תוכן העניינים

מסות

אחרי אוקטובר 2023
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דבר העורכת

שלומית ידלין־גדות

בשנה שעברה חוותה מדינה שלמה רגע שבו כל הבניותיה והבנותיה על עצמה והזולת קרסו; רגע של היעלמות והיאלמות הסובייקט הפרטי והחברתי והיכחדות רגעית של שפתו. השבעה באוקטובר, כרגע של פירוק וקריסה, הפך במובנים רבים להווה מתמשך שאינו חדל לקרות, שחוזר ונשנה במופעים שונים. לצד זאת, במונחי הזמן הכרונולוגי כבר חלפה יותר משנה. בכרך יב של **מארג** כלולים מאמרים שמתעדים את הסביבה המיידית של רגע הקריסה, רגע המפגש עם הממשי. מתוקף הקשר שבין הסובייקט והשפה כל מפגש עם הממשי הוא גם אירוע פוליטי, אפשרות לכונן מחדש את הסובייקט ואת אורחות חייו. המאמרים נוגעים ביגון ובשבר, ובטוויית אפשרויות כינון וקימה משנת אבל אל עולם שנותר לברוא אותו.

בספרו **מה שנותר מאושוויץ: הארכיון והעד (הומו סאקר** III) כתב אגמבן: "סמכותו של העד טמונה ביכולתו לדבר אך ורק בשם חוסר היכולת לדבר, כלומר בשם היותו סובייקט" (אגמבן 2007: 176). בהגותו, הקורבן ונותן העדות אינם מתכנסים, שכן השפה מעידה על סובייקט וסובייקטיביות, על מה שנגזל מהקורבן ונכחד בו ברגע אסונו. כפי שהקורבן והעד אינם מתכנסים, כך נותרים בעינם גם הפערים והיעדר ההתאמה בין העובדות לאמת, בין האימות להבנה. פערים אלה הם הלקונה, ההיעדר, המצוי בהכרח בלב העדות, כי הניצולים מעידים על מה שאי־אפשר להעיד עליו. אגמבן מוסיף שכדי שהתגובה לעדות תהיה משמעותית יש לחקור היעדר זה או יותר נכון, לנסות ולהאזין לו.

ייחודם של הכתבים המובאים כאן הוא בכך שכתבו אותם קלינאים שמעבירים שבועות ושנים במיקוד הווייתם במה שלא נאמר, אך שאפשר לשמוע אותו. כלולים כאן גם מאמרים שמעידים על המשכיות הזמן, על רגעים שקדמו לאוקטובר 2023 ועל רגעים שקיימים, בצו דחף החיים, גם במקביל לרגעי אסון.

עם קבלת השרביט והכבוד לערוך את **מארג**, אני מודה למשה ספירו שהגה ויצר את כתב העת וכיום עורך האנגלית בו. תודה גדולה לדנה אמיר, קודמתי בתפקיד, שנותרת חברת מערכת, שעמלה, יצרה, הנחתה, שימרה והעשירה את כתב העת, ושכל עשייתה מגלה ומוסיפה רבדים בשפה.

הכרך הזה מוקדש לכל נפגעי השבת השחורה והמלחמה שפרצה בעקבותיה; במיוחד לאחינו ולאחיותינו החטופים, שבלעדיהם גם אנחנו איננו אלא היעדר.

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"ALL LANGUAGES OVERLAP OR SPILL INTO EACH OTHER": ON REVENGE, PARDON AND FORGIVENESS

DANA AMIR

Political violence has long been a focus of psychoanalytic research, probing the relentlessly cyclical nature of violence and counter-violence. In the current essay, I propose adding another layer to the existing literature: the interactions between the *language* of the perpetrator and the victim. In hope of challenging the frequently documented dichotomy between positions of revenge and forgiveness, on the side of the victim, and positions of evil and remorse, on the side of the perpetrator, here I present a spectrum of encounters between victim and perpetrator through which to highlight four distinct types or positions of interaction.

The first position on this spectrum is the encounter between the perpetrator's *position of extreme evil*, driven by the intention to cause pain, accompanied by pleasure derived from the other's pain, and the victim's *position of revenge*, seeking to invert victim-perpetrator power relations and to inflict on the latter (or whoever represents them) the same injustice the perpetrator had originally inflicted on the victim him- or herself. In order to extend the usefulness of my ideas, I have introduced the concept of "hermetic narrative" in the larger context of previously-discussed notions regarding the various modes of traumatic testimony. I view hermetic narrative as a tight, saturated narrative, textual or spoken, impervious to any intervention by internal or external forces that seek to challenge its absoluteness. Thus, we generally find that the perpetrator's position of extreme evil and the victim's position of revenge are characterized by hermetic narrative.

Second, I mark the encounter between the perpetrator's *position of banal evil*, which aims to justify or screen acts committed in the name of some form of institutional law, and the victim's *position of false* (or *pseudo-*) *pardon*, a position mirroring that of the perpetrator. In this position, the victim accepts the "rules of the game", i.e., subjects her- or himself to the perpetrator's own erasure of personal responsibility, directly leading to the erasure or

delegitimization of the victim's natural (moral) claim to justice. I utilize the preceding concepts of extreme and banal evil essentially as these were originally developed in Hannah Arendt's classic work *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963). Her book caused scandal in so far as it portrayed Eichmann as a grey civil servant, a man who committed terrifying crimes against humanity 'simply' due to an absence of moral judgment and an inability to think from the perspective of the other, rather than due to sadistic passion or monstrous evil. The notion of the banality of evil denoted a new type of evil: unlike extreme evil, which is the outcome of an express wish and intention to injure others and cause pain, banal evil hides under the cloak of following orders and obeying the law. Evil thus construed appears both out in the open and transparent; it lends itself to being used as a platform for mass destruction while remaining, as it were, without an owner. Such evil enables those in the chain of command and those who execute it to declare themselves to have been no more than soldiers in the service of a law greater than themselves, in whose name they were merely fulfilling their duty. This type of evil can be passed off as acceptable, as logical, as the voice of the majority, and even as a mission. Unlike extreme evil, which originates in blatant sadism, banal evil has its roots in thoughtlessness. Arendt identified, therefore, a kind of violence that can be called *bureaucratic violence*, a form of evil that enables "ordinary" people to express unconscious aggression by means that keep them out of the reach of both punishment and guilt. There are circumstances, Arendt suggests, in which a bureaucracy can bring one to act in this way, granting access to the satisfaction of having power without the burden of guilt for exploiting and disseminating it, and without consciousness of the pleasure derived by exerting it.

At the same time, banal evil is expressed not only in concrete obedience to commands but also in the retrospective testimony about injustices done in the name of that obedience, a form of 'invalid' or pseudo-testimony is characterized by language that relies extensively upon deceptive screen mechanisms. The encounter between the position of banal evil, reflected in what I call *screen confession*, and the position of false pardon, is characterized by a kind of *pseudomutuality* through which one seemingly receives recognition. Such recognition is only apparent. In fact, this recognition is an entrapment within a false dialogical scene, one in which both the perpetrator's responsibility for his actions and the victim's ability to claim true recognition of the consequences of these actions exist on the surface only and, in fact, are being attacked below the surface.

The third position I have marked is an encounter between the perpetrator's position of guilt and atonement—where the perpetrator actually exculpates himself by conducting atonement rituals—and the victim's position of full pardon—which absolves the perpetrator from punishment but not from guilt. This position is a refined or sublimated version of the inversion of victim-perpetrator relations manifested by the victim's position of revenge.

The fourth category is the encounter between the perpetrator's position of remorse, an emotional-existential state that manifests true recognition of the injustice committed and its implications, and the victim's position of forgiveness, absolving the perpetrator not merely by enabling appropriate punishment but also by initiating a sense of true guilt, thereby exceeding all power relations or negotiations.

I refer to an interview with Michel Wieviorka (2005), wherein Jacques Derrida makes the bold and provocative distinction between *rituals of forgiveness* conducted in the service of some ulterior objective (reconciliation, redemption) which aim to quickly restore social, national, political, psychological normalcy, and his perception of *pure forgiveness,* the opposite of normalization, which does not seek to reinstate but rather to escape all forms of 'reasonable' continuity. Forgiveness, for Derrida, can only achieve significance if undertaken in a manner that attempts to consider what he calls the *unforgivable* (*ibid.*, p. 130). In a seemingly paradoxical manner, Derrida claims that forgiveness is not needed for acts that can be forgiven; indeed, if forgiveness was granted only to the forgivable, the very idea of forgiveness would disappear. True or deep forgiveness is always radical: it is only required or becomes meaningful where forgiveness is in a sense impossible. It is neither an economic, give-and-take event nor requires any specific conditions (for instance, the violator asking for forgiveness) in order to be achieved. Forgiveness is the opposite of all this: it is an experience that escapes the language of negotiation and is in that sense a non-negotiable event.*

Following Derrida, I then try to distinguish between two forms of pardon. One level of pardon is situated in the economic-therapeutic logic and hierarchy, and depends on the recognition of injustice by those who ask to be pardoned; whereas a second level of pardon, the *gesture of forgiveness*, erases both hierarchy and transactional relations. Rather than constituting the traditional sense of some kind of property that inheres in the field of the one who is asked to grant it to the one who asked for it, true forgiveness must be *shared* both by the one who seeks it and the one who grants it.

The value of this latter position is that it exchanges the old perpetrator-victim

dichotomy for a perception of responsibility shared both by the self and the other, the perpetrator and victim. Even though the four positions of the victim-perpetrator-relationship axes are presented here as if clearly differentiated and parallel, there is usually a dynamic interaction among them such that each takes expression, whether in concrete action or fantasy, with different degrees of salience, in each encounter between victim and perpetrator.

[Ed. Note—MHS] The author is referring to Derrida's notion that true forgiveness is impossible in the sense, similar to the 'work of mourning,' that it is never fully complete, certainly not when ritualized or conducted in the traditional manner of exchanging privilege. Derrida concedes that his revised approach to forgiveness seems absurd, but only at first blush: "What there is to forgive must be, and must remain, unforgivable; this is a logical aporia." Derrida, and Dana Amir, the author of the current essay, seeks a position of forgiveness that does not prematurely or permanently seal a crack, mute the victim's suffering, allow his or her pain to be elided through false narratives, or appropriated. If one ignores this seemingly paradoxical but crucial redefinition of forgiveness, this deconstructed forgiveness, one invites all forms of hypocritical, calculated and politically convenient forgiveness in through the front door.

SELFOBJECT PSYCHOLOGY: ETHICS OF TRANSFORMATION

RAANAN KULKA

The deepest psychological disaster is the loss of faith in a path; the loss of faith in the Buddha Nature of every human being. In the universe of psychoanalysis, the loss of faith is the nihilistic abandonment of belief in empathy. When this loss of *faith in the way* permeates the collective selfhood, one stands on the brink of a total destruction of the ethics and culture of solidarity and, consequently, even the physical existence of humanity as known to us… possibly even our planet. I contend that Israel and the Palestinians of this era have lost faith in the possibility of peace between them, and that this tragic narcissistic regression brings the Israeli and Palestinian selves to the scorched, archaic regions of almost total fragmentation. Under the holistic umbrella of *selfobject psychology*, this essay proposes the belief in a transformed reality that offers the potential for disillusionment with war and a return to peace. Psychoanalysis is a wonder, and those who dedicate their lives to it as patients and analysts require the courage for human solidarity. In these troubled times, we must not abandon this crucial role of psychoanalysis lest we commit what I consider the sin of "The Treason of Psychoanalysts"—that is, the sin of giving up on total empathy.

In writing this essay, I sought to reflect upon the intersection of psychoanalysis, human solidarity and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, drawing deeply from my personal experiences, psychoanalytic theory, and Buddhist philosophy. This reflection became an exploration of the psychological and ethical dimensions of collective trauma, national identity and the possibility of human transformation. My goal then is to contemplate the historic-cultural role of contemporary psychoanalysis and to call for the reintegration of empathy and solidarity as central to addressing the personal and collective tragedies of our times.

At the core of my essay lies the understanding of a unique form of psychological catastrophe that I have seen unfold in multiple contexts: the loss of faith, particularly faith in empathy and the reality of, and capacity for human interconnectedness. This loss is not just personal-individual but

collective, risking the destruction of solidarity, ethics, and even the human spirit. For me, Israel and the Palestinians serve as a tragic test case. The ongoing conflict has, for many, led to a deep nihilistic regression where hope for peace has been replaced by despair, rage and a fragmented sense of self. I see this as part of a broader crisis in psychoanalysis itself, where empathy—one of the cornerstones of our discipline—is often compromised, both in the evolution of theory and in practice.

In response to this, I feel that a renewed commitment to empathy and solidarity within psychoanalysis is essential. My thinking in this regard is inspired by the work of Heinz Kohut and his theories on self psychology and transformation. Specifically, Kohut's ideas about narcissism and the potential for transcending the individual self toward a universal, ethical consciousness resonate deeply with me. His vision of transformation, outlined in key works from 1966 to 1982, offers a pathway for human development that I believe psychoanalysis must embrace if it is to remain relevant. We need to move beyond narcissistic particularism and reach a state of cosmic narcissism, a state in which we are deeply connected to universal human values.

As I reflect on my own experiences, especially in the light of Israel's ongoing tragedy, I find myself pondering difficult philosophical questions: Can we, as humans, grieve not only for the suffering we endure but also for the suffering we inflict? This is not an abstract question for me; it is central to the psychoanalytic and ethical framework I have come to cultivate and cherish. The practice of empathy, even toward those who have harmed us, feels essential. It is this capacity for empathy that I believe psychoanalysis can offer as a tool for healing, both at the individual level and collectively.

Buddhism, particularly the Gelukpa tradition and teachings as reflected nowadays by the Dalai Lama, has also shaped my thinking. The concept of a "war mind"—the psychological state induced by duality manifested in ambivalence and conflict—resonates with my observations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I have personally found solace in the Buddhist practices of non-dual love, compassion, joy and equanimity, which offer a path for transcending cycles of anger and revenge. In my research and work, I have come to believe that integrating Buddhist philosophy with psychoanalysis could provide a new ethical and spiritual dimension to our metatheory and practice. Both disciplines are inviting us to the potential renunciation from egocentric personhood towards the nondual interconnectedness, and even more so towards the enlightened mind of inter-being.

The call I make in this essay is as much for myself as it is for my fellow psychoanalysts: we must avoid what I term "the treason of psychoanalysis," or the abandonment of empathy as the core of our humanness. This is a pressing danger I see in our field, sometimes taking the form of shying away from fully and sincerely engaging the ethical and political realities of our time. I believe psychoanalysis must actively *advocate* for human solidarity and transformation. This is not just important for the survival of psychoanalysis as a discipline and as a cultural selfobject. Rather, in a world that feels increasingly fragmented and violent, it is essential for the survival of humanity.

I recognize that these reflections are both deeply personal and universal. My work as a psychoanalyst has always been intertwined with my experiences as an Israeli and my observations of the various forms of psychological impact of national trauma. Yet, the themes I explore in this essay go beyond any single conflict. I believe that the non-dual principles of empathy, solidarity, and transformation are relevant to the many crises we face globally. These principles lie at the heart of psychoanalysis, and they are what make our work both challenging and, ultimately, hopeful.

In sum, this essay is not just a theoretical exploration but a personal manifesto. I see psychoanalysis as a powerful, transformative practice capable of healing the deep psychological and ethical wounds that afflict both individuals and societies. By drawing on psychoanalytic theory, Buddhist philosophy, and my own experiences, I am calling for a renewed courageous commitment to empathy and solidarity, which I believe are the keys to addressing the most pressing issues of our time.

THE EDGE OF BREAKDOWN: SIGMUND FREUD AND WALTER BENJAMIN ON HISTORY AND REMEMBRANCE

ANAT TZUR MAHALEL

The present paper offers a comparative reading of Sigmund Freud's and Walter Benjamin's (pronounced: *Ben-yu-meen*) thoughts on remembrance and history. Freud's dream thought, constructed from visual images, and Benjamin's dialectical image—and what he termed the *Denkbild* as its distinctly literary form—are presented as intriguingly intertwined concepts. They both refer to residues of regressive thought expressed through the medium of the German *Bild*, which can be translated as image, picture, or figure. The visual image (*visuelles Bild*) and the *Denkbild* (thought-image or *thinking* image) are presented as crucial to the construction of history because they present a dialectic between a condensed experience of the past (that is, beyond the scope of words and representation) and the inevitable transformation of experience into language, always incurring some loss.

My approach is to read Freud's and Benjamin's late writings (Freud was soon to flee Germany to exile in England where he died of cancer in 1939; Benjamin committed suicide in 1940 at the Spanish-Portuguese border while fleeing the Nazis)—in the historical context of European Jewish intellectuals facing the fast-growing shadow of the Nazi regime. The images discussed comparatively here are Freud's "last Moorish king," Boabdil—last Moorish king of Granada, mentioned by Freud with reference to the disturbance of memory on the Acropolis—and Benjamin's "angel of history."* I interpret these highly condensed images as lamenting figures, images of despair and struggle, further serving as examples of the visual image's ability to represent the unrepresentable and capture hidden mnemic traces at traumatic times.

We know that the creation of history becomes most crucial in times of crisis. At these times of tumultuous and frightening change, the ability to create history as an accumulated body of 'objective' knowledge narrows significantly. Traumatic history (and perhaps the traumatized historian) often remains locked in the form of alienated and dissociated events, with no connecting story.

Tracing momentary experiences, which can be captured through visual images, becomes a useful and meaningful way to hold onto an authentic residue of historical experience.

A comparative reading of the writings of Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin reveals intriguing similarities and intertextual connections between the psychoanalyst's and the philosopher's surrounding concepts and processes involving the way in which the mind tries to contend with hidden and unrepresented aspects of experience. Freud and Benjamin are both central thinkers of modernity who were deeply invested in questions of history and remembrance, their writings offering a rich matrix of ideas and images that continue to facilitate rethinking the complexity and allusiveness of the processes involved in remembering (Anderson 2014; Ferber 2013; Ley Roff 2004; Nägele 1991; Rickels 2002; Weigel 1996; Werner 2019). It has been successfully argued, for instance, that Benjamin viewed man's difficulty with representation quasi-religiously, as a result from man's fall from an earlier state of perfection, whereas Freud would certainly have none of that, viewing the difficulty with representation as inherent in the mind/brain apparatus, as we know it. Nevertheless, most of the classical and contemporary comparative readings of the two thinkers have generally been crafted by humanities scholars rather than practicing psychoanalysts. Within my work as a candidate in psychoanalytic training, I have found it very fruitful to read Walter Benjamin's writing alongside the psychoanalytic literature, finding that it greatly contributes to my clinical thinking (Tzur Mahalel 2021, 2019). I also believe that the wider field comprising the comparative reading of these two thinkers will be enriched by research that stems from psychoanalytic theory and technique.

The conceptualization of the visual image, or figurability, created in dreamlike thought beyond the scope of words and organized thinking, is developed in intriguing ways in the writings of Freud and Benjamin. Although in his writings Benjamin refers to Freud only minimally, and in a nonprogrammatic way, a comparative reading of Freud and Benjamin reveals a rich matrix of allusions and intertextualities. I agree with those scholars who argue that the investigation of the mutual influences between Freud and Benjamin should focus not only upon explicit citations (Ley Roff 2004, p. 116; Nägele 1991, p. 57; Weigel 1996, p. xi), but rather on the manifold and dynamic intertextuality of these two great modern thinkers.

The historical context in which these ideas of Freud's and Benjamin's were formed and developed is considered, particularly the rise of modernity

and democracy at the beginning of the twentieth century in Western Europe coupled with the devastating destruction of World Wars I and II a few decades later, most tragically for Jews. Despite the age difference between the two thinkers and the different disciplines from which they originated, I focus upon the threads that dialectically intertwine the ideas and concepts with which they were both occupied during that distinctive historical period. This comparative reading is presented, among other things, as an opportunity to think about developments in European Jewish thought at that very specific moment.

My aim in this paper is to capture the primary roots of the visual image in psychoanalysis and culture within the singular Zeitgeist in which it was created. The present reading is also influenced and inspired by key post-Freudian concepts, such as Bion's ideographs (1984), Aulagnier's pictograms (2001), Botella and Botella's psychic figurability (2005), and Scarfone's traces (2013). The threads that I believe bind these two thinkers are examined through the lens of Freud's 'dream thought,' constructed from visual images (*visuelle Bilder*), and of Benjamin's *Denkbild*, as the literary form of the dialectical image. These concepts were not necessarily developed in their late writings, but those writings rely heavily on the concept of the *Bild*, in both cases.

The German word *Bild,* most commonly translated as "image," appears in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables* as a word that cannot be easily translated because of the vast set of words that are modeled on Bild and systematically related to it has become especially complex, including *Urbild* (archetype), Abbild (*copy*), *Bildung* (education), *Einbildungskraft* (imagination), and more. Hence, a reasonable starting point for thinking about the multiple meanings of *Bild* can be taken from the biblical verse stating that God created man "in his own image [*be-tzelem*]" (Genesis 1:27) (Cassin 2014 [2004], p. 107–11).

[Ed. Note—MHS] "Angel of history" refers to Benjamin's Ninth Thesis in which he highlights Swiss-German artist Paul Klee's monoprint Angelus Novus (1920), and elaborates upon it through the fifth stanza of Scholem's poem "Gruss vom Angelus": "There is a picture by Klee called Angelus Novus. It shows an angel about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before us, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is this storm" (Harry Zohn, trans., Selected Writings, Vol. 4).

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL: A LITERARY AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE FEMALE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE IN MIDLIFE – SNOW WHITE'S MOTHER AS A CASE STUDY

NAOMI GOVREEN

The purpose of the article is to contribute to the psychoanalytic discussion regarding the subjective mental experience of women in general and mothers in particular, throughout life. I have chosen to focus on the tale "Snow White," both because of the special and central place accorded to the mother-daughter relationship in this tale-type, and because it is one frequently encountered amongst various peoples and cultures. As psychoanalysts have found with most other tales, lore and related archetypical legends, the structure of the tale personifies the inner drama taking place in the mother's psyche elicited by psychodynamic changes that occur in the relationship between her and her adolescent daughter. The most familiar format of "Snow White" was first written down in the 19th CENT and published by the Brothers Grimm in 1812, but I have studied various versions culled from IFA (Israel Folktale Archives). Alongside the story of the innocent, persecuted heroine, this tale-type also describes the mother's experience at a significant turning point in her life, as she grows older and must deal with physical, mental and social changes. This 'aging' experience is even more challenging as the daughter's sexual blossoming and psychological maturation take place, more or less, simultaneously. Upon examining the versions available, I have divided the processes undergone by mothers in adulthood facing their daughters' adolescence into three phases.

The first phase—*the defining moment*—is the beginning of the process of change, usually indicated by some singular moment when the mother realizes for the first time the significant changes that begin to appear in her own body and spirit. In the tale, this moment is expressed by a variety of metaphors and motifs expressive of the fact that her daughter has now acquired abilities that had until now characterized solely the mother herself and that she is now starting to lose, such as fertility and feminine beauty.

The mother, who understands in the defining moment that she has changed,

finds it difficult to face the new reality, the signs of her body's gradual wearing out, all of which announce the beginning of her end—and she therefore tries to deny these shifts.

The second phase—which I term *the fantasy of reversal*—presents the mother with a pervasive sense of anxiety, but as a defense against the rising terror, the mother takes a regressive position of splitting and projection, relocating her unbearable feelings within her daughter, or other younger women in the mother's circle. The mother now experiences these changes, as betrayal by the daughter who has become a young woman, more beautiful and fertile than she is, as if the daughter had somehow stolen her beauty and youth. Ironically, and painfully, the daughter who was formed and developed in her mother's own body, so close to the mother throughout infancy, is now seen as a saboteur of her mother's femininity. Her beauty exceeds that of the mother, who is perceived as less beautiful and esteemed in her own eyes and by those around her.

As opposed to conventional desirable maternal behavior, the mother in the fairytale decides that her only option is to get rid of her daughter. The disappearance of the daughter is intended to help the mother ignore the change she has undergone and to quell the fear of death that has overtaken her—defenses that allow the mother the illusion that she can continue to live her life as it was *before* the defining moment. However, despite the fierce jealousy and murderous hatred the mother displays, in some versions found in IFA—and in stark contrast to the bitter end of the stepmother in the most well-known Grimms' version—after the mother's primary crisis, the older woman may find the mental resources to mourn what was lost and turn the transition to late adulthood to her and her daughter's advantage. Indeed, in some folk versions of this tale, a third phase may appear. In this phase the mother figure not only accepts her age-related changes and places herself in a new position, but also utilizes the advantages inherent in this phase, transforming experiences of a lifetime—the wisdom, the maturity, and the ability to view life in a deeper and wider way—to her and her surroundings' advantage.

In light of this legendary option, I consider this third phase as marking the opening of a new horizon for adult development, when the older woman undergoes a process of change, mourns her losses, and accepts the new situation. In this dynamic, the mother may discover that she can be active in society and in the family in new ways and experience freedom and liberation from social constraints. But if she fails to accept the change and to place herself in a new position, she is in danger of losing in this competition against nature

and the ineluctable direction of time. The process that the mother figure must go through requires transition from initial denial of the changing reality to a position of allowing herself to mourn for what has been lost, to agree to accept reality, and acquire a different status in her family and society. These upheavals are told by women through their own version of this tale. Such stories describe and communicate in a creative way mothers' struggle to cope with ambivalent emotions that they cannot talk about freely in their community and family. As we have seen, depending upon mother's own intrapsychic and intersubjective dynamics, she can initiate either a negating or accepting positioning in relation to her life-changes. As such, telling their version of this tale is a way to process these experiences and enhance transformation through what Thomas Ogden (2000) called the 'art of mourning'. Fairy tales are stories that have a therapeutic potential, for the teller, listener and reader, enabling creativity and 'risky' imagination within a safe framework; this research thus reinforces the inherent potential in the wisdom embodied in such tales, and their possible contribution to contemporary psychoanalytic thinking and to clinical work with women at this stage of their lives, encouraging psychotherapists to assist women to emerge from a sense that they have reached a dead end.

WAKING UP FROM A DAYDREAM: REFLECTIONS ON CLINICAL WORK WITH PATHOLOGICAL DAYDREAMING

ANAT BARAM

"A happy person never fantasies, only an unsatisfied one," wrote Freud in "Creative writers and daydreaming" (1908, p. 423), thus presenting fantasying or daydreaming, through what I understand as an ironic quip, as an essentially normative and universal phenomenon. Many of us daydream, thereby finding respite from our routine and frustrating everyday life, withdrawing into images simulated by our mind in an attempt to create a fictional life that grants us precise pleasures. An island of delight in the sea of gray, partial and inaccurate reality. There is, however, a risk that excessive immersion in daydreaming might serve as a warning sign for fantasies that are, according to Freud, "the immediate mental precursors of […] distressing symptoms […] a broad by-path [which] branches off into pathology." In such cases, defensive use of intense daydreaming might develop into a 'daydreaming state of mind' grounded in disavowal and a deep split in the ego. Such a pathological state creates intentional obfuscation and blurring of boundaries between fantasy and reality, allowing the subject to withdraw from internal and external reality into a fictional alternative reality. While this mechanism is based on the imagination, it differs from creative imagination, transitional phenomena and dream-thoughts because it refuses to accept absence, bypasses mourning processes and tends to overlook reality and emotional truth. Over time, such a state might develop into a pathological internal organization, such as what Steiner (1993) refers to as a psychic retreat, threatening to leave the daydreamer impoverished, stuck and paralyzed.

In this paper, I explore a kind of romantic pathological daydreaming in which libidinal wishes are directed at a fictional ideal object, while the dreamer turns his or her back on real objects. In this state, it seems that anything experienced outside the romantic and ideal is by definition unreal. The subject, whose emotional life now takes place within an enclave of daydreaming, is ostensibly liberated of any expectations or hopes regarding real objects. This

means that the encounter with objects existing outside the pleasurable fictional reality created by the subject is experienced as dull, superficial and distant. This dynamic can lead to divorce between one's perception of reality and one's fantasmatic wishes (Rycroft, 1955), decimating one's faith in ever being able to find joy and pleasure in real life; that is to say, the romantic daydreamer might entertain an unromantic, pseudo-disillusioned and pessimistic notion of what *real* relationships might offer.

I then consider the question of how clinical work with such 'daydreamers' looks like? What patterns emerge in the transference and countertransference when the patient's "psychological eye-contact" (Sodre, 2015) is limited to fictional objects rather than the flesh-and-blood therapist present in the room, and the patient him- or herself is more absent than present? Through clinical presentations, I describe states in which daydreaming has invaded the therapeutic relationship. I propose that when working with such levels of daydreaming, a kind of split transference may emerge in which two parallel and dissociated relationships unfold: one with a fictional object and the other with a real one. Under usual circumstances during psychoanalysis, the intense connection with the fictional object takes place in the patient's mind in parallel with a distinct, superficial and dull transference to the therapist, but there are also situations in which the two parallel relationships both exist towards the psychotherapist, creating a split between the image of the therapist as a fictional object and the therapist as a real object. This kind of situation obtains, in the example provided, when the actual relationship with the therapist can be experienced by the patient as disruptive to the fantasied 'affair' with the therapist as a fictional object.

THE MOSES COMPLEX: FROM THE EMERGENCY CONDITION OF EUROPEAN JEWRY IN FREUD'S TIME TO THE INSCRIPTION OF THE REAL OF LACAN

ITZHAK BENYAMINI

In this essay I present a fundamental inquiry into the way that Jacques Lacan established and processed the conceptual psychoanalytic space that he offers as part of his return to Freud. Through a specific example that touches upon the inter-cultural and inter-religious tensions between Judaism and Christianity, between Freud and Lacan, I will investigate how this tension manifests itself in establishing a quality of clinical discourse that is simultaneously innovative and conservative at one and the same time. This discourse creates a unique compound of these two psychoanalytic thinkers that is especially sensitive to their respective cultural and religious axes. I argue that Lacan's approach to redesigning discursive practice was affected by Lacan's transferential desire to Freud and to the kind of discursive practice the latter had established. Lacan famously insisted that he defined the demand to return to Freud, but perhaps a more crucial question has become, what is found but also *what is lost* during this French translation, what happens to the distinctly Freudian cultural-religious-historical context in the process of being translated into the novel concepts and terms of Lacan's new and radical discourse.

In arguing my case, I focus on the way Lacan deals with Freud's concept of monotheism in the former's *Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959-1960) where Lacan forcefully constructs a new psychoanalytic ethic that touches upon the Real. The Supreme Good, according to the Lacan, is the Thing, the empty place taken up by the *objet a*, the lacking object that is the cause and unattainable goal of the subject's desire. The object is good because it is desired, but it is always lacking, only ever an object of representation. The Real is what is prohibited in an ethics of desire. Ethics derive from an exclusion of the Real. The paradox of an ethic of desire is that the Supreme Good must be off limits. The ethical good is made possible by sacrificing the Good that is jouissance.

The Real, Lacan argues, is what may have eluded Freud, though it was always in the background of his writing, as an 'aside' in Lacan's terms. Lacan closely reads Freud's *The Man Moses and the Monotheistic Religion* (1939) and points at what he considers its most crucial aspects: first, the myth of the death of the prophet/father that follows the Christian model and aligns with the theme of the primordial patricide theorized in "Totem and taboo." The second crucial point for Lacan is the Freudian division of Moses' figure. The 'first' Moses grants the Jews the fundamental principles of the monotheistic-rational-universal religious revolution, but was then killed by his own people because they could not bear the radical principles of ethics and faith of a rational and anti-mystical monotheism. The 'second,' Midianite Moses, priest of Yahweh, the furious Volcanic God of the desert, led the Jews a few centuries later. Throughout the years, the two mythic figures of Moses, as well as the two images of God each 'Moses' represented, coalesced into one essence which is Judaism.

I open my essay by emphasizing two points about Freud's writing on Moses. First, Freud's work embodies Freud's personal anxiety, a derivative of the Judeo-European state of emergency as the Jews of Europe began to transition from the status of belonging through increasing estrangement to, finally, the status of being an object of extermination. Second, Freud tried to understand this state of emergency by using the historicist approach that underlies his psychoanalytic work. I argue that Freud's thinking of historical events attempted to simultaneously construe them as core myths at the root of universal psychic traumas and at the same time as external to 'real' history. I term the logic inherent in Freud's conceptualization *trans-historical*.

I then present Lacan's approach regarding Freud's views of Moses from two directions. On the one hand, I will account for the transferential element in Lacan's work to Freud-the-person and to its role in establishing Lacanian discourse. I argue that the content, the concepts and the themes in Lacan's work are in significant ways a result and effect of this discursive transference, and that they also include a 'translation' of Freud's own historic personal emergency into Lacan's definition of the Real. Second, although at the heart of Lacan's critique of *The Man Moses* lies the fact that Freud adopted a mythological-imaginary approach, Lacan nevertheless adopts Freud's division between the two types of Moses and the two Gods they represent, pointing to Yahweh as the God of the Real. In so doing, Lacan converts the unique Freudian myth, born of the Judeo-European emergency, and carries it from the trans-historic realm of events to the realm of trans-structurality. This transformation converts

the factual data of emergency and the sense of anxiety that Freud experienced on the historical level, to a new identity as the Real. The Real is the aspect that the Lacanian discourse constructs while simultaneously being driven by it, and at the same time remains an element transcendent to it.

Here lies the analogy between Lacanian discourse and theological discourse where God is simultaneously the element created by the discourse and an element always external to it. The Real, then, is an *effect of* Lacanian discourse just as the concept of God is an effect of theological discourse. This effect is also related to the transferential element of the discourse from Freud to Lacan, while the translation of the Real Freudian experience transforms from the historical to the structural to the trans-structural.

"BENEATH THE DESPAIR AND BEHIND THE LONELINESS, WE ARE BOTH STILL HERE": ANALYSIS OF A PERVERSION

ORNA REUVEN

I seek in the work presented in this essay to highlight and further clarify certain aspects of the complex nature of perversion encountered in psychoanalytic treatment using excerpts from the first three years of an analysis marked by dangerous sexual practices, grandiose speeches, and a pervasive stench of sweat. The analysand, referred to as Adam, assumed the role of a powerful ruler, while I was relegated to the role of listener-servant, gradually diminished in presence and voice. The analysis became devoid of life, reflecting dynamics of betrayal and control.

Adam, in his 30s, spent most of his time alone, working on his art, watching pornography, masturbating, and smoking marijuana. Deeply rooted in an adolescent fascination with a porn actress named Natasha, Adam devoted his time to meticulously arranging her photos and videos into artistic collages, which he then used for masturbation. Adam also performed daily practices of penis enlargement and foreskin stretching, which he regarded as forms of self-enhancement. During long hours of treatment, while delivering lengthy, repetitive, highly detailed monologues about his sexual practices, Adam dismissed my interventions as conservative or irrelevant. Similar monologues were employed to express Adam's intellectual and artistic superiority. He frequently entered into grandiose speeches about his professional achievements while belittling other artists and their work. This intellectual self-augmentation paralleled his physical practices, creating a structure in which Adam remained the all-powerful orator, while I was reduced to a passive, irrelevant listener.

Adam's symptomatology illustrates well the classical conception of perversion. His sexual practices meet the Freudian definition of perversion by focusing on partial aspects instead of the complete genital act (Freud 1957 [1910]; 1953 [1905]). Oedipal themes are also frequent in Adam's artistic videos of Natasha, portraying a secretive woman who is often out of his reach, while he fights to become the sole answer for her desires, to prove he deserves to be her chosen one (Freud 1961 [1923]; 1961 [1924]; McDougall 1972,

1974). Gradually, our work gave rise to more detailed recollections from his past. His father's affair, which led to his parents' divorce when Adam was 10 years-old, was the first betrayal. In the father's absence, Adam's bond with his mother grew stronger until it was abruptly severed when she began dating men. Adam recalled waiting in bed for her return, noticing how excited she looked after her mysterious late-night meetings. These feelings of betrayal remained unresolved for a long time, as his mother kept treating him as her exceptional little genius while abandoning him again at night.

Object relations theories conceptualize perversion as a dangerous sphere in which it is necessary to maintain a safe distance from an object that is now seemingly useless but once was a source of great pain (Glasser 1986; Stoller 1974, 1975). In the theater of the perversion, it is crucial to eliminate the old and repulsive yearning for that object and to never reveal its hidden traces. It is better to obliterate the needs from the start, to exercise intimacy like a technique (Khan 1979), to control the object until it is emptied of its assets or essence (Stein 2005; Amir 2013). As Adam's analysis progressed, explicit incidents of revenge surfaced. After years of solitary engagement with pornography, Adam began seeking out real women through dating sites. However, relationships with real women left him feeling frustrated and confused. He, therefore, adopted a dominant, sadistic role in his relationships, demanding complete submission from his partners. Once, during a beach date, an interaction that began as playful competition quickly turned violent when Adam, feeling slighted, struck his partner in anger. His confusion between consensual sadomasochism and non-consensual violence underscored his deeper emotional disarray. Even the need to control Natasha became more and more evident as her role in his artistic videos was demoted into robotic-like, repetitive movements.

A critical turning point in the analysis came as I began to pay more attention to the non-verbal aspects of our relationship, particularly the role of Adam's body odor. Adam often arrived at sessions sweaty from biking, and slowly a stench would fill the room which he refused to address, lingering long after he left. I slowly understood the odor as an assertion of dominance, a way of forcing me into proximity on his terms. My countertransference manifested in a silent protest—leaning toward the window during sessions to breathe fresh air. These small absences in my attention, seemingly unnoticed by Adam, mirrored his own feelings of abandonment and isolation. Smell, in this context, became a form of communication—one that bypassed words and thinking, yet penetrated deeply into the analytic space.

As the end of the third year of analysis neared, a childhood memory regarding Adam's father suddenly emerged. He recalled a moment during his bar-mitzvah trip abroad when a saleswoman mistook the teenager in an oversized shirt and long, unkempt hair for a pregnant woman. His father turned away in horror; Adam could see his father's gaze shift in disgust. I pictured him there—so lacking, infinitely lonely, filled with longing converted into rage. At the core of this void that I felt lay 'something' filled with sorrow. In one of our final sessions during this period, I addressed the issue of smell directly, suggesting that it represented Adam's way of forcing me to engage with him on his terms, dictating the nature and contours of our relationship without regard for my feelings. His angry response confirmed the difficulty Adam experienced in allowing any emotional vulnerability to emerge. Yet, working through the anger, it was now becoming clear that "beneath the despair and behind the loneliness, we are both still here," enabling us to finally confront the dynamics that had structured our work.

The analysis of perversion in this case highlights how deeply entrenched power and control needs and dynamics are in the perverse subject's psyche. Adam's compulsive sexual practices, intellectual grandiosity, and sadomasochistic relationships served as defenses against the unbearable feelings of rejection, betrayal and loneliness rooted in his early experiences with his parents. The sense of smell, a non-verbal sensory medium, became a crucial pathway in our analytic process, revealing the depths of Adam's resistance to emotional connection while also serving as the vehicle of potential transformation. Through this shared sensory experience, space opened for analyst and analysand to confront the underlying despair and begin moving toward a more authentic, albeit painful, encounter with one another.

WITNESSING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

CHANA ULLMAN

In this paper, I describe some unique modes of *witnessing,* that have emerged in the aftermath of the 7/10 disaster in Israel. I will compare those with what we already know about the significance of witnessing and bearing witness during psychoanalytic treatment in particular, and for society in general. Specifically, the paper deals with the meaning of witnessing during and immediately following a major catastrophe, as well as a therapeutic function in the treatment of trauma over the course of time.

In the first part of the paper, I investigate the registration of fragments of testimonies in the here-and-now of the horror, amidst the desperate attempts to survive and protect loved ones, in the absence of any anticipated help from military and State authorities. These are raw testimonies close to experience and replete with emotions and insights. They tell the story of the attempts to hold on to life and to love, in the midst of the threat of imminent death. I then examine the many testimonies that began to be broadcast continuously on Israeli television news following 7/10, which was being referred to as 'the black Sabbath' (*ha-shabbat ha-sha'horah*. The impact and significance of these testimonies extend beyond the obvious. Listening to these reports often evokes in the listener an uncanny experience of a text that is simultaneously completely coherent and understood though at the same time dissociated from emotional meaning.

I argue that these testimonies connect the witness who bears them—through the 'secondary witness(es)' who first *hear(s)* or *receive(s)* the experient's report, to the collective (those who 'collect'). On the one hand, the collective requires the victimized witness in order to solidify its own larger identity and its memory. On the other hand, without the collective, the witness remains bereft of a container, with a 'dead third.' At the same time, the notion of containment is likely an idealization, for there rarely is such a thing as pure containment. In actuality, the testimonies serve the collective and are shaped by what the collective needs. For even as the collective listener ('secondary

witness') is willing to serve as a container, a participant, an *other* who is willing to surrender to the stream of horrific testimonies, the testimonies tend to become narrower and oddly similar, leading to a biased unifying of the narrative due to a natural deletion, condensation or ignoring parts that do not conform to the collective's needs.

What I describe is a subtle process, and not necessarily a deliberate effort, but it is one that glosses over vast splits and differences of interpretations which, advertently or inadvertently, erases multiplicity and idiosyncrasy. Secondarily, this tendency provides constant justifications for evasion of responsibility and perpetuating the cycle of violence. In this respect, bearing witness is never a simple transportation of personal memory to a 'naïve,' neutral social collective space. When testimony reaches the collective, the testimony does not only tell a truth; it also conceals it.

The second part of the paper addresses witnessing in the specific setting of psychoanalytic treatment. The therapeutic encounter with a traumatized individual, with trauma, is a particularly unique mode of witnessing. In contrast to the broadcast or written testimony, witnessing as part of psychoanalytic therapy is always a process, creating a circular movement in which both partners of the dyad change. The witness who has survived toxic events changes as soon as s/he bears his/her story to a living presence (the 'secondary witness') who echoes the story *and* paradoxically reawakens the experiencing self that was silenced and frozen during the trauma.

In clarifying this dimension, I briefly review 6 major current theoretical contributions to the understanding of the functions of witnessing in psychoanalytic treatment. This would include the important contributions of Dana Amir (2018), Benjamin (2018), Margalit (2002), Oliver (2001), Reis (2009) and Stern (2022). These six theoretical contributions illuminate different aspects of the process of bearing witness within an analytic setting which set it apart from the flood of current testimonies broadcasted on our media. Finally, returning to the specific context of Israel's brutal response to the massacre, I describe the problem of the *inability to imagine a future* as it appears in testimonies and as an inevitable consequence of the use of violence.
