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Returning the Self to Professional Psychology

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by

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Abstract

The following theoretical dissertation used an object relational approach to consider integrating the self and professional psychology training. Professional psychology training once valued the emerging and diverse experiences of the trainee's self. However, the recent shift to competency based education models in professional psychology has emphasized self-competency rather than the processes that foster the integration of trainees' emerging identities. This paper argued that the competency-based education models based on positivistic science frameworks limited further dialogues of self-discovery, the processes of on-going self-reflection, and meaning making processes of self. The purpose of this dissertation was to continue the dialogue of self discovery and explore aspects of self missed by adhering to the competency model's reductionist perspective. A narrative paradigm was used to better address the constructivist and socially constructed aspects of an emerging and fluid self-experience. The project was designed to include both theoretical and personal essays on self in order to express the author's self experiences and the critical insights for training he discovered along the way as he gathered and was played upon by the literature of self and the experience of professional psychology education. The implications for the findings of this project suggested the self was located in the presence of the "other."

Keywords: psychoanalysis; self; self-awareness; reflective practice; professional psychology training; psychology education.

Preface

Introducing this study on the self and professional psychology practice was challenging for me. While it is customary for authors to introduce the importance of their topic and what compelled them to study a topic, I would rather not begin this way. Instead, permit me to say, I would rather its readers discover and use this project in a way that was important for them. In fact as I look back at these words I too have become their reader, and I am confused by what I meant. I only half recognize, among these ideas on training and myself, what they have continued on to become. Some ideas have stalled in some ways, and others have tangled up in other ideas, and surprisingly, some ideas have become central to other interests in my life. Nevertheless, these ideas once again seem to be some use for me, and if I am correct I began to write these essays on professional psychology's approach to training the self as a vehicle for me to communicate with myself, and it seems I am still doing so. I am quite pleased by this, as I did not want myself to be trained as much as I wanted to find ways to communicate with it and learn ways to listen to its communications.

Initially, I conceived this project as a strict theoretical library dissertation. There was scant literature on self education in professional psychology, and where it did exist, I believed the definitions of self were vague. I envisioned addressing the missing gap of self in the professional psychology self training literature by organizing some philosophical and psychological ideas on the continuity of self, in other words a more comprehensive idea of self. What hubris! Did I really ever imagine a solid and coherent self? Fortunately, I was overwhelmed by the scope of self in the literature, and I realized soon after beginning, my description of the self, no matter how well organized, would be cursory and perhaps only further reify self-education.

Instead, I included myself in the study. At first I assumed what I found interesting and important in the ideas of self and professional education training reveled something about me, but what I have since discovered was that these revelations were not the only important discovery. Amongst the textured and disparate body of myself I recognized a process of communication that attempted to link my past self with my emerging aspects of self, or if you will, the consolation of psychological mindedness that comes from continuing to live. What I discovered was that this type of company required a certain type of patience and craftsmanship in order to facilitate a dialogue.

My study of self education in professional psychology became a study of how I communicated with myself, which also happened to parallel goals of self education and psychological mindedness that I believed required some thoughtful consideration. My project was a self study on two levels. To do this, I used a flexible methodology that would allow me to show how I communicated with myself and what was communicated to me. I turned to the narrative research tradition of essays and the use of personal essays to share my intentions and the meaning I drew from my experiences with professional psychology. To control for self indulgence, I invited the dissertation committee to actively participate and share their self experiences reading my essays. Amazingly, for me, the recursive use of the committee's feedback did not control for self indulgence but evoked myself in ways through which I was both surprised and enriched. It was quite pleasing to listen and consider what was evoked in them and what these ideas brought to them personally and professionally.

The essays were organized in two sections. The first section included four essays on my emerging ideas of self in professional psychology. I provided a history of professional psychology's attempts and failures to address self education. Next, I briefly described some ideas

on the ontology of self and the implications for accepting an open-ended, emerging self in

training. This was followed by some ideas about the educator's role of facilitating student self

experiences. This section ended with some ideas about the educational community's cultural

approach to the self by considering the processes of mourning lost identifications and

establishing new ones through playing.

The second section included two essays on my emerging self in professional psychology.

In the first essay I shared some of my identifications and the associations that I had while

becoming a psychologist. As a young boy I found myself in books. One of my first memories

was of running away from home only to return to the small library I created in my bedroom. As I

have continued to live and relate to others, I have used literature and poetry to navigate with both

myself and others; therefore, I returned to those books to help guide me here. In the second essay

I shared my experience of communicating with myself. I attempted to show how I parceled out

my current mood with my process of love, shame, and frustration, which led me to consider

myself as a medium for life.

In writing this way, quite literally in the preface—beginning with an ending—I hoped for

others to see how this research was discovered and co-created with myself and others. I hoped

that the critical insights I had while coming upon myself would be incorporated into the

continual dialogues of self and professional psychology training.

Chapter 1: Losing the Self in Professional Psychology Education

Professional psychology education once placed the self at the center of its educational model. Singer, Peterson, and Magidson (1992), wrote, "Whatever the substantive content of the core-curriculum, it is critical during training to provide systematic attention to the nature of the relation between the self of the student and the work of professional psychology" (p. 133). However, as professional psychology education moved toward competency-based education and outcome models (Fouad et al., 2009; Peterson, Peterson, Abrams, Stricker, & Ducheny, 2009), it has moved away from integrating students' emerging identities with their self. Professional psychology's current approach to the student's self encourages the student to be a reflective pratctiioner and comply with self-competency benchmarks. Unfortunately, these models did not address the challenges of selfhood and did not provide educators with guidelines on facilitating the growth of a student's self. Furthermore, the reductionist model of comptency based education may have had adverse effects on authenticity, leaving the authors of the self-competency benchmarks to wonder, "Are we merely teaching some of them to develop more believable 'false selfs'" (Mangione & Nadkarni, 2010, p. 77)?

I believe the authors meant to answer, "Yes." While I agree with Mangione and Nadkarni's (2010) rationale that the burden of honest self sharing comes with risks, they do not address the discrepancy between the goals of previous self education models and the current competency-based education model and the impact these changes have on students' selves. The major difference between education models is that the current self education recommendations fail to accentuate the student's self and instead offer activities that have little or no resemblance to the process of selfhood.

Initially, self education was bound to "self-in-role" learning (Singer, Peterson, & Magidson, 1992). Self-in-role was conceived as a way to integrate the student's self within the multiple professional roles of a psychologist. Self-in-role also addressed the diverse ways a psychologist's self was invoked by different contexts. Along with self-in-role, educators considered the necessary environments for self learning. Singer, Smith, and Dodge-Beck (1992) described the educational holding environment necessary for the objective and subjective interplay of the trainee's self. The authors wrote, "This recalls Winnicott's concept of transitional phenomena which marks the space between 'me' and 'not-me.' It is a region between the student's internal and external worlds where ideally one may explore and integrate emerging self-in-role" (p. 10).

Self-in-role continues to provide the foundation for the self learning in the current educational model (Peterson et al. 2009). However, the use of "role" is largely reified in these classes and little focus on self. As evidenced by the syllabi for professional psychology education vehicles, there is often more emphasis to the roles of professional psychologists (i.e., assessor, educator, scientist…) than to readings about the self, psychological mindedness, or self-awareness. While the authors of self-in-role once described the necessary environments for self study, this educational narrative has been forgotten in the present education model. Currently, the education model deemphasizes exploring and emerging aspects of self and emphasizes reflective practice (Peterson et al., 2010).

The current education model and professional psychology's competency-based education model endorsed Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner model (Peterson et al., 2009; Peterson & Kenkal, 2010). D.L. Peterson (1995) wrote, perhaps skeptical of Winnicottian training cultures, "…Neither of us (Schön) has considered it necessary to fly off into an intuitive never-never land.

Reflection in action draws on past research and documented theory wherever pertinent research has been done and well-tested theories are available" (p. 980). Perhaps the influence of emerging evidenced based practice cultures changed the training narrative. It was clear that the interplay between one's emerging self and the work of a professional psychologist was being encroached upon by the need to have a well defined and documented theory that suggested what students ought to do with their selves.

Schön's (1983) approach to reflective practice neither incorporates historical aspects of one's self, nor does it address how the continuity of self connects past experiences of self with its current incarnation. Instead, Schön defined practitioners' reflective practice as an ability to instinctively manipulate information and research to attenuate methodological and technical problems of science at a local level. He then suggested that practitioners reflect on what they did in order to distill the useful aspects of that experience. In other words, Schön's reflective practitioner was another way of adding scientific knowledge to the positivistic science tradition. It was not a model that facilitated ones' experience of self.

Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner conceptualized the self as a precision instrument for observation and problem solving, but failed to consider how anyone else might use their self. In other words, the reflective practitioner was more of an ideal self or ideal use of the self. This was a major shift for self education goals in professional psychology. The reflective practitioner model developed observation skills and problem solving skills rather than fostering the development of one's unique self experience. Where at one time self learning required a space to explore the continuity of one's idiosyncratic self through self experiencing and self reflection, Schön's reflective practitioner model provided no consideration for the process of continuity.

Professional psychology self education currently faces a challenge. How do educators handle such a complicated object? The self is both an experienced and thought-about construct that grows by accretion through time. Aspects of self can be experienced through multi-sensory, intellectual, and perceptive processes. Self experiences can also be evoked from previous developmental stages of one's life. Most interesting, the self never seemed to appear as a whole unit, but its continuity suggested wholeness or completeness. Instead of staying curious about how the student uses, communicates, and constructs their self, professional psychology has lost the desire to follow the student's development of self. In its place, education offers guidelines about what an appropriate self ought to do.

While competency based education in psychology assumed knowledge was what made one's identity (i.e., knowledge of roles, knowledge of psychometrics, and knowledge of diversity…), this approach failed to consider the bidirectional aspect of self. Knowledge was both mediated through the influence of the student's self and the self was mediated through knowledge. Khan (1974) articulated the bidirectional aspect of self this way, "…Though each of us feels sure about what he means when he uses the concept of *self*, it is hard to communicate the meaning to another. And this, for me, constitutes the essential paradox of the experience of self: no one can communicate directly from his self or can be related to directly in his self. Hence, the necessity of symbolic forms" (p. 294). For Khan, the self used objects to both symbolize its desires and understand of the external world.

Earlier guidelines for self learning educational environments attempted to observe the student's symbolic attempts to use their self and knowledge to facilitate a professional training/identity narrative. However, as "role" and "competency" became reified in competency-based education, the space for meaning-making to emerge and the student's ability

to express their self has been crowded out.

   This overcrowding was what Winnicott (1960) described as "false-self phenomena." While Mangione and Nadkarni (2010) suggested that the goal of self-education for some was to develop a more believable false self, they did not wonder in what conditions and to what purpose would one facilitate a false self. Winnicott asked, "What is the equivalent of false-self phenomena in normal people?" For Winnicott, in times of health socialization and development necessitated compromise, but would Winnicott consider a time of health a training experience that filled in the gap of freedom, meaning-making, and the space of realness? I do not think so. My sense was that students in self-training believed as Winnicott believed, "The False Self defends the True Self; the True Self is, however, acknowledged as a potential and is allowed a secret life… (And) The False Self has as its main concern a search for conditions which will make it possible for the True Self to come into its own" (p. 143).

   I have no doubt that the self continues on through professional psychology training. What has been lost was the profession's desire to recognize and value the student's strivings to integrate disparate aspects of self with the here-and-now experiences of graduate education. Self learning was not about ingesting knowledge about a professional ideal, and it was not simply a task of describing one's past. Self learning once recognized the dynamic relationships students had with their self and the unique experience of integrating the act of professional psychology education with their self. When educators started telling students how they ought to be experiencing their selves the field of psychology has lost its professional identity as a curious and inviting group of professionals who valued the procession of humankinds and their continuing selves.

Chapter 2: Omitting the Self

In the Chapter, *Losing the Self in Professional Psychology Education* I attempted to show how the idea of self was omitted—literally left out—of reflective practice and self-awareness education. Now I set my sights on another meaning of omit—to leave undone—when addressing the ontology of self. The professional psychology education model does not discuss the self's existence, which hinders dialogues regarding educational goals, activities, and evaluation criteria. I use this absence to suggest a simple argument: The self is not foundational. It exists as incomplete as it is always reliant on the other. In this essay I attempt to briefly sketch out the self as a living memoir—not *Memorires D'Outre-Tombre*, but an emerging performance piece—both a one man act and ensemble.

Bollas (1995) described what is most vexing about the self. He wrote, "We can conjure any vivid self-experience simply by recollecting it, but we cannot evoke our selves by speaking our names or any other invitational act. A self experience seems ready at hand upon its calling; the self, as a presumed psychical entity, seems nowhere to be found" (p. 157). It's in this nowhereness of self that leaves open the speculation that the self is illusory and does not exist, and, not surprisingly, it is in this same nowhereness of self that leaves open the speculation that the self is foundational. I propose that it is in this gap of nowhereness, between me and not me, that there exists a relationship to self that is ongoing and never complete.

This idea came to me while reading theories of the self from an ego psychology perspective and the problems of ego identity (Erikson, 1956; Hartmann, 1952; Jacobson, 1964). While the ego psychologists articulated the various functions the ego performs, it was their claim that disintegration of the self and its relationship to distress and pathology that most resonated with me. I was entirely unconvinced. I am not ashamed to say their version of self made me feel

a little self conscious about my own fluctuating self-experiences. Thankfully, I was not alone in

my skepticism. Searles (1979), also disagreed, he argued:

> Jacobson's views are not only too technically structured, but are also expressed with too
>
> much finality, too much 'authority,' and to this extent the reader is left with a kind of
>
> sterile-finality feeling of there being nothing left to say…It does not at all adequately
>
> convey how ceaselessly conflictual, how ambivalent, human beings are concerning the
>
> development of an identity… (p. 40)

This ambivalence toward having an identity buoyed my thinking, which led me to take

serious the challenge, if what Bollas (1995) described was common for humankind, that the self

was nowhere to be found but one can conjure up any self experience, then what was one to make

of having disparate self-experiences and also claim that disunity led to one's continual identity?

Buddhist perspectives on psychology provided me with some interesting ways to

consider the question. Epstein (2007) described the broad functions of the ego according to ego

psychology. While the most commonly associated function of the ego in psychoanalysis was

ego-defense, it was important to note ego psychologists also emphasized studying and

distinguishing the structures the ego used to organize the psychic experience of phenomena.

Hence the interest in ego terms such as attention, perception, integration, and representation.

When Buddhists considered no-self in psychology, Epstein postulated that Western

psychologists often hold the mistaken view that that meant throwing out all the organizing

processes of the ego. Epstein clarified the Buddhist idea of no-self was closely associated to the

representational function of the ego—that which was closely associated with ideals, and that the

representational aspect of ego, often illusory, hindered the ongoing phenomenon of existing.

Epstein (2007) preferred to use Winnicott's neologism *unintegration* as a way to organize one's existence while diminishing the representational functions of the ego. Epstein suggested states of unintegration, was a type of synthesizing process of the ego, which allowed the person to relax and observe their own self-experiences and self-feelings without having to identify with them. Therefore, humans need not experience disintegration and psychiatric breakdown when they experience conflictual self experiences and feelings that do not correspond with their identity. Epstein summed this up as, "Rather than encouraging a consolidated ego sure of its own solidity, the Buddhist approach envisions a more fluid ego able to constantly integrate potentially destabilizing experiences of insubstantiality and impermanence" (p. 53).

The world was not lost without the representational ego as it's the anchor. The world of insubstantiality and impermanence could be used, and the self helps gave shape and texture to ordering what one can say about one's experiences. The self was not a new ego in the organizational sense, but a type of constellation of experiences that could be evoked by current experiences. The self did not tell you what to make of the world. It communicated by associations and its meaning could be polysemous. One could use disunity of self-experiences to create connections to emerging ideas and experiences in one's present context, which was usually a variable one.

I believe the ego was flexible because one is born dependant on another. As Winnicott (1956) reminded his readers there was no such thing as a baby without his mother:

The word infant implies 'not-talking' (infans) and it is not un-useful to think of infancy as the phase prior to word presentation and the use of word symbols. The corollary is that it refers to a phase in which the infant depends on maternal care that is based on maternal empathy rather than on understanding of what is or could be verbally expressed…I am

here supporting the view that the main reason why in infant development the infant usually becomes able to master, and the ego to include, the id, is the fact of maternal care, the maternal ego implementing the infant ego and so making it powerful and stable. (pp. 40-41)

Furthermore, Winnicott (1971) described the process of selfhood in terms of transitional areas and phenomena. The space between the mother and infant dyad established the illusion of omnipotence for the infant, and through the gradual instances of maternal failure the infant began to identify not me objects. In an attempt to control these not-me objects, the infant imbued his objects with special meanings. These were for Winnicott the transitional objects. Transitional objects are the infant's attempts of creating a self by using the world around him.

 I believe Winnicott (1971) is a new kind of anti-idealist. His ideas of selfhood, even though he uses the language of True Self, did not conceive of the self as the foundational of reality or knowing. For Winnicott one cannot know the self or the world as a thing in itself. One knew their self *and* the world as their current experience. Winnicott's paper *The Use of the Object* demonstrates that Winnicott was never interested in the self and the world outside of their interaction. In the paper he refers to a subject who can use something in the world as anything he wants, He can pick up a pencil and fly it around the room until it crashes and burns in an imaginary jetsam. Because the pencil can be picked up again and be used again as anything (i.e., writing implement, drum stick…) the world continues to exist. One's subjective experience was nourished by the object world, and the world was made meaningful by one's subjective experience. One's ability to use the world and be influenced by the world constituted a relationship between the self and the world. Neither was a thing itself.

I see a parallel between Paul Ricoeur's description of a "passivity" of otherness in selfhood, and Winnicott's (1965) mother-infant dyad. As Ricoeur's (1992) title, *Oneself as Another,* suggests, one's identity exists in relation to the other. While there appears to be two distinct people in the mother-infant dyad Winnicott writes extensively on the existence of a latent dependence on the mother to facilitate the experiences of the infant. Ricoeur describes three passivities or latencies that discredit the self as foundational, and places the self as dependant on its relation to another. He wrote:

> In this regard, I suggest as a working hypothesis what could be called the *triad of passivity and hence, otherness*. First there s a passivity represented by the experience of one's own body—or better, as we shall say later, of the *flesh*—as the mediator between the self and a world which is itself taken in accordance…Next, we find the passivity implied by the relation of the self to the *foreign*, in the precise sense of the other (than) self, and so the otherness inherent in the relation of intersubjectivity. Finally, we have the most deeply hidden passivity, that of the relation of the self to itself, which is *conscience* in the sense of *Gewissen* (Consciousness) rather than of *Bewusstein.* (Awareness, p. 318, my parentheses defining German words)

From these ontological perspectives, the self is not foundational and the self is established and maintained through the continual interplay between one's experience and the outside world.

Regarding implications for professional psychology education of the self, it would seem that this ontological perspective of self does not fit in with professional psychology's competency-based education model. Competency education models, customarily a positivist tradition, assume phenomena can be experienced outside of the human context of experience.

This is a reductionist model for comptency, and it postulates that phenomena of self are well defined and that the benchmarks reflect all there is to know about the topic. For the competency-based model it is assumed students have a self and that through revealing the self to teachers those students can be evaluated on whether or not their self is competent for the role of psychologist.

On the contrary, as I have argued above, the self is never completely defined in the process of revealing. Revealing the self is a process of discovering the interdependence and latent connections to the other. A constructivist epistemology is much better equipped to investigate and elaborate on the self's protean and dependent presentations. Furthermore, because the self is—as another, there is room for narratives about one's intentions and the meaning making aspects that depict how one made sense of their relationship to otherness. Bollas (1992) offers a convenient way of understanding this. He divided self-experiences into simple and complex, where the former were the actual felt experiences of the self and the latter were designated for thinking about and elaborating the meaning of self-experiences. Through narratives of one's self, students and faculty can share dialogues about student's self experiences and use descriptive evaluation narratives that foster continual feedback and growth. Furthermore, dialogues about self offer a more accessible and nuanced understanding of the student's self when considering issues of competency.

To recapitulate, I have briefly articulated the idea that the self is not a construct that can be considered complete. While many authors have considered the self to be a stable construct that organizes one's reality, this definition of self does not capture the mutability of self experiences and the location of the self outside of itself. Instead, authors of psychotherapy and philosophy have considered how a self can tolerate destabilization, and, upon more

consideration, there appears to be dialectic of oneself and another. This continual mediation of

self between itself and another precludes the self from being a foundational entity (i.e., a thing in

itself). The self processes of experiencing itself and making meaning about one's experience is a

process best framed by a constructivist epistemology and requires flexible methodologies like

narrative research to provide a way of communicating, observing, and appreciating one's self.

Chapter 3: Returning the Self to Professional Psychology

Johannes Climacus, as Kierkegaard wanted *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* cited, wrote "My main thought was that, because of the copiousness of knowledge, people in our day have forgotten what it means *to exist* and the meaning of *inwardness*" (p. 249). Nowhere is this more evident than in professional psychology training, which led, Ladany (2007) to quip, "With most of the focus on knowledge, it would arguably seem, looking from the outside, that knowledge gained is the primary outcome of graduate training, with psychotherapy skills coming in a distant second, and self-awareness coming sometime after lunch" (p. 392).   As I argued in *Losing the Self in Professional Psychology,* self learning, in competency-based models has emphasized knowledge about a professional ideal of self and diminished the importance of exploring and integrating a student's emerging self with the profession. With this new focus came a shift in the educator's role.

In the comptency-based model, for their part, professional psychology educators have taken up the role of expert on the self. Unfortunately, the expert of the self is not a tenable position when trying to invoke the student's honest and authentic responses to the self. In this essay I outline some problems of self-experts and how this approach limits dialogue about the self. I also propose that educators approach facilitating the student's self experience by observing their own thoughts and feelings evoked by the student's self, and encourage educators to acknowledge their student's experience in a way that continues the dialogue of the student's self experience.

To begin with, what might an expert be for? Phillips (1995) suggested experts were for ending questions. He wrote:

Children unavoidably treat their parents as though they were experts on life. They, and

other adults, are the people from whom the child learns what is necessary. But children

make demands on adults which the adults don't know what do with…Often, from the

child's point of view, answers merely interrupt questions…The adults are not fully

competent with their own instruments, but there is nobody else for the child to appeal to.

Children go on asking, of course, but eventually they have to settle for the adult's

exhausted impatience, and the fictions of life. Experts, like parents barraged by

unanswerable questions from children, are sought out and expected to know the

answers—all the answers. (p. 1)

Educators like parents are presented with a problem, how do they look like authorities

while still in the process of discovery themselves? Another problem for educators in a

professional guild is that if they tell student's what the profession thinks is a competent self skill,

behavior, or attitude, all they are going to get from the student is his attempts to tell them about

his competent self. It is not uncommon for students to present themselves in the best light. This

dilemma is particularly infuriating for educators and students who both at some level believe this

self learning arrangement to be spurious and vapid.

While competency clearly has a place in the dialogue of professional psychology practice

and training, its central placement has greatly limited the scope and depth of emerging self

dialogues. In the competency frame students either are competent or not competent, and any

further dialogues are in the form of remediation plans. Obviously, educators need a process to

deal with issues of comptency; however, it should not be the framework for organizing classes

and dialogues about the self.

Educators face a choice: Do they continue being an expert about competent selves and end discovery or do they become an expert on facilitating students' self-experiences and deal with comptency issues that arise? For me, it is obviously the latter. The role of the self educator is to allow her students to exist and acknowledge their existence.

In order for educators to experience their students' selves they need to allow students to exist. Through existing educators can observe how the student makes use of their self and their world. Winnicott (1960) wrote, "Feeling real is more than existing; it is finding a way to exist as oneself, and to relate to objects as oneself, and to have a self into which to retreat for relaxation" (p. 117). For Winnicott this type of existing resulted through a particular kind of object presenting—a way of presenting an object so that the person can use the object in a unique way. This type of object presenting can be done without another impinging meaning on the other person's use.

In education, students elaborate their self by using the material (i.e., readings, lectures, practica experiences…) of the profession in their unique way. This allows the student to use and find what matters to them. This provides students ways to understand their intentions, how they use things, and how they outgrow and discover emerging aspects of their selves. This requires a different kind of educational expert, an expert that allows students to define the meaning of their usage of objects and experiences. These new experts are not just educators of content as much as guardians of space. They are responsible for maintaining unanswerable questions and preventing answers to collapse into rigid definition.

The educators' approach to the student's self is not unlike the mother's role to her new born child. Winnicott (1960) wrote, the "Essential maternal function enables the mother to know about her infant's earliest expectations and needs, and makes her personally satisfied in so far as

the infant is at ease. It is because of this identification with her infant that she knows how to hold

her infant, so that the infant starts by existing and not by reacting" (p. 148). If an educator can

identify with his student's self, the process of identification allows the student to express himself

while the teacher is preoccupied with understanding the student's self. It is because of this space

that the student's self is allowed to emerge with, rather than react to, the educational

environment. The teacher's focus is on identifying with the student and not on force feeding the

student on what he needs to be to become a psychologist.

It is this identifying-with-the-student stance of the self educator that needs more clarity

and guidance. Providing an unburdening stance is probably easier to conceive than the process of

identifying with the student's self.

The questions that came to my mind were, "What happens to the facilitator's self when

identifying with the other?" and "What does the educator do with their own process of

identification?" Here I look to psychoanalytic authors and their description on their own self

experience while experiencing their analysand's self (Bion, 1979; Bollas, 1992, 1995; Eigen,

1996; Ogden, 2004; Winnicott, 1971). I am helped by Bollas' (1992) concept of unconscious

communication. This idea supposes that human communication is tuned into more than just

verbal and non-verbal cues, and that human's are "internally shaped by the presence and actions

of others" (p. 56). The point of unconscious communication was a way for the analyst to stay

open to whatever feelings or thoughts the analysand invoked in her.

Bion (1979) and subsequent writers like Ogden (2004), described their attention as

"reverie." It was a form of free association for the analyst that allowed the analysand's words

and presence to shape and transform the analyst's experience so as to coalesce with the

analysand's experience. According to Ogden, "No possible interpretation or response was to be

reflexively dismissed or stifled. It required enormous psychological effort…to resist becoming mechanical, detached, or imitative of an idealized version of (one's) own analyst" (p. 47). Interestingly, many of Bion's patients remarked how his interpretations were transformations of their own words that contained a hint of Bion's zenic personality (Grostein, 2007).

Bollas (1992), too, wrote about using the psychoanalyst's free associations. Bollas suggests that no matter what the content of the analysand's free associations the analyst can elaborate on the other's associations. The conditions of psychoanalysis afford the analyst much quiet time, and while, "the patient struggles with the rhetoric burden of narration, the analyst is lost in a world of thought" (p. 109). The freedom that arises for the analyst to think and feel is a process to be shared with the analysand. Bollas devoted much thought in his writings to differentiate his internal experiences of thoughts and feelings as a process of wondering and exploring rather than taking those thoughts and feelings as evidence for a solution to a problem. Bollas suggests that "even if the analyst thinks much of such inner associating is lucid, it is not" (p. 109). In other words, one's "gut feelings" or "emotional reasoning" was not to be ossified as the formal answer to the client's experience. The analyst's free-associating is an act of receiving the other and responding to the other spontaneously in an unending pursuit toward understanding.

I see a parallel between the analyst's reveries and free-associations, and an educator's approach to understanding a student's self. Being quiet and allowing the student to describe their experience allows for the student's self to emerge unencumbered, and the educator's self is invoked and used to understand the student. Similar to Eigen's (1996) take on Winnicott's capacity for "waiting-in-aliveness," the educator's internal word is active and being played upon

by the student. The educator has the "capacity to be alone" with their thoughts and feelings that were evoked by the student's experience.

Bollas (1992) believed that "unconscious communication is enhanced if the analyst can disclose to the analysand mental contents of his own that are still unconscious but seem of particular—and spontaneous—relevance to the reported mental contents of the analysand" (p. 102). The educator, like an analyst giving a good interpretation, shares their aliveness by returning their experience of the student's self experience. The intention of the educator's response is that it is not so far from the student's self-experience that the association feels meaningless, but not so close to the student's experience that the response ends further dialogue. All dialogues need a little foreignness to elicit further responses

As I approach a conclusion, I want to briefly return to the idea of authenticity and the risk of being seen by an educator. Mangione and Nadkarni (2010), the authors of the relational competency which houses the self domain, speculate that students are weary of allowing their selves to be seen due to the inherent risk of self disclosure and that education communities must respect privacy and due-process. I agree.

Due process and privacy are civil and appropriate courtesies that should be afforded to students. Self learning educational vehicles should be places where students feel free to bring up what they want and what they are comfortable talking to others about. My main criticism of competency models for self learning is that they are not designed to afford students to risk being seen. I believe students are willing to talk about their selves, but the comptency model reflects back to the student an image of what the profession preferred that students look like.

While the process of self education must allow students to exist, it is also imperative that the educator acknowledges that the student exists. The use of free-association by the educator

allows the educator to exist with the student, and by returning the student's self through

dialogue, the educator acknowledges the student's experience of self.

Returning the student's self is crucial. For Winnicott (1971), the self was returned

through the mirror-role of the mother. Through satisfactory holding the mother did not violate

the infant's illusion of omnipotence, which established a freedom to use the object. It is through

this process of mirroring that the child risked looking. Winnicott wrote, "When I look, I am seen.

So I exist. I can now afford to look and see. I now look creatively, and what I apperceive I also

perceive. In fact, I take care not to see what is not there to be seen" (p. 114).

Winnicott (1971) emphasized the difference between perception and apperception.

Alienation of the self for Winnicott was when the illusion of the mirror-role did not reflect the

infant's experience, but only displayed the mother's experience. In this case, the mirror's role of

facilitating apperception was usurped by the mother's needs (or, in educations case, the

profession's needs), and the infant began perceiving his world for clues on how to react to the

mother, rather than existing and creating his self. This type of mirror is truly distorting.

Similarly, Lacan believed that the mirror-stage totally alienated the infant from his self,

but for Winnicott the mirror illusion did not lead to alienation as long as the mother satisfactorily

reflected the infant's self back. Furthermore, the mirror-role of the mother, being more than an

image to be perceived, was creatively endowed by the infant. The Winnicottian mirror, rather

than a continual terror of alienation and impossible desires (in Lacan's case), could become an

area for self-creating. From this view, there was pleasure and aliveness from being seen. The

infant was creatively making their self, through mirroring, as long as someone was willing to

recognize the infants self strivings.

To recapitulate the theme, self learning, must allow students' selves to emerge, rather than suggest a professional ideal of a psychologist's self. As students begin to exist, educators can identify with the student's expressions of self and be evoked by and return to the student their own experiences of the student's self that furthers the continual creation of their identity. Self education, like psychotherapy is not telling the student about his self. Winnicott (1971) both warned and advised, "Psychotherapy is not making clever and apt interpretations, by and large it is a long-term giving the patient back what the patient brings in…I like to think of my work this way, and to think that if I do this well enough the patient will find his or her own self and we will be able to exist and to feel real" (p. 117).

Finally, I am wary about psychology's attempts to complete all the gaps of experience with knowledge. When it comes to the self some pits are verdurous. As a profession we must stay alive while falling into our students' processes of contacting their self. Currently, professional psychology education has lost its faith in this lacunosity, and ignores the potential self-experiences that shape their students' academic life and work. The profession must consider returning the self to education. The beginning of civil discourse on the self begins by recognizing the student's strivings for self and respecting the student's process. It is in the process of self elaboration that returning items becomes the greatest act of civility.

Chapter 4: Mourning and Playing in Professional Psychology Cultures

In graduate school, Peterson's (2004) article on evaluation cultures of professional psychology education programs made a lasting impression on me. I admired his prose style, altogether elegant, cogent, and urbane—it made reading and thinking a pleasure. His scope of interests was both sweeping and evocative, and I found myself in many of his ideas on Romantic and Modernist evaluation traditions in professional psychology education. However, I was not buoyed by his hopes of creating a professional culture of collegiality between students and faculty. Not because that was not an admirable goal, but I could not agree with his recommendations to attain the goal which suggested "putting aside primary identifications."

Peterson's (2004) main point suggested new identifications could be formed through faculty modeling, but by doing so, Peterson ignored what was essential to the Romantic view of man. "What mattered most," wrote Symington (1986), "was not so much the subject matter or technique, whether it be in literature, poetry, painting, music, or architecture, but the authenticity of inner feeling…nothing was so abhorrent to the Romantic as someone who just copied the technique or style of another" (p. 74). Currently, professional psychology education cultures invite student's to do just that. My impression was that putting aside primary identifications might not be so easy, and more problematic was that professional psychology education lacked dialogue about losing one's self in training. Cultures in professional psychology education rarely addressed mourning the loss of past identifications and lacked a cultural approach for students to re-experience their self.

Peterson's (2004) recommendations for putting the self aside and engaging in modeling seemed an improbable outcome for the self in learning. The pursuit of community based on collegiality denied the dialectic processes of discord and reconciliation. Peterson's

recommendations seemed to offer a standard of relating between students and faculty, yet he did

not consider how dismantling one's identifications might be difficult and ignored the interesting

experiences that came about from that struggle. Peterson (2004) wrote:

> Often among students (as well as with psychologists in general) there is an over
>
> identification of theory with self. It is not much of an exaggeration to suggest that some
>
> transactions carry the implicit message "to disagree with my theory is to devalue and
>
> attack me." The evaluation of competencies is often experienced by students as an
>
> evaluation of personhood. An inevitable part of substantial learning, especially for
>
> sophisticated students, is the uncomfortable experience of feeling deskilled, feeling that
>
> one's previous learning was trivial, narrow, or outdated. A more productive frame would
>
> be to identify oneself, instead as a thoughtful person who can listen, change, grow and
>
> develop competencies, putting aside primary identification as, for example, an object
>
> relations type or a cognitivst. Then, the process of leaving behind an old way of thinking
>
> and being open to a new one becomes evidence of growth and evolution, not imminent
>
> threat. When this perspective is central to the training culture, open participation in the
>
> evaluative process and resulting change is evidence of strength, not weakness. (pp.
>
> 424-425)

For Peterson (2004) the way towards collegiality lay with our buried identifications, but

he failed to address whether or not one could easily put aside primary identifications. While in

agreeance with Peterson's (2004) observations that identifications were present in educational

cultures, I cannot imagine how students and faculty would readily give up their identifications,

and do I think old identifications can or should be discarded for new ones without space for

ambivalence and play. Our identifications populate our psychic world. They provide personal

meaning for us. When they are severed or severely altered we mourn their loss, establish new connections, and thereby new identities.

In *Mourning and Melancholia,* Freud (1917) compared and contrasted typical aspects of mourning with pathological experiences of melancholia and mania, and applied psychoanalytic observations of the object on one's self; thereby, creating an account of our internalizations and the mechanisms that shape our self. "In mourning," Freud wrote, "the world has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego that has become so" (p. 314). Freud was puzzled by the patient's lost self-esteem as a result of object loss. He described how the field found "…ourselves facing a contradiction which presents us with a mystery that is difficult to solve. Following the analogy with mourning, we were obliged to conclude that he has suffered a loss of object; his statements suggest a loss of his ego" (p. 314). *Mourning and Melancholia,* while heavily populated with Freud's language of economics and drives, also provided a base ground for object relations to conceptualize how objects affect our sense of self.

For Freud the loss of the object could be a person or aspect of a person. Whether or not it was known did not matter. What mattered was that the person experiencing the loss experienced disruption in their sense of self. Freud (1917) wrote:

There is then no difficulty in reconstructing this process. An object-choice had occurred a bond had been formed between the libido and a particular person; through the influence of a real slight or disappointment on the part of the beloved person, that object relation had been subjected to a shock. The result of this was not the normal one of the withdrawal of the libido from this object and its displacement on to a new one, but another which seems to require a number of different conditions in order to come into being. Investment in objects proved not to be very resistant and was suspended. The free

libido was not, however, displaced on another object, but instead drawn back into the

ego. But it did not find any application there, but served to produce an identification of

the ego with the abandoned object. In this way the shadow of the object fell upon the ego,

which could now be condemned by a particular agency as an object, as the abandoned

object. Thus the loss of object had been transformed into a loss of ego. (p. 316)

For Freud, mourning and melancholia were both imbued with a tension to establish,

maintain, and sever ties to love objects that were knotted up with one's sense of identity. Freud's

economic and drive language provide an apt metaphor considering the temporal processes

needed for unraveling of identifications. Melancholia, for Freud (1917), was the pathological

investment of the libido on the narcissistic object. In other words, the person invested their own

ego with the object's rejection, and slowly tormented their self for the loss. Mania, on the other

hand, deals with the same "complex" as melancholia. However, the economic investment of

energy overcomes the loss of the object immediately. "In mania," wrote Freud (1917):

The ego must have overcome the loss of the object (or mounding over the loss, or

perhaps the object itself), and now the total amount of counter-investment that the painful

suffering of melancholia had drawn and bound to itself from the ego has become

available. The manic person also unmistakably demonstrates his liberation from the

object from which he had been suffering by pouncing on his new object-investments like

a ravenous man. (p. 321)

Perhaps Freud found the slow unraveling aspects of melancholia normative. Clearly he

understood or came to accept that mourning took time to establish new love ties, yet when he

described the rapacious energy of mania he wondered, "We might perhaps imagine that this

process of dissolution takes place so slowly and gradually that by the time it is over the

expenditure of energy required for its accomplishment has been dispersed" (p. 322). Curiously,

Freud's title is not *Mourning, Melancholia, and Mania*. The aim might not have been his most

salient point as much as the process of gradual discharge.

If it is the case, that the process of mourning identifications requires a slow unwinding, it

is no wonder that Freud (1917) suggested, "The loss of love-objects is an excellent opportunity

for the ambivalence of love relationships to come to the fore" (p. 318). And here there is a

necessary contradiction, what compels one to create new love attachments is the tension to

maintain previous connections that were replete with pleasure and that had become just as un-

pleasurable. One's identification has both attractive and repulsive qualities that require work to

create a new understanding. Some have argued there is something valuable to be gained from

their tension. Kris (2010) considered the necessity of unlearning when considering education. He

wrote:

> When I speak of unlearning in psychoanalysis I have in mind not only cognitive
>
> retraining but *revision of identifications and processes of mourning*. The tension between
>
> innovation and conservation surely creates resistances in both directions…I view that
>
> tension as a divergent conflict which the elements pull in opposite directions and require
>
> painful alternations between the two sides, with the expectation of loss of one or the
>
> other, in order to reach resolution—that is, a process akin to mourning. (p. 1)

It is not surprising to me that Freud's and Kris's language suggests a struggle—pain

even—when one is coming to terms with losing and then settling on a new identification.

Peterson's (2004) observation that we all have identifications and are prone to taking our

knowledge personally contrasted his recommendation for an easy going resolution through

relinquishment. I am however, sympathetic to Peterson's reluctance to acknowledge a student's

process of mourning. I imagine faculty are more attracted to students' attempts at learning and

becoming, and repulsed by the students' attempts at unlearning. Peterson described the risk of a

faculty being exposed to students' observations and frank feedback, and I suspect this risk is due

to the student's unappealing aspects of unlearning. Students' disappointment can lead to

disillusionment, which can lead to rudeness and hurt feelings. However, I recommend that this

rudeness must be evaluated not so much as a static characteristic of the student, but as a dynamic

aspect of becoming a professional psychologist. My main fear is that as the profession gravitates

toward evaluating the person of the therapist, standards for evaluation will overlook the

ambivalence produced by learning and unlearning, and the community will evaluate student's

disillusionment without considering the self in the educational context of loss.

It has not been lost on me that my insistence of valuing mourning in the evaluation

culture of professional psychology education is rather dour and brutish. I loathe imagining

learning-institution housing only wounded people pulled in fickle directions by encounters with

new knowledge and self-experiences. However, true to mourning, it's hard to imagine something

from the outside world providing anything worthwhile. Mourning is like a spell that we can only

break when we wonder what to make of our disillusionment. However, if I am to consider

mourning and the process of disillusionment, then it would be more than fitting to discuss the

role of illusionment in the evaluation cultures of professional psychology education.

Phillips (1988) presented a discerning description of what different traditions in

psychoanalysis made with disenchantment. He wrote, "Freud and Klein had emphasized the role

of disillusionment in human development, in which growing up was a process of mourning, for

Winnicott there was a more primary sense in which development was a creative process of

collaboration. Disillusionment presupposed sufficient illusionment. For the infant at the very

beginning, given a holding environment, desire was creative rather than simply rapacious" (p. 101). Our losses do not necessarily make us greedily search for objects to fulfill a void within us. Our disillusionment could be the place of creation. One could utilize the dross to continue the self. From the Winnicottian, or romantic tradition, mourning was not the entire cultural story of maturation or professionalism. Encountering mourning did not necessitate the end of growth.

Notice the similarities and divergences between mourning and the creative process. According to Winnicott,

> Its (transitional phenomena) fate is to be gradually allowed to be decathected, so that in the course of years it becomes not so much forgotten as relegated to limbo. By this I mean that in health the transitional object does not 'go inside' nor does the feeling about it necessarily undergo repression. It is forgotten and it is not mourned. It loses meaning, and this is because the transitional phenomena have become diffused, have spread out over the whole intermediate territory, between inner 'psychic reality' and the 'external world as perceived by two persons in common,' that is to say, over the whole cultural field. (Phillips, 1988, p. 118)

Within Winnicott's metaphor there is a gradual loss of energy similar to the mourned object. However, for Winnicott, the loss does not necessitate mourning, primarily because there is an opening for future creation to represent what one was becoming. Freud's metaphor of energy only takes us so far. Mourning can be seen as approaching a resolution, but it is entirely bound up in one goal—maturation to a depressive position. Winnicott presented a wilier approach. Winnicott proposed humans both lose and create their self through spontaneous, free, and alive gestures. Particularly, if one has sufficient room to play.

Furthermore, while Freud's and Klein's theory of maturation conceives the cultural field

moving toward disillusionment and accepting a resolution of drives based on compromise, guilt,

and shame, Winnicott on the other hand observed other possibilities. Again Phillips (1988)

sketch's out the difference:

> Prior to Winnicott's conceptualizing all that was transitional in human experience,
>
> psychoanalysis, broadly speaking, had been a theory of subjects in some kind of
>
> instinctual relation to objects. From Winnicott's point of view, it had not taken sufficient
>
> notice of the space between them, except as an obstacle. In this space, desire crystallized;
>
> the fantasized wish to merge with or annihilate the object was an attempt to pre-empt the
>
> space, and a capacity to mourn the object constituted the space as real. But this space was
>
> also used by children to play in. Children's play was not only the child's more less
>
> disguised representations of a craving for the object, but the child's finding and becoming
>
> a self. (p. 118)

The ability to play bestowed personal meaning on experience. The outcome for Winnicott

was considerably different, and rather than resolving the drives Winnicott suggested we were

creating meaning for ourselves. It is here that disillusionment becomes the field of play. Phillips

(1988) wrote:

> Transitional phenomena provided a non-compliant solution to the infant's loss of
>
> omnipotence. It was disillusioning for the infant to discover the mother as real and
>
> beyond magical control. But development through the use of transitional phenomena was
>
> not for Winnicott, as it was for Freud, a process of cumulative disillusionment; it was not
>
> a growing capacity for mourning, but a growing capacity to tolerate the continual and

increasingly sophisticated illusionment-disillusionment-re-illusionment process through

the life cycle. (p. 121)

Likewise, within professional psychology education cultures, the capacity to mourn

would be incomplete without considering how students create their self after losing it through

professional training.

As I approach an ending, let me address one more thing that came up in my reading of

Peterson (2004). He recommended that evaluation rich cultures replace evaluation free

environments or what he calls "Winnicottian training environments". His main argument was

that in evaluation free environments there was no anxiety or risk which generally resulted in a

spurious sense of mastery. He suggested, at least in "an evaluation rich culture one knows where

one stands." However, I believe risk free environments to be a misrepresentation of the romantic

evaluation culture. Peterson presented a narrow view of transitional spaces. There is considerable

anxiety in transitional spaces. According to Winnicott (1971), "Play is immensely exciting. It is

exciting *not primarily because the instincts are involved*, be it understood! The thing about

playing is always the precariousness of the interplay of personal psychic reality and the

experience of control of actual objects. This precariousness of magic itself, magic that arises in

intimacy, in a relationship is being found to be reliable" (p. 47). In other words, there is always a

risk because one's control is always precarious and one's personal psychic reality cannot

maintain the environment. If the child cannot hear "no," there is no room to play.

As I stated at the beginning, Peterson (1994) let me express myself in multiple ways—it

was my playground. As I edit these papers I am reminded by myself that I wrote many papers

based on ideas I had while thinking about this paper. In my first year of training, I attempted to

write a five page paper enumerating his misconceptions of Winnicottian training environments.

Since then, I have come back to his paper and attempted four or five more versions. What has changed you may ask? While the scope of my ideas has come to include ideas of mourning and the slowness associated with learning and unlearning, I am struck by how angry my earlier attempts sounded when I re-read them. Clearly, Peterson was onto something when he stated how brutal students and faculty were regarding their identifications. As I re-read and re-wrote my works I found my tone to be rude, uptight, and inconsiderate. Snotty even! It wasn't until I explored and played around with ideas of melancholy and wondered why I took myself so seriously did I begin to feel more playful—relaxed even. The ideas of loss and disillusionment came about from my angry reactions and I was able to incorporate these ideas into this narrative.

My disillusionment and anger toward training reminded me of Charles Seashore's (1975) commencement paper to the candidates and faculty of the Washington School of Psychiatry Training Program, in which he noticed, "The difficulties of students are remarkably similar despite dramatic differences in faculty, program design, and resources; that a humanistic process of professional development was a contradiction of terms, and that professional development is a big pain in the ass" (p. 2). I now come to believe that both Peterson and I share similar hopes for attenuating the complicated aspects of self disillusionment and illusionment in professional development. I believe that no matter what occurs in education it will be a big pain in the ass and what comes from the topsy-turvy process of the self in professional development contributes to the pressure. Where Peterson and I disagree sits between our approaches to these complications. Perhaps it is my nascent view but I believe the more we as a community of educators and students observe and acknowledge our losses and creations the more we can impart to each other what it means to be human and striving for change.

Chapter 5: Associating With Myself

The second half of this project is designed to explore my emerging experiences and thoughts on becoming a psychologist. As I explained in the preface of this study, I believe my emerging ideas of self training in professional psychology are intertwined with my experience and understanding of myself. Rather than pretend that my ideas are purely objective, I want to show readers that these ideas are not foundational for the field of psychology training but what I make of self-training. I offer my perspective in hopes that these ideas of identity can further dialogues about *who* is a professional psychologist and *what* the profession does to further develop and understand students' identities. The following are two associative stories I had when I consider myself and training as a psychologist. Both images, better yet visions, came to me while I was day-dreaming prior to beginning training and amidst training. I present these visions of myself and then elaborate on their personal meaning and the elements of education that invoked these experiences.

The first vision I had about being a psychologist came to me prior to starting training in clinical psychology. I was working as a special education teacher and in my spare time I wrote short stories.

The scene that came to me was an image of a boy and an old man sitting in an airy, sun lit room. All I could see was the boy, his clothes, shoes, and chair; and the old man's legs and the honey colored pine floor. No one was talking, it was quiet, and the only movement was the tiny dust shimmering in the sunlight. The boy's and old man's clothes were rustic and anachronistic—the boy wore a cap and suspenders, and the old man's legs were in trousers. The boy and old man sat in sturdy, old fashioned caned chairs. The only distraction from the quietness arose from the stress of the caning and the friction of the legs on the wooden floor. The

old man and boy did not talk and they sat across from each other. Neither was rushed and neither was anticipating anything to come. They were sitting amongst the slowness, within the creaks of wood, and floating with the stardust. When it was time to leave, the boy was given a book. The book was paper backed and heavy. It was not placed in his hands. It was just in his hands with no further instruction. The boy got up and left with the same slowness and tenderness as he had as when he sat, and the old man continued sitting with his hands resting on his upper thighs.

The scene reminded me of sitting with my therapist. I wrote a paper for my first year intervention course about his qualities as a therapist. I wrote about the smell and sights of the room, and the way we interacted over the years. What stood out to me most of all was, "While I identified with him," as I wrote then, "I was no sycophant." The teacher asked in the margins, "How was that possible?" I don't know whether she was curious or incredulous, because the paper was the end of the discussion. The comment became food for thought. After all those years I return to chew on that question.

Instead of answering it, I asked another question: "What am I to make about my identification with my therapist?"

In my own personal mythology, I look back at my years in therapy as an apprenticeship. It seemed from an early age I was looking for a profession. As a young boy I identified with my father's high school basketball stardom and our local Catholic priest's wisdom and kindness. I am not sure if it is fortunate or not, but my unaggressive and day-dreaming nature did not correspond to the competitive world of basketball, and in church. I tended to ignore most of the sermons and fantasize about sex and action movies. By my early teens both my identifications as a basketball player and priest ended when I realized I would never be a 1000-point scorer and with the young death of the reverend.

As I look back, I started therapy just after these two events. I was desolate, alone with considerable anxiety about the world and my place in it. So when I say I was looking for an apprenticeship, one can see that I am being quite literal. However, this was an unconventional apprenticeship. Similar to Pip, the boy from the forge in Dickens' *Great Expectations,* I had no idea who my benefactor was.

My experience in apprenticeship was never straightforward. I was never told I would be a psychologist. I just talked and listened. My therapist asked questions about my life and when I felt like I was being stage-managed he apologized and confided in me that he was just lost and trying to understand my experience. We first met while I was in high school and we continued through my college years. At the completion of my sophomore year, I realized I had taken most of the pre-requisite classes for a degree in psychology—I assumed it was because I was interested in and enjoyed going to therapy—so I majored in psychology.

When I finished my undergraduate, my therapist gave me a bunch of old psychology books he did not want and thought I might be interested in. What a gesture! But a gesture of what? The books neither told me why I so much enjoyed therapy nor did they tell me how to be a therapist. I used the books in my own way. It was up to me. I picked up books with interesting and confusing titles, like cybernetics and structural theory, and when I was too confused or bored I put them down and read something else. I was most certainly adrift with the history of psychology, but in that drift I found ideas and passages that evoked different ways for me to experience the world.

Before I wrote these essays I had some ideas that disturbed me. I wondered if my therapist was setting me up all along to be a psychologist (mostly these thoughts occurred to me when I was struggling with work, facing difficult clients, getting negative feedback from

professors, and any other time people did not get my jokes or misunderstood me), but I remembered his favorite quote from Lampadussa's *The Leopard,* "Things must change in order to stay the same." He never taught me a specific skill and he never explained his paradoxical statements. I found that I gave meaning to his words. I thought the statement was more akin to saying: "If you want to be like me (the therapist) you will have to stay the same." As I see now, I wanted to be just like my therapist. I could mimic his sayings and contort my voice to sound like his. I could organize my office like his and I could organize the hour like he did. However, as I found out later, I could not experience the world like him. I had to come to my own terms with the world and my experiences.

Temperamentally, we are different, he would describe himself as an insensitive klutz and I would describe myself as an overly sensitive klutz. Besides his acceptance of my wild indignations he allowed me and respected my reactivity as another way to be in the world. For this I am grateful. I cannot pretend to be someone else very long. I had to get a sense of myself in order to know how to impart myself in the world. He left me to do my heavy lifting. My reactivity is my greatest strength and my greatest weakness. Some of those heavy books he gave me remain on my shelves as a reminder that they were touched by two different types of people. I know what it's like to open those books, and I am sensitive to others who know for themselves.

From a Freudian perspective, one might say that without my identifications of the father as basketball player, priest, and therapist I would be overcome with the guilt of my desire. My apprenticeship was just a way to find suitable identifications, and I was inevitably looking to find a new role when the other identifications were lost. In fact, my therapist's favorite saying would still work in this perspective. From this perspective my benefactor (and tormentor) was my

desire and concomitant guilt, but I believe another conferred this bequest on me. My benefactor was my self.

Not everyone that goes to therapy looking for a new identification comes out as a psychologist. My desires and fears may play a role in my identifications, but let me share something with you that most people close to me are all too familiar with—I am a day-dreamer. I have spent hours of my life in thoughts that are evoked by the world around me. My ideation is legendary. As a basketball player the coaches referred to me disparagingly as a "space cadet", and as I mentioned earlier, church was a great place to day dream. Through my essays, I have found day dreaming to be my greatest skill. A skill that I can develop to understand another view of my client's unique life experiences and a way to further communication with my clients. I imagine that my day-dreaming will continue to evolve. Perhaps someday when I am old and tired from work I will return to my short fiction writing to continue making things out of the world around me.

Let us return to the vision I started with. I am struck by the timelessness of the scene. Why such old-fashioned clothing and furniture? Why was the scene so slow yet vibrant? It feels eternal to me, as if they could from any point in history with any culture. What most fascinates me? It must be the faceless old man. Why does he have no face? Who is the old man? Prior to my essays I would have had no doubt that the old man was my therapist, but now I have another perspective. The scene reminded me of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. I remember just having read it before the vision came to me. In the chapter Scylla and Charybdis, Stephen Dedalus explained his literary theory that an artist's life is intermingled in his art. Dedalus used a complicated idea to demonstrate his theory, which showed Shakespeare was both Hamlet and the ghost of his

father—and by doing so hints that Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom are Joyce in *Ulysses*.

Joyce (1919) wrote:

> As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies, Stephan said, from day to day,
> their molecules shuttled to and fro, so does the artist weave and unweave his image. And
> as the mole on my right breast is where it was when I was born, though all my body has
> been woven of new stuff time after time, so through the ghost of the unquiet father the
> image of the unliving son looks forth. In the intense instant of imagination, when the
> mind, Shelley says, is a fading coal that which I was is that which I am and that which in
> possibility I may come to be. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I
> sit here now but by reflection from that which then I shall be. (p. 192)

As I look back at my vision I am reminded of the ambiguous pronouncements of ancient oracles; where a misplaced comma from a scribe makes an ominous fortune auspicious. As I take another look at these essays I ask again" "Who is the author of these essays?" When I first set about writing them I thought I was just the young boy in my day dreams, but I became quite convinced I am the old man as well. What I experienced with an insensitive klutz was that an overly sensitive klutz can be endearing and impart much love and caring into the world.

The next scene that I envisioned came to me around the end of my first year in training. I had been increasingly more fatigued and distressed by the rigors of parenthood and graduate school training, and what in three years time was discovered to be a cancerous tumor in my sternum wall. The lack of sleep and the pressure in my chest wall led to grim apperceptions of the world and extreme bodily sensations.

In this vision, I discovered myself in a darkly tinted landscape. There was no sun, and all the colors were pulled toward the black spectrum. The surface of this land was barren except for

a few trees which had swollen and cracked trunks which extended twisted and briary branches

that surprisingly held a dense canopy of greenish black leaves. As I look out over the land, I saw

I was standing next to a long line of human figures shrouded from head to ground in heavy black

cloaks. The procession extended toward the grey-black of the horizon. The human figures

walked dirge like one-behind-the-other. I slipped in between the figures in the line like a spastic

dog circling its members as if to get a better scent of who was in those robes. This was

increasingly difficult as the line continued on.

　　　I was so put off by the veils, I began pulling off these heavy hoods which revealed to me

the stone colored faces of my fellow psychologists—teachers, students, and therapists. Their

eyes did not meet my eyes, but their faces recognized the intrusion and communicated that there

was nothing to say. It was to be washed over with silence, and the silence continued along with

the walking toward the horizon. The march was uninviting. The march was not insipid nor was it

solemn. It was not a gesture for the reverence of solitude or collectivism; it was in fact gesture

less.

　　　As I walk among them I have no cloak. I can stop. I can leave the line. I can see up ahead

of the march as it enters an enormous grove. It is a labyrinth with cobblestones of bone white

whose starkness only adds to the spectral greenness of the tall and thickly leaved hedges looming

in the sky. The line proceeds towards the middle of the labyrinth, and I stop to let the march

disappear around the hedge corner.

　　　I do not want to continue this way. I push through the line and take another corridor. As I

leave the march I set out for the center of the labyrinth too. My path is silent and occasionally my

path bisects the procession and I enter the path until I find another quieter alleyway. In these

quite moments there are many discoveries, strange and wonderful birds are nested in the thick

leaves, their songs are simple and melodious, and each simple tune is elaborated by another, weaving a fugue of birdsong. In other alleys there are archers whose hunts are so prolific there is not one hedge in the labyrinth that does not contain a miss-shot arrow. The labyrinth garbage is blown up into in the bramble of the hedges. Parchment, glass, and iron works from the hunters are everywhere, but also from ancient cultures of humans whose maps and stories of the labyrinth have long since been forgotten.

After wandering down the alleys of the labyrinth and bisecting the procession. I begin to get weary on my path. I come to a blind alley and I am alone. I can feel my heart beating and I think I might be very scared. As my heart beats, I can hear its great chambers flapping as if I had the wings of a bird. And as the flapping accelerates, I feel my body ascend over the hedge walls and upward through the smokeless clouds, I feel the sun's heat and the twilight fading. I am up with the mountain air! As I look down through the hole created in the clouds, I can see the labyrinth as a whole, expanding, and growing wider and taller, and its great center dissolving. I am no longer afraid of my heart beating. I am no longer afraid of being alone with my feelings and experiences. I am one of those beautiful creatures of the labyrinth whose home is amongst the tortuous path of life and the eternal flight of comprehension.

Let me begin by saying the cloaked humans reminded me of monks and I must go back to my days in the Catholic Church. Because of my height, I am nearly six feet, three inches tall, and I have been close to that height since early adolescence, my altar boy alb was ill fitting. The short sleeves exposed much of my forearms and my sneakers were exposed by its lack of length. In a way I was not fitted for the position as it seemed I was not fitted for the procession. But why not? The procession, the attire, and the labyrinth all suggested a religious initiation. What was my aversion to initiation? Why will I not join the procession?

It is obvious to me that my little day dream's style and content is derived, if not an outright act of theft, from the works of Dante, James Joyce, Jorge Luis Borges, and Umberto Eco. My first thought on why I am averse to initiation had to do with my neophyte stature as a psychologist. Perhaps I am now too young and too immature to understand the grave nature of psychology. Similarly, Adelmo of Otranto, the first character to die in Eco's (1980) monastery mystery novel *The Name of the Rose*, is a young monk who, "Because of his youth… (He) worked only on marginalia. He had a very lively imagination and from known things he was able to compose unknown and surprising things, as one might join a human body to an equine neck" (p. 76).

Presumably, Adelmo (whose experience was similar to Dante's) was killed because his talent for the grotesque was also a talent for the subversive. Perhaps I felt most alive in the margins, both entertaining and frightening myself with the monstrous world. Also, it is not lost on me that I come from a long line of rascals, iconoclasts, and scapegoats. My mother's great cousin was the only American governor to be elected while in prison and my father's family still has not fully recovered from being on the losing side of the English war of roses.

Even if I am not temperamentally or historically made for the world of the procession, I cannot help myself to point out how dour and lifeless it is for me. The colors in this world were infused with tar, the cloaked humans were expressionless, and the space was devoid of motion. This procession was like Dante's deepest part of hell, a frozen chamber with no hint of life sneaking into it. I am reminded by Eco's (1994) *the Island of the Day Before*, whose main character Roberto sends his imaginary twin brother Ferrante to a sense-less existence in Hell for his Scaramouch ways. Ferrante was welcomed to his fate through a viserated body, who said:

Ill- come…to the Land of the Dead…According to our punishment, each of us is led to a

stage of disintegration all his own, as if to allow us to savor extinction, which for each of

us would be our greatest joy…But no. As you see us we have come, each, to his present

state without being aware of it, through imperceptible mutation during which every fiber

of our being has been worn away in the course of thousands of thousands of thousands of

years…

Living, we believed Hell was the place of eternal despair, because so they told us.

Alas, no, for it is the place of undying hope, which makes each day worse than the one

before, as this thirst which is kept alive in us, is never slaked. Having always a glimmer

of body, and everybody tending to growth or to death, we never cease hoping—and thus

did our judge condemn us to suffer…

You will hope that a wisp of wind, a slightest swell of the tide, the arrival of a

single hungry leech, can return us, atom by atom, to the great Void of the Universe,

where we could again participate in the cycle of life. (pp. 490-491)

What a nightmare for me. I am a sensualist! I want to experience the world and how it

moves me. Yet in the vision, while I am not emboldened to join the procession, I am also not

clearly ready to live and accept all my experiences. I wander around the labyrinth like the

Borgesian (1962) narrator in *The Library of Babel* ideally looking for the center of the labyrinth,

"Like all men of the library," says the narrator, "I have travelled in my youth; I have wandered in

search of a book" (p.52). For Borges, the labyrinth was a library and a library was the universe.

And the book that everyone seeks is the one that explains the universe. Why would I want to

have a book to explain the universe? Perhaps if such a book existed I would know something

real. If I could just get my hands on some real knowledge, if I could attempt a serious study of

the labyrinth then I would be able to know where I was, what I was to do, and where I should go.

I would know what my feelings and thoughts mean—I would have no responsibility for them, I

would just know what they were for. This thinking made me believe that my feelings were for

something else other than me. The procession was this hollow understanding of self

knowledge—the center of the universe, bedrock, the foundation of life, or as in the case of the

tower of Babel the original language in which God spoke to Adam.

What if there is no book or language to understand the world? What then!?! What

despair! I may have said, "If I had only listened to my mother", for that is what I imagined

James Joyce was thinking when he wrote *Ulysses*. Stephen's mother knew best for her son in the

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Through Joyce (1916) Stephen mocks her prayers as

provincial idealism that he must avoid. He wrote in his journal:

> 26 April: Mother is putting my new secondhand clothes in order. She prays now, she
>
> says, that I may learn in my own life away from home and friends what the heart is and
>
> what it feels. Amen. So be it. Welcome, O, life! I go to encounter for the millionth time
>
> the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience
>
> of my race. (p. 217)

O, what an unsympathetic buffoon! Stephen leaves the *Portrait* soaring in his own

grandiose ideal and he ignores his mother's plea for him to connect to his heart, to his feelings,

and to his own existence.

Stephen returns in *Ulysses* much more sympathetic, he is disillusioned with the world,

and he is flummoxed with the nuances and complexities in him and around him. The labyrinth is

truly a strange puzzle—it is more than ideational, it is also visceral—the world is felt deeply and

connected to one's body. Such mistakes I have made. What joy it was for me to come across

both signing birds and archer's arrows. These symbols, as I discovered while revisiting this

essay, were of a moving spirit and earth that Longfellow used to convey in a poem about the

elements of human experience through time. Winnicott called it "psyche-soma". I recognize in

myself my profound gift of ideation and its inherent weakness to make me stone cold, stark like

cobblestone, and grey throughout with no personal meaning. I too long make my fortune on

ideation and searching for foundations, rather than using my body to experience the world and

use my felt experiences.

In fact when my body does make an appearance it is in the form of beating. Bodily

sympathies are caught up with my heart, my heart beats—out of anxiety? Despair? The

immanence of the universe? I must ask the heart, "Why do you beat?" Through this beating of

my heart, through my body the universe is revealed to me. Do not forget, Scott, your brain is

your body! It beats to propel me forward, to continue to feel and experience, to despair and to

rejoice. I am not one of those lowly bodies begging for a chance to feel decomposition. I cherish

my heart beats—lead me in times of sorrow and joy. It is my way of knowing the world. In my

story it literally gave me wings like the mythical maze maker Dedalus, like the literary group of

Dante, Joyce, Borges, and Eco. My feelings and thoughts are always in relation to the world and

what to make of an indefinite and perhaps infinite universe.

This brings me back to a question similar to the one I asked in the beginning, Why don't I

want to join the procession? The procession is not something outside of me. I thought originally,

the procession was the work and focus of psychology, but it is a much more personal challenge. I

can see the procession as an initiation of myself. I must be willing to change to fit in with the

protean universe and the procession to me was my unwillingness to change. I was seeking a

foundation that was not there. Now when I talk about origins I am talking about moving

foundations. An endless foundation, that Wittgenstein called "riverbed propositions," that Freud called "desire," and that Winnicott called the "True Self." I don't want to join the procession because I would be losing my body, my connection to the world of change, and what I am throughout time.

As I wrap up these associations with myself. I am struck how paradoxical and contradicting they were. I have described myself as overly sensitive and reactive, and on the other hand stonily obtuse and detached. I am not ashamed to say that my classmates and professors have noticed these abstruse traits in me. What a strange beast, I say! So be it!

I was going to call these associations *In Books.* Prepositional titles for essays are trendy and I used plenty of literary sources to guide my thoughts. But I thought how funny it was, the image of someone in a book, crushed by the weight of knowledge—it really reminded me of my detached-unaffected self, but I also began to imagine a book that I was alive in. I imagined a book that could fit the entire universe inside, and I thought about Dante's vision of God, Bound up with love together in one volume, what through the universe in leaves is scattered. That's the type of book I would like to be in—both immanent and transcendent. It is quite literally the happiest image I share with myself. I am quite pleased to be in this book. Like a flower gently pressed between the pages. Even a chrysanthemum! But perhaps not a Johnny Jump Up, as I have experienced there are worse things than death and that is having no desire.

Chapter 6: Communicating with Myself

I do not want to write this essay. When I conceived this essay I imagined showing the professional psychology world there were more difficult conversations in training than issues of student problem competency. My imagined method was to describe my experiences of self-usage in a supervising exercise and show how I came upon some aspects of myself that were difficult to handle. My thought for the essay was I would share the subsequent ways I made sense and appreciated my thoughts and feelings. Instead, while re-reading what I have written, I mordantly ask myself, "Who cares?" Or more to the point, "Who is writing this essay?" Better yet, "What am I writing this essay for?"

Initially, I thought I was writing about my experience of shame. While taking part in the supervising exercise as a therapist I presented a case to someone in the role of a supervisor, and the other students in the class were invited to experience and allow their selves to be open to their own experiences of the supervisory exercise. I described waiting for my wife and son to pick me up after I ended treatment with a young woman who was moving to another part of the country for a job opportunity. I was describing my bittersweet mood and my experience standing under a flowing tree in the beginning of spring then abruptly changed my narration and gave some back story and a case history of the young woman. At that point, the supervisor asked, "Where did you go? You were standing under the tree and then you disappeared."

"Why had I disappeared?" I wondered then. As I continued to talk to the supervisor my feelings of love and tenderness for my client were emerging. I was taken by her elegant spring dress and her ebullient mood that accompanied her that day. I was also aware of my relation to the weather. The spring too had come over me as the fecundity of hot earth and fresh rain perfumed the air. It was there under the young dogwood blossoms that I looked up to see the

clouds—wispish in the newly blue, newly clear sky, which not long ago was disguised by the winter sun.

At the time I told these stories I felt my heart beating and I began to be a little self conscious. I became aware of my fellow classmates. I told the supervisor I was feeling a little anxious talking about my feelings. I remember having the thought that I would like to disappear again—like when the supervisor noticed my disappearance under the tree. I wanted to tell the students and the supervisor that, "*I heard you looking* at me." At first I was interested and invigorated to look and now with the class looking on I was inhibited to look. I was very much aware of taboos and shame.

While under the tree I was experiencing love and loss, in the class I was beginning to think about shame and the professional community. While I sat there I did not wonder what to make of my passionate remembrances of my client. I was alive to the complex rules for intimacy. I was experiencing my peers' looking at me. When I looked to my peers I saw smiling mouths and transfixed voyeuristic eyes. Their countenances did not impart that they caught me looking, but expressed a more gentle form of surprise and excitement.

Many women shared that they were captivated by the spring dress. They described the colors, textures, style, cut, and feel of their spring dresses. They would look off innocently—doe eyed I would say to myself—in rapture of their imagined dresses. Others would describe romantic images from movies or paintings of earthly expanses, fields, of warmth and sun. Even stiller, one peer would dismiss love as not important—something everyone should have for their client. Clearly, love was in the air. I could feel the intimacy in people's description of the dress's contact to their skin, I could honor the specialness of one's chosen color or design, and I could

identify with the resentment that comes from my belief of what I think love can do, its consolations—the actual experience of love and its occasional nuisance.

As I sit here now writing, I wonder if my shame was based on my own impossible demand to merge with my impossible professional ideal of a psychotherapist. I erroneously believed that my desire would sweep me up off my feet and I would be carried off into untoward encounters both professional and personal. Perhaps my disappearing acts—under the tree and in the classroom—were ways of forestalling my fancies before I became mad with passion.

But let me return to my problem of writing this essay before I stray too far. The passages I wrote above are very personal constructions of an event from some time ago. And yet while these thoughts have been percolating around in my head, I am not moved by these thoughts and words the same way as before. In fact, I have been editing this paper for weeks cutting down on the content to what matters to me now.

In fact I am on a full scale mission to dismantle this paper, Gone is, "Man…the most voyeuristic... and his visual sense contributes more information than any other sense…despite and impart of this, there exists a universal taboo on looking (Tomkins, 1995, p. 143)." Goodbye Freud (1918), I care not to, "Assume an *ambivalent attitude* toward," my taboos and prohibitions. In fact, Dr. Morrison, I have a different desire to disappear and struggle for acceptance that is not related to shame.

I have to ask myself now, "Why her? Why now?" If I am not interested in shame am I obsessed with love? Why does this case come back to me now? I do not have such shameful and loving feelings at the moment. In fact I feel annoyed and vexed by writing this essay. I want to disappear and reappear in another essay. I am feeling like I am outgrowing this story. In fact as I read my loving passages I am moved to nausea. I have no regard for love at the moment. In fact I

am noticing over the course of writing this essay I am not interested in topics that once were endearing. I am beginning to get a sense of an ending. And now, in these moments of procrastination and disillusionment I am reminded of my client again. For when she came to treatment she was most disillusioned with her love objects, and I wondered if she came to treatment with the question, "Can I love again?" I believed her answer was yes. I sensed her endearing looks at me, and I could sense my own preciousness in my own gaze and how I talked to her. It was not so much that an actual love connection was to be made, but a belief in life that there was more to be had.

So I ask myself again, "Why her? Why now?" I hear nothing. Am I becoming aware of my own waning interest in these essays? I have spent the better part of three years reading and writing on a wide range of topics related to the self. It seems to me that almost every thought and thing that comes into my life has something to do with myself and my project. I have literally been preoccupied, in love with, and making darling this project. And now as I am approaching the end of my essays here. Are these ideas dead to me? I am wondering—Will I ever find something to interest me again?

That is why she is here. I carried the question into this essay on shame. I cannot help but be alive—she is alive in this essay with me. "Can I love again?" and this is what came upon me. I am open to receiving the message. I was not out of love, but receiving a message from myself that there was another story to tell. Different times and experiences evoke different aspects of self. I could not rekindle that flame of shame from class, because I am not feeling shame at all I am feeling frustrated because I want to contact my self and twist its arm to say something about shame, but all you want to talk about is love.

I have a lot of affection for these essays. I am not sure how they will be received and used by others but I have some thoughts on how they will be used by me in the future. I originally finished this essay describing myself as a man out of love with the essays, but it would be impossible for me to say that. If there is anything I have learned about myself it is that just when I think it has been exhausted by the world it surprises me what comes next. Sometimes, like the young woman I worked with, one can lose faith in herself; but if one starts to listen carefully, there is something in the silence that emerges to connect you with the voice who asks, "Who am I and Who will I be?"

Epilogue: After Thoughts with Regard to the Implications of this Study

…Don't we all want to be known? Even in a qualitative dissertation project…

Throughout this project I asked myself many questions. Chiefly, "Who is a student in a professional psychology program?" I was afforded this study because educators in professional psychology invoked the self in its training model, and by this invocation I was allowed to ask, "How a student is known in a professional psychology program?" And by asking these questions I have come upon more questions, such as, "Why does the profession want to know who a student is and why does a student want to be known?" What are the implications for knowing one's self? Will knowledge of the self prevent prohibited behaviors or improve psychotherapy outcomes? Or is the self truly worthless? As Larkin asked in *Continuing to Live*, "What's the profit, Only in time; we half identify the blind impress... Since it applied only to one man once, and that one dying." If there is any consolation in continuing to live, as I discovered in these essays, it is that the self is a complex experience and that questions about the self leads to more questions and self contradictions.

When I look back at the committees' meetings there was a pervasive uncertainty about how to address the subject, and yet there was also a pervasive desire to keep talking about the self. Although the committee was capable of talking about their selves, I wondered if we were not all stymied by wanting to fully express ourselves. For instance, at times the committee members would ask questions that resulted in me responding in a way that made me think, "If I could just say a little more I might be able to express myself." Another wanted to be understood, and she would occasionally check-in with the rest of us to confirm whether or not she was making sense—or as I wondered, "Do we get her?" Another wished he knew me more when we were together on campus. Another pointed out that there was always a wish to be known.

And now, as I sit here writing, I invoke my wishes, and I invoke my desire to be known. I am reminded of Freud and Lacan who once suggested one can never get what one wants—one's desire leads him to its prohibited use or tantalizes him with something just out of his reach. So at this point in my essays, I reconsider my original observation of professional psychology training. Whereas I wrote, "Professional psychology education once valued the student's self…", now I think the profession must value something else, we must value a student's desire to be known. In the former, the self is valued for what it can do, and in the later the self is desired for its impossibility to be known. For in this impossibility to be known come great strivings and through great strivings come many struggles and joyous consolations. It is through wanting more that I find something else, and rather than lament the *blind impress* of myself—I can love fate. I can incorporate something unexpected; I can take the waste of my struggles and cultivate myself with its compost.

At a personal and professional level, I look upon this study in a cheerful light. What I anticipated it to be was not what it came to be. Looking back I am struck by my disappointment in life. After I wrote these passages I went on internship and my first experience was sitting in on a clinician meeting. A supervisor from another team asked the clinicians to be responsible for a joint commission audit, and then he left the room to attend another meeting. As I sat with the group, I listened as they addressed the task of attributing responsibility. The clinicians cajoled the tired looking supervisor into organizing the audit, and then the room began to talk about other cases and clinic issues.

As I listened and joined in conversation, I eventually got this persistent idea that each member was talking about their responsibility in the clinic. One was disgusted by the clinic's reimbursement policy, another wondered if she was doing enough to help a struggling family,

and another was wondering if she was doing too much. I thought of William Blake's aphorisms

in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "Too much. Enough." I spoke and told the group my

thoughts. It seemed like the dilemma of responsibility was playing on everyone in the room.

How does one know what is enough? By doing too much? The group pleasantly responded to the

comment and then another asked me, "When will you be here—or what hours?"I answered the

group I had no idea and that my role wasn't well defined, and that in my struggle to figure out

when and how I will be there, I will keep the spirit alive with me too. I too was being played on

by the ambiguity of taking responsibility.

An old Antiochian used to call it carrying the question. Perhaps this question like many

others that have to do with expectations and wishes are unanswerable. Or cannot be reacted to

but lingered over—an answer or response needs time to arrive and be enacted.

What I have discovered in this project is that the results are deeply personal, and for my

broader audience I do not offer much in the way of guidelines. All I can offer is the discovery of

my crescive self and my attempts to describe myself. Do with it what you would wish. I do not

pretend to know how you would use this study. I know how I would want it to be used, but that

would be missing the point. I am also not so foolish as to believe that these ideas will lead to my

intended result. In other words, I would rather be surprised by what comes up when you meet

me—just as I expect you will be surprised by what the study means to you. Therefore, reader, I

cannot offer you any implications. At most, I can only ask you to haunt the pages in front of you

and see what connects you to the work.

I am being sincere when it comes to the possible significance of this work. I have faith

that this manuscript will continue to expand throughout my life—I have already seen its

expansion. But when it comes to you, I cannot offer such condolences. Instead I feel a little

mischievous. I feel like I am being a Søren that I have chosen, deliberately, to make your life

more difficult by suggesting that the implications for this study cannot be determined by me

alone. And like a good Søren, I do this out of a place of reverence—I am like a new Zarathustra

who is not trying to persuade you to see the world through my eyes, but one who asks you to go

off without his prescriptions and struggle to breathe the fresh air with your lungs and view the

horizon with your eyes from atop the mountain. Like Zarathustra, let me be an idol in the

twilight of your expansive and growing light. Only then can you come back to me so that we

may grow in our light—and together we flourish according to our existence and our desires.

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