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Passion and Gratitude in Psychoanalysis

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To paraphrase one of Samuel Clemens' admittedly ragged quips, rumors of the balkanization, marginalization, and impending demise of psychoanalysis may have been somewhat exaggerated. Perhaps psychoanalysis doesn't need a life coach after all. If the contents of this journal since its inception six years ago, along with those of other lively, contemporary publications such as *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, and *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, are any indication, the diagnosis of fractionation given to psychoanalysis (which insurance wouldn't have covered anyway) turns out to be a serious case of cross-fertilization of inspiring, evocative, and creative ideas—ideas birthed both from psychoanalytic pioneers and the contemporary midwives who still value originality, invention, context, passion, and an appreciation for the irreducibility of the person. The cry for evidence-based treatments seems not to be deterring psychoanalysts and their respective patients from enjoying the discovery of their own personal odysseys; they continue to expand their sense of emotional meaning and deepen their connections and engagements with others, while still getting around to reducing troublesome symptoms from time to time as well.

If contemporary psychoanalysis has diverged from traditional scientism, or even challenged it at times, it bodes well for patients and clinicians who favor respecting the integrity of the unique emotional lives of persons, many of whom struggle daily to wrest themselves from the encumbrances of the one-size-fits-all, empirical-data based prejudices of normativity. And indeed, the question of who determines what constitutes “evidence” remains underexplored. And the voices of our patients often go unheard. Doubtless psychoanalysis, given its intense diversification of theories and sensibilities, could have Dodo-like perished in its tracks by now. But its

continuing success strangely may lie in psychoanalysis' recognition that, indeed, each analysand, each person, is utterly unique and individual, each requiring a different clinical sensibility to reap the rewards of a therapeutic relationship. Thus, given our current contextualist and systems understanding of human life—paradoxically having emerged from the science that reluctantly but finally gave a nod to chaos, noise, anomaly, and messiness—the notion of settling on one treatment with one identifiable and predesigned outcome, for all patients, has come to feel, well, rather embarrassing.

If there is a new paradigm brewing in psychoanalysis, and there usually is, it is one characterized not as much by a different vision of the self, or by a reconceptualization of the clinical relationship—though there is plenty of that—but rather by the increasing respect of psychoanalytically informed clinicians for the uniqueness of the individual, whether philosophically, psychologically, or neurobiologically speaking, and the consequent and relentless necessity for ready-to-hand creativity and ingenuity. Clinicians' awareness, toleration, and dare I say *excitement* about multiple perspectives—the proverbial jigsaw puzzle with the customary missing pieces—provide the engine for appreciating and respecting the complexity of each individual's emotional world. Clinicians today seem more willing to live and play with ideas, and less given to the familiar chant: “I don't want to have to think—just tell me what to do with this theory.” I am encountering less preoccupation with finding a psychoanalytic common ground on which we presumably could stand, assured and calmed in the knowledge of one coherent theory: Indeed, unification, homogeneity, and consensus make me squeamish, especially when it comes to things like theory and practice.

I believe the pages of the *IJPSP* in the last five years reflect the fruits of the diverse opinion, argument, cross-pollination, creativity, and passion that are palpable in psychoanalysis today. My experience as this journal's editor continues to be enlivening, evocative, mind-addling, and uplifting. When I study the articles that find residence on my desk, I am, above all, inspired, for which I am grateful. I feel privileged to be able to witness, first hand, the evolution of psychoanalytic sensibilities that are, indeed, therapeutic—sensibilities that are shaping our future. That said, I remain convinced that the true life blood of the *IJPSP* rests, in addition to the contributing authors, in two essential groups of terrific people: The *IJPSP* editorial organization—our associate editors, our contributing editors, our book review editor, our neuroscience editors, our philosophy editors, our poetry editors,

our internet editor, our editorial board, and our editorial associate (all listed on our masthead)—and our editorial reviewers and translators (listed below). Without them, without their indefatigable tenacity and focus, our efforts could not be realized. I wish to extend to them my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude.

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