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The Empty Chair—A Cautionary Tale for the Young Analyst

Giuliana Galli Carminati[1,2], Federico Carminati[2]

[1]Seoul National University (Bundang Hospital), Seoul, Republic of Korea
[2]International Society of Multidisciplinary Psychoanalysis, Geneva, Switzerland
Email: giuliana.gallicarminati@gmail.com

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Abstract

This paper is based on our experience as psychoanalysts and the observation of our colleagues and our patients. We describe our view of the trajectory of the young psychoanalyst through the lens of our own experience and in the light of the concepts of desire and want or lack. We compare these concepts in Freud, Jung, and Lacan and describe how they accompany and influence the young therapist in his journey. In particular, we also analyze the meaning and the effects of the lack or absence of the analysand, both in the individual analysis, when the patient "misses" a session, and in group analysis, when one or more group members are absent during one session, leaving one or more empty chairs. We analyze these absences in terms of resistance but also as a possible "expression" of the group's psychical apparatus. We conclude with a vision of the relation analyst-analysand inspired by the work of the analyst Charles Baudouin, who has developed a synthesis between Jung and Freud.

Keywords

Psychoanalysis, Jung, Freud, Baudouin

1. Introduction

In this paper, through an imaginary journey following the psychoanalyst's career and aided by our observations of patients and colleagues, we try to make sense of the disillusionment and weariness we have often observed in our fellow practicians. In the second part of this paper, we suggest how these negative sentiments can be overcome by considering the human relation established between analysand and analyst.

The young analyst begins his[1] career in the search for presence and desire

[1]We use the masculine pronoun for simplicity, but we address this paper to therapists of all genders.

(Malcolm, 1982). The analyst and analysand are present in the same room (sometimes virtual since Covid). They are physically or informatically present to each other in a corporality (even virtual) that the analytical doxa would absurdly ignore it. The presence of the analysand is rewarding. This person for whom the analyst is "the one who knows," as Lacan said (Lacan, 1966), is the guarantee that we have made it, we have crossed over to the "other side of the mirror." (Gabbard & Ogden, 2009).

Indeed, it is impossible to imagine an analysis without the analysand. Even if…, but we'll talk about that later. If, for the analysand, the analyst is a blank canvas on which to project all the reflections of the kaleidoscope of transference, the analysand is the blank page on which the analyst hopes to write his story as a great healer. Especially in the beginning.

The description of the "resolutive interpretations" of the great masters has done more harm to analysts (and, by the way, their patients) than the myth of the gallant knight to teenage girls or easy Internet pornography to teenage boys. It creates unrealistic expectations and sows the seeds of great frustrations to come.

The other pole of the analyst's activity is desire. All analytical work is kneaded with desire. According to Freud, desire is the force, the *Trieb* (Freud, 1905), that animates the movement of our psyche. Desire is the inspiration of dreams, the royal road to the unconscious. Lacan also makes it a central element (Lacan & Miller, 1998), assigning to it the elusive nature of the desire for the Other. For Jung (Jung, 1969), desire is at the source of the individuation process, which must lead the individual to discover his true desires beyond social norms to access the totality of his being and enable the triumph of the Self.

For all these authors, the goal of psychoanalysis is to make subconscious desires or desires directed toward subconscious objects become manifest. And so, to our couches! The analyst must just set in motion the wheels of free association and interpretation, and sooner or later, all these desires will manifest themselves in the clarity of consciousness. That's the job! What can possibly go wrong?

2. Philosophical Wanderings

It is interesting to see analysts complain about the "positive scientists" for their "blind and limited" rationality, even though they are the true last descendants of Descartes. In an age where physicists are talking about quantum entanglement, the mysterious formal causes governing the world, non-local interactions beyond space and time, parallel universes, and elusive chaos, our analysts are still chasing the clear, distinct idea that will save the soul.

Here is Descartes:

> "I call clear that [perception] which is present and manifest to an attentive mind (menti attendenti praesens et aperta); […] and [I call] distinct, that which is so precise and different from all the others that it contains nothing in itself but that which obviously appears to the one who considers it prop-

erly (so separated from others and precise that it contains absolutely nothing in itself but that which is clear)." (Descartes, 1637)

Descartes means that reality becomes manifest to our senses through perceptions that appear to an attentive mind as clear and distinct.

One might think this describes the repressed's realization in a classic and classically successful analysis.

The problem is historical and epistemological at the same time. Freud was a man of the nineteenth who dreamed of seeing his friend Wilhelm Fliess produce a ponderous, very German, and very "neopositivist" treatise that would have provided the "rational" basis of his work, to make it *aere perennius* (more durable than bronze[2]). Fortunately for the history of human thought, Fliess failed him.

Dr. Fliess, the academician, the "serious" brother, went down in history only for having frustrated Freud's desire—no pun intended. For the rest, this otolaryngologist practicing in Berlin developed a pseudo-scientific theory of human biorhythms and a possible nasogenital connection that quickly passed into the *oubliette* of history—although it might be interesting to revisit his nasogenital theory in the light of neuroimaging.

And Freud, the dreamer, freed "counter his own will" from the "burden of proof" of his theories, continued his path by becoming the Copernicus of the soul (this often happens between brothers). By wanting to write the first volume of yet another treatise on neurology, he forever turned on its head the place of man in his own soul, opening a dark and bottomless abyss under his feet.

Freud's story reminds me[3] a bit of Marie Curie's one. A "very nineteenth-century" experimental physicist, serious to the point of heroism, she largely contributed to propelling the world into the era of quantum mechanics, electronics, and nuclear energy. Hailed everywhere as the great scientist and lady she was, she did not participate in the vertiginous developments that her discoveries were so much responsible for.

Of her, too, we can say what Lacan said of Freud, that she had not fully grasped what she had discovered. And this is far from being a limit. On the contrary: the work has far exceeded the creator. The fact that Moses could see the promised land but not enter it makes him even greater because, by arriving at the edge of his humanity, he allowed others to enter a new world.

But here, we have a significant difference between the work of Freud and that of Mrs. Curie. The hard sciences have developed a compact and powerful language that allows us to "liberate" ourselves from the author and his story to draw only the essence of his work.

The famous Italian mathematician of the Renaissance, Niccolò Tartaglia (1499 ca-1557), discovered in 1539 the solution of a particular form of algebraic equa-

[2]In the final Poem of Horace's third book of Odes, he acclaims that his words will outlive any structure made by man ("Exegi monumentum aere perennius," I built a monument more durable than bronze.)

[3]We use the first person because more direct in the writing, but we refer to both authors.

tions of the third degree. Wanting to communicate his discovery to his friend and illustrious colleague Gerolamo Cardano (1501-1576), he wrote to him:

Quando che 'l cubo con le cose appresso
se agguaglia à qualche numero discreto
trovan dui altri differenti in esso.
Dappoi terrai questo per consueto
che'l lor produtto, sempre sia eguale
al terzo cubo delle cose neto.
El residuo poi suo generale,
delli lor lati cubi ben sottratti
varrà la tua cosa principale.
Questi trovati, et non con passi tardi,
nel mille cinquecent' e quattro e trenta,
con fondamenti ben sald'e gagliardi,
nella città del mar'intorno centa.

With the promise not to tell anyone. From this, Cardano found the general solution of third-degree algebraic equations, a major advance in algebra.

Even for an Italian, this reading is not easy. The English translation of this poem, provided by the author, reads more or less:

When the cube with what comes after it	[$x^3 + px$]
equals a discrete number	[$=q$]
the difference between two terms is in it.	[$u - v = q$]
You will then consider this a habit	
that their product always be equal	[$u \cdot v =$]
to the precise third cube of these things.	[$(p/3)^3$]
Thereon, its general residue,	
of their cubic sides well subtracted	[$\sqrt[3]{u} - \sqrt[3]{v}$]
will be worth your main thing.	[$=x$]
These things found, and not slowly,	
in one thousand five hundred and four and thirty,	[in the year 1534]
with solid and healthy foundations,	
in the city by the sea of all-around enclosed.	[in Venice]

Today we say:

$$x^3 + px + q \Rightarrow x = \sqrt[3]{-\frac{q}{2} + \sqrt{\frac{q^2}{4} + \frac{p^3}{27}}} - \sqrt[3]{-\frac{q}{2} - \sqrt{\frac{q^2}{4} + \frac{p^3}{27}}}$$

and there is no reason, except literary, to remember Tartaglia's beautiful sonnet.

This is not possible for psychoanalysis, and therefore it is necessary to return again and again and again to the fathers (or sometimes "mothers" as in the cases of S. Spielerein, M. Klein, A. Freud, and many others) and their—more or less faithful—exegeses. There may be a deep reason behind this difference, but I don't think it has been fully understood yet. Lacan tried to express the concepts and

topoi of the psyche with formulas and operators. But it is not enough to describe concepts with "mathematical" symbols to formalize a theory.

Mathematics is a powerful tool, but only in the narrow realm of its laws.

3. From Presence to Want[4]

The lack of formalism in psychoanalysis described in the previous section adds an element of indetermination and doubt to the practice of psychoanalysis. Something is missing. A "canonical interpretation" providing a solid foundation is "wanting."

The essence of analysis is the search for what is hidden from us, what we lack. As analytical work progresses, want takes on a central role. The void settles at the center of the work, becoming its main subject.

We look for what we have hidden, but even more so, we seek what we do not know that is hidden. It's like looking for something without knowing what and groping in the dark. And yet the repressed is not what is not there, but rather what keeps coming back and, returning, escapes us. It is a light in the blind spot of our soul, of which we see only a disturbing reflection. Jung said our conscious mind is just a parrot repeating what the unconscious commands us. It is, therefore, the repressed who guides us like puppets. But then, who is looking for whom? Isn't the repressed in search of himself by playing with our consciousness as a simple instrument of his individuation?

In the analytical doxa, one must concede a minimum of free will to the self that explores its unconscious. But if the secret master of our actions is what we are supposed to be looking for, what chance do we have? The basic Freudian presupposition of a conscious self, anchored in the reality that, with the help of the analyst, strives to know itself, is undermined by both Jung and Lacan.

Jung, while advocating the triumph of the Self as "master and lord" of our soul, transforms the unconscious from a broom closet that must be emptied with the help of the analyst into a world of Platonic ideas—renamed archetypes—depositories of the true essence of the material and spiritual world. Despite his open monism, Jung puts "reality" in an otherworld—be it inside us—and thus he reintroduces a form of dualism, de *facto* if not *de jure.* If Freud had shown us the abyss under our feet, Jung pushes us outright into it. So, according to Jung, our consciousness lives *in the cave*, and our unconscious becomes the domain of reality that shapes our thoughts and gives meaning to our life. But even this unconscious no longer belongs to us. We are just ripples on the surface of the ocean of the collective unconscious. Yes, our objective is still to individualize, but we have very little left to accomplish the task. Our individuation is what we do with this wavelet, nothing more.

And if we thought it couldn't go worse, it was because we hadn't met Lacan

[4]In this paper we use the word "want" to indicate a lack or absence of something essential or desired. It is used to express a strong desire or a feeling of needing or wishing for something that is currently unavailable or not possessed, be it material possessions, emotional needs, opportunities, or personal aspirations.

yet. The Real escapes us completely. We are left with a game of mirrors between symbols that alienate us and an Imaginary that takes the place of reality as a collection of concepts that we can signify but not know in the real essence. Words alienate us from the concept they symbolize. When we learn the word "white," we can no longer see a white rose for what it is because we "have" to disassemble it into "white" and "rose." So, a white rose has something in common with white snow or a white wall, which is absurd.

Only the words "ambiguity" saves us. Ambiguity is the reason we can talk and understand each other because it allows us some wiggling space. If we had no "ambiguity" in our exchanges, we could not communicate. Perfect clarity would enclose each of us into a monistic universe and, in the end, drive us to folly.

At least with Jung, we possessed immutable concepts giving shape to our perception of reality, hiding somewhere in our unconscious that we share with the rest of the universe. They still are a *Trieb* in our soul, although they are no longer our desire, but are animated by an autonomous—and insatiable—*vis formandi*[5]. Even without a form of their own, and therefore unknowable "in themselves," archetypes can be glimpsed from the "shape" they give to things and our perception of them. With Lacan, we are immersed in an infernal spider's web between signifier and signified, with no access to the Real. This reality, like God's true face, is so terrifying that its manifestation is the very definition of trauma because we cannot symbolize it. For the rest, we are condemned to wander from metonymy to metaphor in a semantic hell. Humanity is a pregnant Semele of a chaotical Dionysus.

This is the process by which want penetrates the analytical process becoming its center. We only talk about what is not there. The analytical session is a moment that keeps repeating and hides from itself, like a moment of Aïon's cycle. It is only a point in time and space that misses everything: the past, the future, the places evoked outside the four walls of the cabinet, and the crowd of characters that the analyst and the analysand bring with them, who enter and leave as on a theater stage in the transfer-counter-transferential game.

The counterpart of this want that surrounds and inhabits us is desire. We are full of desire because we are invaded by want. According to Freud, desire is the main "engine" of our psychic life. It is the *Trieb*, the impulse that must be satisfied to regain the homeostasis of our psychic system. Freud teaches us that desire is, above all, conscious, and it can become unconscious by the action of repression. Here again, we have a neopositivist vision of the soul's mechanisms. We desire something or someone, and if our desire comes up against the prohibition of the Superego, we repress it. Still, it continues jeopardizing our "peace" because it can neither be elaborated (sublimated) nor satisfied as it is unconscious. And yet it is still there to haunt us like a faceless Erinyes. There is nothing more present than the action of the repressed. But the desire described by Freud is a nineteenth-century style concept. It can be finally discovered (if we have a good-enough analyst?) and thus satisfied or "sublimated." If only…

[5]Desire to give form.

And from there—you should have understood by now—it is only a downward slope. Desire is, of course, central for Jung as well. But it no longer comes from the "conscious reality" to be relegated to the "broom closet" of the soul, where it will beat at the door till the wise interpretation of the analyst liberates it. The desire for Jung comes from the depths of our collective soul. The archetypes give it form, and finally, it rises to the surface, molded and distorted by our complexes. This desire that emerges from the collective unconscious does not belong entirely to us. It does not in its form, since it depends on archetypes, nor in its content, because we share its origin with the countless souls that have sedimented in the collective unconscious. We are no longer actors of desire but its victims. The desiring subject is subject to desire.

But the coup de grace is, once again, Lacan. Deprived of contact with reality (the Real), beyond what the logos allows us to symbolize, desire can only turn on itself in the Imaginary. And so the desire for the "other" in the symbolic passes through the infinite mirror game of the semantic labyrinth and becomes the desire of the "Other." This Lacanian Other is unknowable because non-symbolic, or better, infinitely symbolic. It contains all the variations of our passion without revealing itself to us. And in the end, one can only desire his own desire, oneself, like Narcissus, whose fate we know. We could muse that it was Gödel himself to suggest this idea. Not only does the origin of desire escape us, but its very object becomes unknowable to our consciousness and unconscious soul. Such desire can only constantly shift from one thing to another, wandering without hope of satisfaction. It is no longer Sisyphus who, at the cost of setting existence before essence, we "must imagine happy" (Camus, 1985). It is downright Tantalus, whom no philosopher has dared to rehabilitate until now. The only fixed point is the desire itself, the "desire to be desiring," as Johnny Halliday (Goldman, 1986) said, but this only exacerbates the alienation.

4. The Empty Chair

I dare to propose that this "marauding path" through psychoanalytic thought, which I have carved as freely as arbitrarily, is paradigmatic of the analyst's career. At least, it was for me. And God only knows what will happen next.

It is when the analysand "stands us up," and we have an unexpected "free hour" of vertiginous freedom, a void in which we think of the analysand, wondering if he[6] thinks of us, sure (we hope?) that he too feels the same, like lovers stripping a daisy. Is this still a session? I sincerely believe so. And sometimes even a very fruitful one. This sudden absence is almost an irruption of the Lacanian Real, which forces the analysand and analyst to "imagine" the session. The ineffable then appears to us simply as unspoken, for surely, we will verbalize this "virtual session" next time we meet. It is not uncommon to hear the analysand tell us at the next session that he "talked in his head" during the entire virtual "session." The choice of restitution, i.e., of which part of the "silent discourse"

[6]I use the masculine to indicate an individual of any gender.

will be made explicit in the next session, is also an analytical work, almost a Jungian "transcendent function" where we allow the deep layers to emerge without the restrictions of space and time of the session, but still within the analytical framework. It is a two-stage analysis, one in absence and the other in presence.

Another frequent situation is the entry into an analysis of the "designated patient" in a connected structure, frequently an (extended) family. In a dysfunctional system, it is not uncommon for a particular individual to "carry the symptom" of the community. If we want to introduce a Bionian (Bion, 1961) element, the system shares a group psychic apparatus, which can be limited to a couple or extended to a multigenerational family. If this structure "gets sick" and a shared repressed element threatens the system's stability with its eternal return, a member can be designated as the "sick" to be treated. This mechanism is what Kaës calls the *phoric*[7] function (Kaës, 2013) of the one who "bears" the role given to him by the group. This "carrier of the symptom" sometimes has shamanic appearances, with obvious somatizations, often autoimmune or mysterious illnesses. Far from being the actual patient, this person is the only one who can both carry the weight of stigma for his family and work on himself, and not only. He is the "misfit," but also the one sent to save the others, like the migrants who cross the sea to discover a better world, the modern ἀποικοι[8]. The analysis of this individual turns very quickly into a group analysis without the group. We find ourselves working not only with an individual but with an entire group through the "spyglass" of only one of its representatives.

It happens in couples when the one who "can't take it anymore" starts the analytical path for himself but also for "the other" for whom "everything is fine, except your fantasies." It happens in families. "You know, everyone else is fine in our family. We really must help him" (i.e., the so-called sick). It's very reminiscent of the old joke of someone who goes to the psychiatrist with a sausage in each nostril and says, "I'm really worried about my brother because he's not doing well at this time." In these cases, I feel that I am also with "others" and that the person I have in front of me is an individual but also an inseparable part of the whole to whom he belongs and with whom I am working. The absence of others, all those (virtual) empty chairs in the cabinet, makes the work more intense because "there is only him" to save them.

When the partner takes too much importance in individual therapy, the doxa would like to refocus on the here and now of the analysand. "We are not here to analyze your husband. Tell me about yourself instead." But sometimes, the real analysand is not there, and the person in analysis asks us for tools to treat the one who really needs care. It is a "transitive" transfer (in its logical-mathematical[9] sense), with a relay in the middle. Simple resistance to overcome—"it's not me, it's the other"—or analysis "through an intermediary," highly heretical, but

[7]From the Latin verb *ferre*, to carry.

[8]Apoikos, literally deprived or distant from the homeland, the colonizers who founded the Greek cities beyond the sea.

[9]In mathematics we say that a binary relation (involving two elements) is transitive if a - b and b - c, implies a - c.

perhaps the only keystone of the system accessible to us. Shall we then focus the work on the analysand, the one we have in front of us, or accept to venture into a *terra incognita*, with no theoretical-doctrinaire or ethical compass? Already seeing the situation is difficult. As for managing it, it's something else. *Cave Narcissum*[10], in any case, because it is not Yalom who wants it.

The analyst can easily fall into the trap of his own narcissism, believing that he can "go beyond" the established practices—the so-called analytical framework. The danger is that the analyst is then led by his own feeling of "omnipotence" and by his "non-analyzed" core. Jung would say that the eternal archetype of the "healer" is constellated, and it is then more the analyst's desire and less the patient's interest that guides the process, with predictable results. The famed American analyst Irvin Yalom has pioneered the concept of "existential psychotherapy" (Yalom, 1980), in which the analyst establishes a relationship with the patient that is much more "symmetrical" and active than in classical analysis. Yalom describes his practice in a series of captivating fiction and clinical case study books, in which the analyst has behaviors that could be considered unthinkable and heretic "acting outs" from a Freudian vantage point. Yalom's techniques are very tempting, and he makes them seem easy, but he is a consumed and gifted master, and—in the author's humble opinion—his method is no place for beginners.

And in fact, this unorthodox "empty chair" analysis ends badly very often. We know of successful settlements, but no one tells us the story of migrants who perished in the waves or on a deserted beach in a faraway land.

The group, of course, wants its salvation, but not necessarily "this salvation," the one that the designated patient announces to it. The message brought back is that not only the "sick" has to heal, but the whole group must change, and this may be unacceptable. The designated patient is laden not only with the expectations but also with the resistance of the group, and sometimes the pressure is too great. *Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi dona nobis pacem*[11]. Often, we have sacrifice but not redemption. Or at least not right away. It is little comfort for the analyst to "lose" (sometimes symbolically, sometimes more literally) his analysand to know, as the months and years go by, that the "rest" of the group is better. Usually, the "end of the story" is never known, and the analyst is left wondering. But sometimes, this abrupt ending is the start of the mourning phase and, with it, the recovery of the energy "trapped" in the healing process. It can be a "happy ending in disguise."

It is in the group situation that the chairs are really empty. The absence is not supposed but explicitly marked by the empty chairs of those who should be there and are not. The interpretation of absence in an analytical group is a challenge for the analyst because, precisely, it is both a group and individual effect. After more than 20 years of group analysis, I still haven't figured out if we can tell

[10]Beware of Narcissus, in the sense of being wary of our own narcissism giving us a delusional self-confidence of being "above the rules."

[11]A Latin phrase commonly used in Christian liturgy that translates to: "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace."

when the group stops. Nor when it starts, because at the first session of a new group, I always have a strong impression of a "reunion" rather than a first acquaintance.

In any case, we can interpret the absence of one or more members as a group effect. The group offers us the possibility of a conscious presence "with variable geometry." In an individual analysis, we cannot "leave outside the door" a part of our individuality. In a group, this is possible, and it gives group analysis flexibility which is not possible in an individual analysis. Sometimes things that "cannot be said" when the whole group is there can be expressed when some of the phoric elements of the group are missing.

If someone in the group is the herald of the law and the Superego, "leaving him at home" can be a good way to say things that are otherwise "unspeakable." If the anima must express herself, staying "among girlfriends" is very practical. Obviously, these "girlfriends" can be of both sexes because what counts is the symbolic function. If the moment is serious and intense, maybe we can do without the "jester" of the group. But absence can also have a dark side, that of exclusion. The "scapegoat" can be morally ostracized but also "physically" excluded. He will indeed have excellent reasons not to come, but his chair will remain empty, nonetheless.

The possibility that the group must change its conscious part, I would almost say its "social mask," allows it to move forward more quickly. But it can also be a form of resistance. If the group's psychic pageantry "resists" a "revelation," "emptying" the group, or at least depriving it of the one who "can say it," may be a good strategy of refusal to advance in the psychoanalytic process.

But this lack can also be a powerful way to move the group forward because it creates fault zones, *clinamens*[12] that, by creating an imbalance, lead to a new group psychic homeostasis. It is perhaps one of the incarnations of the Lacanian Other, never attainable but always alluring. The great trap of homeostasis is that entropy is at its maximum, and further movement is impossible. If everyone had the "wisdom of cats," everything we see around us—civilization and its artifacts—and arguably ourselves would not exist because there would be no desire. Whether this would be a good or bad thing is another matter.

Admittedly, all this clashes with the desire of the group conductor, who naively would like to see everyone "work hard" and lay bare "the bowels" of the group. But again, *Cave Narcissum.* The group's work is mysterious, and the conductor's life is full of frustrations. The conductor sees the group "from the inside"; he is subject to its movements, and the name of his role is almost a cruel joke because it is he who is led by the group, stuck in a function that he can neither change nor fulfill.

[12]According to the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus, the world is composed of tiny, indivisible particles known as atoms, which move in a straight line through space. However, Epicurus proposed that occasionally, these atoms undergo a slight swerve or deviation from their regular straight-line paths that he calls *clinamen*. This deviation from their straight path allows atoms to interact and to create reality as we know it.

And what is the desire of the group? Following the Bionian triad, its desire starts with the need for the father-leader, who will bring the group toward peace and homeostasis. It is the dream of the little child who sleeps in the car's back seat while the parents travel at night. Nothing can happen to him because the parents are there. It is the powerful, benevolent father we glimpsed in our archetypal dreams. That paternal figure, leader of the horde that we desperately tried to project onto our real father, so desperately human and insufficient.

This desire continues with attack and flight, a pure expression of the desire for survival. It is the emergence of archetypes that haunt the group left by the father in a darkness without landmarks. But it is also the moment of individuation of the group through the challenges to overcome.

And it ends with the messianic hope that the next generation can save us. Of course, this is the place of coupling and sexual desire. But this is only the screen, the bait Nature has prepared for us to allow the "selfish gene" (Dawkins, 2016) to perpetuate itself in the offspring. Genuine desire is the desire for eternity "by proxy." And if we consider these phylogenetic roots of desire, may God protect us from a desire that can be satisfied and a lack that can be filled. That would be the end of the species. It is clear that, with these "innate" and partially unconscious instructions imparted to us by Nature, self-consciousness has put us in a very uncomfortable spot. Or not. We know nothing about the anxieties of jellyfish, and we are the only beings who can profit from psychoanalysis.

But to desire the next generation is to desire to generate desiring beings. It is desiring desire.

What if Lacan was right?

5. Pars Construens

So, all for that? Yes and no. Or rather, not at all but quite the contrary.

My "obedience"—always relative—is Baudouinian, and I keep an admiration intact for his Freudo-Jungian "great synthesis" (Baudouin, 1950). But I also believe that the importance of the intellectual and ethical edifice he built is not to have brought the "enemy brothers" under the same roof. Freudian and Jungian societies, straight in their boots, largely ignored Baudouin's work and his ecumenical message. Moreover, Baudouin did not include Lacan's thoughts, nor did he consider in his synthesis other voices such as Ferenczi, Adler, Mélanie Klein, or Anna Freud, to name but a few. Baudouin's message is to move the analysand to the center and store the tools in the corner of the room. An analysis is, first and foremost, "the encounter between two individuals" (Baudouin, 1950). Freud and Jung gave us tools, which we can use as necessary, but the priority is not theory but the patient. It sounds trivial, but it's paramount and so often forgotten. If neither Freud nor Jung work, Baudouin teaches us to use psychagogy, hypnosis, and autosuggestion—yes, you got it right, the Coué method[13] (Coué,

[13]The Coué Method (La Méthode Coué) is a self-help technique developed by French psychologist Emile Coué. It involves repeating positive affirmations to influence subconscious beliefs and improve well-being. By using autosuggestion, individuals aim to harness the power of the mind to enhance self-confidence and achieve desired outcomes.

1910)! As Dr. Susan Lowenstein (Barbara Streisand) says in The Prince of Tides: "Even Voodoo if it's to make her get better!" (Streisand, 1991).

Here is where we should make a fresh start. Once the theory is frustrated by want-desire, the fact remains that we are still there. And—most importantly—the patient is still there too. And he expects to be helped. A missionary doctor once told me that he had to operate on his first patient in a hut in the middle of the bush with the patient's parents, who looked at him with a mixture of hostility and mistrust. Panic. But he had to do it. He then heard a voice telling him, "Maybe you're a poor doctor, but you're the only one hundreds of miles around, so go for it."

We share with the patient this want that inhabits us, this desire that keeps shifting without peace. We are hurt as much as he is. But this does not mean the analyst must necessarily become symmetrical to the patient. As Baudouin said, the analysis is a path traveled together, in which we have chosen the role of guides (Baudouin, 1987). Of course, there will be interpretations of dreams and lapsus. Still, they will only be the milestones of a human journey, a part of the road made together by consoling ourselves of our shared condition—good memories for the future. We say in Italian "impara l'arte e mettila da parte" "learn your trade and put it aside."

To take this journey, we must abandon the idea of "healing" once and for all. But we can also see it as the chance to "heal ourselves," continuing the path that started with personal and didactic analysis and controls. Perhaps we can say of analysts what we say about airplane pilots, that there are no good pilots but only old pilots.

If we wish to follow in the footsteps of Aesculapius, Apollo's human son, we should remember that he has been saved from the womb of a dying mother murdered by his father. Doubtlessly a heavy lineage to claim. And that he shares this dubious origin with Dionysus, son of Zeus and the human Semele. Perhaps we really need both the son of the Logos and the lord of Chaos to cure our Dionysian confusion.

And individuation? Because this is a specific goal, a point of arrival. Do we have to abandon this concept too?

In mathematics, we speak of series when there is a succession of numbers. A series can be convergent if it tends to a specific number. But sometimes, there are series that converge, i.e., the terms of the series are confined to a smaller and smaller circle as the series progresses, with no number in the center of this circle. In this case, we define the series itself as the number we seek. Coming back to the analysis, individuation does exist, but it is no longer the endpoint of the process but the process itself.

At the cost of stretching our analogy and following Baudouin less in the letter than in the spirit, we dare to say that the doctrinaire essence must come second to the existence, here and now, of the analyst-analysand relationship.

Does this force us to imagine the analyst happy?

6. Conclusion

The observations and thoughts described in this article are not easy to summarize since they are more elements of a process than assertions or facts from which we can derive definitive conclusions. We can, nevertheless, suggest some possible avenues to prepare the psychoanalyst to face some of the frustrations and difficulties that will inevitably confront him. In particular, Baudouin's humanistic approach to placing the analyst-analysand relationship at the center of the analytic process should be emphasized when training analysts of whatever obedience.

It is also essential to preserve an empirical approach to psychoanalysis. As already expressed by Freud, whatever structure of the unconscious we base our practice on, it is but a model of an unknown and probably much more complex reality. Considering this, any doctrinaire approach risks missing a large part of the reality of the human condition. Ultimately, we should never forget that the final objective of any analysis is to take a journey that improves the analysand's—and hopefully the analyst's—quality of life.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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