

For Mental Health Professionals Interested in Psychoanalytic Perspectives  
 A local chapter of the Division 39 (Psychoanalysis) of the American Psychological Association

**PSPP Spring 2018 Program:  
 Working with Intense Shame & Negativity**

by *Kee O’Toole*

On a March 3rd morning, following the trauma of a violent snowstorm that battered our region, a large crowd gathered in the auditorium of the Philadelphia Ethical Society to attend a day-long workshop on “Working with Intense Shame and Negativity in Psychotherapy: Advantages of a Multiple Self-State Model of Mind,” given by keynote presenter Richard Chefetz, MD.

Dr. Chefetz is a psychiatrist in private practice in Washington, D.C. He has been involved in leadership roles with the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, and has taught at analytic institutes in New York and Washington, DC. He is widely published on the topics of trauma, dissociation, and clinical process.

Two local psychologists, Stephen DiJulio, PhD, and David Ramirez, PhD, ABPP, joined Dr. Chefetz in presenting. Dr. DiJulio is the current president of Behavioral Health Associates of Delaware and the Clinical Director for Survivors of Abuse in Recovery, Inc. (SOAR). Dr. Ramirez has been Director of Swarthmore College Counseling and Psychological Services since 1994 and is also former president of PSPP and of the Division of Psychoanalysis (39) of the APA.

Dr. Chefetz provided the overarching theoretical material for the day’s training. This material was augmented by Dr. DiJulio, who demonstrated a successful outcome in the use of Gestalt Therapy technique with a patient with PTSD. And Dr. Ramirez courageously shared a very personal illustration of the processing of shame from his own analysis. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the local case presentations, this article will focus on Dr. Chefetz’s presentation.

Dr. Chefetz began the session with a simple, yet central notion, that while “good theory and technique can guide curiosity toward more fruitful exploration...in the end, it’s all about the relationship; good theory and technique are not substitutes.” He described psychotherapy as involving one person telling “another what they don’t really want to say while the other person listens to what they don’t really want to hear; nevertheless, these two people agree to have a relationship with explicit boundaries, to tolerate their discomfort in the service of human growth, and to abide by the interpersonal rules of discourse that make human healing possible.” Although Dr. Chefetz would easily impress the audience throughout the day with his comprehensive and integrated understanding of the overlapping neurobiological, psychoanalytic, affective-sensory-behavioral components that undergird the complex process of trauma-related shame and

*continued on page 2*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Spring 2018 Program: Working with Intense Shame & Negativity .....1  
 A Necessarily Incomplete Understanding of Sexual Harassment .....3  
 A Nation Unwell.....5  
 New Child Training Program at IRPP.....6  
 Hypnosis and Psychoanalysis:  
 Where the Twain Meet .....7  
 Moloch, Murder, and the NRA .....8  
 PSPP Member News.....9  
 From the Board .....10, 11  
 Editor’s Note .....12

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**PSPP Fall 2018 Program  
 November 3rd**

**Speaker: Malin Fors, author of  
 A Grammar of Power in Psychotherapy:  
 Exploring the Dynamics of Privilege**

**Check the PSPP website or listserv for details soon.**

## ***Working with Intense Shame & Negativity...continued***

negativity, it was his disarming and engaging connection with the audience that continued to underscore the key ingredient to implementing and sustaining effective treatment for such complex disorders: the humanity and interplay of the therapeutic relationship.

Dr. Chefetz introduced some over-arching principles of trauma treatment, which involve the following ideas. The creations of the mind are attuned to and motivated by self-preservation and the reduction of pain, and even self-harming behaviors have the intent of reducing pain. Enactive repetition is a way of using action to tell the story with the possibility of a new outcome: less pain. Emotional intensity of any kind is feared more than a particular emotion, such as shame, sadness, anger, and, even, joy. The closed systems of trauma-related thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and somatic experiences rely upon dissociative processes to maintain homeostasis. Given the closed nature of such systems, entry is possible through the context of a safe-enough relationship, hopefully, as in the one co-created between the therapist and the patient.

Utilizing Tomkins' affect theory as a frame of reference, wherein all experience encodes to multiple areas of the brain, makes the multiple self-state psychology of the mind implicit in the generation of a human mind. This concept of multiplicity of encoded self-states will need to be considered in the treatment of trauma. A distinction between affect (encoded proto-sensations, somatic and unconscious), feelings (encoded sensings), and emotion (named feelings; appraisals) is also an important delineation. Consequently, feelings are embodied, and may need to be accessed therapeutically through other forms of interventions such as body work, movement therapy, or dance before these experiences can be languaged. Another important differentiation was made between fear and anxiety. Fear is characterized as a more intense phasic distress, which waxes and wanes, and disrupts cognition. In comparison, anxiety is less intense, and is a more long-term, sustained distress, in which thinking can and does occur. During experiences of heightened fear, the individual cannot learn, becomes disengaged, and the system becomes dissociated. However, as previously noted, all emotional experiences remain encoded in some region of the brain, and the patient may have some sense of their existence as a "different me," even if they are not able to articulate it externally. The interpersonal, and the intrapersonal, are woven from the perspectives of self-states for the patient as well as for the therapist, and the clinician may experience a dissociative state as well in helping the patient to make sense of their own dissociation.

In terms of complex PTSD and DID, shame dynamics light up as a self-state in relation to self-states. Shame as an organizing principle can be conceptualized as a feeling, a function, and instrument to help "direct traffic" (e.g., occluding emotionality, deflecting via obsessional focus, and narrative regulation). Negativity "tethers" dissociative experiences without naming them, and is used as threat detection "on steroids." The patient is paradoxically asserting self-safety through their negativity and negative behaviors ("I'm at risk of being hurt, don't you understand that?"). The paralinguistic cues that signify shame include: vocal withdrawal, confusion of thought, hesitation, self interruption (censorship), soft speech mumbling, silences, stammering, fragmented speech, long pauses, or rapid speech, word incoherence, and tensely laughed words. Visual cues

involving shame are seen in hiding behaviors such as the hand or hair covering all part or parts of the face, gaze aversion, hanging head, hunching shoulders, squirming, blushing, over-controlled behaviors, false smiling, or other masking behaviors. Omnipotent shame may be related to captivity and loss of sovereignty, surrender, devaluation as lived experience, dissolution of self, or power through negation. Shame may also be associated with fears of rejection and abandonment. For those who experience complex PTSD and DID, shame flashbacks can be vicious toxic revivifications, and efforts to have a relationship may be enough of a stimulus to trigger massive shame, wherein valuing the self may feel impossible or dangerous.

In the treatment of shame, Dr. Chefetz outlined an approach in which the therapist helps the patient to manage the threat of overwhelming affects by identifying them and talking compassionately about them (containment). Shame-producing enactments should be identified as they occur in the session, and the therapist should help the patient to understand them. However, the therapist also needs to be aware that patients very easily experience almost any intervention as shaming, and the patient may react by using anger, chaos, fear, and other intense affects to deflect and protect against shame. The therapist should also be watchful for subtle idealization and devaluation in the transference, as shame is "just around the corner." The therapist should also be understanding and tolerant of one's own experience of shame, which could be utilized to help the patient understand the use of shame as a regulating emotion for relational distancing; as exemplified by Dr. Chefetz's case presentation. Finally, the therapist should also be mindful that the analysis of shame in these patients takes precedence due to toxicity and prevalence.

Toward the close of his presentation, Dr. Chefetz again reiterated the primacy of the therapeutic relationship in facilitating the restoration of the individual's dignity, worth, and specialness through the repetitive experiences of relatedness in the face of intense negative emotion: "You and I are a good team, we've got lots of work to do, and we're going to do it; we just need to stick together, and we will."

*Duangporn (Kee) O'Toole, MS, is a Year IV graduate student in the Chestnut Hill College, PsyD Program. Previously, she worked for over 25 years in clinical, supervisory, program development, and management roles in the Employee Assistance Program area, providing mental health and consultation services for healthcare, small business, and corporate organizations.*



# ***A Necessarily Incomplete Understanding of Sexual Harassment***

***by Burton Norman Seidler, PhD***



These days, sexual harassment is a particularly hot topic. Prominent people, previously perched in powerful positions presumed to have performed perfidiously, have been snatched (sometimes precipitously) from their respected posts. Women and men are emerging and exposing those that they maintain forced themselves on them sexually, men like Bill Cosby, Donald Trump,

Bill O'Reilly, Roger Ailes, Kevin Spacey, Senators Roy Moore and Al Franken, Garrison Keillor, Matt Lauer, and James Levine, and who knows how many more names that undoubtedly, and, I might add, sadly, will follow? I make no claim to know whether the people that I just mentioned truly committed sexual harassment or worse. The only thing that is certain is that women and men have risked sticking their necks out by coming forward and making these very serious accusations against them.

What is sexual harassment all about? Can psychoanalysis make sense of any of this? And, if so, are there any explanations that would suffice? Another set of questions centers around whether or not those that engage in such activities can be helped by psychoanalytic treatment.

Freud's (1912) seduction theory initially provided a framework for understanding aspects of the unconscious processes attendant to pedophilia. However, for a variety of reasons, he dropped that notion (prematurely, some would say) along with other fertile ideas about the impact of early trauma. Perhaps this is because Freud's Victorian Europe tended to avoid dealing with sexuality openly.

Our own Puritanical society may not be terribly different. Discussing sex is still fraught with the peril of social condemnation. For instance, since Freud's time, research about sexuality has not occurred to the degree that one might expect on a topic of such magnitude and central importance in psychoanalysis. Studies like Kraft-Ebbing's (1896) *Psychopathia Sexualis*, *The Kinsey Reports* (1953; 1948), Masters and Johnson's (1966) *Human Sexual Response*, *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (1970), and *The Hite Report* (1976), are the exception to this propensity to eschew writing about sex, forms of sexuality, or things that have become sexualized, but really have more to do with aggression, power, and dominance. That is why Twemlow's topical work (1999) on harassment in the workplace is so prescient.

He noted that the roles of bully, victim, and bystander interact and facilitate each other in a myriad of complex ways. He claims that if an organization has a bully, there's both prey and passerby in that very same group. He does not confine his ideas to men as

the sole perpetrators of harassment against women. Along with men who harass women, he includes illustrative examples of women being harassed by other women, as well as women who harass men, and men who harass other men. I do not mean to imply that these occur to the same degree or in equal proportions, but rather to make sure that they are not under-represented here.

Studies dating from 1981 show that out of 20,314 male and female federal employees, 40% of the women and 15% of the men reported sexual harassment within the previous two years. It's speculative to estimate how many men experienced harassment, but were too ashamed to admit, much less report it. It is certainly the case that the women who were harassed felt their careers were at risk were they to formally report their experiences. There are a number of other studies, but limited space restricts my ability to list them all. Instead, let me attempt to glean a few salient points from them so that we can try to make some sense of this, even if only in a limited and thus, necessarily incomplete way.

The literature mainly notes a power dynamic that is largely, but not exclusively male-dominated. Nevertheless, one which is fertile ground for fostering sexism and racism. Where male dominance is confronted or when the gauntlet is thrown down, it is often met with sexual harassment as a means of demonstrating "who wears the pants" (this expression is worthy of analysis, all by itself), and who must submit. This applies to racism as well, where defiance against the rule of the white man is treated as a direct threat to masculinity. In the latter regard, it is no accident that the black man is often derisively referred to as, "boy."

This is no less true for women, where sexual harassment is rarely about sex, but about subservience and subordination, but rather, the link between power and sex. Not all men sexually harass, but sexual harassment seems to be predictive of men who associate sex with power. This is also true of men who associate guns, rifles, or other phallic symbols with their sense of masculinity. So that we don't brand all hunters, for example, as potential sexual predators, we must keep in mind that the key differentiating factor is whether gun owners' sense of masculinity is inseparable from their weapon, as opposed to perceiving a gun as merely a tool that assists in reaching a goal. Much like a fisherman uses a fishing rod or a net as aids for catching fish, the hunter perceives his/her rifle merely as a device for catching deer, etc.

When men view women as minority members or as less powerful in the workplace, there is a greater likelihood of the men acting out. This also seems to be true of many members of minority groups, who have an increased probability of being harassed without an intervention by so-called "innocent" bystanders. It is much more like bullying, where the eroticism is embedded in sadism and domination instead of mutual back and forth shared sexual pleasure. Again, sexual harassment is hardly about sex,

*continued on page 4*

## ***A Necessarily Incomplete Understanding of Sexual Harassment...continued***

but rather involves power, the so-called ultimate aphrodisiac. Twemlow insightfully asserts, “a great deal of pain comes from the passive and facilitating role of the bystanders” (p. 253). Frequently, when passersby or bystanders do nothing (sometimes out of fear; other times out of unconscious vicarious pleasure) victims experience a sense of isolation due to their perception of not being supported by colleagues, friends, and sometimes even their own families who feel equally cut off from the mainstream of authority and power. These circumstances unwittingly foster the conditions necessary for inducing profound regressions—which add to feelings of powerlessness. Cognitive capabilities are diminished, clear thinking is substantially reduced, helplessness and passive compliance start to set in. Typically, when individuals feel powerless, they feel trapped and thus unable to prevent further harassment from taking place. And, when it does, they berate themselves for allowing it, as in “what’s wrong with me?” or, “why did I just stand there, doing nothing?” or, “I am such an idiot!” The self-monologue may vary somewhat, but it is common for such individuals to further their harassment by contributing their own self-debasement, often to the detriment of their self-determination. This is most evident with battered spouses (Twemlow, 1999).

In the workplace, this may manifest itself behaviorally as reduced spontaneity and creativity, illness (or accident-) proneness, loss of energy, reduced productivity, and absenteeism. Intra-psychically, turning anger against the self (in the form of depression) may be observed, as well as increased anxiety, agitation, jumpiness, testiness, hypervigilance, dissociative reactions, or walking around in a semi-fog. So, when someone finally announces what has happened, it generally comes at great risk and at great cost.

### **But what can we offer as psychoanalysts?**

The typical intense workshop approach or brief consultations, have not been found to produce lasting change. The Harvard Business Review recently reported those men who are most likely to harass frequently leave such trainings convinced that harassment is not a big deal—except, and this is a possible big deal—when leaders of a company or organization themselves attend and actively endorse such trainings. In fact, helping those in leadership roles develop a psychoanalytically informed attitude which promotes individual and group understanding of the dynamic unconscious has been shown to have a greater probability of achieving a positive outcome (Twemlow, Sacco & Casanelli 1998). Specifically speaking, (1) role-playing, (2) training supervisors to detect harassment early, (3) providing them with their own ongoing supervision, and (4) psychoanalytic psychotherapy are generally helpful. In addition, (5) organizations need to put in place formal, as well as informal structures and procedures for dealing with incidents of sexual harassment.

A word of caution: many who are involved in bullying of one

sort or another rarely voluntarily come for psychotherapy, often simply because the bullying has worked in the past. As a rule, such individuals believe that the only way that they can be heard is to shout, act hostile, and/or intimidate. Even if these tactics work in the short-term, they are not effective down the line. They also do not seek therapy because their behavior is ego syntonic. If ever they do enter psychotherapy it is often at the behest of an upset spouse or a complaint registered with the court.

The issue of power differentials and asymmetry is now being spotlighted and when that happens change, although often too slow, ensues. People are now speaking out about this, and finally being heard, and those that are part of our society who wish to maintain or raise the bar of civility need to take note of this, because it is not going away. Nor should it.

### **References**

- Freud, S. (1912). *Selected Papers on Hysteria and Other Psychoneuroses*. 2nd Edition, Trans. A.A. Brill. New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company.
- Hite, S. (1976). *The Hite Report on Female Sexuality*. New York: Macmillan Publishers.
- Kinsey, A., Pomeroy, W., Martin, C., & Gebhard, P. (1953). *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: Saunders Publishing Company.
- Kinsey, A., Gebhard, P. & Pomeroy, W. (1948). *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: Saunders Publishing Company.
- Krafft-Ebing, (1896). *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Stuttgart: verlag von Ferdinand Enke.
- Masters, W. & Johnson, V. (1970). *Human Sexual Inadequacy*. Toronto; NY: Bantam Books.
- Masters, W. & Johnson, V. (1966). *Human Sexual Response*. Toronto; NY: Bantam Books.
- Saal, F.E. (1996). Men’s misperceptions of women’s interpersonal behaviors and sexual harassment. In, M.S. Stockdale, Ed. *Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*. Sage Publishers.
- Twemlow, S.W. (1999). A Psychoanalytic Dialectic Model for Sexual and other Forms of Workplace Harassment. *J. Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, vol. 1 (3), pp. 249-270.
- Twemlow, S.W., Sacco, F.C., and Casanelli, G (1998). *Psychological Principles of Dispute Mediation: Changing Large Groups in Crisis*. Manuscript in preparation.

# A Nation Unwell

by Julie Mullany, PsyD, MFA, LP



As analytical thinkers, we ask, and try to make meaning of what is behind havoc. More than five hundred days into his fake presidency, are we still shocked over who is desecrating the highest office in this nation? Should we be? The so-called president is more than just a crass reality star

playing dress-up; this is far more than the U.S.'s King George moment. The curtain call on America, as we and perhaps the rest of the world has known us, sounded long ago, and echoes of it mock rightly so from the furthest global balconies. "Leader of the Free World" is more an oxymoron these days than the heavyweight gloat of the past. Far from free or united, this nation is a hostage unto itself. Fascism and rampant homegrown xenophobia, inflamed by the bigot in charge, has made us our own dejected and divided prisoners. Trump is not only bloat and bone spur in the gut and heel of our once democratic union. He is a disturbing symbol of a nation fractured and unwell—its decay bursting forth—eating itself from the inside out.

Over two decades ago, public policy and environmental writer John Miller's (1997) book *Egotopia: Narcissism and the New American Landscape* honed in on America's personality via a biting criticism of the degradation of the nation's built environment, which he saw as the physical ugliness that defines and homogenizes America's cities, suburbs, and countryside. Back in the nineties, when writing his book, Miller viewed America's consumer-centric urban and suburban sprawl as ugly and a physical manifestation of the nation's increasing narcissism or "egotopia." His personification or diagnosis of America back then focused on the American landscape as an illustration or function of the "New Man"—someone who "embodies the undeniable and irrefutable megaself" (Miller, 1997, p. 36). Miller spared no pains to scapegoat 20th century psychology and psychotherapy as prime culprits in the creation of this "New Man" (he viewed the field as a medium promoting self-indulgence), and his attacks on our profession read as grossly reductionistic. However, if one can step over that, his analogy of the landscape as a visual symbol of the nation's psychic decay still fits today. Perhaps now, more than ever, it is even more apt.

Essentially, Miller's position suggests that the United States' environment itself is pathologically out of balance because the United States as a culture is out of balance as well (Miller, 1997). The idea is not far-fetched when we think of the mind/body connection and notion that the body, or the physical shell, provides data or can be a gauge of sorts. That indicates the wellness, or lack thereof, within a body. Few would

argue (except Trump and his cult following) that America, personified as a mind/body entity of sorts, is presenting as healthy or well. This suggests the obvious—that the U.S. has never been healthy. Particularly in terms of racism, for many people of color, it is clear the current time is simply a new iteration or a more blatant reemergence of original ills that have never been treated. Instead, these ills have existed as abusive and festering wounds that date far back to the time of the nation's problematic founding and origins.

Metaphor is its own flood all around us. Every day, the U.S. disowns or splits off more parts of itself. When a sinkhole reportedly appeared on the White House lawn just days before Memorial Day weekend the irony was almost humorous. It is not funny, however, that there are many more sinkholes, proliferating all across the nation, and due largely to the usual cause: crumbling water, drain and sewer pipes; infrastructure often neglected by cities with budget problems. (Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2017-05-huge-sinkholeswrong.html>.) If only natural disasters could somehow selectively take out the human disasters running this country. Sadly however, even White House lawn sinkholes do not work that way.

Forgotten Puerto Rico is still largely in blackout more than nine months post Hurricane Maria. Hawaii is angrily spewing molten lava and toxic gases without an end in sight. Flint, Michigan's drinking water, contaminated since 2014, is estimated to remain liquid poison until at least 2020. Large regions of California, Alaska, and Colorado, are lost to wildfire. Beloved and successful celebrities have taken their own lives—Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain—the latest suicides. Counting the ways in which the U.S. is unwell is a daunting endeavor.

In 2015, journalist Malcolm Gladwell wrote an article in *The New Yorker* applying sociologist Mark Granovetter's theory of social-influence "thresholds" to posit that school shootings are akin to the gathering force of a riot; evolving and spreading like a contagion (Gladwell, 2015). Three years since his provocative article, increasing and widespread gun violence in the US has only tragically served to confirm Gladwell's suggestion, proving itself a uniquely American disease, seemingly uninterested in, or unwilling to consider any real form of treatment. There may be no heavier concrete evidence of this nation's self-destructiveness than its apparent incapacity and absurdly negligent refusal to pass any reasonable gun control legislation, no matter the steadily increasing death toll due to unrestricted access to guns.

*continued on page 6*

## ***A Nation Unwell...continued***

And what of the US government's most recent abusive policy of detaining and separating asylum-seeking migrant families at the US / Mexico border—wherein over 2400 children (prior to the executive order halting the policy) were taken away from their parents and, by all accounts, may remain so indefinitely? Or police brutality, mass incarceration, the lack of universal healthcare or affordable housing, the sabotage of our Supreme Court, the war against Blacks, Muslims, immigrants, the media, the LGBTQI community, those with disabilities, women and reproductive rights, the poor, the environment, and the severing of ties with ally nations in place of collusion with dictatorships? This nation itself is a cry for help. Just watch Sacha Baron Cohen's *Who is America?* It is a horror show.

There are no quick or easy solutions. Long-term, insight oriented treatment for the U.S. is clinically recommended. Nevertheless, as inhabitants of an unwell nation, curse first, if you need to. It may feel energizing. Get anger out, as that will drive action further than despair. Then get galvanized, resist, write letters, march, protest, find your voice in community, fight back, and most importantly, VOTE THEM OUT. An unwell

nation, like a person, cannot heal without first gaining empathetic self-awareness of its struggles and problematic symptoms. We must vote into office those who can own, and lean into, rather than deny, minimize or project our problems. The resistance is now. Stand up for healing.

*Dr. Julie M. Mullany is a clinical psychologist practicing in Philadelphia. Australian-born and predominantly U.S.-educated, she earned her doctorate in clinical psychology in Chicago, and also spent a year as a student fellow at the Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis. She then completed internship at the State University of New York in Buffalo, NY, and her post-doctoral training at St. George's University in Grenada in the Caribbean—before landing in Philadelphia as a staff psychologist at UPenn CAPS.*



---

## **Training**

---

### ***New Child Training Program at IRPP***

The Institute for Relational Psychoanalysis of Philadelphia is creating a new child training program with an anticipated opening date of September 2019. Clinical work with children has evolved radically in the recent decade. This program's intent is to incorporate the contemporary advances into a relational psychoanalytic training model to meet the needs of our child patients and their families. The program will build a foundation with current views of child development informed by research (attachment, neuroscience, and infancy), as well as theoretical advances, such as attachment and non-linear dynamic systems, into psychoanalysis. This theoretical foundation will form a basis for technique that is centered on the medium of play and the importance of affect to the process of mentalization in work with parents and children.

With the program's emphasis on multiple dimensions, consideration of the subjective positions of the parent (and other significant attachment figures) in relation to the child defines the complex movement in a child-centered treatment. Parental subjectivity is central to the conceptualization and treatment in a child relational model. As such, the secondary generational effects of trauma will be given special emphasis in the training. The mechanisms of the transfer of trauma, as well as how to interrupt the transmission and create a more secure base for the child, will be core proponents of the new curriculum.

Situating the child relational program in a discourse with an adult relational program is poised to open up creative thought within the model, enhancing the dimensions of both programs. Having experience moving between and within the developmental differences widens the spectrum of relational thought necessary to critical thinking about process. The exploration of sameness and difference serves to both locate and expand subjective positions, the new frontier in a psychoanalytic psychotherapy of the people. Please stay tuned to PSPP and IRPP for future announcements about the opening of this new IRPP program. Read more about IRPP online at [www.irpphila.org](http://www.irpphila.org).

# ***Hypnosis and Psychoanalysis: Where the Twain Meet***

**by Ari S. Pizer, PsyD**

I want to start by thanking the board of PSPP and Jane Widseth for the endowment fund in her name, which helped fund me to attend the annual spring meeting for the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH). This year's topic was on the treatment relationship and two of the plenaries were prominent psychoanalysts—Michael Diamond, PhD, and the late Jeremy Safran, PhD—talking about the integration of psychoanalysis and clinical hypnosis. Prior to seeing a note about this conference, I was not aware of this rapprochement of sorts. So when a few things fell into place and I realized I could attend the conference, I was excited to try something new.

The conference was incredibly stimulating and generative for me. Diamond's presentation, which, among other things, brought together Winnicott, holding, and hypnosis, was brilliant. I also took the four-day fundamentals workshop and came away with a new skill that I felt ready and excited to use (within the limits of my new skill level and training of course). The facilitators somehow transferred a lot of knowledge and training to us in only a few days through lectures, demonstrations and breakout experiential practice sessions. By the end of the weekend I felt much closer to the people in my practice group who no longer felt like strangers. I also met some really wonderful senior clinicians who were warm and welcoming to all of us newcomers. Additionally, some of the takeaway points for me were: 1) being more aware of the ways we create altered consciousness in our patients, whether we are doing formal hypnosis or psychotherapy; 2) in bridging to psychoanalytic language, I felt more in tune with noticing my patients' subtle shifts in self-states through this training; 3) I learned about confusion inductions and had a good laugh at myself when I thought of the moments during my training when patients would greet an unfortunately long comment with a blank stare. The use of confusion to facilitate (induce) or deepen a trance state happens when the therapist deliberately joins many sentences together with conjunctions, or shifts between different ideas or concepts in ways that are difficult to follow. When you overload the mind's capacity to hold onto and process all of that information it shuts down momentarily and the person lapses into a trance-like state. When used sparingly, it can be very effective. A silly example might go something like this:

As you know, if you are right handed, the left hemisphere processes information contralaterally with the right side, and if you are left-handed, the right side of the brain processes information from the left side of the body. So when writing with the right hand, it is the left hemisphere that is controlling the movement, and when writing with the left hand it is the right hemisphere that is controlling the movement. You can also know that when writing with one hand or the other, many different things are happening in different parts of

the brain, working separately and together with each other. Knowing that this is happening all the time outside of conscious awareness can bring about a deep sense of relief and calm that the mind and body are doing exactly what they should. And you can be free to turn your attention to other things, like sensations you are noticing in the body right now, having left the bodily operation and concern to other parts of the mind, as they continue to operate in the background. It was interesting to think about how I could actually use this to facilitate a state shift in my patient (and in myself).

This introductory experience got me excited for further training. After going to the spring meeting, I attended a two-day workshop with Elgan Baker, PhD, integrating psychoanalysis and hypnosis for working with character pathology. This became another turning point in my thinking. He integrates hypnosis into his psychoanalytic practice and brings out different components of hypnotic trance, using hypnosis for its containing function, to elicit transference, and to strengthen the therapeutic alliance. He also explained how and why he uses these components at different times in the therapy depending on the aims of the therapy, and type and level of personality organization. After these two experiences, I will definitely pursue further training to expand my basic skills in the area, while looking for areas to integrate it with my psychodynamic background.

What I hope people will take away from this is that, for those interested, there is a rich intersectional area between psychoanalysis and hypnosis that can be felt immediately where the twain again meet.

*Ari Pizer, PsyD graduated from the Institute for Graduate Clinical Psychology at Widener University. He is an early career professional entering into private practice. His areas of interest are psychoanalytic psychotherapies, clinical hypnosis, and working with people who have visual impairments and other physical disabilities.*



*Ari Pizer, PsyD*



# ***Moloch and the Murder of Children***

*by Charles Ashbach, PhD*



Thus far in 2018 there have been 23 school shootings in the United States. The most horrifying and egregious have been the two at Parkland, Florida, and Sante Fe, Texas high schools. These terrible events have triggered great outrage and shock and have brought forth a demand to do something about the apparent indifference to the great danger posed by our

culture of guns and violence. What follows are some thoughts that have emerged around the question of the violence against children.

For a period of 1000+ years, up until the Babylonian exile (585 BC), the Semitic people of the Canaanite region practiced a form of religious devotion to a deity called Moloch. The ritualistic center of the religion was the sacrificial destruction of infants and children inside a brass statue (brazier) of a god-creature presented as possessing the head of a bull and the body of a man. The Bible (Leviticus 18:21) referred to this process as the children being “passed through the fire to Moloch.” The belief at the core of the sacrifice was that such a “sacred” act of murder would establish a covenant with this ferocious supernatural entity. The members of the religion felt that the sacrificial destruction of some of their children would demonstrate their supplication and subservience to their god-figure Moloch and this would serve as their atonement and propitiation for their sins. The god-object would then be satiated and allow their lives to go on successfully.

From historical records, we learn that this sacrificial act was accomplished by laying the body of the infant-child across the outstretched arms of the figure of Moloch and then, in reaction to the searing heat, the victim rolled into the stomach opening of the idol. The priests in attendance would beat large drums and sound bells to block out the cries and screams of the child-victims; one presumes to prevent the parents from hearing the agony of their children so to protect against their unbearable guilt and shame that they participated in this monstrous act.

Eventually this process was stopped and is represented in the Bible as the story of the “sacrifice of Isaac” where God, after calling for Isaac’s holocaustic death, relents because of Abraham’s unquestioning loyalty. God responds: “Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son...I will bless you and multiply your descendants....” The provision of the lamb as a symbolic representation of something precious and important to Abraham (the Jewish people) begins a new era in religious belief and ceremony. The institution of a symbolic order to enable humanity to “pay” the deity for the essence of life without destroying life itself becomes one of the great contributions of Jewish thought.

Psychoanalytically we can imagine this heinous act to reflect the primitive psychic terror that our aggression, ambition, and desire to be equal to the god-object and to possess the power that “he” does, is felt to be the essential crime that brings the greatest shame and the terror of retaliation against the self. Of course, this is another version of the crime of Adam and Eve where they sought to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and thereby be equal to the deity. Apparently our deep yearning and ambition to be equal to the god-object so frightens us that we offer up our generativity and our hope for the future – our children – in order not to feel alone and abandoned.

The present American crisis of guns and the murder of our children must be understood from this primal and archaic perspective if we are really to grasp how such madness can capture the mind and emotions of a so-called modern society. From the perspective of the unconscious, the NRA represents a priestly class that worships at the altar of a modern day Moloch organized around the delusional belief in the omnipotence of the common man. The NRA priests beat the drum of the “Second Amendment” to distract us from the dangers of believing that “all might come together to protect each.” The danger of a commonwealth becomes the “monster” of the State, filled with greed, violence and unimaginable rapaciousness.

So the massacre of the innocents, the unrelenting murder of our innocent and vulnerable children, is the “price we pay” in order to keep alive the “god” of individual omnipotence and invulnerability. Of course it is beyond absurd to have military weapons of mass destruction commonly available to the most immature and mentally unstable in our society, but the ideology of this “religion” demands absolute faith so that the harsh and murderous “deity” does not experience our doubt and uncertainty.

Finally the cries and screams of the child-victims have begun to be heard, and for this we have the students and parents of Parkland High School to thank. Each of us is responsible for allowing our moral order to become corrupted and perverted under our very gaze, and each of us must begin to feel the guilt and remorse for the growth of such madness and barbarism. But here guilt must not be the agent for self-hate but rather an energizing recognition that each of us needs to awaken our rationality, our passion, and our basic humanity to take back our responsibility from this horribly distorted order of belief and delusion. Do we continue to allow the “Second Amendment” to be more powerful than the 10 commandments?

As a psychologist I hear the incantation of “providing mental health services” to the sick and traumatized as one oft repeated step that could be taken. Of course the hypocrisy of such a proposal is almost too painful to contemplate. The madness of this ideology, this “secret religion” must be brought out into the bright light of reflection.

*continued on page 9*

### ***Moloch and the Murder of Children...continued***

tion. Perhaps we could mount a psychotherapeutic intervention on the NRA and on NRA legislators. I could imagine a platoon of therapists being sent to NRA headquarters (or is that hindquarters?) or to the US Congress and Senate to confront them. We could then have a “day of confrontation and interpretation” where we might express the hidden concerns, anxieties, and denied realities lurking under the surface of their delusions and fears.

The present challenge is to penetrate to the depth of our unconscious in order to own the impossibly primitive phantasy that we need to sacrifice the lives of some of our children so that we may be allowed to remain in the passive state of the good child who does not seek to unseat the primal deity that we have established to protect ourselves from the terror of radical and unprotected separation. The NRA will then be understood to reflect our need to have a perverse religion filled with scapegoats who will continue to protect us from our guilt. If we can find our way into the experience of our guilt, we will hear the sounds of the sacrificed children and be driven by our moral conscience to act.

*Charles Ashbach, PhD is a clinical psychologist in the Chestnut Hill area of Philadelphia. He is a founding faculty member of the International Psychotherapy Institute (IPI) and is co-author of the book: Object Relations, The Self and the Group. He is interested in the study of narcissism, trauma, war, and primitive mental states.*



---

---

#### **PSPP Member News**

Cindy Baum-Baicker, PhD, recently had two articles published:

Baum-Baicker, C. (2017) Wise elder clinicians. *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy*, Winter 2017, 53 (3), 11-16.

Baum-Baicker, C. (2017) Defining clinical wisdom. *Journal for the Advancement of Scientific Psychoanalytic Empirical Evidenc JASPER INTERNATIONAL*, 2 (1), 71- 83.

Miriam Franco, PsyD, designed a new Guided Imagery app, ImageryWork, to relieve stress and improve mood, coping, and performance. Tracks are easy to use and promote fast, effective relief from stress and anxious thinking. In addition to stress reduction tracks, there are others for special challenges, including Relieve Caregiver Stress, Defeat Dental Fears, Master Test Anxiety, Stressfree MRIs, Lower Blood Pressure, and Coping with Chronic Illness. You can download the ImageryWork app on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

Margaret Kim Peterson, PhD, who is Professor of Theology and Psychology at Eastern University, has a new publication, “Were We There to Talk about AIDS, or Not?” in *Public Seminar*, an online journal out of the New School for Social Research.

*To share your professional news in the next Currents, please email [psppeditor@gmail.com](mailto:psppeditor@gmail.com).*

## Summer/Fall 2018 Endowment Report

by Jeanne Seitler, PsyD, Endowment Chair

It is with great pleasure that I have the privilege to share with the PSPP membership the ongoing generative effect our endowment Program continues to have in our community. PSPP members are doing really interesting and impactful things in the world, and I believe our endowment program is a launching pad for many such generative efforts.

The following PSPP members applied for and received stipends from the David Ramirez Fund, assisted by allocations from the General Endowment Fund to support attendance at the 2018 APA Div. 39 Spring Meeting in New Orleans:

Mary Brennan, MS  
Hilary Hla, MA  
Margaux Ketner, BA  
Katherine Leshner, BA

Ari Pizer, PsyD received an award from the Jane Widseth Endowment Fund to attend the ASCH conference in Orlando to focus on integrating clinical hypnosis into his psychoanalytic clinical practice.

Jourdan Porter, BA was awarded funds from the Jules Abrams Endowment to allow her to present a poster at the Association for Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health (APPPAH) this October, 2018.

Although PSPP does not yet have an endowment award dedicated to psychoanalytic research, three years ago the PSPP board decided unanimously to award a gift of support to the start-up of the *Journal for the Advancement of Scientific Psychoanalytic Empirical Research (JASPER)*. The second issue of JASPER was mailed out this spring and the first issue of 2018 is being compiled this summer. The PSPP board expressed enthusiasm for this project and pride to have an opportunity to be involved at its inception.

As this endowment chair was unable to attend the PSPP Fall meetings this past year, the annual appeal for endowment giving that is usually done in person at the 2017 Fall meeting did not occur. Consequently, gifts for 2017/2018 have not yet come in as they usually do in response to the personal appeal. **I must now catch up with my endowment chair duties and request your participation through a donation before the end of 2018.**

A reminder that at this time our website software does not allow members to assign their gifts to the various endowment funds. Gifts made through the website currently go directly into the general endowment fund. The way we have decided to handle this situation for the time being is to ask you to email the endowment chair at [jseitler@gmail.com](mailto:jseitler@gmail.com) with the particulars of how you want your gift to be assigned once you have made the gift through the website. I will record your preference and relay your allocation information to the PSPP treasurer. The alternate method is to indicate your funding allocations directly on the endowment giving form after printing it out from the website. Mail it with a check made out to PSPP to Jeanne Seitler, PsyD at: **10 Garber Square Suite 5 Ridgewood, NJ 07450.**

Late Fall/Early winter is the best time to present an application for consideration for Endowment gifts, although we do consider applications throughout the academic year. You will find the PSPP endowment application on the website as well as the endowment annual gift form when you are ready to make your 2018 gift.

As I have shared in the past, your gifts and interest help us continue to support our next and future generations of psychoanalytically minded members. I want to extend a **Huge Thanks** to our consistent annual endowment supporters! And for those who have yet to give to the Endowment Program, no gift is too humble....

### PSPP Launches New Website & Listserv

by Adrian Chu, PhD

After a year of meticulous communication and planning, the new PSPP website was officially launched on June 26th, 2018! We hope that you get to enjoy the modern look of the website as well as the much improved technology that operates behind the scenes, which will allow future generations of board members more design and technical flexibility. We also switched and upgraded our listserv provider on July 16th, 2018 to a company that specializes in listservs, and we are confident that this will significantly reduce errors and downtime compared to our previous listserv provider. **Please remember to direct all future listserv messages to [pspp@lists.pspp.org](mailto:pspp@lists.pspp.org).**



A gentle reminder that this transition requires your cooperation as well—your basic membership information was migrated to the new website and you will need to take the following steps to utilize all your membership benefits:

1. Click on “Member Log In” on the top right.
2. Enter your email address as your username and then click “FORGOT PASSWORD.”
3. You will receive an email from [office@pspp.org](mailto:office@pspp.org) titled “Password Reset.” Please click on the link inside it.
4. You will be taken back to the new PSPP website to enter your new password. Please note that a mix of uppercase and lower case letters and numbers will strengthen your password.
5. After entering your new password, you will have to click on “Member Login” again on the top right, and log in with your new password.
6. After logging in, there are two options on the top right for your PSPP Account and PSPP Directory. Please note that these are independent of each other
7. To create your brand new PSPP Directory listing, please click “My Directory” and then “Create Listing” where you will add your practice information. You will NOT show up on the PSPP Member Directory until you complete this step!
8. To change your mailing address for PSPP mailings, please click “My Account” and update your information there.

Our new webmaster, Joe Altobelli, will be overseeing this transition over the next few months and also as we prepare to open registration for our Fall program, so please feel free to email him with any questions or feedback at [joe@mypracticesites.com](mailto:joe@mypracticesites.com). He designed our new website and is also offering all PSPP members a 10% discount on any of his services. You can take a look at his portfolio at [www.mypracticesites.com](http://www.mypracticesites.com).

### Mentorship Update

by Barbara L. Goldsmith, PsyD, Director & Valeriya Spektor, PhD, Asst. Dir.

As the mentorship program enters its 13th year, participation continues to grow at a steady rate. The program owes its success to all of the PSPP members who have generously volunteered their time to nurture the next generation of psychologists and social workers. We recognize that many of you have been continuously mentoring students since the inception of the program and your support is really appreciated. Thanks to all of you.

Over the past year we have had many graduate students and post-docs as well as early career professionals apply. Students from our local universities (Widener, Chestnut Hill, Temple, Immaculata, and Penn) as well as from schools all over the country. The PSPP mentoring program also collaborates on the national level with the Division 39 Scholars Program.

Dr. Valeriya Spektor, the assistant director of the program routinely checks in with mentors and mentees after their initial meeting and solicits feedback, offers help and keeps the program database current and organized. Val initiated the PSPP Mentorship Facebook Group which all members of the program can participate in. Please check it out: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/psppmentorship/>

We cannot emphasize enough, how mentoring is an important and rewarding experience for both mentee and mentor. Mentees have repeatedly told us that they find mentoring to be an invaluable experience and feel incredibly supported by their mentors. Mentors mutually reap much satisfaction from the experience as well. The benefits of mentorship are highlighted in a June 2016 article in the Monitor entitled “The Life Changing Power of Mentors”: <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/06/mentors.aspx>

At this year’s annual graduate student/mentee brunch on May 20th, we had over 40 attendees. We discussed how shame and self-disclosure in supervision can easily cause students to feel vulnerable, criticized, and on the defensive about exposing their work as psychodynamic therapists. We discussed ways to help support students and provide them with additional resources.



## Editor's Note

As I put the finishing touches on this newsletter, I am thinking about a passage from this edition's submission from Charles Ashbach. About the surge of school shootings in the U.S., he writes: "There is something emotionally 'dead' in our collective response, something 'unmourned' that allows us to absorb each successive catastrophe and continue to move onward....How are we to awaken from our long nightmare of social confusion and psychic delusion to assume a position of responsibility, humanism, and appropriate action?" I get the sense that many of us are thinking about this question or questions similar to it. From sexual harassment to school shootings to the current political climate, this edition of Currents features efforts to grapple with recent distressing developments and with those that have long been a part of us.

Burton Seitler considers the underlying dynamics of sexual harassment in light of the #MeToo movement. Using a psychoanalytic frame, Ashbach takes us deep into history in an effort to better understand school shootings and our national gun culture. Julie Mullany reflects upon the nation as a quite unwell patient and the value of getting in touch with our raw emotions about unfolding events, whether devastation in Puerto Rico or separation of families at the border.

This edition also features an excellent recap by Kee O'Toole of Dr. Richard Chefetz's presentation at PSPP's spring program, a look into Ari Pizer's experiences at a conference that integrated hypnosis and psychoanalysis, and updates about our new website, mentorship program, and endowment efforts.

I welcome ideas about future content, as well as reactions to past content. I look forward to putting out a call for new submissions this Fall. I can be reached by email at [psppeditor@gmail.com](mailto:psppeditor@gmail.com).



Josh Freker



### Board Members

Philip Rosenbaum, PhD  
**President**

Stacey Boyer, PsyD  
**Past-President**

Christine McGinnis, PsyD  
**Treasurer**

Hallie Kushner, PhD  
**Secretary**

### Directors-At-Large

Adrian Chiu, PsyD

Kathryn Cording, PsyD  
**Brunch Series Coordinator**

Ari Pizer, PsyD

Valerie Wilson, PhD

Dina Del Amo, PsyD

**Child Study Group  
& Act 48 Coordinator**

Dan Livney, PsyD

**PCOP Liaison**

David Ramirez, PhD, ABPP

**PCPE Liaison**

Jeannie Seitler, PhD

**Endowment Chair**

Sarah White, PsyD

**Membership Chair**

### Newsletter Editor

Josh Freker, LSW

### Mentoring Program Coordinators

Barbara L. Goldsmith, PsyD

Valeriya Spektor, PhD

### Graduate Student Representatives

Lara Gross, MS  
(Chestnut Hill College)

Sara Fried  
(Chestnut Hill College)

*The PSPP Newsletter is published two times a year. Contributions and comments may be sent to the Editor at [psppeditor@gmail.com](mailto:psppeditor@gmail.com). We reserve the right to edit manuscripts for length, clarity, and consistency of style.*