questioned whether the analyst should not continuously vary his attitude to suit the treatment. This question is the springboard for what has been called 'Ferenczi's experiments with technique.' In his Clinical Diary, Ferenczi writes, "The analytic situation, but specifically its rigid technical rules, mostly produce in the patient an unalleviated suffering. and, in the analyst, an unjustifiable sense of superiority."

This is not the place to trace the sad trajectory of the Freud/Ferenczi relationship, from being honoured colleagues, with Ferenczi the expected heir, to coldness and disagreement. Michael Balint, who was analyzed by Ferenczi and was his editor and literary executor, supported Ferenczi's condemnation of an authoritarian attitude in analysis, and the Hungarian School of Ferenczi and Balint emphasized the idea that the analyst contributes more than just a setting, a transferential object and interpretations.

When Michael Balint and his wife came to London in 1939, they transplanted the Budapest school of thought; Balint is recorded as saying, "The human mind is not essentially different in

London from what it is in Vienna or in Budapest." Balint joined a deeply divided British Psychoanalytic Society, but found a place in the Middle Group or Independents. He continued Ferenczi's way of thinking, but with perhaps more level-headedness.

In a 1939 paper, Alice and Michael Balint described how each analyst has his own way of proceeding, which suits him, and which he thinks is right. But it is not a matter of being right. The contribution made by the Balints, in Ferenczi's footsteps, was the introduction of the analyst himself as a subject of observation. And this is not susceptible to rules. In this way, we come to realize that psychoanalysis is not only a technique; it is much more a relation between two people.

Presumably Balint, like Ferenczi, was convinced that he was working in a direct line with Freud's fundamental discoveries. Balint shares one feature common to all great psychoanalytic investigators – his ability to transcend taboos (or should we call them rules?). He gave priority to experience over theoretical abstractions. In 'The Basic Fault' he says, "Some analysts are firmly convinced that the limits set by Freud's technical recommendations must remain absolute forever, and any technique going beyond them must not be called analytic. In my opinion, they are too rigid." And again, "If my train of thought proves valid, 'the correct technique' is a nightmarish chimera, a fantastic compilation from incompatible bits of reality."

The last ten minutes or so must have been pretty heavy going, so let us lighten things with a Balint anecdote (only obliquely to do with Rules) which I was surprised to come across in reading for this lecture. It is translated by Andre Haynal from a French paper published by Balint in 1970. In Budapest in the 1930's, Balint had already decided to gather a few general practitioners in a kind of seminar for the study of psychoanalytic possibilities in their practice. However, the political situation was very tense, and, as Balint records, "We were ordered to notify the police of every one of our meetings, with the result that a plain-clothes policeman attended each of them, taking copious notes of everything that was said. We could never find out what these notes contained or who read them. The only result we knew of was that on several occasions the detective, after the meeting, consulted one of us either about himself, his wife, or his children." Even today's most challenged group leader does not, I think, face such a situation.

Balint's 1951 paper, 'The Problem of Discipline', is pertinent in thinking about rules. His point is that education consists in imparting simple rules to the new generation, expressed as "You must" or "You must not", but that there are two classes of such rules. The first class is self-evident, its prototype being 'You must not go too near the fire,' – or, as we have already agreed, 'Don't do anything stupid on the way to school'.

Balint's second class consists of rules that are not self-evident – the use of 'Please', 'Thank you' or 'Keep to the left'. In a way these rules are nonsensical; they have no inherent logic, no relation to reality; harm does not necessarily follow if you do not comply with them. Balint points out that the rules of Type 1 are the same everywhere in the world, but those of Type 2 show amazing and baffling variations from one society or group to another.

My question is this: are the rules of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy which we use today, and which derive from Freud and his followers – are these Type 1 or Type 2 in Balint's formulation? By meticulously applying all of the rules suggested by Freud, are we avoiding disaster, or are we merely enforcing the norms of our intellectual sub-culture? Do these rules come from a strong, critically minded and realist ego, or have we been taught these rules by the building up of an unbending super-ego?

The biologist Peter Medawar, who was my postgraduate professor, has written, "We can say with confidence that there is no such thing as a schedule of rules by following which we are conducted to a truth. Given any rule, however fundamental or necessary, there are always circumstances when it is advisable not only to ignore the rule, but to adopt its opposite." Which makes me think of Michael Balint's thought

(when speaking of defences) : "Anyone who is running away from something is running toward something else."

Psychoanalysis is not only a technique; it is much more a relation between two people. As in playing the piano, at first a technique is necessary (rules must be learned) but the artist's interpretation is far more than technical execution. Balint's aim was that the patient should be able to find himself, to discover his own way, and not be shown 'the right way'. He has said that the analyst must be " a discreet ordinary person, who does not offer himself as omniscient or omnipotent." That thought leads me naturally to Balint's student and his colleague in the Middle Group, my own analyst, Peter Lomas, since 'ordinary' was Peter's byword in therapy and in his writing.

Lomas was independent-minded and quietly influential. He had a deep understanding of psychoanalytic theory, with great respect for Freud, and fondness and admiration for Ferenczi and for Winnicott, who was his supervisor. He is on record as admiring Balint. But, like his own analyst Charles Rycroft, he found the world of psychoanalysis dogmatic. His central argument was that psychotherapy lies in the realm of the moral, rather than the scientific, and that psychotherapists stand or fall by what Aristotle called 'practical wisdom', rather than the tyranny of convention and technique. With others, he set up The Guild of Psychotherapists as a training organization, and, later, the Cambridge Society for Psychotherapy, known to its friends as 'The Outfit', and offering a radical departure in psychotherapy training.

In his 1993 book "Cultivating Intuition", Lomas says, "We exist in a tradition, which informs our attitudes. Although crucially influenced by Freud – for it is he who has picked us up and placed us on the path of psychotherapy – I find that I am deeply and consistently moved by a desire to emphasize, in a way that psychoanalysis does not, the intrinsic worth of the personal relationship. But there is always the temptation, in aiming for the security of certainty and professional respectability, of following the method unthinkingly, thereby allowing it to dominate and corrupt the relationship. The tenet that there can be a rule for all people and all situations stems from a failure to recognize the diversity of human beings. The need now is to demystify the practice of psychotherapy, and to recognize that the experiences within it are not only part of the natural world, but can be encompassed by our ordinary capacities for experience. In some very important senses, therapy is an ordinary activity and the therapist is there as an ordinary person."

Lomas has also written, "Is it morally right that, in an engagement between two people, it should be set up so that one person is so dominant, that the therapist is the one who makes the rules? If you take it out of the therapy setting, and you see two people talking together and one is making all the rules, one would probably say that was bullying, and not morally right."

For his students and colleagues in the Cambridge Society, Peter suggested his own tongue-in-cheek "Seven Rules of Psychotherapy".

1. Say to yourself before each session, 'I am not Winnicott, nor Jesus Christ'.

2. All you have got is this person in front of you. He is your only hope. Perhaps he can tell you something, so listen.

3. Silence is not golden. After awhile say something, if only telling the patient the cricket score.

4. If you get into a rage, don't hit the patient. Just say, 'I need a pee' and go out and meditate for a while.

5. The patient's money is precious, you mustn't be.

6. Do not worry if you find you are more screwed up than the patient. This is quite normal. It is called the Inequality of the Therapeutic Relationship.

7. Remember that you can never get it right.

Which reminds me of Bion's comment, that before any psychoanalytic session there ought to

be two rather frightened people, and if there weren't, what was the point?

I want to conclude with some thoughts about a part of my own work. These days, I am mainly a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice, but, as well as walking people to school, for the past 7 years I have done two sessions a week in a general practice, offering long appointments of 45 minutes. This is not therapy (the 45 minute duration is a private trick to remind myself of that), but it is extended general practice. The part of me that is a GP had yearned to be again in that setting, so I went to a practice with a proposal: I would come to their surgery and see the patients they wished they had more time for – as simple as that. My only negative stipulation was that they not send me eating disorders or addiction problems, as those are conditions which need structured care. And what I wanted to offer was very unstructured care; patients would be able to come as often as they liked, the only restriction being availability of appointments, just as it is for the other GPs. Patients would be able to self-refer. And, importantly, I would be taking no responsibility for continuity – that would remain with the patient, if they wanted it.

Long appointments are far from a unique idea – John Salinsky has written about them, my own GP trainer offered a long appointment at the start of morning surgeries, I did so myself throughout my time as a Principal. However, the present setting is different, in that I do not have access to the online medical record, and I do not prescribe or refer, though I might suggest such steps to the colleagues. I keep a few brief working comments in a private notebook. Confidentiality is preserved, unless I have fear for the patient, in which case I can speak to the referring GP or the on-call doctor immediately.

On the room allocation list, I am referred to as 'The Counsellor'. That's fine by me, but medical knowledge greatly widens what I can offer, and the doctors use me in interesting ways. The usual discussion about the pros and cons of taking the antidepressant tablets takes more than 10 minutes. So does the woman with a disappointing knee replacement, who had planned for it so carefully and then felt let down, and wants me to examine the joint and feel the scar. There is the man with a rare cancer who comes through the door saying, "I'm dying", who needs someone with whom he can look up information about his condition, and there is also the clinical medical student, only weeks before finals, who has just been given a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis, and who has all too much information about the condition. There are struggles with bereavement, with pornography, and the doctor who doesn't want to be one. One woman came with 4 sides of closely typed A4, describing the long history of her (very unusual) symptoms; I asked her to read it out to me, which took up the full 45 minutes. When she came back, she announced with surprise that things were better.

I mention that work in this lecture because the absence of rules seems beneficial for these patients, preserving autonomy, and, I think, contributing to the care. Patients can come every week if they want to and they can continue coming as long as they like. Sometimes they attend regularly for a year, vanish for 3 years, and return – just as they do with their other doctors. And I am convinced that the lack of rules plus the absence of waiting time are large determinants of the success of this experiment. In his iconoclastic 1978 novel about medical training, 'The House of God', Samuel Shem explains that compassionate care involves breaking senseless rules. His protagonist states, "The delivery of good medical care is to do as much nothing as possible."

Anthony Storr has written, of analysts, that some of us tend to an inappropriate dogmatism. There is the risk that we avoid anxiety by holding onto rules so rigidly that we may prevent productive therapeutic transformation taking place. Rules and codes may be a means of defending ourselves from responsibility. Storr also records, "I once had a conversation with the director of a monastery. 'Everybody who comes to us', the monk said, 'does so for the wrong reasons.' Storr points out that the same is generally true of people who become

psychotherapists, and he adds: "For the most part, we have to put up with what we can get; namely, ourselves." Rycroft, of course, has described ours as 'an intrinsically odd profession.'

I have a great propensity for falling in love. In reading for this lecture, I have fallen in love all over again with Freud, Ferenczi, Balint, Lomas and Alice. I confess it. I have delighted in their writing and felt my own deficiency. The Society has honoured me by its invitation to give this lecture in memory of Michael Balint, and I thank you. Balint work has been indispensable to my education, and I admire and revere Balint as a wise, inspirational and practical link between Freud's discoveries and our own work today.

Tom Main's paper, 'Some Medical Defences against Involvement with Patients' has long been one of my favourite analytic papers, but I had forgotten, until recently, that he presented it as the 1978 Balint Memorial Lecture. In conclusion this evening, I can do no better than to repeat for you the final sentence of Tom Main's lecture, when he said, "I think you know that for each patient encounter there can be only one safe general rule, which is: do not have a general rule."

Breaking the Rules, Sian Morgan

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Loveday Worzencraft

Unfinished

I was going to write a little about my love of faces and facial expressions, and that it probably isn't a coincidence that I prefer to draw children as I love them too. But, as the title implies, I am a work in progress and subject to change.

After recently discussing the different approaches to art and artwork and what art even is or means to the individual, I clumsily tried to explain my own approach.

Not giving myself any pressure to 'do a drawing' I explained, I tend to just draw until I have had enough – my 'fill' so to speak – of creative expression. Whatever it looks like, whatever stage of shading, or layering upon layering of deepening, smudging and rubbing of marks on the paper (but never rubbing out, I may add) in a vain attempt to create some reasonably accepted semblance of it not being a flat 2D child's scribble, I will stop. Sometimes I will even stop at a scribble.

As sudden and urgent as the need to be creative sometimes is, so is the desire to stop. Gone is the need to push through this feeling and persevere until a masterpiece is hanging on the wall. For me, the pressure of persevering or 'finishing' becomes an off-putting obstacle that stamps on any current or future motivation to draw. Bringing me back to the question of what is art for me. Art or drawing or being creative is an outlet for me, much like yoga, which is similar to allowing your physical energy to dance. As Tao Porchon-Lynch once put it, 'Yoga is a dance within…and then something inside you grows so big, it spills out like champagne, that's when you dance on the outside.'

Much like my dancing, my drawing is a release. An unfinished and messy expression of what cannot be solely contained within.

And, what does it mean to be finished anyway?

As I regularly say to yoga students, 'You can't master yoga; there's no end place to get to - because you are constantly changing and therefore so is your understanding of the practice - that's the beauty of yoga'.

And art.

Girl, Loveday Worzencraft

Boy, Loveday Worzencraft

Deborah Evans

Sleeping Beauty

There is something quite frozen about trauma to say the least, an element of control keeping the psyche ordered and an unconscious refusal to play with other possibilities. Apart from that, I have found with some patients a capacity to escape trauma through imagination and creating another narrative. This can be a positive break away from narcissistic parents but it comes at the expense of split in the psyche. In his book *Psychic Retreats* John Steiner describes this place well: a place that is split off and difficult to engage. This bilateral split keeps the shadow at bay often through manic or obsessional behaviour holding prisoners of objects and self.

I have thought about how Sleeping Beauty is a good analogy for people who are stuck in traumatic reactions and are desperately trying to find another narrative to live in. I want to use this analogy to think about how phantasy and the imagination are sometimes used to escape the tyranny resulting in both healthy and unhealthy ways of being.

According to Adelson, Fraiberg and Shapiro

> In every nursery there are ghosts. They are visitors from the unremembered past of the parents, the uninvited guests at the christening. Under favourable circumstances, these unfriendly and unbidden sprits are banished from the nursery and return to their subterranean dwelling place....This is not to say that ghosts cannot invent mischief from their burial places. Even among families where the love bonds are stable and strong, the intruders from the parental past may break through the magic circle in an unguarded moment, and a parent and his child may find themselves reenacting a moment or a scene from another time with another set of characters (1975, 164-165).

This echoes the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty. The bad fairy is very upset for not being invited to the christening so she casts a spell. The princess will prick/splinter her finger on her 16th birthday and will fall asleep until she is rescued. The child's life has become the non-consensual acted out parts of parental issues without consent. The bad fairy represents the unresolved ghostly issues of the mother's or father's oedipal issues. The parents' own issues rear up at transitions, especially on the birth of a child, as this brings back with it their own unconscious experience of their first triangulation.

Maureen Marks, as noted by Etchegoyen and Trowell commented on a case where the arrival of their baby is experienced by the procreative couple as potentially catastrophic:

> There comes a time in the intimate relationship between a man and a woman, which I will refer to for convenience as a marital relationship to imply some degree of formal commitment and/or permanence, when the couple decide to have a child. Each of them has entered into their existing relationship with a way of relating that has enabled them to stay together and to reach this point of creating a baby…the parents capacity to negotiate this configuration will be influenced by their own early unconscious experience of their own parents' unconscious communications…the parents' parents can therefore be uncannily present at this time and influence the next generation's capacity to adjust to their own new family situation (2002, 95-96).

The parents' own inner child and oedipal struggles have been frozen in time and are reignited when the same constellations appear in future generations or at transitional stages. The spell is cast at the birth of the child, driven by a dynamic that was not the making of the young child. The new life has to remain on hold while

it is being used as a vehicle of unresolved generational issues. Dolto, as cited by Morgan, in Hall, Hivernel, and Morgan describes children as the living the symptom for the parent, a psychic container, where the parent projects onto the child their own past traumas and shame (2009, 44).

In this paper I want to firstly talk about a space that is needed to gain perspective and therefore opening up opportunities: the importance of the father and the Oedipal law that if worked through well offers a potential healthy space for the child. However I want to secondly discuss elements of working with someone who through their phantasies tried to usurp the oedipal law in order to escape the trauma yet the imagination went too far over the boundary of what we may feel is a healthy psyche.

I have discovered in a few patients that have been abused that they are also from a very early age became story tellers. They learnt to escape into the world of make believe, a psychic retreat. It saved them. The problem is when they come into therapy although they may experience bodily flashbacks and have PTSD symptoms they have a tendency to turn in on themselves accusing self of making up lies and attention seeking; therefore they are left with a sense of going mad. The phantasies of abuse have not been accepted as a reality. The talking of truths is not permitted. This will also be the case for the part of the self that wants to remain in relationship with the internal parents.

Lastly, storytelling and the arts can be a way of creating the space that is needed, the position of the father, a breathing space, a finding a canvas of one's own. I will talk about Dramatherapy and the arts and the space, an escape for some from claustrophobic compulsive transferences. The arts can give movement to the sleeping beauty to wake up from the tyranny.

(The story of Sleeping Beauty continues with the spell that puts Sleeping Beauty to sleep. The child's own sense of vitality and self is on hold and asleep, unborn until the knight in shining armour kisses her and wakes her up. This also correlates with the latency stage of childhood which moves on to the stage when the father admires the daughter. Perceiving his adoration the daughter's young adult self-awakens. There are, however, complications in reality even with the ending. What if the father is not available to rescue the child or is abusive? What if the mother's feelings about the father are poor and he is introduced by the mother in a perverse light?)

The first object fusion with mother is only experienced, not represented. It is the third object, or more rightly speaking, the second object, the father that gives us a fresh perspective to witness oneself in relation to others. Melanie Klein (1930) wrote about symbol formation which is the stage of the father. A child who can symbolise can potentially enter the world of the father.

The position of the father is a place of castration freeing the child from the reigns of his mother land. Klein (1945) calls this position the depressive position. Barrows and Barrows stated

> It is at the time of weaning - the infant's first major experience of loss – that the father will often be most naturally the object called upon to help the child process the attendant feelings (2002, 170).

Each session has elements of the father position in that he is the gatekeeper, the ending, the contract, the time. He comes from the world of what Freud (1911) coined as the Reality Principle. For Freud the concept of reality was bound up with the father. The child has moved on from the oceanic feelings of primary narcissism and is replaced with the development of the self. Melanie Klein (1935, 1940) wrote extensively about the depressive position which entailed an acceptance with the father. Lacan (1950) offered a structural theory hinged on the Name of the Father.

Emanuel also stated that

> A key role of the father, which most men find initiatively, is to introduce the baby to the world. It is interesting to note that in general

> mothers appear to carry or sit holding their babies in the earliest weeks face to face, whilst fathers tend to hold the baby facing into the world. Many fathers find that they can only really contain the baby's distress in the earliest weeks and months, by movement or distraction" (2002, 142).

Greenacre (1954) describes this initiating action by the father as supporting the toddler's push towards self-determination via encouraging muscular activity, a sense of body self and the exploration of space. It is with the father that the quality of space is introduced. The father therefore is the creator of a three dimensional perspective giving the child space to move.

The father is then equated with the child developing an ego, a place of one's own, working on creating confidence to be in their own skin and exploring new potential lands, with an unwritten script or an unspoilt canvas being the aim of the creative work. Working with fresh concrete ideas that are not born from merging unconscious material can be therapeutic and supportive, giving building blocks to work on rather than crumbling walls by over analyzing the past. The father gives the child a new perspective, a distance to view the world and a chance to create a sense of one's own ideas of who we are.

One patient struggles with her childhood memories of having an abusive father to whom she is extremely loyal, and when she finds herself in a state of rage and anger she will very quickly move to a state of reparation. She is a contortionist when it comes to holding her family together in her mind.

Turning the world upside down through story

As a child Natasha (pseudonym) would cope by escaping into the make-believe, creating stories, talking in different voices, bringing to life her dolls and teddies. It is as if she shared out her fragments of abuse, having imaginary friends to take some of the pressure off.

Natasha has started to use this defence of make believe in relation to her parenting of her son almost as if he also needed protecting from her trauma. She rewrote the oedipal story through stories to her son, literally turning the oedipal law onto its head. This is because she could not stomach the true oedipal constellation so she projected out her own phantasy about creation and birth. The story she created for her son is as follows;

There are two angels in the sky, big and little angel, and they were sitting looking down on the earth and saw a couple that they liked. Little angel wanted to join the couple but was worried whether big angel would be okay alone. Despite this the angel left the skies and joined the couple. This was the creation of Zack (pseudonym). After a while the young boy was missing big angel and so because of the power of his love for big angel, big angel slid down a rainbow and was able to be created into a baby and became Zack's younger sister.

Out of context this story is charming and full of love and empowering ideas. The idea that one chooses to be born is true of many religions but even so the parent's part in desiring a child is vital for healthy development of the child however this story also gives my patient's son omnipotent power. He is in the story before the parents and is more powerful than their desires to have a child. He even has the power to create a sister. This was her way of taking the power away from her father and mother, disassociating from her oedipal struggles. She splits herself off from her own past history.

Natasha exposed a concern she had that when she was in a rage with her son she held him tightly and turned him over to hit his head onto the floor. She told me this just before a professional meeting was to take place with all that who involved with the family. She clearly thought about her children and wanted to protect them from her violent unpredictable self by telling me so that I could act as an advocate for her children by voicing this disclosure. Since the law for protecting children is always to

expose concerns I therefore reported this which led to the children being assessed by Social Care.

Natasha's son had told her that he was worried that his baby sister would hit her head and her brains would fall out. Zack's fear of his responsibility over her life and death, especially if he had created her. He is likely to think he is responsible for his mother's rage driving his mother to hit his head. Thus in the story that is told to him about his creation he is in the position of the father, the authority, not in the position of the child that needs protecting. He can both therefore hurt and protect his sister. There is no sense of a higher authority to hold him in mind and protect him from the unpredictability of his mother's mind. The stories may have helped Natasha but they are uncontaining, and born from the mother's trauma.

On one occasion her son, having just witnessed his parents kissing said, "But what about me? Do you not love me any longer?" Natasha answered, "If it was not for our initial love for one another you wouldn't even be born".

Shengold noted that

> "What happens to the child subjected to soul murder is so terrible, so overwhelming, and usually so recurrent that the child must not feel it and cannot register it, and resorts to massive isolation of feeling, which is maintained by brainwashing (a mixture of confusion, denial and identifying with the aggressor). (1989, 250)

Soul murder reminds me of the sleeping beauty who is frozen and in a state of arrested development. Creating a make believe world is a way to survive.

In my work with Natasha we readdressed these stories and talked about the importance of the oedipal law. Natasha was aware of why she needed to create the stories and why her attempt to turn the world upside down for her children left them exposed to her projections and uncontained. We often used the analogy of her ability to deep sea dive to places of such great emotional experience and fear, but many other people could only snorkel on the surface of the sea and did not know about the strange creatures below. Natasha was attempting, among other things, to expose her world by turning it upside down. If one kept one's own depths of despair alive in the minds of others, one day we might also find the knight in shining armour who did not appear for one's own Sleeping Beauty.

Son as the knight in shining armour

In another story Natasha showed how she indeed placed her son in the role of the knight/father. Natasha described a time machine in which her six year old son was able to go and visit her own six year-old self and play with her. This was a frightening idea. It seemed she was looking to her six year-old to rescue her from her frozen state of trauma, to wake her up and heal the wounds. It is as if she had invested the role of completing her oedipal trauma in her child, by going back to the initial crime scene where her drama was written.

Revenge of the abusive father through metaphor

In another phantasy exchange it clearly indicates her attempts to dampen down her rage through flight into phantasy. Her rage intensified her need to project her anger into future generational minds, as in the following example:

> Zack: "What am I made of?"
>
> Natasha: "You are made of me and I am a unicorn"
>
> Zack: "What are babies made of?"
>
> Natasha: "Babies are made of marshmallows of course."
>
> Zack: "What is dad made of?"
>
> Natasha: "He is made of straw."

In this dialogue the father was associated with a man without a brain or a spine who one could easily set fire to, lighting one's anger up, destroying what one hated safely at a distance through projection. A unicorn has a phallic horn, representing magic and power. The

unspent anger on the father who abused her still needed to be vented, otherwise the fire inside had nowhere to go; the energy needed an escape. Anger as her narcissistic needs could not be met.[1]

Target and Fonagy stated:

> For the mother to be able to accept the child as an independent living being, linked not only to her but also to the child's father, she has to loosen her incestuous attachment to her own parental objects (2002, 57).

Containment

There are signs of progress. Natasha was in the process of reintegrating new perceptions of her husband, rather than keeping him and the children in the prisons of her past and responsible for past abuse.

Natasha has been working on re-addressing some of the stories and restoring the oedipal order. Before a two week break I suggested that her son might appreciate being read to from a story book. Written stories that were anchored in the here and now, every day, happenings of children, such as "Millie Molly Mandy" and "My Naughty Little Sister" might be suitable. Both books are very ordinary stories of everyday life and are structured.

Gersie's work (1997) often involves using the structure of cultural myths for a very grounding sense of order which children need. The father's position is of introducing the child to social rules and structure. The structures of Gersie's stories give boundaries and a sense of containment. She is offering a framework from which to think of the self, limiting the oceanic experience of the potentially engulfing pre-oedipal world of the mother. As she explains:

> Traditional stories emphasize that life itself or the urge to growth exercises a maturational pull. Every story character is invited to wake up and to grow up. Sooner or later the shed, prison, nest, cottage or cave where the story character abides is turned into a location which must be left. It becomes a home base from which initiating actions occur." Gersie (1997, 154).

She adds:

> The time for crossing the threshold into a wider world is at hand. A reluctant or gutsy heroine or hero needs to set forth into the world. Distant horizons call with greater or lesser urgency, more or less attraction. Fortified in castles, isolated in pristine towers or hidden in caves deep beneath the surface of the water, sooner or later each story character must face the challenge to wake up to their relationship with their world (Gersie, 1997, 157).

Through Natasha's therapy her children are gaining healthier parenting and containment. I have found that working with parents of children who need therapy is often more beneficial than seeing the child alone. The child needs their real parents to be their containment and hope in life, not to depend on an auxiliary parent whom they see for one hour a week. I have at times been aware that Natasha might become envious of her children if they dominated her therapy where after all her own internal six year-old waits in line. It is helpful therefore that Natasha has two sessions a week to feed all the external and intra psychic parts of her life.

The Arts and the position of the father

In all the arts therapies the child's use of its own body in relation to space moves the child from being the passive receiver of external dramas into the action-based protagonist, claiming a sense of purpose and curiosity through movement and structure. Potentially this is what any visual creative medium offers the child or adult patient, another perspective to give distance from the claustrophobic dynamics within the skin of the

[1] Natasha was diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder and her distress was immense. As Kreisman and Straus (2010, 14) wrote, "A borderline suffers a kind of hermphilia: lacks the clothing mechanism needed to moderate his spouts of feeling. Stimulate a passion and the borderilne bleeds to death" "The world is split at any particular moment you are either good or evil. Either the idol is banished to the dungeon or the borderline banishes himself in order to preserve the all good image of the other."

mother or merged parental couple. As suggested in Natasha's case, however, what happens if clients are acting out distorted stories of past traumas? If this is the case the therapist needs to be aware of the merging material and of the stage of development the child is at, that of pre-psychological birth.

Natasha needs a safe space for her own internal child. If her internal child had a place to be thought about Natasha would no longer need to use her son as a vehicle for her projections and attacks on her father figure. She needs to develop a boundary, a symbolic father, a separation which prevents the fluidity of merger.

Dramatherapy has the qualities that can anchor patients to the external structure and the position of the Reality Principle. Dramatherapists physically explore distance, an external exploration separating out from the internal. If we work with concrete drama ideas we are working with the function of the father, freeing and separating out, starting afresh. This is the beginning of an independent ego and sense of self.

Many dramatherapists use the idea of building a den. It is as if the child/adult builds a place, separating themselves out, building protection. It is a natural part in the development of play for children. It is a structure and a definition, like a skin of our own to live in, a castle where we are the king or queen, calling the shots.

Working with a new space – landscape

I have occasionally used a technique which I call physical landscapes. The landscape is built on top of a large piece of wood, made from paper mache and various other material. I have offered this idea to adults and children who have struggled to find the third position, separating out from claustrophobic dyad dynamics. My approach, therefore, was for patients to create natural concrete representations.

One patient aged 48, Alastair, (pseudonym) was very stuck in a maternal transference. His father had died which exaggerated his difficulty in allowing himself to think for himself. He felt a huge amount of guilt for even coming to therapy; he did not feel he should be thought about which exasperates his difficulty with separating from his maternal entanglement and finding a new perspective, place to be.

He built a landscape which we worked on from time to time. The landscape was built with paper mache, paper tissue, and match sticks. He built rolling hills, dense forests on the side of a hill, flat viewing space on top of a hill, a stream, and a wooden cabin made of match sticks which later he said represented the therapy room in my garden. [See Figure 1.] We used the landscape to imagine standing and experiencing each area of the board. The density of the forest was a very different auditory sensation to the open plains at the bottom of the hill or the stream.

Taking a step out of the dyad transference into the arena of action equates to the father. The landscape is the self. The thought of the body, with spatial awareness, and physical sensation is allowing the reality of the skin boundary to be experienced in the concrete external world of the father. The actual sensation of tearing the newspaper up into strips in preparation to make the paper mache skin is the cutting action so much needed for the child or adult.

[Figure 1. Alastair's safe space]

The grounded concrete solidarity of the landscape anchors the child or adult to the external world and by doing this the child or adult gains space from the anxiety of the dyad

relationship. It offers another perspective from outside, relief from the internal.

The landscape relieved the symptoms of the internal oedipal constellation Alastair struggled with enough for him to take a breath and to start to build something new with me or something for us to use as an anchor from the maternal transference. Throughout the therapy, however, there emerged a pattern in the transference which was indicative of Alastair's oedipal struggles. Whenever we seemed to make progress in our thinking together, it would be followed with another stage of suspicion but as Feldman states:

> Not only were the phantasies reflected in the patient's material, but one could follow the elements of the oedipal drama being re-enacted in the sessions. Through the operation of projection and introjective identification, the roles assigned in phantasy, to patient and analyst were often complex and reversible (1989).

The landscape remained a space of refuge where the phantasies were not permitted. It was a more concrete setting in action and the body rather than lost in the internal psychic drama. The landscape belonged to the position of father, the outside.

According to Chassegeuet-Smirgel,

> The analytic setting representing the womb is at the same time the guarantee that this womb will not swallow up the child, the analysand, forever. As some patients say, the analytic boat has sides which can be grasped in order to get out, and the analytic cot has bars one can hang on to so as not to become lost in a timeless sleep…In its role as boundary, the setting is law, a cut off part, a representative of the father (1986, 41).

In an earlier paper (2012) I described the earlier stage of F's therapy, the symbol of the wave, which, if it prematurely breaks would leave the child on the beach without having gained a good enough symbiotic experience needed when developing the ego. F's physical landscape embodied this process of therapy as a wave about to break. In the second and third year of the work I could hear F having more of an agency and sense of self ready to walk alone. I see this as the footsteps she has imprinted in the sand [See Figure 2.] It is a grounded, formed sense of herself with an integrated sense of inner life.

[Figure 2: F's landscape and progression]

Conclusion

We cannot fully know whether the child or adult is aware they are acting out other people's dramas and we cannot necessarily stop this from happening but, as arts therapists we can offer new spaces with fresh canvas and paint brushes to work from. We can offer patients a new page, a position to be the author of the script. Drama therapy is at worst an assessment tool to view the disastrous collision with parental material but at best a new place to start building the child or adult's own story book, a place to claim their own land. Sleeping Beauty in this version finds her own internal drive through movement into another perspective, or another story tale that has not been scribbled on by the internal toddlers (bad fairies) of her ancestors. Of course internal Oedipal constellations and trauma still need to be worked on but if we do not build these safe self-islands we may not be able to trust that we will not be swallowed up by the past.

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Sleeping Beauty with Father, Sian Morgan

Isobel Urquhart

A Conversation about Death

The curtain lifts.

- *How are you?*

- Well, I'm sort of on edge but I'm not feeling comfortable with… it sort of feels like an indulgence – it's not what politeness expects, to talk about yourself….

- I'm not sure where I am, really, or who I am, who we are – things aren't very good really.

- *Inside or outside, both?*

- I listen to the Archers at lunchtime. I don't know… it's like young people have an audience, a way of expressing their identity and change. And I find myself having a disparaging attitude towards this. And maybe that's a way I think of it in myself.

The dream

- I'm on a bus with Mum. She'd got off and the driver pulled away and wouldn't stop to let me off. I felt annoyed and anxious and looked around to find a way to stop the bus – the emergency window or a lever – and I was worried about gathering up my possessions. I had an idea that I could throw something out of the bus but it would spill and break up. I thought about my Monopoly set.

- We played Monopoly when I was younger – with my brother and one or two of my foster brothers. Sometimes all weekend. But there was an older Monopoly set that we played when we visited our parents. It was quite evocative, the places on the board – I knew about some being crappy places like Old Kent Road, and just knew about Mayfair being rich.

- We lived in the western side of Bethnal Green/Shoreditch. My mum sometimes called me a 'slum child'. She kept herself to herself, really, Mum. When she was little, her mum died of cancer when Mum was 5, she spent 6m to 1 year in a "Yarrow House" – a sort of convalescent home for 'the better classes'. Mum grew up in Kingston, she had a sort of nanny, "auntie" Marjorie. She was quite middleclass really. Dad was

different. East End, Hackney born. He was a vagabond, really. When I was very small, he was in and out, absent a lot. Not a responsible person. Some of the time he was working in warehousing – he kept a diary that I've looked at – it looks as if he spent a lot of time with men in pubs – cafes maybe. One time we were due to visit his mother in Margate – we did it regularly – it was a cheap holiday – we stayed for a week or two. This time, Dad rocked up on the evening of going, but he'd spent the money for us getting there. He brought a transistor radio for me and my brother, I was only 3 and I thought even then what a stupid present – it's just a sop.

- It must have been so hard for my mother, married to a man like that.

- You know the hardest part of the dream was that mum was off the bus – she was on her own. And I am still like that – feeling her being on her own. Mum didn't want to be alone – ever. I feel responsible – I need to connect with her because she hated to be on her own.

- The most poignant moment for me when the Queen died was when she was actually interred; *finally,* being laid to rest in a particular place.

- I feel bogged down. In a way it relates to the dream – there's something positive in the dream, because I do stop the bus.

- I visit Mum's grave twice a week. I pray – I've got a book of prayers – morning prayers, evening prayers, all stuff like that. I talk with her. Actually I talk to her in this house as well. No, there's no reply from Mum. Mum and I used to visit the same grave before she died – it was her mother's grave.

- At uni, a long time ago, I said to this orthodox priest, we know where God is, but we don't know where he isn't. He said when we make the liturgy, we join heaven and earth. One time, mum asked where is John? (husband). She seemed satisfied – no, relieved – by my saying he is in God's presence – as we all are. That's my working ethos – if I want to give myself a feeling of reassurance, well, if my Mum is anywhere she can hear me, it will be at the grave or in this house. I talk with her in Brighton too. We shared those places.

- Her dread of being left alone – it's mine too. How sad it is to be alone in death. Sometimes the thought comes that I could kill myself – I understand the irrationality of the thought – but so I could be with her, not for my comfort, but for her's.

- It's like that would complete the search. I feel as if I died it would end my mother's suffering at being alone. And I feel I didn't do well by her –

as if my killing myself would, not heal, but make better. There's guilt in there somewhere.

- *How do you think your mother would feel if she knew you thought that?*

- She'd be touched – that I'd thought of saving her from being left on her own in death. Appreciative. She self-harmed as well. I'm in awe of her about that – that she could do that to herself. Like tattoos - that she could do something no matter what others thought or said. Control. No one could make her not do it. Killing yourself is the ultimate control, maybe.

- On the flip side – perhaps I'm prepared to say these things about myself because I can't say them to or about others. Thinking about killing myself is something I can keep for myself, know about myself. A way to keep alive, knowing that I have the possibility.

- God got it wrong in the design of us creatures. We're so complicated. Even in the church groups I have been to, they seem to be OK with pat answers. I find myself not disposed to accept the 'story' in religion – but so much seems to hinge on it in relation to God. It feels like it requires a response to a narrative as much as it is about getting up in the morning.

I drew this in response to a dream. As far as I can tell, because it was purely unconscious, it is death as Cronos embracing a child tenderly. Thinking about it afterwards, it feels very comforting because I have had a lifelong fear of death, having endured significant losses from a young age: this image makes me think of death as potentially transformative, as a consequence of the invocation of love through grief.

In addition to my own losses, my grandparents suffered the deaths of 4 of their young children in a diphtheria epidemic at the turn of the last century. Although they were left with 8 children, it was hugely painful for them; my grandfather jumped into their grave and scarred the family for generations. My cousin's daughter is a paediatric pathologist and inadvertently named her daughter after my grandmother.

I certainly have carried the trauma. This image is a consequence of an awful lot of therapeutic work which has moved me from a frozen state in reaction to death to being able to experience my grief and to be able to accompany friends towards death.

\- Sian Morgan

Print 3, Tara Sampy

Pat Tate

The Unconscious in Decor

(1)

To enter my consulting room, one walks up the drive, opens a door. Passes through a short passage and then through another door into the room itself. When all this was initially built and decorated, the room itself was soon suitably supplied with furniture and a few pictures on the wall, and It Was Good.

But the bare white passage clearly needed something, so I shuffled through the large number of framed items stored in the loft, and selected a sufficient number to cover one wall of the passage in what seemed a pleasing array. I later added, on an adjacent wall, a print I'd seen and coveted in the home of another therapist.

Many years later, I have actually looked at that wall of pictures, instead of merely walking past it, and was surprised at what I saw:

- Picasso's lithograph of Don Quixote
- A school of fish
- The first page of William Morris' version of The Canterbury Tales
- An old man poring over a book in a library or bookshop
- A gull with outspread wings
- Three other woodcuts of birds, including an owl
- A cyclist in Cambridge
- A maintenance man painting, high on the Eiffel Tower
- A woodcut of Southwold where we holiday

Perhaps you will see what I so belatedly perceived: a variety of depictions of travel, movement, progress – even the old man bent over his book is getting somewhere. My unconscious had rather heavy-handedly chosen to represent, in the transitional space between the outer world of the street and the intimate world of the consulting room, the whole notion of transition.

The later addition, on the adjacent wall, is the page from Alice in Wonderland showing Alice in conversation with the Cheshire Cat. The text reads:

> "Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?"
>
> "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.
>
> "I don't much care where---" said Alice…
>
> "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.
>
> "…so long as I get *somewhere,*" Alice added as an explanation.
>
> "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if only you walk long enough."

References:

Carroll, L. (1865) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* Macmillan

(2)

For several years I have been on a serious economy drive – no unnecessary purchases, especially anything for myself. But I still flick through the mail order catalogues for gifts, and recently I saw a pleasing set of four mugs, decorated with images from the Japanese artist Hokusai. The consulting room mugs were broken or damaged – the price was reasonable – I could allow myself to order these. Next to them on the page, also after Hokusai, an attractive cushion with the well-known image of The Great Wave.

Oh, I did so want that beautiful cushion. I struggled – no need at all for a cushion – unjustifiable expense – but desire won out, and I ordered both items.

Goods delivered, and unpacked in my kitchen. Mugs – lovely, useful; cushion – gorgeous. Took them out to the consulting room, mugs placed in the mini-kitchen, cushion placed on spare chair in the room. Then – only then – the 65+ years' memory surfaced, of once being shown the workspace of my brother-in-law-to-be, a Freudian analyst. On his wall – a print of the Great Wave.

Lucy King

Pandemic

We listened to nightly dire warnings.
Became full of dread and anguish.
Fearful of closeness, we learnt to keep our distance,
Afraid of death lurking anywhere around us.
Playgrounds and park benches were taped around like crime scenes.

Yet through all this, we found new kindliness from strangers,
A strong new sense of sharing and community.
A spirit of the blitz perhaps though no huddling close in shelters.
Instead, we clapped our thanks on doorsteps.
Confined to home, had only phones and videos
Became disembodied voices or phantoms viewed on screens.
Our worlds both shrunken and expanded.

January 2022

This poem emerged out of a poetry workshop I did during the pandemic. It already reads as a dream-like memory of a far off time, almost as alien now, as it was extraordinary, when it started and the restrictions of lockdown were imposed.

Margaret Farrell

Review of Michael Briant: *Psychotherapy, Ethics and Society: Another Kind of Conversation*

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018

(N.B This review was written in 2019. I understand from Michael that he is in the process of expanding what he has written.)

Michael Briant's thought-provoking book addresses directly the very important issues suggested by its title. It contains chapters discussing philosophical and ethical issues, which perhaps are too often brushed aside by therapists who are overly engrossed in the 'here-and-now' in the room, or who possibly feel, as Peter Lomas (1981) has promulgated (with considerable erudition!):

> ordinary living is not without its own magic, mystery, ecstasy despair' or, again, 'the degree to which help is a function of the setting itself as opposed to the theoretical presuppositions of the practitioner.

On the other hand, Lomas also writes in *Doing Good* (1999): 'our contemporary model of psychotherapeutic endeavour is quite remarkable in that it omits the moral dimension of living.' Briant's book goes into this omission in considerable detail. Further, there continues to be a widely-held controversy in the analytic world as to whether therapy aims to 'help' 'cure' or 'heal' psychological suffering or whether it should merely be concerned with understanding the individual patient's unconscious, to the point of discouraging any mention in the therapy room of outside events or societal issues. A great strength of Briant's book is that he emphasizes the unavoidable role of ethics and morality in our practice of psychotherapy, and the value of incorporating philosophical/moral issues both in the consulting room and as they illuminate understanding of Society as well.

The book begins with an examination of current social-political thinking as over-valuing Rational Economic Man, and yet how 'the stock of insights that therapists have acquired… can… shed valuable light on these matters because ethical issues are the "stuff" of [their] work.' He gives, throughout the book, extensive case histories to illustrate his thesis, emphasising these ethical problems. The plan of the book, as Briant states, revolves around two fundamental issues:

> that the practice of psychotherapy is based on an ethic'; and that it addresses the problem of free will-- including reference to the philosophy of Spinoza, who suggested that free will is an illusion but 'it seems we need to believe in it.

Thus, as psychotherapists, we need to acknowledge deterministic constraints, but within these, we need to help our clients/patients cope with the interaction between what is genetic or unchangeable and what greater understanding (through analytic therapy) can help with their lives. One example he gives is the case of 'Andrew,' whose family chose not to tell him of his Mother's death while he was taking his university finals – only to be confronted by this terrible news when he arrived home. Obviously Andrew needed time and sympathetic therapy to come to terms with his grief, especially in regard to other dynamics in his complex history, but eventually Briant says 'I neither urged him or discouraged him as I felt it was essential for him to decide for himself' and thus Andrew eventually saw

that he needed to come to see himself as a free agent. In this regard he quotes the Oxford philosopher Stuart Hampshire as saying,

> Both Spinoza and Freud represent moral problems as essentially clinical problems… There can… be only one way of achieving sanity and happiness: …to come to understand the causes of our own states of mind.

Briant's various examples illustrate cases where, through non-judgemental discussions ('conversations') with him as therapist, they have come to make realistic decisions about their lives for themselves. He makes the case for a humanistic approach based on psychologically-informed change. He refers to Freud, who even in 1908 felt nevertheless that helping individuals had its limits and that profound change was needed in society as a whole.

Regarding a deeper attempt to link with Society as a whole, I feel that Briant could have given more acknowledgement to the work of thinkers about groups – starting, of course, with Freud himself (1921), but having also been studied in depth by Le Bon, Trotter, Elias, Tiger, Bion and others, and most intensively by S H Foulkes and the group-analytic movement. Malcolm Pines (perhaps the most eloquent writer on group analysis) (1998) says: that the group analyst needs to 'integrate the psychoanalytic model of the mind together with the sociological and anthropological perspectives on the human condition.' Bion's thoughts about groups informed the Tavistock group movement and the many valuable conferences that rose out of it which Briant references briefly, but which led away from psychotherapy into sociology and a rather pessimistic and nihilistic form of group therapy which the Tavistock itself eventually abandoned. The Foulkesian Group Analysts have been more fruitfully involved with psychotherapy in groups, uncovering primitive and hidden dynamics and exposing ethical issues in the mini-society of a group setting. For example, Dalal (2012) in his Foulkes lecture to the Group Analytic Society concludes that he 'places ethics at the centre of the human emotion, and at the centre of our work as psychotherapists.' Group therapy (especially group-analytic psychotherapy derived from the work of Foulkes), involves a group conducted by a psychoanalytically- oriented group-analyst typically meeting weekly and providing in a small way a microcosm of 'society' while at the same time integrating the problems or concerns of each member. Group-analytic 'large groups' involving 15 or more members meeting less frequently dramatically point out how rapidly people can descend into unconsciously-driven elements which clearly represent psychological issues of society as a whole. As Lionel Kreeger put it in his book *Large Groups* 'the essence of the social is that it is human and the essence of the human is that it is social.'

Given my views of the rich literature and practice of group-therapeutic approaches, which I feel is an omission in Briant's book, I think this book is a very valuable and deeply engaging work, addressing issues which all therapists should take on board. He warns against 'adaptation' as an aim for therapy, stressing rather the importance of understanding the limits which Society places on the person, and how individuals can best live within it or cope with it and 'feel the sense of our own personal autonomy.' He concludes with a possibility that 'there is a steady gathering of thoughtful and humane voices that might help us find our way.'

On having read the book for a second time, I wonder if it should really be two books. In spite of Briant's effort to draw attention to the overlap of psychotherapy and ethics, I think that his inclusion of the more historical/sociological contribution of writers like Norman Cohn, Henry Dicks, Roger Money-Kyrle and James Gilligan needs even more space than he has been able to devote to their valuable work. Psychotherapists and their patients can benefit from the recognition that their understanding/practice of individual psychology can be greatly enhanced by these studies of serious psychopathology in the wider world and the moral questions that are raised – as well as, conversely, analytic knowledge can contribute greatly to understanding the very serious issues raised by historical events and social institutions. This book has given me much to think about, and I heartily recommend it to all psychotherapists.

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Print 4, Tara Sampy

Tara Sampy

About the Cover Artist

Tara Sampy has developed a practice, working with different media, to explore her interest in both how communities are made visible, and how they are represented. Her socially engaged practice has included work with women's groups, allotment holders, and older people.

Commissioned to make site-specific work in the UK and Europe she has presented her work in partnership with national galleries at conferences both in the UK and Germany.

She has always had an interest in plants, the people who grow them, and interpretations of the concept of 'nature'. In this most recent work she has brought plants into the process of making, by placing them onto the inked plate and printing directly from them.

These Monotypes are individual unique prints that are created by re-laying the paper onto the print plate several times. Utilising the plants positive and negative image, she plays with transparency of colour and qualities of plant forms to create an entrancing series of works that explore moments of connection, balance and relationship.

Her work is available through Waterbank Press as limited edition archival Giclee prints along with other unique printed books and cards.

Instagram page @waterbank.press

Print 1 (Same as cover), Tara Sampy