

## Special Issue: On Happiness



### FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

By Hilli Dagony-Clark, Psy.D.

Dear Candidates,

I hope you are well settled into the academic year. For those of you just beginning training, this is likely an exciting, if not a bit overwhelming, time of adjustment. For those returning, this time is hopefully filled with a sense of confidence and enthusiasm about what you have learned and will continue to gain. I very much hope that you will regard the Candidates' Council as an extension of your analytic training and as a source of support as you establish yourselves as burgeoning analysts. Below you will find an update of the affairs of the Council. While it is important that you at least keep abreast of candidate affairs at the national level, I strongly urge you to involve yourself in the life of the Council in order to network with colleagues from around the country, develop your sense of analytic identity, foster your sense of professional community and learn about academic and administrative issues that affect your training.

The Candidates' Council (CC) met on June 9, 2011, in San Francisco at APsaA's 100th Annual Meeting. Highlights of this meeting include 1) Launch of the new CC Education Committee, whose goal is to form and sustain a candidates' study group supported by the Committee on Psychoanalytic Education (COPE); 2) Launch of the new Digital Media and Communications Committee, whose goal is to increase candidates' presence on APsaA's website and maintain the candidates' social networking website, Ning; 3) A presentation by Program Committee Chair,

Kimberlyn Leary, about submitting proposals for panels and discussion groups at the APsaA national meetings; 4) A presentation by Certification Examination Committee representative Karyne Messina about writing cases up for certification; 5) A presentation by the Committee on Child and Adolescent Analysis (COCAA) Chair, Charles Parks, about the benefits of Child Analytic Training. Also, candidates engaged in a spirited roundtable discussion about analytic identity, professional involvement, and practice building.

Our Candidates' Council will engage in several activities during the 2012 National Meeting this January.

1. **Local institute candidate organizations.** In an effort to foster local candidate involvement, Michael Garfinkle and Sabina Preter will lead a discussion about the formation of local institute candidate organizations. Such organizations would not only foster a sense of collegiality among peers, but also may disseminate information about involvement in APsaA and encourage attendance in national meetings.
2. **Candidates' Study Group.** Candidates' Council Education Chair Caryn Schorr, President-Elect Navah Kaplan and I will visit the Committee on Psychoanalytic Education (COPE) during the January meeting to discuss the formation of a candidates' study group and its relationship to COPE. During the Candidates' Council we will solidify the nature of the study group (participants, topic, location times, and frequency).

3. **Roundtable Discussion.** We will engage in a roundtable discussion about the state of analytic practice and identity, while encouraging use of our current networking website for referrals.

The Candidates' Council's Executive Committee, as well as its active committees, have been working hard over the past few months toward increasing candidate's participation in APsaA, as well as improving the quality of their experiences on the national level. The annual Candidate Membership Drive Campaign took place from October 15th-November 15th. The APsaA National Office sent out information about candidate membership to new candidates, and I sent a letter describing the benefits of joining APsaA. If you are a new candidate, I strongly urge you to apply for membership in order to fully immerse yourself in all opportunities available to you as a trainee.

I continue to work on a mentorship initiative I hope to launch during my presidency. The goal of this program is to match all incoming candidates of APsaA institutes with candidate members and graduate members to solidify the trainees' connection to our organization at the onset of their studies.

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It was decided to launch a pilot mentorship program to test its efficacy prior to launching this initiative nationally. Early in the New Year, I will be sending out a letter requesting participation in this pilot study to a small group of institutes. Additionally, I will send an informal questionnaire on the candidates' listserve investigating the issues with which candidates feel they require the most assistance in order to tailor the program to their needs. Your participation in this questionnaire will be very helpful. The results of the efficacy of the pilot program will be presented at the 101st Annual Meeting next June in Chicago.

Treasurer Jamie Cromer is working on the 2011-2012 matching Candidate Travel Award Program, which will be in effect during the January meetings. At the time of this writing, we have 13 confirmed recipients, two institutes who are not interested and 14 institutes with whom Jamie continues to correspond. In addition to her usual responsibilities, Jamie will attend the American Psychoanalytic Foundation Meeting as a candidate representative.

In order to increase the candidates' presence on the APsA website ([www.apsa.org](http://www.apsa.org)), and provide accurate, easily available, and in-depth information about the Candidates' Council, Vanessa Sinclair has written a new section that will appear in the Members' Section of the website. The new section lists the active committees of the Candidates' Council, as well as contact information and a link to IPSO. Vanessa will additionally advertise use of the social networking Ning site on the candidates' listserve.

Caryn Schorr has been advertising participation in the candidates' study group on the candidates' and members' listserves, and recently wrote a piece for TAP about it. As I mentioned earlier, Caryn, Navah Kaplan, and I will meet with COPEs to discuss how to nurture and develop the study group.

I hope you will join us at APsA's 2012 National Meeting, January 10-15, 2012 ([www.apsa.org/Meetings/2012\\_National\\_Meeting.aspx](http://www.apsa.org/Meetings/2012_National_Meeting.aspx)). Below are some highlights

of the exciting programming designed specifically for Candidates:

- **Discussion Group #4: On Being Supervised: The Unfolding of a Live Supervision—** Wednesday, January 11, 9:00-11:00 AM

*Chair: Hilli Dagony-Clark*  
*Discussant: Fred Busch*  
*Presenter: Robin Gomolin*

- **Breakfast Gathering** for Candidate Members— Thursday, January 12, 7:45 AM

- **Candidates' Council Meeting—** Thursday, January 12, 8:15 AM-12:30 PM

*Chair: Hilli Dagony-Clark*

- **Candidates' Forum: Developing Psychoanalytic Cases and the Candidates Who Will Work With Them—** Thursday, January 12, 2:00-4:00 PM

*Chair: Arden Rothstein*  
*Panelists: Elizabeth Brett, Allan Frosch, Alan Skolnikoff*  
*Moderator: Phoebe Cirio*

- **Discussion Group 99: Candidate to Candidate: Creating a Psychoanalytic Patient—** Thursday, January 12, 4:30-6:30 PM

*Chair: Phoebe Cirio*  
*Presenter: Nilufer Yalman*  
*Discussant: Fred Busch*

- The Candidates' Council's annual **Winter Bash**, organized and hosted by Navah Kaplan, on the evening of Thursday, January 12th on the Upper East Side. Drinks and a full dinner will be served. It promises to be a wonderful night of socializing, networking, and relaxing.

- **Candidates Writing Workshop—** Friday, January 13, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM (see below)

- **Coffee with Distinguished Analyst:** Psychoanalytic Controversies, Babel and Clinical "Evidence"—Saturday, January 14, 7:30-8:45 AM

*Chair: Hilli Dagony-Clark*  
*Presenter & Distinguished Analyst: Dale Boesky*

On Friday, January 13, a writing workshop will be held in lieu of the Candidates' Council's Scientific Paper Prize since winners were not selected to receive an award this year. To encourage candidates to excel in writing about psychoanalysis and publish their work, three editors from JAPA will discuss the writing and publication process. A paper written by a candidate who has agreed to a public editing will be selected from papers previously submitted for consideration by the Paper Prize. Attendees who signed up in advance will be e-mailed the paper to read before the session.

I hope you find this summary of both the CC's activities and meeting programming both helpful and informative. Please contact me if you have any questions and/or concerns about candidacy, training, or involvement with APsA at [hilli@dagony-clark.com](mailto:hilli@dagony-clark.com).

On behalf of the Candidates' Council, I wish you a very Happy 2012 and I look forward to meeting you in New York. ♦

Respectfully,

Hilli Dagony-Clark, Psy.D.  
Candidates' Council President

**APsA Candidates' Council**

Hilli Dagony-Clark, *President*  
Navah C. Kaplan, *President-elect*  
Valerie Golden, *Secretary*  
Jamie Cromer, *Treasurer*

**The Candidate Connection**  
Newsletter of the APsA Candidates' Council  
Michael Garfinkle/Jamieson Webster, *Co-Editors*

## From The Editors Desk, “On Happiness”

“Present happiness owes much to previous drudgery, and future happiness may depend on present drudgery.”

(Bion, 1991, p. 179)

We had the fantasy of trying to find out how many American Psychoanalytic Association institutes teach *Civilization and its Discontents* in their curriculum. Our guess would be not very many, if any. One reason for our pondering this, is that the message that runs throughout this work, one of the greatest—to our mind—of Freud’s writings, concerns the futility of ideal happiness. Critical thought on the question of happiness, no less the way in which this might have bearing on the problems facing psychoanalysis today, seems conspicuously absent. Freud contrasts what psychoanalysis reveals against what seem to be fantastic, but nonetheless psychoanalytically analyzable, human expectations. It is also our fantasy that with the absence of *Civilization and its Discontents* from the content of the curriculum, so follows an explosion of expectations for happiness and a misunderstanding of discontent within the psychoanalytic community itself.

***Psychoanalysis must ceaselessly evaluate the ways it slips into a super-egoic vision of itself, its training, its cure, and its possibilities within contemporary society.***

Psychoanalysis, to a certain extent, works against expectations. For Freud the idea of individual happiness does not admit of the particularity of desire, the history that has come to shape it thus, as well as the ways it perpetually conflicts with reality, no less civilization. The ideal of happiness, of human progress and perfection, is for Freud, too static. Psychoanalysis tells us something very different than this about humanity, and its message is a sober, at times even stoic one.

The pleasure principle has two aims—the momentary production of pleasure, or, the removal of un-pleasure. We only know happiness, in essence, through the contrast between these two, always temporary, states. One does not

exist without the other. For some, happiness might be the experience of pleasure, and for others it will side more with the removal of unpleasure. One tends to find comfort in an extreme, say depression transforming into ecstatic joy, while the other is grateful for something, less extreme, like surmounting difficulty. One is the happiness of sating a wild and untamed instinct; the other is the happiness of quietness. Psychoanalysis does not judge one manifestation of pleasure or another. Its science traces the history of pleasure and pain.

However, there is a judgment by Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents*. It concerns the way in which happiness as a demand—one that can certainly be found in a whole host of civilized moralities and value systems—is essentially a super-egoic demand. Be Happy! Enjoy! For Freud, it is out of touch with reality to the extent that what it demands is impossible. It is a kind of infantile omnipotent demand. It therefore contributes to repression, aggression, guilt, the personalization of failure, omnipotent overvaluation, and a whole plethora of symptoms not only on an individual level, but on a societal level as well; religion being one of these collective neuroses.

We wonder what has happened to *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. While not as explicitly groundbreaking as *Civilization and Its Discontents*, it provided an idea of how happiness and pleasure could be limited and advanced by the group. From its first English publication, it has carried low status, not helped by Strachey’s introduction, “There is little direct connection between the present work and its close predecessor, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*” (Freud, 1921, p. 67). We are not so sure. Freud describes his own version of “misery breeds contempt,” arguing that every relationship, marriage, friendship, and by extension analyst and analysand, candidate and faculty, contains repressed

aversion and hostility. In the group, this is avoided where there is the illusion of uniformity, but as heterogeneity becomes more visible, the group cannot repress these forces further. Metaphor is used powerfully to promote uniformity, either by overemphasis on the differences between classical and relational psychoanalysis, or by appeals to the military or the religious. We are not “in the trenches” and we do not share a doctrine of faith, so how is desire of the individual reconciled against the group needs, the group identity?

Of the many reasons candidates are drawn into psychoanalytic training is the drive to repair. Many seek out training as part of a scheme to repair themselves and some enter with a hope to repair the profession. Therefore, psychoanalysis, in its institutional form, must embody this particular ethic of abiding by the ways in which we each have absolutely individual desires. No one training will fit all, and there is no one way of doing psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis must ceaselessly evaluate the ways it slips into a super-egoic vision of itself, its training, its cure, and its possibilities within contemporary society. Progress for Freud would never be human perfection, technological mastery, or a state of angelic bliss, but rather an accommodation by us, and eventually by civilization on the whole, to the heterogeneity and multiplicity inherent in a psychoanalytic idea of desire. As he says with his usual eloquence, “everyone must find out for himself in what particular fashion he can be saved”.<sup>1</sup> Does the analytic institution make room for this possibility or work against it? This is a real question for us.

<sup>1</sup>Hanna Segal described in parallel the aims of psychoanalytic training and the aims of religious salvation in a 2001 interview with Daniel Pick: “You know we are in a Messianic Society. We are always expecting the new generation—Jesus—all analysts are obsessed with training. All splits, all differences eventually revolve around training. What kind of analysis, what kind of supervision, what kind of training, how long, how many times a week? We are over-devoted to training.”

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In this issue of *The Candidate Connection*, several authors ask what psychoanalysis has to say about happiness, how the two relate, as well as how happiness relates to reality. Sergio Benvenuto carefully questions those who would seek to demonstrate a relationship between gross domestic product, or per capita income, and mean happiness. By what standard do we judge that someone is happy? He traces the influences of the economic and the religious in asking questions of happiness. Vaia Tsolas traces her relation to happiness from *εὐτυχία* to a more accessible, American concept. She also considers the impact of termination on happiness and generativity.

Sibel Halfon takes up Bela Tarr's most recent film, *The Turin Horse*, as an example of the use of repetitiveness in psychoanalysis to turn the patient from "abject misery to creative misery." Finally, Ezra Feinberg takes up Freud's questions about jokes and their relationship to the unconscious and adds questions about the value of the "unserious" to psychoanalytic practice and to the profession.

At a time in history where the ideal of instant gratification is more the norm than the exception, the slow march to neurotic unhappiness that Freud promised seems like a tired joke. Instead, it is argued that psychoanalysis may

need to function as civilization's reminder of inescapable, painful repetitions and the overwhelming intensity of unchecked pleasure. This is the helpful plague we bring.

Jubilantly,

The Editors

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## ON HAPPINESS

### Happiness for the Dismal Science

By Sergio Benvenuto

*Sergio Benvenuto is a researcher in psychology and philosophy at the Italian Research Council (CNR) in Rome, Italy, a psychoanalyst, and president of ISAP (Institute for Advanced Studies in Psychoanalysis). He is the founder and co-editor of the semiannual "European Journal of Psychoanalysis", published since 1995. He is a contributor to many cultural journals such as Telos, Lettre Internationale (French, Spanish, Hungarian, Rumanian and Italian editions), Texte, RISS, Journal for Lacanian Studies, L'évolution psychiatrique, and Cliniques Méditerranéennes. He has translated into Italian Jacques Lacan's Séminaire XX:Encore. His books and papers include Perversioni. Sessualità, etica, psicoanalisi (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2005); German tr. Perversionen. Sexualität, Ethik und Psychoanalyse (Wien: Turia + Kant, 2009); Mehta Lacana, in Russian (Sankt Peterburg: Aleteija, 2006); "Wittgenstein and Lacan Reading Freud", Journal for Lacanian Studies, vol. 4, nr. 1, 2006, pp. 99-120; "Perversion and charity: an ethical approach," in D. Nobus & L. Downing eds., Perversion. Psychoanalytic Perspectives / Perspectives on Psychoanalysis (London: Karnac, 2006, pp. 59-78); Accidia. La passione dell'indifferenza (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), Hungarian, Turkish and Spanish editions in press; with A. Molino, In Freud's Track's (New York: Aronson, 2008); La gelosia (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011).*

*Laise nous masche*  
(Happiness gnaws at us)  
(Montaigne 1580)

It is striking that economists today play the leading role in interdisciplinary studies on happiness. In the 20th century, economics had dealt with the pure analysis of exchange value, and not of use-value. In other words, it was only concerned with "preferences revealed" through the market, and not with the ultimate reasons for these realized preferences. Economists had only to deal with the *means* to reach *ultimate ends* which, according to Utilitarianism—the hegemonic philosophy in economics—are pleasure, happiness, satisfaction and individual well-being (terms considered more or less synonymous by Utilitarianists). The principle set out in the American Constitution on the right to the pursuit of happiness, albeit inspired by Utilitarianism, is tautologic, since for Utilitarianists human beings *by their very essence* can do nothing other than to pursue happiness. To aim for non-happiness or unhappiness is not something human for Utilitarianists, for whom we are all *forced* into happiness, that is to utility. By contrast, as we shall see, this aim is plausible for those I shall call *anti-eudaimonologists* (from

*eudaimonia*), for whom human beings do not seek happiness, but essentially are driven by enjoyment. For Utilitarianism, utility consists of the subjective sensations which make up the pleasures of life or allow us to avoid displeasure. Precisely because political economics limited itself to trade and exchange, it neglected pleasure, and thus drew the epithet "dismal science" given to it by Carlyle.

In recent decades, however, this dismal science—excited by its theoretical and practical failures—has increasingly sought to invest directly in the aims (life's pleasures) as well as in the means (economic exchange), even at the risk of shifting the discipline's very nature. But with these broadened horizons, should we not fear an imperialism of *homo economicus* logic, which would turn even the meaning of our lives into an economic calculation? I shall try here to assess the philosophical core of this shift in economics.

Today many economists question *why* we buy one thing over another and wonder *what we should buy* to feel better. Of course, deep down many researchers and professors are motivated to sell politicians what they call Evidence Based Politics: if they were to discover what makes people globally happier or less

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unhappy, they could supply politicians with an effective recipe for maximizing the satisfaction of their voters—and assuring their re-election. By increasing the Gross National Happiness, politics would leave the uncertainty of ideologies to become a technocracy formed by expert ‘eudaimonocrats’.

So, alongside traditional rankings which classify countries according to GDP, we now have others that classify them according to “quality of life”, “national well-being”, “life satisfaction” and so on. Charts comparing happiness in different countries are available; the one below correlates the level of happiness to the per capita national income in each country. But, does such a map make any scientific sense, or any sense at all? Does it grasp something real to put into relation? Is it not a pure artifact of eudaimonology?

In fact, this map is the product of a very simplistic calculation of happiness: individuals in a sample are asked: “How happy do you consider yourself on a scale of 1 to 3?” All you obtain in this way is what people *say* about their being happy or not, not whether they *really are* happy or unhappy. But economists usually have an empiricist philosophical background, for which what one feels is *ipso facto* equivalent to what one is; and one must take for granted that an individual says what he truly feels. *Feeling* happy is *being* happy, or more, *believing* to be happy *is* to be happy; in the same way that *being* in love is just *feeling* in love, even if the beloved one is Jack the Ripper. If a prisoner at Auschwitz were to reply “I am quite happy”, no one has the right to tell him “oh no, you *must be* unhappy in a Nazi concentration camp!” Even Primo Levi (1958) described “a good day” in Auschwitz! Any question about the essence of happiness is sidestepped, assuming that subjects always know what they’re talking about when they say “I’m happy rank 3” or “I’m unhappy rank 1”. For utilitarian empiricism appearance and essence coincide.

This utilitarianist philosophy banishes any cultural relativism: the concept of happiness is considered identical in all cultures. For this reason, the utilitarianist finds it difficult to explain, for example, why on average the French describe themselves as unhappier than Americans do, even though ‘quality of life’ indicators are higher for France than they are for the US. This is due to the fact that for Americans *stating their happiness* is a narcissistic duty more important than it is for the French, who have basically absorbed the vision of Baudelaire, for whom happiness is something vulgar, for ordinary people. Terms such as ‘happiness’ have various meanings in different cultures; ‘*happiness*’ is not the same as ‘*bonheur*’. What changes above all is the value each culture gives to *the project* or *the duty* of being happy. These differences might explain why the inhabitants of Nigeria and Tanzania claim to be happier than those of Japan and Finland.

However coarse this type of research may be philosophically, some interesting correlations do emerge. Let us take the map shown here correlating happiness and national income; it is striking that the countries on the diagonal line, bottom left to top right, are all culturally Judeo-Christian and Western: a sign that in these countries, in contrast to others, income and claims of

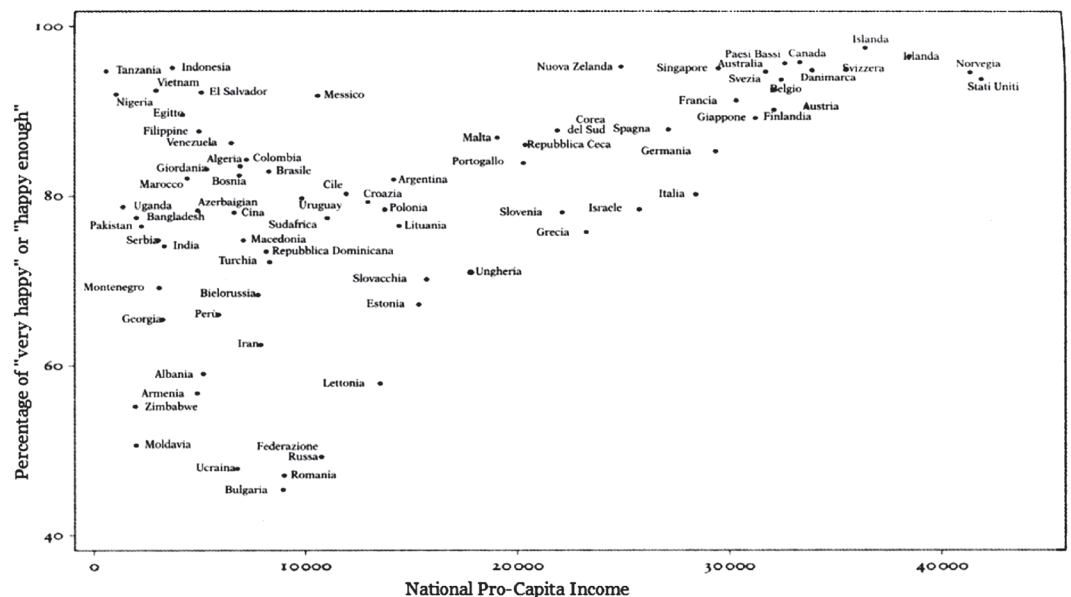
happiness are closely related factors. Age, on the other hand, is not a significant factor to predict whether someone will state his happiness or unhappiness, while employment and love are: *single* and *unemployed* women and men, even if wealthy, declare themselves unhappier than average. For most people everywhere, the crucial condition for enjoying one’s own existence is to work and be loved.

‘Eudaimonology’ thought it had made a landmark discovery in 1974 when it formulated “The Easterlin Paradox”, which stated:

- There is within a single country a low correlation between income and happiness.
- The richest countries are not necessarily the happiest.
- Variations in people’s happiness seem to depend very little on variations in income and wealth.

In the last 40 years, pro capita GNP in Western countries has dramatically increased, without any parallel increase in the average rate of individual happiness. Between 1994 and 2005 there was no increase in ‘happiness’ among the Chinese, though for the period in question the per capita income in China rose by 150%—confirmation of the old saying that “money doesn’t buy happiness”.

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Yet Eudaimonologists—usually ‘liberal’ thinkers—often forget to stress the point that even the huge increase in both public spending and leisure time in the second half of the 20th century did not produce any notable variations in people’s rates of happiness. Note that this ‘paradox’ (but why paradox?), according to which the economics of happiness is not correlated to economics proper, is perceived by specialists as a great achievement of economics applied to happiness.

Instead, recent research—most probably inspired by social-democratic wishes—has tried to show that a correlation exists between lesser economic equality and higher malaise in a country.

***For most people everywhere, the crucial condition for enjoying one’s own existence is to work and be loved.***

Wilkinson & Pickett (2009) showed that wealthy but less egalitarian countries (above all the USA, followed by the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Israel) register more mental health problems, a higher use of drugs, lower life expectancy, more obesity, lower scholastic performance, higher teenage and out-of-wedlock pregnancies, more violence, more incarcerations and punishment, and lower social mobility compared to more egalitarian countries (like Japan and the Scandinavian nations). Moral of the story: everyone, even the wealthy, is damaged by inequality.

The trouble is rather that while Eudaimonologists are usually centre-left, the data they collect maliciously support a paternalistic and conservative vision. For example, it appears that a stable family life, especially marriage (Oswald 2004) and religious faith, contribute to happiness, while divorce tears it apart. (The question then is: are a stable family, marriage and faith in God *causes* for being/saying-to-be happy or its *effects*? And in general, is not an inborn disposition towards happiness the primary cause of a tranquil and “conformist” life, more than any political or social policymaking? Were this the case, the importance of politics in our lives would have to be reassessed. One might raise

the question: up to what point does a married person in a stable, church-going family feel *obliged* to say to herself that she is happy?)

The debate among both economists and ‘psychologists of the economy’ has focused on these two rival approaches. The Utilitarianist approach derives from philosophical empiricism and finds in Daniel Kahneman one of its most prestigious representatives. In this perspective, happiness is always *what I feel in the present*, and can be measured both by explicit questions (such as: “how do you feel right *now* about the concert you *just* heard?”) and perhaps by a fMRI to verify the activation of the cerebral centres of

happiness. The Eudaimonistic approach, whose main representative is Amartya Sen, refers to the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia*. This criterion is no longer correlated to the present-presence of each individual life experience, but to what Sen calls *capabilities*, i.e. to the *possibility* or *power* each of us has to do satisfying things or ‘find fulfillment’. An Auschwitz prisoner might say “I’m happy!”, but his *capabilities* are extremely limited. Eudaimonism is an ‘economics with a humane face’, which starts from this question: “If people living in totalitarian and despotic regimes declare themselves happier than those living in free and tolerant societies, should we then conclude that the former societies are better than the latter?” The eudaimonistic answer is no. We cannot consider a society of “happy slaves” happy. In short, the Eudaimonists would like to reestablish a certain morality of happiness and make it socially congruent and shareable. So, their philosophical gamble consists in saying that while economics has so far been individualistic, it needs to become intersubjective, relational. The term *relational* (which gives *relativism* its deepest meaning) is very much in favor today among the Western intelligentsia. And, indeed, there is a great insistence on the importance of ‘relational goods’, like friendship, good

neighborly relations, mutual empathy, and so on.

Then, we have a third approach, well described by the title of Paul Ormerod’s (2007) article: *Against Happiness*, which aims to demolish eudaimonology as a whole: “Public expenditure, leisure time, crime, gender, inequality, income inequality—none of these are in any way correlated with measures of happiness over time [...] So one could conclude either that the attempt to improve the human lot by social and economic policy is futile or the data is not telling us anything of value.”

It is to this trend of “anti-happiness” that psychoanalysis essentially belongs. In fact, happiness or less unhappiness were never acknowledged as either a focus or goal of analysis by any of the main psychoanalytic currents. Basically, all psychoanalysts have always believed in what Freud wrote—even if he wrote it before he invented psychoanalysis: “...[Y]ou will be able to convince yourself that much will be gained if we succeed in transforming your hysterical misery into common unhappiness. With a mental life that has been restored to health, you will be better around against that unhappiness”. Thus the aim of analysis is neither to achieve the patient’s happiness, nor to simply get rid of the neurotic misery (*Elend*), but rather to transform the misery into an unhappiness against which one could be defended! Analysis seemingly aims for a coexistence with an unhappiness deprived of the (neurotic) misery, with a sort of “rich” unhappiness.

Freud later (1932) enunciated the task of analysis as “*Wo es war, soll ich werden*”—a sentence around which translators and interpreters have scuffled. Some have interpreted it to mean that one should strengthen the ego (*ich*), while others—who would translate it as “Where it was, there I should become”—think instead that the subject (*I*) should reach the place of unconscious itself. But no matter which interpretation, the aim of analysis is not at a feeling of happiness, but rather at a reversal of position between *ego* and *it*, between the self and the Other, at something on the order of the subjective structure.

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An analogous contempt for “the happy society issue” animates so-called ‘post-modernist’ thinkers inspired by post-structuralism. The very concept of *happiness* is discredited as ‘ideological’ in the Marxist sense, insofar as it is identified with the acquisition or possession of material or immaterial goods (such as power, prestige, love, truth, etc.). This cultural nebula pursues the Dionysian vocation of Nietzsche: what matters is not *happiness* (always quoted in English) but *jouissance* (often quoted in French). The paradigm of the “wo/man of enjoyment” is the hero who takes enjoyment in doing battle for her Cause, not to be confounded with ‘the causes’ of happiness in the Utilitarian sense. Che Guevara, by going to Bolivia and confronting death, did not pursue his ‘happiness’, but rather he enjoyed his Cause. At the core of post-modernist, including Marxist, philosophies there is a certain aristocratic contempt for “goods for the masses”. Some eudaimonologists say that “happiness is earning a hundred dollars more than your brother-in-law”, which confirms the terrible opinion anti-happy-ists have of “the economics of happiness”: that it calculates not enjoyment but the levels of envy within a community. For the post-modernists, instead, their reference is not my neighbor who aspires to earning a hundred dollars more, but heroes like Gandhi or Aung San Suu Kyi, who do not seek happiness, but enjoy their commitment to win or die. Eudaimonologists, by focusing on the possible causes for happiness, lose sight of the fact that each of us, working for one’s own Cause, establishes one’s own criteria of “a life good enough”.

Essentially, both the utilitarianist and eudaimonistic approaches start from an undeclared and unquestioned assumption: that both individual and collective forms of happiness (experienced or planned) are congruent and homogeneous. A happy society would be one where the mean population is happier than the mean in other societies. In other words, happiness is not bound to contrasting *projects for a good life*. Yet, among a country’s citizens there is no general consensus on the collective or individual criteria for “happiness” or a “good and beautiful life”. The divergence in ways to “try to live well” is always removed from the analytic space of the eudaimonologists, who unwittingly adopt a totalitarian image of society, that of a nation with no conflict over what meaning to give to our lives. It is taken for granted that the well-being of societies is commensurate to individual well-being, and that the essential reasons for being happy or unhappy are the same for everyone. This research—even when it appeals to Aristotelian or phenomenological concepts—scotomizes the conflict between the criteria of a life good enough, a discordance which is in fact at the core of global political and ethical conflicts. Whether by force or persuasion, every human being fights alongside others in order to impose on others still his own *project of happiness*.

And finally, the anti-eudaimonologists repeat over and over that any ideal of happiness is an illusion, an “ideology”. But the fact remains that, when asked, most people around the world would

declare themselves happy. In fact, the belief in a fundamental unhappiness underlying the human condition is confined to an intellectual “dandy” élite with a humanistic background; in short, to claim the impossibility of happiness is a sign of social distinction, a highbrow thing. But even if most people were to admit to have failed in their search for happiness, the fact remains that every human being—even anti-eudaimologists—can do nothing less than to adopt any strategy necessary to enjoy a “life good enough”. And even if reaching happiness may be impossible, the desire to live well enough is still necessary.

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## Who Are My Daemons?

By Vaia Tsolas

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*of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and an assistant clinical professor at City University. Dr. Tsolas was born in Greece and immigrated to the USA in her adult life. Being a foreigner herself, Dr. Tsolas has focused her work on issues of Otherness on the level of the body as well as of the societal. She has presented in the USA and abroad. She is in private practice in NYC.*

I always had a problem with the word ‘happiness.’ Maybe it is my Greekness, maybe it is my overvaluation of the negative as deeper and more meaningful. You don’t just use “*Eftihia*,” the modern Greek word for happiness, at the drop of a hat. During the first few years after my immigration, I often found myself bothered when I heard the word happiness

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being thrown around with such American ease, used as if it were just like any other word. Perhaps, it is just that happiness is not Greek to me!

According to the dictionary, in ancient Greek the word *Eudaimonia* or *eudaemonia* is the Greek word most commonly translated as happiness. “Eudaimonia,” “aretē”, (most often translated as “virtue” or “excellence”), and “phronesis”, (often translated as “practical or moral wisdom”) are central concepts in Aristotelian ethics. In Aristotle’s works, eudaimonia was used as a term for the highest human good; virtue of character (*ethikē aretē*) and happiness (eudaimonia) number among the central preoccupations of ancient ethics. Aristotle, unlike the Stoics, takes virtue and its exercise to be the most important constituent of eudaimonia, but nonetheless acknowledges

Well! Fred Pine once said that ‘psychoanalytic training is the only training where you spend years and years of hard work and over \$120k in order to lower your fees after you graduate.’ So, certainly it is not our wish to advance ourselves financially. There is some other wish that drives one to want to go through analytic training, some other burning desire that helps us go through the hardship of devoting more than 15 hours a week in training (plus the financial burden)! We could say we recognize this desire in each other, that it makes us similar in some way, that it helps us to form a cohesive group; the group of shrinks, of psychoanalysts. But what is this desire? What do we believe in? Apparently, if it was a demand for satisfaction, we would have chosen a different profession.

***Aristotle, unlike the Stoics, takes virtue and its exercise to be the most important constituent of eudaimonia, but nonetheless acknowledges the importance of external goods such as health, wealth, and beauty. The Stoics, on the other hand, make virtue necessary and sufficient for eudaimonia, but deny the necessity of external goods.***

the importance of external goods such as health, wealth, and beauty. The Stoics, on the other hand, make virtue necessary and sufficient for eudaimonia, but deny the necessity of external goods.

The necessity of external goods? Well, I am not only a Greek, I am also a psychoanalytic candidate who was just approved for graduation. Given my hangups with happiness, it makes it even more complex for me to consider believing that one could possess ‘the highest human good’ during, or even more, after psychoanalytic training. I guess virtue is one of the goods one strives to craft in one’s personal analysis, but what would the necessity of external goods be? What are the external goods in psychoanalytic training and in one’s life as an analyst? In other words, what does the analyst in training and the analyst in general believe in? That after one’s hard work there is fulfillment, satisfaction?

A couple of weeks ago my advisor asked me how things were going. “How is it going with your analysis, supervision, classes?” he asked.

I replied, “I am happy with my analysis.” “I am happy with my supervisors.” “I am happy with my training.”

But as I spoke, I thought to myself, ‘What am I saying?’

Am I really happy? Is this a reaction formation or another wave of idealization defending against the deeply ambivalent, angry, hungry, unsatisfied infant at the frustrating, depriving breast, and/or a denial of what this breast is...all the hierarchical, authoritarian, rigidified structures of our institutes and societies? Has my analysis changed my Greek origins and made me into an obedient, good citizen? Are the ‘external goods’ I got through training enough to dupe me into qualifying my experience as being ‘satisfied’ or ‘happy with.’ As I hinted,

the last thing I would want is to lose is my Greekness; so I consulted with a Greek friend and colleague who is also on the verge of graduation from a psychoanalytic institute in Greece.

“I am presenting my final case this month, I can’t sit down and reflect on my experience at the moment, but I am sending my thoughts about Eros, happiness and politics,” she said. It is an interesting selection of topics, I thought, to say the least.

Here is some of what she wrote to me:

“The question “what is Eros” is frequently posed. It’s true that in the Greek language Eros is not love. And, moreover, in the Symposium, “love” is faced with rejection—the word love is used while describing the way a slave loves (agapa) his master. There is confusion since there is not a different word to render the meanings Love and Eros, neither in English nor in any other language in which psychoanalytic theory has been expressed.

Transference, an integral part of psychoanalysis, is a love relationship. According to Freud, our theory about Eros and Love is very critical to the clinics. Psychoanalytic success, measured by any psychoanalytic criterion, demands the development of a transference neurosis. Freud’s discovery that the transference feelings of his patients contained psychic energy that could be canalized in the service of a treatment procedure that aimed at insight is consistent with the platonic use of the need for the winged charioteer to control the winged steeds in the second platonic dialogue, which is centered in Eros, “Phaedrus.” According to the Freudian theory, the transference passion could be subjected to analysis because it is based on the refinding of infantile love objects and thereupon transference must be largely resolved by interpretation. The intention is to permit the subject’s Eros to rise from the

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transference and be pressed into the service of bringing about intrapsychic change. This Freudian thought confirms Plato's original insight into the plasticity of Eros.

Someone's Eros is going through some stages of transformation: Eros for justice, politics, philosophy and beauty...."

These thoughts left me wondering why she wrote about Eros and why she experienced such a powerful need to believe in the transformative powers of Eros in the final days of her training, especially when she is witnessing, firsthand, the agony of our country.

How can there possibly be this Eros for training, for becoming an analyst, in an era where, for my friend, her country is collapsing, but also for all of us, we live in an era where you often hear that psychoanalysis is dying or that it is dead? Can it be possible? Is Eros what we absolutely need to believe in? Do we, like with transference love, hope that despite our various transferences to the psychoanalytic institute, our longings and infantile yearning, that it is precisely this that could be transformed, channeled into an appetite for life, into Eros? And in more general terms, is Eros possible at these times in which fathers everywhere are on the decline, failing to secure us, failing to guarantee us a future, failing to provide us with some enduring sense of stability

and going on being? Does this decline pose an impasse for the development of transference and channeling of desire?

Kristeva says, "I will come back to the 'need to believe,' that narcotic that makes living easier, for—happy infantile and amorous trauma—it is the foundation of our capacity to be...*speaking beings*."

***Is this need to believe, this need to be duped, to be in love, to be in Eros—not agape—something that we can rediscover in the course of our training; and, perhaps even more fundamentally, is Eros one of the basic ingredients in the formation of an analyst?***

Was my spontaneous response to my advisor actually, in some very meaningful way not a defensive response to the call of the Other who demands satisfaction, but rather my desire to believe in training, to believe in psychoanalysis? Is this need to believe, this need to be duped, to be in love, to be in Eros—not agape—something that we can rediscover in the course of our training; and, perhaps even more fundamentally, is Eros one of the basic ingredients in the formation of an analyst? Well! Being done with the training, I am also at the termination phase with my training analysis at the moment. If there is one thing I can say with certainty, it is that life feels much more fragile than I have ever experienced. Fragile indeed, but

precisely because of its fragility, life also feels more precious. Last night, I had the dream that I was transferred a fertilized egg and that I was pregnant. I went shopping for the baby feeling so happy, but also afraid that shopping was premature and that the egg might not stick. I woke up with the feeling of how

fragile my pregnancy was, but also happy...Happy with the thought that I was pregnant. Here once again happiness emerges, this time as an anxious anticipation of something new that is about to happen!

Is this fertilized egg what I gathered during training? My formation as an analyst? If it is, I would like to believe that this pregnancy is a kind of giving birth to myself as an analyst, and my hope that it would last...that it would stick! Without having the analytic Fathers though, in the same way as they used function as guarantors of training, my new identity feels as if it is premature and therefore fragile. Fragile, but also precious because that same lack of guarantee makes it my very own analytic space. ❖

## The Turin Horse: From Abject Misery Towards Melancholic Beauty

By Sibel Halfon

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Patients who come to psychoanalysis do not simply express a need for relief from one symptom or the other but talk about a way of life that always ends up in suffering. They question why they repeat the same patterns over and over again despite the unhappiness they bear, and why they can't prevent these acts, even if they are aware of them. Turin Horse, Bela Tarr's last movie, is concerned with such infernal misery and repetition. The film cares little about narrating a story that concerns the source

or the reasons behind this destined unhappiness but instead powerfully evokes a state of morbid misery waiting to be experienced.

The movie starts with an introductory voice-over about an incident in Turin that reportedly led to Friedrich Nietzsche's final breakdown into madness. Nietzsche reportedly saw a horse beaten by its owner for refusing to move and he started to weep while pronouncing the words "Mutter ich bin dumm"/

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“Mother, I am stupid”. The voiceover reports that no one seems to know what has happened to that horse while Tarr insinuates that we are watching that horse’s driver and his daughter who live in a stone hut with no electricity, on a remote barren land, suffering from a howling, relentless, omniscient storm that masks any sunlight.

***This kind of transformation of repetitive forms, from exact deadly repetitions towards sublimated forms of representation, from abject misery towards a creative misery, is the model of change in psychoanalysis.***

The lives of the father and the daughter are fixed on a few repetitive routines that involve waking up at the same time, with the same agonized look, dressing, undressing and dressing again, one layer over another, always in the same order, drinking 2 shots of palinka (Hungarian fruit brandy) for breakfast and eating one potato that they peel and smash with their hands like animals. They continue to carry out the same mundane tasks over the course of six days, such as drawing water from the well, washing the dishes or simply staring out the window, into the nothingness, barely exchanging any words. Their dreary routine gets even more minimal when the driver’s horse first refuses to pull the wagon and then stops eating.

The film is concerned with carefully detailing the repetitive acts of the characters as the audience is faced with the “perpetual recurrence of the same thing” (Freud, 1920). These repetitions, far from bringing any happiness or joy to the characters, in fact feel like a “repetition” (Marucco, 2007), a request for help, but there is no one to respond to these silent cries.

Throughout the movie one asks for a break in these deadly repetitions; something to put an end to the reproduction of the same misery that will perhaps create a venue for change. In effect, there are two out of the ordinary incidents where other characters come into the narrative: A neighbor who has run out of palinka stops by for a refill and talks

extensively about the awful state of the world describing it as debased, destroyed, ruined, with nothing left to hold onto. The only other visitors are gypsies who come to steal water from the well, all of them insanely cheerful and cursing provocatively. As they ride off, one of the gypsies leaves the daughter with a religious book about defilement.

The presence of another figure beyond the father daughter dyad, a third, is essential to raise the unnamed, undated, and unexplicated repetitions to a higher level of representability (Loewald, 1971). Only then can they be used by the psyche in the service of difference. However, the visitors that Tarr introduces cannot function as a vital other that can imbue the father and daughter’s experience with emotion and meaning. Instead, they serve to bring further decay and impoverishment and the daughter discovers the next day that the well has run dry and the lantern has refused to stay lit. Even though the father and daughter attempt to escape soon after, the audience is not allowed to follow their escape. The camera remains static while they move out of the frame and return back with no explanation. The viewer is also forced into a state of permanent stillness unable to escape the “pure repetition”:

*... ‘pure’ repetition (commanded by the death drive, almost in the realm of the pre-psychic...) is expressed in a halted time that, through the succession of acts, constitutes a permanent repetition of an atemporal present. What is more, ‘pure’ repetition, that is only discharged either through acts or through the soma,...leads to the impoverishment of the psyche. Pure repetition slowly causes the silence of the representative capital, rendering it mute (Marucco, 2007, pg. 319).*

According to Green (2002), repetition, when operating under the death drive, is evidence of a failure of the “objectalizing” process, which is the ability to integrate affect and representation through an investment in object relations. What makes objectalization possible is a transference object whose psyche can be used to metabolize and transform projected unconscious messages which the subject is not yet able to do on his own.

Even though none of the characters within the movie can serve as this vital object, the movie itself establishes a very special relationship with the viewers who start to serve as the missing transference other. The audience is captivated by the slow perpetual camera work, as well as, the rapturously severe cinematography. Neither feels disconnected, nor alienated, from the movie itself. In contrast, the movie remains gripping and powerful, one can even say pleasurable, in the melancholic beauty that it evokes.

The expressive cinematography that goes beyond the narrative serves an objectalizing function, as the audience develops a deep emotional connection that lets them link up, represent and imagine throughout the movie. This is the work of Eros, which can transform the deadly repetitions into something bearable and ultimately gratifying.

This kind of transformation of repetitive forms, from exact deadly repetitions towards sublimated forms of representation, from abject misery towards a creative misery, is the model of change in psychoanalysis. The psychoanalyst, rather than attempting to offer a better destiny or healthier behavior, serves as a locus (much like the expressive elements in the Turin horse) where such transformations can occur.

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## Seriousness

By Ezra Feinberg, Psy.D.

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Is psychoanalysis too serious? In a 1994 article, the late analyst Peter Giovacchini writes that “psychoanalysis has been enveloped by an aura of seriousness.” He then recalls his initial meeting with his analytic supervisor, a “classical” Freudian. Giovacchini sat in complete silence for almost the entire session. Breaking the silence with only a few minutes remaining, the supervisor then uttered four ominous words: “psychoanalysis is serious business” (Giovacchini, 1990, p. 90). Is it? Has it always been? Adam Phillips recently criticized contemporary psychoanalysis for its “terrible and absurd institutionalized seriousness” (Phillips, 2006, p. xv). What would it mean for psychoanalysis to be less serious?

In a sense, psychoanalysis assumes we are never serious enough. We are always scattered or dispersed: “What the patient happens to say when he is saying what he wants to say, what we dream when we are wanting to sleep, how we fail when we are determined to succeed; this is what psychoanalysis, and of course not only psychoanalysis, wants us to attend to” (Phillips, 2006, page xiii). While this focus of attention is what makes an analyst an analyst, it is also what makes her a caricature. The stereotypical psychoanalyst reads too far into everything, makes psychic mountains out of molehills, and is, above all else, gravely serious. This “terrible seriousness” may contribute to contemporary psychoanalysis’ marginal position in the world of psychology—but that is another matter. The question is: What is so terrible about this seriousness? Patients must be taken seriously, received with serious listening and serious intent. Save for the occasional joke or humorous moment here and there the entire endeavor seemingly demands seriousness at every turn. And yet, perhaps the process requires non-seriousness as much as it requires seriousness.

According to the principles of the Freudian slip, meaning often occurs while we are concentrating on something else (John Lennon agrees: “Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans”). In being invited to “say whatever comes to mind” the patient is asked to scatter his thoughts by speaking out loud. The process of making meaning would seem to involve a mode of communicating that falls far outside the realm of seriousness. In analytic work, what has been obscured comes into view in fleeting moments, seemingly out of nowhere, much like a good joke. Christopher Bollas asserts that analytic work and comic work are essentially the same—the patient *slips* on a banana peel and falls *onto the couch* (Bollas, 1995). Slips often interrupt (and threaten to undo) seriousness. And that is where psychoanalysis comes in, taking seriously the non-serious, non-concentrated, scattered, dispersed moments. The serious couch breaks the non-serious fall. But the relationship is symbiotic: Without the (non-serious) fall the (serious) couch is useless. For all its seriousness it seems the endeavor of psychoanalysis has nothing to offer without cultivating non-seriousness in equal measure.

The steady shifts of unconscious positions (in the Kleinian sense) occur through unconscious transferences and projections, both outgoing and incoming and, mostly, in the complicated space known as intersubjectivity. Affect, mood, and psychological positions

envelop and disintegrate through deep psychic processes only fragments of which might be worked through in an analysis. To varying degrees we both analyst and patient are helpless in these shifts, as if blown about by the breeze (or wind or gust) of the unconscious. While an analysis can change the experience of the breeze, and in the best cases helps to steady us, Psychoanalysis does not seek to eradicate the unconscious, it merely brings aspects of it to light while most of it remains in its non-serious domain.

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## Interest-free Loans for Training

*Applications due May 1, 2012*

**The Candidate Assistance Fund** of the American Psychoanalytic Association provides loans up to \$5,000 to candidates training to be psychoanalysts. The loans are to be repaid within a maximum of 6 years. Currently, between 5 and 7 loans are made annually.

There are two criteria considered in approving a Candidate Assistance Fund loan:

- the need as evidenced by an applicant’s financial need.
- the ability to repay the loan as evidenced by the applicant’s overall financial health.

### Eligibility

- APsaA Candidate Members in good standing are eligible to apply to the Fund.
- Candidate Members must have completed one year of training.
- Financial need must be demonstrated.

### Application Procedure

Guidelines and applications are available in the Members Section of the APsaA website ([www.apsa.org](http://www.apsa.org)) or email Dean Stein, APsaA’s Executive Director, for an application form at [deankstein@apsa.org](mailto:deankstein@apsa.org).

### Application Deadline

Fund loan applications need to be received at the APsaA offices by May 1, 2012.



There is so much of psychoanalysis that is not serious, and this may be why its seriousness may be a problem. To be sure, the unconscious is not inherently comic or humorous, but it is inherently non-serious. What might this mean clinically? In no way should the clinician's level of seriousness be diminished in the consultation room. Everyone knows seriousness is at the heart of the work.

***In no way should the clinician's level of seriousness be diminished in the consultation room. Everyone knows seriousness is at the heart of the work. And yet the heart of the work contains so much that is anything but serious.***

And yet the heart of the work contains so much that is anything but serious.

The relationship in psychoanalysis seeks to be a transformative one. When we think of different kinds of non-psychoanalytic relationships that might be called transformative we find the most intimate love relationships: early parental objects and, later, our closest romantic partners, friends, relatives, and colleagues. Unconscious development, changes, and shifts occur through these relationships, and the psychoanalytic

relationship shares many properties with them. These relationships *take hold* unconsciously, outside the realm of seriousness. Intimacy does not require the focus of a furrowed brow. Instead this taking hold occurs through states that Bollas calls "deep play," where the material of one's unconscious, which come in the form of wishes, desires, instincts, and dreams, intertwine with an other.

The psychoanalytic relationship adds seriousness to this—the seriousness of prior training, observation, and considered reflection—and this makes the psychoanalytic relationship unique. Indeed, it may be seriousness that makes the psychoanalytic process psychoanalytic, setting it apart from these other transformative relationships. While seriousness may be crucial, seriousness is taking up too much space. The psychoanalytic endeavor proclaims the goal of making the unconscious

conscious: "where id was, there ego shall be." Much seriousness is required in this process. And yet understanding the non-seriousness of the work is as crucial as the seriousness it needs to begin with.

With Winnicott, the child's happiness hinges upon her ability to play—to create transitional spaces and objects, to negotiate reality through what might be playful or even funny or fun. Winnicott paired the transitions and potentials in childhood to the transitions and potentials in analysis. Feeling "better"—not just happier but perhaps safer, warmer, kinder, stronger, lighter, or healthier, to name just a handful of the infinite possibilities of "better"—hinges not just upon the transitional and potential space created by the patient through the analyst but also through the analyst's creation of space for herself in the work itself. The analyst's potentially creative and transitional use of the analytic space requires both seriousness and non-seriousness. We all know the importance of the safety of the analytic space, and although the balance may be yet another impossible one, safety will be compromised without weights on both sides of the seriousness question. ♦

The logo for the American Psychoanalytic Association (APSAA) is displayed in a large, stylized, grey font. The letters are bold and interconnected, with the 'A' and 'P' being particularly prominent.

AMERICAN PSYCHOANALYTIC ASSOCIATION

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