International Forum of Psychoanalysis, 2018
Vol. 27, No. 2, 82–89, https://doi.org/10.1080/0803706X.2017.1296588

Check for updates

Psychoanalysis and the academy: Reflections on undergraduate teaching[1]

ELLEN HANDLER SPITZ

Abstract
This article addresses both the rewards and the daunting complexities of teaching psychoanalysis to undergraduates in the USA, where the idea of a university as a site for the cultivation of the life of the mind is under siege. The essay recommends a close critical reading of key Freudian texts, the establishment of a classroom atmosphere of trust, genuine respect for expectable student skepticism, and the capacity to wait as dystonic ideas gradually take hold and reveal their worth. Speed, a ubiquitous feature and a questionable desideratum of twenty-first century US culture, as well as facile cleverness, a desideratum within academia, tell against the psychoanalytic process, which is long, slow, halting, laborious, and painful, but a process that can, at best, open what has heretofore been sealed.

Key words: *undergraduate teaching, psychoanalysis, Geisteswissenshaft, humanities*

This essay is an informal reflection on the possibility of teaching psychoanalytic ideas to undergraduates in American college and university settings in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Over the past 25 years, the field of psychoanalysis has all but vanished from psychology department programs from coast to coast in the USA, and psychoanalysis is mentioned only rarely in college literature courses, where the entire field is reduced, more often than not, to derivative, ahistorical Lacanian versions; thus, psychoanalysis, if and when it is introduced to neophytes at all, is presented in forms that, to some practicing clinicians and historians, seem partial if not misleading. Freud's ground-breaking ("earth-shattering" might be more accurate) oeuvre has gone missing from course syllabi, with the exception of "Civilization and its discontents," which, from time to time, appears on reading lists of "Great Books" seminars and of freshman humanities classes.

Within the psychoanalytic community, this absence of psychoanalysis from the intellectual lives of undergraduates has been duly noted and lamented,[2] and it has been remarked that if, to the contrary, young students were given opportunities to encounter psychoanalytic ideas at an early stage of their education, they might well perceive its riches and be receptive later on – predisposed, in other words, to build on its ideas at more advanced stages of their lives and careers, and to integrate psychoanalytic thought with other modes of interpretation, both personal and professional. To that end, I modestly contribute this essay. However, a gentle caveat: my experience is of necessity circumscribed and idiosyncratic. This essay is meant to raise questions and to stimulate, encourage, and chasten rather than to provide solutions or replicable pedagogical methodology. You will find no statistics, no data, no conclusions; I would stop short, however, before leaping at windmills with the good Don Quixote and crying out with him, as per *The man of La Mancha*, that "facts are the enemy of truth!"

When psychoanalytic theory and practice are taught in the accrediting training institutes of the USA, classes are filled with candidates who have completed many years of prior education. These candidates have obtained terminal degrees in their

Correspondence: Ellen Handler Spitz, Honors College Professor, University of Maryland (UMBC), 1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250, USA. E-mail: spitz@umbc.edu. www.ellenhandlerspitz.net

[1]This essay, in an earlier form, was presented at the International Psychoanalytic Association Conference in Boston, MA, July 23, 2015, at the invitation of Dr. Murray Schwartz.
[2]A propos, note the Colloquium "Psychoanalysis in the University," convened at Emory University in Atlanta, GA, by Dr. Sander Gilman, November 11–12, 2007. My paper for that occasion was titled (after Chaucer) "And gladly would s/he learn and gladly teach: On teaching psychoanalytic ideas in university settings."

(*Received 6 December 2016; accepted 13 December 2016*)
© 2017 The International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies

Copyrighted Material. For use only by 48793. Reproduction prohibited. Usage subject to PEP terms & conditions (see terms.pep-web.org).

respective disciplines; they have been vetted with care by peers, have undergone analysis or are currently in analysis, and, in most cases, have practiced doing clinical work with patients. Such postgraduate students differ markedly from the cohort we are assuming here when we consider the project of teaching psychoanalysis to undergraduates. A not insignificant factor is, of course, age. Undergraduate college students, at least in the USA, are at least a decade or more younger than the candidate population of the training institutes. This point may seem obvious, but it is not trivial. It matters a great deal when meaningful engagement with ideas that concern the nuanced complexities of human life are at stake.

When students come to the table with fewer years, the psychoanalytic notions of intrapsychic and interpersonal conflict and ambivalence resonate with them differently. Although technology has, theoretically, made a wider world accessible to today's youth, that world is often remote, artificial, robotic, and outside any direct moral obligation. Media aside, many undergraduates lead circumscribed lives, at least before enrolling at university. For financial and other reasons, local students on public campuses rarely travel far from their own familiar neighborhoods. Their exposure to the arts and culture is limited; their knowledge of history, scant. Most have not yet been called upon to make or participate in major life decisions; few have had first-hand experience of crippling sociopolitical upheaval and trauma;[3] a small number have suffered the loss of close personal ties or coped with the responsibilities of fatal illness. The education they receive, moreover, is largely cognitive (data- and skills-based), separable, in other words, from their emotional and personal lives in ways that psychoanalytic thought can never be unless it is distorted.

It seems urgent, therefore, to wonder whether it is even feasible to teach psychoanalysis to the student population just described in forms that preserve the essence of what the field has to offer. My solution throughout my teaching career has been quite radical. It has been to use psychoanalysis subtly and not always to offer it labeled as such. The core ideas – the processes of questioning and going deeper, of observing and monitoring transferences, and of noting subtle recurrences in symbolic function and behavior – can be utilized and made conscious even when Freud is not the ostensible subject, nor his texts per se on the table. I have found that permeating the discussion with a respect for candid feelings gives students a way to see in: it offers them flashlights, so to speak, and it can sometimes be a gentle way of starting. Considering the rampant stress and anxiety among today's students, there can be no doubt that such teaching has the potential to prove beneficial. That said, there is, of course, no substitute for reading Freud.

For full disclosure, I wish to explain that I work in a public institution of higher learning and have been teaching undergraduates at the University of Maryland (the acronym for my campus is UMBC) since just after the turn of the century (2001), and at Stanford University previous to that. I am in the trenches, so to speak. Unlike my fellow faculty members at private, elite institutions such as Harvard and Princeton, where the annual tuition fees exceed an average American family's entire income over a period of many years, I teach at a campus representative of those attended by most American college students. You will find no members of the economically over-privileged 1%. Our students are obliged to work after, before, and in between their classes; they borrow funds and compete for scholarship money to make ends meet. Although they have little material wealth, they bring to campus what is infinitely more valuable: they bring a cornucopia of diverse religious backgrounds or none at all, a great variety in color of skin, hair, and shape of eye; they attire themselves in costumes that vary in cut, color, texture, and how much of their bodies is concealed or revealed. They profess a spectrum of political ideologies, a wide and often extremely challenging range of linguistic competencies (and lacks thereof, whether oral or written), aesthetic tastes untutored but always deeply felt, and aspirations – sometimes limited or grandiose or both, but genuine; and, increasingly, they bring diversity with regard to gender. Where else in the world does education look quite like this? For those whose task it is to teach this bewildering array of youthful humanity, the project can seem daunting, but its gratifications outstrip its woes. Minds expand, horizons recede, and mental lives sprout daily and bloom.

Teaching, in my Jewish tradition, is a *mitzvah* – that is to say, a commandment, a calling that cannot be refused. It is an ever-evolving, demanding, exhausting, and exhilarating practice, which some have called art (see, apropos of this, Highet, 1950). Many of my students have grown up in homes with few books. When I shepherd them by bus each fall to the beautiful Folger replica of Shakespeare's theatre in Washington DC, it is the first time some have ever seen live actors performing on stage. I encourage them to read slowly and quietly outside of class, to keep track of their thoughts by recording

[3]There is an argument to be made that systemic American racism implicates all citizens such that undergraduates have willy-nilly been exposed to sociopolitical trauma; however, while I respect that view and honor it in this footnote, I consider its nuances and counterarguments to fall outside my present scope and to require a separate study.

Copyrighted Material. For use only by 48793. Reproduction prohibited. Usage subject to PEP terms & conditions (see terms.pep-web.org).

them in the margins of their books, to contribute without shyness to interpretive classroom discussions the likes of which they may never have held before with family or friends. At the end of every seminar, I distribute ornamental bookplates inscribed with their names, one to each student; I ask them to paste theirs into a favorite book among those we have studied together so as to treasure that book, not sell it back to the campus bookstore.

Today's most intellectually gifted students are, in large numbers, pursuing the so-called STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, math), where feelings are kept at bay. In a recent gathering of psychoanalysts and psychologists in New York, Dr. Elliot Jurist, Editor of *Psychoanalytic Psychology,* told the assembled crowd that, according to statistics reported in *The New York Times*, only 7% of American undergraduates now major in the humanities (i.e., in philosophy or history or music or literature or foreign languages or the history of art).[4] This shocking statistic bodes ill for the future of a civil society and for the preservation of our culture. At the beginnings of psychoanalysis, well over a century ago, by contrast, the entourage Freud attracted were a group of highly sophisticated, culturally informed, group of men and women well read in several languages, both ancient and modern.

Not long ago, a bushy, raven-haired budding engineer slouched into my office, collapsed on the sofa, and grumbled: "Dr. Spitz, you want us to *care* about our work in this class. That's not like my other professors. They just want us to *do* the work; they're not interested in whether we *care*." His comment shocked me, and my immediate impulse was to deny it. But moments later I realized that he was right; I *do* want him and the others to care! After all, their being in the classroom – merely sitting there and breathing the same air together for several hours a week – is part of their lives: and part of mine. Not time out. Their lives are ticking, as is mine: the class matters. We are all responsible.

I describe the above just to let you taste the flavor of the soup, so to speak, before you read on, and because youth such as the above are those to whom psychoanalysis would have to be addressed if it were to be introduced widely on American campuses. From the teacher's side, of course, there comes – along with sharing – a great, too often unmentioned bonus. Dame Marina Warner, in describing her erstwhile literature classes at the University of Essex, put it as follows (2014): To re-read something entirely familiar in class refreshes it for me; a new reader is more sensitive to the shocks of recognition and alienation that a writer delivers, as well as to the violence, the spleen, the pain. In other words, to revisit well-known texts in the company of untutored youth expands teachers' perspectives and enables them to teach better just as, no doubt, therapists' horizons of awareness, during the practice of therapy, are expanded along with their patients'. And the capacity, therefore, to help and to get it right is increased all around.

Resistance on the part of students must be expected, however, and must be allowed open expression in class. Everything about contemporary American culture, its speed and quick-fix solutions, its ceaseless motility, its exclusive focus on the here-and-now, its impatience, its externality, its materialism, its transforming all experience into entertainment, tells against the slow, still, patient, internal, historical, difficult process that psychoanalysis entails. What I have noticed over time is that those students who resist most brazenly may ultimately turn out to be the ones who find value in the ideas because their hostility opens them up and flips them over, so to speak. Conversely, those who jump quickly on the psychoanalytic bandwagon out of cleverness or a wish to please may unwittingly turn their cleverness-cum-acquiescence into a shield. Souls who are tepid, on the other hand, sometimes remain so – apparently lukewarm but not unaffected. The foregoing insights are Hegelian as well as Freudian, of course. So much depends on the teaching, the make-up of each particular student group, and the atmosphere in the classroom, but more about that below.

Meanwhile, when persons of a certain age are asked to address a topic about which they have thought a great deal, their minds frequently stray to personal history, and now, with the kind indulgence of my readers, I shall turn to a brief reminiscence of my own.

My own academic introduction to psychoanalysis took place at the University of Chicago during sociologist David Riesman's final year before becoming distinguished University Professor at Harvard. It was the last gasp of the Hutchins era, and Riesman taught a seminar on Freud. Actually, his class was not devoted exclusively to Freud, nor was Professor Riesman unqualifiedly positive about Freud. Riesman's professorial style was low-key in affect, and he tended toward the phlegmatic not the flamboyant, albeit tinged with mild iconoclasm. Despite Riesman's sangfroid, however, Freud's ideas astounded me. They burned through the pages of my books, even as I carried them day by day across the windy

[4]From the June 3, 2016, event held at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York by the journal *Psychoanalytic Psychology* to celebrate their first online issue devoted to psychology and the humanities.

Copyrighted Material. For use only by 48793. Reproduction prohibited. Usage subject to PEP terms & conditions (see terms.pep-web.org).

streets of Hyde Park. Like the blustery gusts that nearly knocked me over, Freud's writings jolted the foundations of my heretofore bourgeois, romantic intellectual life. At this point, you may perhaps be thinking: but wait a moment! Wasn't Freud himself bourgeois and romantic? Not quite, however, in the manner of a sheltered teenaged girl of my upbringing.

Drowning in "The interpretation of dreams" (Freud, 1900), "Studies on hysteria" (Freud, 1895), the "Three essays on human sexuality" (Freud, 1905a), the Clark lectures (Freud, 1910), Little Hans (Freud, 1909), Dora (Freud, 1905b), "The uncanny" (Freud, 1919), and "Civilization and its discontents" (Freud, 1930), I came up for frequent gulps of musty library air. I felt aftershocks of anxiety, recognition, intense admiration, disbelief, and a sense above all that these pages were churning with a force that surpassed everything else I was being asked to read in college. It didn't matter what David Riesman said or left unsaid: Freud's ideas – real, scary, startling in their unique way of being at once strikingly new and eerily familiar – rocked my intellectual stability, which suddenly seemed fragile and unformed. Looking back, I bless Riesman for staging the encounter. And beyond Freud, all unwittingly, Riesman taught me a secret about pedagogy: namely, that when genius has brushed the pages of a book, the very best teaching can entail just making an introduction and then standing back to wait. Channeling Clov's oracular words from Beckett's *Endgame*: Something will be taking its course …

During my undergraduate years as a humanities major (fine arts, aesthetics, and literature), I studied Freud but learned nothing about updates, nothing about contemporary psychoanalysis as it was then being practiced. Was this a lack? Should we consider teaching contemporary psychoanalysis to college students today as well as Freud? With the students I have described above, it seems clear that Freud is the basic, foundational material and that we need not worry for, as students encounter his ideas and writings, updated versions will spontaneously come into play. They will necessarily undergo modification in the context of the students' own worlds. No doubt, my perspective was from standing under the umbrella of the humanities.

To elaborate, let us consider an important distinction between *Geisteswissenschaft* and *Naturwissenschaft*. In the latter, in the natural sciences, students study the most up-to-date knowledge in their fields. To learn astronomy, one does not study Ptolemy. To learn physics, one does not study Thales of Miletus or Heraclitus. To learn mathematics, one does not study Pythagoras or Babylonian or Egyptian math, except perhaps in special seminars on the history of science, but then, after all, the history of science is considered a humanistic discipline. Why is this the case? It is so because ideas in the natural sciences are believed to march forward. They advance. The old is superseded by the new, and students must learn what is current. A premedical student need never study long-abandoned practices of bloodletting based on the now-discarded theory of humors. A premedical student heading for obstetrics need never know how the ancient Greeks believed babies come from their father's seed, which is sown inside their mothers, who supply the womb alone and who make no genetic contribution to the developing child.

If these notions are wrong, after all, why bother learning about them? One reason, a humanist would argue, of course, is because many people believed them at one time, and that, consequently, such beliefs exerted a powerful influence on society, a phenomenon that – in and of itself – is of interest if one cares for the history of ideas. Think of how the status of women is affected by the latter belief! Besides, on rainy days, standing under that humanistic umbrella, I cannot suppress a nagging suspicion that what has been cast aside by science might prove useful some day for revealing directions in which to search for what is still unknown.

When we switch into the humanities, everything changes. A student reading the Oresteia of Aeschylus must absolutely need to know about Greek misconceptions about human reproduction because these misconceptions underlie the final outcome of the trilogy, that is, the condemnation of Clytemnestra and exoneration of Orestes. Is there a philosopher today who has written more meaningful pages on friendship than Aristotle or Montaigne? Is there a modern writer who has analyzed tragic drama with greater precision and insight than Aristotle, in his slender *Poetics*? Has anyone stated the case for censorship of arts in the education of young children more cogently than Plato in Book II of his *Republic*? What about Rousseau's unequaled *Discourse on the origin and basis of inequality* of 1754? Philosophy undergraduates read these works precisely because no "advance of knowledge" has supplanted them. They continue to matter. They hold their own. More than that – they set standards of excellence. Similarly with literature and the visual arts: Shakespeare and Molière have not been surpassed by Tennessee Williams or Eugene O'Neill. The landscapes of Eduard Manet do not improve a whit upon those of Nicolas Poussin. The humanities, like psychoanalysis itself, dwells in historic time: the past is brought forward into the present.

I want to go further and claim even more. In order for a science student to understand how the eye works, she need never know that Euclid believed vision occurs when the human eye sends out rays

Copyrighted Material. For use only by 48793. Reproduction prohibited. Usage subject to PEP terms & conditions (see terms.pep-web.org).

toward objects seen. A student of literature, on the other hand, might be fascinated to learn about this, since it sheds light (*sic*) on the strange metaphor "to cast one's eye over the countryside." Humanities students, in fact, can well understand their objects of study only in historical context. Michelangelo's sculptural style looks altogether different to students after they have gazed upon Greek and Roman statuary. Similarly, a familiarity with Dürer's, Holbein's, and Rembrandt's painted portraits, not to mention Cézanne's, are essential before one can come to grips with cubist portraits by Picasso. I can teach my students what is recent only when they have acquired a sense of history.

Thus, in the humanities, when past works continue to matter, they do so on two counts at least: first, they matter on the basis of their unsurpassed heights of intellectual and aesthetic achievement, and, second, they matter because what comes later cannot be understood properly without them. This is different from what occurs in the sciences. Moreover, it is my students' cultural legacy, above all, that I want them to discover and interpret. I am willing to let the present moment go because journalism, media, Internet, and smartphone all provide that in spades. My job is to help them understand where it all came from, just as it is the psychoanalyst's job to help patients understand where their thoughts, fantasies, acts, and daily feelings came from. With this picture in mind, we can see why teaching Freud's seminal work (critically, of course), rather than updated versions of psychoanalysis, is of particular value in the humanities.

Freud's revolutionary genius merits direct confrontation by each generation. For one thing, he is a superlative writer, winner of course of the Goethe Prize, one of those thinkers and authors we need to meet and face head on. And doing so is not always pleasurable. Freud suffers opprobrium and repudiation because he mortifies us. We do not know ourselves and cannot know ourselves, he dares to claim. Whatever we think we know is suspect and partial, a mere veneer, the spume that floats upon a bottomless sea. That vaunted reason of which we are so proud speaks to us only in dulcet tones, in murmurs. Incessantly, we override it. Our treasured hearts fray daily in riddling dissension about which, clinging to facades of wholeness, we preserve a defensive unawareness so that minute to minute we cannot tell what we feel or think or why we act as we do. Freud's ideas crack our complacency. For this reason, they belong at the core of an undergraduate liberal arts education. I try to bring them home when I teach, and, as I do, I seek signs in my students of the wrenching astonishment that came to me in my own college days.

Whether or not Freud is, in contemporary psychoanalytic practice, more honored in the breach than the observance, to quote Hamlet, he merits a place of prominence on our syllabi. Regarding psychoanalysis as an indispensable tool for investigating and interpreting mental life, human society, and culture, moreover, I would advocate for teaching Freud not only as an historical figure, as a member, along with Darwin and Marx, of a holy triumvirate of "great nineteenth-century thinkers." Critical and contextual readings are insufficient. For, despite Freud's bitterly excoriated errors, his obvious cultural contingencies (flags for female psychology, homosexuality), and apparent widespread irrelevance vis-à-vis many clinicians treating patients today even though surely he stands as the *fons et origo* of our vast contemporary array of talking therapies, he transcends all of the above. Perhaps what I am really saying is that, from a humanities perspective, Freud the thinker still *is* – intellectually in large part – contemporary psychoanalysis. At his best, he is contemporary in the same way Shakespeare is. With that as a given, let's push on and ask how best to teach him.

Fast-forward from David Riesman into the twenty-first century. Tables turn. Now it's my turn to sit, stand, or pace behind the professorial desk. I am up at the board. I am teaching an undergraduate seminar devoted to Freud in a dedicated philosophy classroom of my American state university. My students seem attentive and engaged, but they find the ideas rough going – hard to *follow*, that is, as well as hard to *swallow*. Superficially stable, well-adapted high-achievers, upperclassmen, they are primed to keep emotional tough stuff at bay. Classrooms are not for strong feelings. Despite their intelligence and good will, Freud's concepts are not easy for them. Take, for example, the concept "Hysterical patients suffer from reminiscences." As my students struggle to make sense of this, I ask myself: How do I parse the distinction here between intellectual incomprehension of Freud's ideas and defensive resistance to them? How different is it to teach this material than it is to teach other theoretical texts? When a student, for example, does not understand Aristotle's distinction between *post hoc* and *propter hoc* in the *Poetics*, might it be for similar or different reasons from those which cause her to fail to understand the difference between "repression" and "resistance" in the Clark lectures? When I know for sure, it affects my teaching of the psychoanalytic ideas.

Moreover, when it comes to Freud and psychoanalysis, cleverness alone on a student's part cannot suffice. This is a crucial matter for pedagogical concern. Cleverness – the ability to think fast and catch on– is a prized attribute in academia. But this

Copyrighted Material. For use only by 48793. Reproduction prohibited. Usage subject to PEP terms & conditions (see terms.pep-web.org).

very attribute may, as we know, just as easily block as facilitate knowledge when we enter the lists of psychoanalytic teaching and learning. Freud's texts need to be understood deeply, haltingly, personally: they need to be internalized. But they are notoriously hard to remember even from page to page and from one reading to the next. We tend to repress them, I have noticed, far more readily than we do other texts. So, what can a teacher do to help?

In my classes, we use a variation on the method of *explication de texte*. We move slowly, which means not only that we push back against the "quick-click" culture outside the classroom door, but also that we channel the psychoanalytic process itself, which cannot be hurried. We read passages aloud, we comment on them, we tell stories. We listen to one another. No interrupting. No hands waving in the air while someone else is speaking. Strangers at the semester's start, the students need to feel at ease with each other and with their teacher for this project to work. Without the benign presence of trust in the classroom, no psychoanalytic teaching and learning can take place. Trust builds gradually. Invisible, we can sense it, just as we can immediately sense its opposite. If asked the indispensable condition for teaching psychoanalytic ideas to undergraduates, I would say without hesitation – trust must permeate the classroom. And mutual respect. Resistance, denial, and suspicion must be allowed their say. Only then can insight peek through.

As for texts, my choice would be the Clark lectures because of their crystalline clarity, their informality, and their florid, often amusing metaphors. As one reads them, one can see and hear Freud speaking to his American audience in Wooster, Massachusetts, over a hundred years ago. If I had time for only one of Freud's works, this would be my go-to choice for undergraduates. Among teaching techniques, drama often works well: asking students, for example, to chose a partner and act out a metaphor. One I have not yet actually tried but I am thinking of using is that comical lecture room scene with the ill-mannered audience member Freud introduces in his second lecture. After the students have acted it out together, I doubt they will forget it, and it may help them to distinguish with confidence the notion of "repression" from that of "resistance."

For background and scenic context in presenting Freud's oeuvre, my art history training proves useful. Thus, Freud shows up in class at first against the glittering backdrop of fin-de-siècle Vienna art and architecture. The students need to see, I think, what his world looked like. Also, having worked closely with Freud's vast antiquities collection (see Gamwell & Wells, 1989, which includes my essay "Psychoanalysis and the legacies of antiquity" [Spitz, 1989]), which was kept in his consulting room and was therefore constantly within his line of vision as he listened, reflected, and wrote, I enjoy presenting some of these objects to my students. There is, of course, Carl Schorske's (1979) classic work on fin-de-siècle Vienna for cultural history and background. When feasible, toward the end of the term, I have invited practicing analysts in to class to describe their actual work and to answer students' questions from a clinical perspective.

Regarding the Clark lectures, students should, I believe, be encouraged to note and examine their idiosyncratic reactions as they read, and be unashamed to seek out analogies in their personal lives and in the cultural venues they know best. Elizabeth von R, for example, proves a fruitful case because students can readily grasp her morally unacceptable attraction to her brother-in-law. When Anna O, on the other hand, finds her English lady companion's dog disgusting, it is harder for them to see why. It is valuable for them to air these spontaneous reactions and, as they do, to parse the cultural contingencies as a group and try to separate what still holds from what is outdated, like wheat from chaff. Spontaneous reactions, again, are part and parcel of the psychoanalytic process itself. For students, however, to dare to reveal their thoughts about their reading openly in the classroom setting, they must feel safe enough not to self-censor out of embarrassment or fears for their eventual evaluation by the professor. We need to form, in the classroom setting, the counterpart of what is clinically called "a working alliance." Is this truer when psychoanalytic teaching is at stake than when other subjects are being taught? My hope for each student is that at some point during the term there will be at least one "aha!" moment, whether private or shared.

When the semester ends, my students often say they have been disabused of prior misconceptions. Yet it is unclear (except in certain cases where students have stayed in touch for years) whether they actually do go on to *use* Freud in their own lives, to question themselves, and to continue to look within. This requires fortitude. Some of them will surely sell their books back to the campus bookstore and bury the class in a mental tomb. Even so, the seeds, having been planted, may unexpectedly sprout one day. A phrase, an idea, an insight may arise bearing leaves. I am confident that introducing them to Freud's ideas is ultimately worthwhile. And I know that, like the termination of any treatment, the end of the semester signals the beginning of the unknown. Something will be taking its course.

Perhaps we should segue now into a related matter before closing. This is the matter of who is competent

Copyrighted Material. For use only by 48793. Reproduction prohibited. Usage subject to PEP terms & conditions (see terms.pep-web.org).

to teach psychoanalysis to undergraduates in a university setting. There are professionals within the psychoanalytic establishment who would unabashedly declare me incompetent, for instance, because I do not treat patients. They would argue that only a clinically trained practicing psychoanalyst is capable of teaching psychoanalysis. Even in a university setting. This belief, rather widespread within the psychoanalytic establishment, needs to be addressed. First, a desire to keep practice and pedagogy together is admirable. But normally, in other fields, while circles of practitioners and teachers overlap, they rarely form congruent sets. Bear in mind that a fine musicologist need not play either the violin or the piano, nor must he be capable of conducting a cantata or even a master class. Similarly, a great theater critic might well prove incompetent as an actor, a director, or set designer. Nor is it necessary for me, having read Cennino Cennini's famous fifteenth-century handbook *Il libbro dell'arte*, to have the requisite skill and experience to mix pigments as Cennini details with precision and prepare a panel with gesso in order to teach my students about the art of Giotto or Fra Angelico. It would be nice, but it is not essential. When the psychoanalytic establishment holds on possessively to its intellectual heritage, it becomes insular. It loses ground. Indeed, this is actually a psychoanalytic insight: when one holds on too tightly, one loses; when one gives, one receives.

To achieve rapprochement with the university, both sets of doors must swing open. To prevent the teaching of psychoanalysis to undergraduates from becoming too cerebral and too detached from practice, why not initiate some innovative co-teaching – scholar and practitioner together? I would advocate for collaboration, with each partner bringing the best of his or her knowledge to the seminar table. In my view, much of the distortion of psychoanalysis that has found its way to campus and caused (in part) its marginalization is the result of a profound disconnect between the clinical and academic worlds; yet the solution lies in greater inclusiveness rather than in possessive exclusivity on the part of the psychoanalytic world. That path leads only to further diminution and eventually to demise.

As for American academia itself today, I hesitate to use the buzzword *crisis*, but I must.[5] Higher education in the USA has been rushing headlong into the embrace of a "business model" that entails ballooning administrations, shamelessly overpaid bureaucrats who preoccupy themselves with matters of external expansion, reputation, and finance as opposed to the challenges of providing a meaningful education to the increasing masses of poorly prepared youth who flock to campus because the bachelors degree is now as necessary for employment as the high-school diploma once was. This "business model" spawns costly and unnecessary building projects at the expense of faculty salaries, it ratifies increasing class size, rising tuition rates, flagrant grade inflation, ubiquitous self-promotion (euphemistically called "institutional advancement"), increasing disrespect for and exploitation of faculty, a thoroughly misguided emphasis on numbers and "retention" at the expense of standards of excellence, and the image of students as "entitled consumers." An ugly scene, which, I fear, matches many embarrassing elements of American culture today and works against the slow, painful, inward-turning Freudian project.

How ironic it is that David Riesman, who introduced me to Freud years ago, penned a valediction to the exploration of inner life when, in *The lonely crowd* of 1950 (Reisman, 1950), on the eve of the heyday of American psychoanalysis, he spoke movingly of how "other-directed" selves were supplanting "inner-directed" selves:

> If [only] the other-directed people [think: today's crowd moving along Broadway, each person texting on a smartphone] should discover … that, indeed, they do no more assuage their loneliness in a crowd of peers [think: Facebook or Twitter] than one can assuage one's thirst by drinking sea water, then we might expect them to become more attentive to their own feelings and aspirations.

But let me not end on a dispiriting note. True, undergraduate students have been betrayed by an inferior education received before arriving at the gates of academia and by the philistine values that surround them. Yet when they walk through the doors of our classrooms, and sit down around the table, and turn their eager faces toward us, we find them curious, appreciative, and deliciously anxious to learn. Give them what is truly great, and they will respond. They will make us weep with the alacrity and intensity of their responses. Those of us who believe that psychoanalysis has precious gifts for them will find them ready. Even if not at first. Even if the path is steep and treacherous. As Freud's patients taught him how to understand them, just so will our youthful students, when we listen to them and exercise our ingenuity, show us how to teach them. What matters is our belief in the value of the project, our concern for them and for our common human destiny, and a joyous will to share, as per the

[5]See the following books and articles: Aron & Roksa (2011); https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/the-corporatization-of-higher-education; http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21567373-american-universities-represent-declining-value-money-their-students-not-what-it; and http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/ivory-tower-explores-american-higher-education-pricey/

Copyrighted Material. For use only by 48793. Reproduction prohibited. Usage subject to PEP terms & conditions (see terms.pep-web.org).

quirky character from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury tales*, the Clerk of Oxenford, about whom it is said: "And gladly would he learn and gladly teach."

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. Schwartz and to my fellow panelists at the International Psychoanalytic Association Conference in Boston, MA, July 23, 2015, especially to Dr. Paul Schwaber and to Dr. Peter Lowenberg. I also wish to thank Dr. Aleksandar Dimitrijevic for his kind invitation to revise the talk for publication in this journal.

References

Aron, R. & Roksa, J. (2011). *Academically adrift.* University of Chicago Press.
Freud, S. (1895). *Studies on hysteria*. SE 2: 21–47.
Freud, S. (1900). *The interpretation of dreams*. SE 4: 1–338.
Freud, S. (1905a). *Three essays on human sexuality*. SE 7: 123–246.
Freud, S. (1905b). *Fragment of an analysis of a case of hysteria.* SE 7: 1–122.
Freud, S. (1910). *Five lectures on psycho-analysis*. SE 11: 1–56.
Freud, S. (1909). *Analysis of a phobia in a five-year-old boy*. SE 10: 1–150.
Freud, S. (1919). *The uncanny*. SE 17: 217–256.
Freud, S. (1930). *Civilization and its discontents*. SE 21: 57–146.
Gamwell, L., & Wells, R. (eds.) (1989). *Sigmund Freud and art: His personal collection of antiquities*. New York: Abrams.
Highet, G. (1950). *The art of teaching*. New York: Vintage Books. Taylor & Francis.
Reisman, D. (1950). *The lonely crowd: A study in the changing American character*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Schorske, C.E. (1979). *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Culture and politics*. New York: Vintage.
Spitz, E.H. (1989). Psychoanalysis and the legacies of antiquity. In L. Gamwell and R. Wells (eds.), *Sigmund Freud and art: His personal collection of antiquities* (pp. 152–171). New York: Abrams.
Warner, M. (2014). Diary. *London Review of Books*, *36*, 42–43.

Author

Dr. Ellen Handler Spitz is a writer and university professor whose work concerns psychological perspectives on the arts and the aesthetic lives of children. She writes for public media as well as for academic journals and is the author of seven books, including *Art and psyche*, *Inside picture books*, and *Magritte's labyrinth*. She holds the title of Honors College Professor at the University of Maryland (UMBC).

Copyrighted Material. For use only by 48793. Reproduction prohibited. Usage subject to PEP terms & conditions (see terms.pep-web.org).