

*Six Steps in the Treatment of Borderline Personality Organization*

# The Third Split Transference and Termination

Vamik D. Volkan

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## Table of Contents

### Step Six: The Third Split Transference and Termination

REACTIONS TO THE TERMINATION DATE

MOURNING AND INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHANGES

THE APPEARANCE OF AN OLD SYMPTOM

REVIEWING PARENTAL INTROJECTS

WISH FOR NEW IDENTITY

FIRST REFERENCE TO A MAGICAL PILLOW

SHARING A BED WITH FATHER

FREEDOM FROM NEUROSIS

SECRETS IN THE MAGICAL PILLOW

REVIEWING OLD IMAGES

THE ANALYST AS A NEW OBJECT

GIVING UP THE PENIS

REVIEWING THE PATHOGENIC TRAUMA

REVIEWING THE EXTERNAL REALITY

REVIEWING THE PATHOGENIC FANTASY

LAST MOURNING AND CELEBRATION

## Step Six: The Third Split Transference and Termination

What follows is an account of Pattie's clinical progress during the six months before termination. I give events sequentially as she reported them. The reader will note her initial constructive response to the setting of a termination date; her review dreams; her anxiety, which led her to "visit" her old symptoms; and her new efforts to restore herself once more on a higher level. Her return to splitting was not as dramatic as I have seen in others with similar psychopathology (see Jane's termination phase in Volkan 1976, Chapter VI). However, she gave a strong illustration of returning to a magical linking object when she used a pillow to control the separation. Both oedipal and preoedipal elements "stuffed" in the pillow were analyzed and interpreted, and this led to her recapturing and tolerating—for one last time—her original pathogenic infantile fantasy. The resolution of such a fantasy validates her work with me as being psychoanalytic. References to her mourning appeared and reappeared during this time.

### REACTIONS TO THE TERMINATION DATE

When Pattie asked for a termination date I did some soul-searching, being aware of my old habit of coming to the rescue of women in trouble, a result of my having been born in a house of mourning and perceived as a replacement child for an idealized dead uncle (see Chapter 3.) One of my "missions" as a small boy was to rid my mother and grandmother of their grief. I dealt with the conflicts arising from my background by sublimating (Volkan 1985c), but the tendency to try to save women in distress surfaced from time to time. I recalled how pleased I would have been had Pattie been more idealized and better prepared for veterinary school. I recently found myself agreeing with her that she would look better if she lost more weight. When I caught myself doing this, I told her that in the past, hidden under her "big bad blob" representation, she had entertained the notion of being perfect, and now I was in a way wanting her to be more perfect by losing weight. I was making a technical mistake by speaking so, and I took some responsibility for this, but I added that we should consider the possibility that she was passing to me, as termination approached, her own old desire for perfection, so that I had become the agent to push her toward this end. I warned that we should both be alert to this.

I had to consider whether, regarding the termination date, my desire to “save” her completely might obstruct my agreeing to let her go. It was then that we agreed to conclude her treatment in six months. Two days later Pattie reported having worked very hard on the previous day to clean her house. She had installed storm windows “to keep the heat in,” and had begun to wash the outside of all the windows. She knew that her energetic housework had something to do with our decision to part in six months. To her, “Keeping the heat in” meant “keeping my impulses under control,” and the window-washing reflected her efforts to look prettier. “The place is sound and OK,” she explained, “but I must clean up a few more dirty windows.”

### **Outer Change versus Inner Change**

During the next few sessions she reported progress with her window-washing, and soon it was all done. “The outer change does not necessarily show the inner change, but it will not hurt me to learn more about how to look as a young woman.” She was going to a spa, taking exercises. There she met a beautiful woman who wore a bikini but disclosed none of her pubic hair. Eager to learn more feminine secrets, Pattie questioned her about how she managed this, and was told that the woman shaved to accommodate the outlines of the bikini.

Within days after setting a date for termination Pattie wore her hair differently, purchased new clothes, wore conservative lipstick to her sessions, and rejoiced in being able to tame a stallion in less than five minutes. She then sought out a young man for a date and stopped smoking. She became the very picture of a healthy young woman. I refrained from comment since I did not want her to stay that way—dependent on the support of compliments from me; she should now stand on her own feet. When she appeared half an hour late for one session, she spent it going over memories of rejection by her depressed father. I said she might have perceived me as the depressed father. Was she expecting me to say something that would acknowledge what a healthy woman she had become? When she replied that she had, we discussed the possibility that she could maintain a high self-esteem without depending on applause from others.

In her next sessions she wandered through extreme views of herself and then tried to take stock of her present state as a woman. When she sold one of the horses imported from Europe she could indeed

call herself a businesswoman. The sale brought excitement along with sadness and gave her a chance to review her mental representation of horses and their meaning to her. "But basically," she said, "I treated the horses like I treated my parents. I was attached to them but yearned to be independent of them. I felt sad about parting from the horse I sold; I felt as if my own child were leaving me. But I think I was now separating my horses from their symbolic meanings and coming to be a businesswoman."

### **A Review Dream**

In the third week after deciding to terminate, Pattie reported a long dream that I felt summarized her analytic work. It began in her childhood home, but she was searching for a new home and observed that the neighborhood had changed. She sensed her mother's influence but could not recall seeing her. She found four bins full of water and covered with stone covers. She went into one of the bins, which was like the inside of a cave, with a mysterious and exotic quality, possibly like something from the Near East. It was warm and she felt comfortable.

She said the four bins stood for her parents' four children in their mother's womb. She visited "being in the womb" in her analysis by entering the womb of an analyst from the Middle East (I am from Cyprus). She dreamt of adventures in the cave, including disposing of a snake that she kept in a bottle, invisible to anyone but herself. She finally went through a tunnel, in a rebirth fantasy, to get out of the cave and find a nice home. (I noted that the idealization of analysis might be a resistance to her mourning over losing it.)

The next day a dog on the farm killed a sheep and had to be destroyed. She felt sad about this although the dog had been a troublemaker. Before having the dog put down she had considered other options, and even thought of advertising for a new master in spite of the fact that she knew it would not make a good pet. That night she dreamt of being in a house into which newcomers had moved, bringing with them a new breed of dogs without feet that were cruel to people to revenge the cutting off of their feet; they were messengers of evil.

Pattie knew that killing her dog had activated her childhood rage toward Mary, represented by the dogs without feet. It was as though her own rage had caused Mary's problems. Although she wanted

Mary disposed of, she felt guilty. I thought that this time she was reviewing early conflicts that had affected her all of her life. It was a moving hour. She spoke of raising orchids, and I sensed in her a tenderness the quality of which had escaped me before. She spoke of how until now nursing her untamed rage made her feel that she was not entitled to the good things in life. She returned to her “review dream” about going into a bin, recalling now that the bins were located on the property of the family of a boy who went to school with Pattie and whom Pattie secretly admired. When he once asked to hold her hand he was offering her what she so strongly desired, but she seized his hand and flung him to the ground, hurting him. After this he stayed away from her. Pattie spoke tearfully now of how she had “defended” herself from things she greatly desired but did not feel entitled to, and how she thus had held tenaciously to her “big bad blob” image, hiding her tenderness and longing for tenderness from others.

### **MOURNING AND INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHANGES**

The sessions that followed were full of mourning. “I think how I was, and I feel sad,” she declared. “I am mourning over things that were part of me. I know this is a transitional state, but God it’s painful!” She had made an effort to give up smoking and added, “I think giving up smoking relates symbolically to my losing bad parts of myself. I never knew how to mourn properly. I always had guilt and depression with my mourning, but now I know that there can be mourning without depression and guilt.”

A month and a half after setting the termination date, and after her open mourning, she was busy creating a new self. “I have no excuse for being sick any more,” she said. “This is a peculiar feeling.” She enrolled in a new health spa and lost a few pounds very quickly. She looked very well.

While making these external changes she spoke openly of internal changes taking place—her identification and her desired identification with me. “The only other person I know who is like you is me,” she said. “I don’t really want to be an analyst, but when I talk to other people I need to weed things out. I am too analytical. I am at a different level. This really freaks me out.” She was strongly attracted to a young man named Steve, who came to work on the farm. Since he remained on the farm at night sometimes, she contemplated having an affair with him in order to have the missing element before finishing her analysis—having a steady boyfriend. Instead of acting on her impulse, however, she



wanted to know Steve first. "I began listening to him like you listen to me," she said. "This is a wish approach; sex doesn't run my life any more."

### THE APPEARANCE OF AN OLD SYMPTOM

While infatuated with Steve, Pattie suddenly felt "dissociated" and went to a bar where she picked up a stranger with whom to have intercourse. The next day she was greatly worried about being infested with vermin, and when she came to her senses she told me with great embarrassment what had happened. I said nothing at first except to encourage her to continue analyzing. Still embarrassed, she spoke of having felt very well recently, and wondered why she had gone to the bar and repeated her old symptoms. She said the man she had picked up was not "a scumbag," but an attractive man. Although she had been "dissociated" during the whole experience, she kept thinking that she would have to tell me about it, and that she would feel very uncomfortable. Then she began shouting, "Fuck you! You're a failure!"

It was not clear whether she was addressing me or uttering what she expected I was thinking of her. "I suffer, but I get you, too! I don't go down alone!" she declared.

She recalled that after work with her psychologist she had felt better, but had suddenly felt depressed again. Her parents had rushed her to her therapist, who became very alarmed, saying, "I was afraid something like this would happen." When, soon after this, Pattie was admitted to the hospital, she felt betrayed.

"I am repeating what I did with her and what I did millions of times with my parents," she said, expressing appreciation for my not being dismayed by the return of her symptoms. Instead of telling her that I was afraid she could not be cured I said, "Let us continue to analyze."

The fact was that when she told me of her picking up a stranger I did *not* feel like the little boy she flipped over when he offered his hand; I could still keep my hand out to her. I believe that such tolerance, which is not easily acquired, comes from long experience with patients like Pattie. After telling about her lapse I said that an analysand may have in termination phase a tendency to visit old symptoms as though to say goodbye to them. I was glad that she had not revisited her old symptom just for the sake

of repeating the past, but had done so in an effort to understand its meaning. She began her next session by saying that she did not like revisiting her old symptom. "I don't need to repeat it, I can analyze it," she said, adding that her recent infatuation with Steve, her experiencing of sexual feelings, and her visit to the bar were all "manifestations of *transference*." I cannot recall ever having used this term with her, and I was delightedly amused that she had not only correctly identified the source of her behavior, but was using the correct term, which she had picked up somewhere. Any question as to where she had picked it up would be an interference with her serious search for its meaning. She spoke of leaving me and of psychologically leaving "the old family nest." No wonder she wanted to know if the old breast/penis could still be found in case of difficulty in her progress.

### REVIEWING PARENTAL INTROJECTS

Pattie's parents were visiting the farm, and she watched them very carefully. She was amazed to see how much she had internalized their bad parts. She was discovering that what she had taken to be her own self had been to a high degree composed of parental introjects. Searles (1978) warns against interpreting such findings early, since it would be injurious to attack the patient's core self, which consisted of such introjects. Moreover, premature interpretation is injurious "if the analyst gives the interpretation in a spirit of disavowing implicitly that he himself possesses, in his own personality-functioning, any appreciable element of the particular personality-traits in question, for an interpretation so given tends to foster the patient's feeling isolated from (1) his usual sense of identity, (2) his parent from whom the introject had been largely derived, and (3) the analyst" (pp. 19-20). However, in the termination phase these issues are mutually examined.

Pattie noted her mother's behavior, which she summarized as a secret declaration that "I can't do anything—I'm not smart enough." She watched her father telling himself that he should be harsh at all times. Reporting these observations, she said that I never used her weakness against her, and that she never experienced me as being harsh with her, although I left her with her own harshness, which was the end result of, among other things, her introjecting her harsh father. When she wanted to get rid of her own internal harshness by putting it on me, it did not fit, and she found this maddening. Her going to

the bar also was partly an effort to make me harsh. Putting her internal harshness into me would comfort her. The option of disowning the harshness without externalizing it onto me never occurred to her.

### **WISH FOR NEW IDENTITY**

Pattie dreamt of being visited by a representative of a school who sought to enroll her as a student. Pattie was dressed conservatively, and the room where the visit took place was full of geraniums. In reality Pattie had, at the age of 20, been enrolled in this school, which emphasized its riding program, but she did not ride well and could not handle her life there. She greatly disliked one female teacher and left within a few months. However, the school kept sending her its alumni news bulletin, and every year she cynically and mockingly sent it a donation of one dollar. The day residue of her dream came from her having received the bulletin that day.

The dream represented her desire to live this part of her life again, this time with a different identity, one which would not alienate those whose world she wanted to enter. She had taken a geranium plant from the school, potted it and cared for it so well that she still had it after many years. The geraniums in the dream were her secret link to all she wanted to be—an unaggressive and socially acceptable woman who need not separate from the school.

She amused herself by cutting up and then trying to tape together pictures of herself; it was as though she were trying to make a new Pattie. “Sometimes I feel like a jerk wearing sweat pants and going to a health spa. But no matter what, I will go through with it,” she said. Noting that she was about to turn 28, she asked, “What is my marketability?” She expressed sadness over her lost years. I too felt sad and told her that we had no choice but to be philosophical about those years.

She reported becoming rather a sensitive rider and keeping the horses’ stalls clean. “But,” she said, “I envy myself in my recent dream—conservatively dressed and comfortable with my femininity. I’m not there yet.” She reported writing to a friend what she had learned in her analysis, and how inner and outer needs had changed and how her inner and outer worlds now seem compatible.

### **FIRST REFERENCE TO A MAGICAL PILLOW**

Three months after setting the termination date Pattie began talking about a pillow she was making. It seems that before she had gone to the hospital where she had stayed so many years earlier, she had bought a pair of pillow cases to embroider, which were stamped with a design of warriors on horseback. She resumed work on them now and thought of giving me one for Christmas, which was approaching. She said that completing the pillow paralleled the completion of her treatment. She now thought of the battle scene she was embroidering as a scene from the Middle East, one that represented her analysis. She enjoyed her sewing and put forth her best effort. She said she was happy at the thought of making me a present—it was not a bribe since she wanted nothing in return. Thus, she said, there was no need for me to analyze her gift and spoil her pleasure in giving me something. I said nothing, and before long she went with her father and Steve to Europe to buy horses. She returned just before Christmas.

The trip had been a business success and she had daydreamed about the handsome men she saw on the planes. “I am in a state of metamorphosis,” she said. “I am not yet a flying butterfly, but I am certainly no longer a caterpillar!” She reported that my pillow was finished except for being taken to a shop to be stuffed.

She decided not to join her family for Christmas, but was surprised to find herself feeling some sentiment about them. She gave her own Christmas party, and that night dreamt about a famous male ballet star who was then being seen in a film. She talked to me as a young woman talking about a fantasied lover. When she went on a long automobile trip with Steve, who did the driving and had the car radio turned up high, she put plugs in her ears and daydreamed about Steve, *in her mind* undressing and making love to him. “I had fun. It was very enjoyable,” she said. “And at the same time I was not involved in inappropriate *actions*. To have thoughts, desires, and feelings without immediately acting on them is a new kind of freedom for me,” she added.

### SHARING A BED WITH FATHER

At the start of the new year Pattie dreamt about a famous equestrian widely admired by horsemen. She was eating ice cream in the dream when this man asked to lick it. She felt highly flattered, but he took away her ice cream and walked away from her. The manifest content of this dream was that someone she

saw as sexually important to her wanted her ice cream, which probably represented her breast, and then humiliated her. This dream signaled her telling me what had happened during her first trip abroad to buy horses.

Her disclosure was made after her father came to the farm for a visit at the first of the year, to be followed a day later by her mother. He was angry at finding cats living in the house, and while driving to her session Pattie thought she would end up talking about the same old issue—her anger toward him. She did not want to waste time doing this, but found herself muttering, “*Fucking father!*” She said that being alone with him was really bad, but when her mother was present she provided a buffer between father and daughter. Angrily, she added, “I was happy about one thing on the last visit to Europe. I didn’t have to share a room with my father!” The significance of this remark escaped her. When I encouraged her to tell more, she disclosed that during the first trip for buying horses they had occupied the same room and that for some reason they had moved the twin beds side by side before retiring for the night.

As she told this, the significance of it struck her and she felt “weird.” She recalled having argued with her father before they went to bed. “Oh my God!” she cried, “If we didn’t fight we would fuck! That would be worse!” She called her relationships with her father “an aggressive love story.” After calming down, she again reviewed her difficult early relationship with her mother, and how she had hoped to be loved and appreciated as a girl by her father in order to escape her mother, and blossom. He disappointed her and had smothered her hope of having high self-esteem as a girl. She now understood that she had been relating in a negative way to him in the hope of gaining his attention, using him to *confirm* her negative identity. At the bottom of all this, however, was that she really still wanted his affection and repeated an oedipal scene in order to see concretely what this was all about. She had not finished her associations to this incident when the hour came to a close.

At the next session she was beautifully dressed and wore perfume. Her mother had driven her to my office and was waiting outside for her. I asked if her mother were providing a buffer between us, noting that if this were the case we might find it hard to talk more about the bedroom in Europe.

Pattie said that Mary had made a one-day visit to the farm with her mother, and that this had given Pattie a chance to observe the attachment between them. At the table, their mother acted as though there

were not enough food for two daughters. This did not depress Pattie, who was able to see it as a repeating phenomenon, in which she would then turn to her father. Suddenly she said, "My father screws Mary *too!*" She wanted on one level to express disappointment in her father, but on another to indicate that she had an aggressive love affair with him.

At her next session she showed me a new coat and gave me a warm, sensual smile. But as soon as she lay on the couch she started speaking of being fed up with her father. She complained of the condition of the ring they had built for exercising and training their horses, saying that her father showed no interest in *her ring* and that he was "*screwing*" her. When she realized what she had said she gave a nervous laugh, but I felt she was really ready now to face unresolved oedipal desires without much anxiety and the formation of symptoms. "I don't really want to sleep with my father," she said, "above and beyond the moral thing. I don't like him as a man; but I am amazed to see how much I was stuck with him when I was a child." She said she now understood that staying on at the farm was "being screwed by him." She had recently visited a friend who was a mistress of a married man. I asked if she also felt like a kept woman on the farm. "What a tradeoff!" she exclaimed. "In order to seek gratification for my childhood wishes I had to stay neurotic, a kept woman."

### FREEDOM FROM NEUROSIS

Pattie spent the next few sessions telling me of her relief at having discussed her "secret." "I don't feel helpless any more," she said. "If I stay on the farm, that will be my decision. It will be because I like horses!" She made a realistic assessment of her financial situation. Careful not to encourage her to make a drastic change, I helped her assimilate things, telling her that as time went on she could make her own decisions about the future and decide where she would live. "I feel alone now," she said. "I gave up my father in order not to be alone in the future. Anger still comes out, but I turn it into assertion."

In what she called a "wonderful dream," she had been skiing on a mountain. "I put the skis on. I was part of them. They were not foreign to me. Everything flowing, no chasing, no confrontation. I am having the best time! Me and my mountain! I am in control." Her associations recalled an unhappy experience skiing with her family, when she had felt humiliated by her inability to ski well. She had been left behind. "I really want to ski," she said. "Of course, I can't ski as I did in the dream, but at least I

know that I conquered my childhood fear—the fear of abandonment.” In her next session she gave an example of how she could now change anger into assertion. When she had been transporting some horses in a horse trailer, her helpers had been careless and not listened to her directions. This made her angry, but instead of shouting at them she calmly called them together and told them how to do their work. Her handling of them had been successful.

On the previous day she had been in a checkout line at the store, well dressed and feeling confident. She ruminated over how her childhood conflicts had made her stay with her parents, and how they in turn unconsciously encouraged her masochism. The horses had dominated her life, and before that there were mice and hamsters. “Who the hell wanted to spend time with rodents?” she asked herself. Now she was doing an unbelievable amount of work on the farm and wanted a respite.

Lost in these thoughts, a man in the checkout line asked if she were angry. Surprised and jolted by his inquiry, she replied, “Thank you for your concern. I’m not angry any longer, just tired—just plain drained.” When telling me this she began to sob. From time to time she stopped long enough to say that her sobbing made her feel more free. Then she reported a newly unrepressed memory. She was a child, feeling sick. Mary was crying and her mother was taking care of her. Pattie began to cry, too. “My father made me stop,” she said. “He grabbed me and threw me across the room. I stopped crying.” She kept on sobbing and spoke of her stubborn determination to change her parents. She really wanted to create good parents in order to be able to trust again, but she met with obstacles in carrying out this “project.” When the time came to leave, she looked at me with tears in her eyes, saying, “I can cry freely now. Progress, huh? Thanks.” I think she sensed that I was deeply moved.

### **Effective Grief**

She told me later that she kept on crying all day. Little more than two months of her treatment remained. Recalling that her father had thrown her across the room, I asked whether she expected that I would throw her out. She replied that although she did not anticipate that, she sometimes felt as though I were telling her to “piss or get off the pot.” She said that fixing a termination date had motivated her “to do things that I knew inside out.” But she confessed to being sometimes frightened at the idea of not seeing me again. She said I was a god in her mind when we started work. Later I had become a machine, a

nonhuman object, and then I was a doctor charging her for listening to her. Now she thought I was the most important person she had met in the twenty-seventh year of her life.

She was sad when I cancelled a session in order to attend a meeting. “Again, I feel like crying,” she said. “It is as though I were losing my best friend.” She was now able to tolerate grief readily. Before their treatment, patients like Pattie are unable to grieve effectively (Searles 1982). She now said, “What makes our separation tolerable is that I am not needy anymore—but sometimes the real world sucks!” She went on to give an example of what she meant and indirectly disclosed her identification with my ability to deal with day-to-day problems.

She met a young woman who was friendly to her and joined her for lunch, greatly pleased over this extension of her social contacts. At lunch the woman disclosed that she was a lesbian and admitted to sexual interest in Pattie, who calmly replied that she had no homosexual inclinations. She was, however, able to get the woman to discuss her very traumatic childhood. Pattie responded empathically, and when the two parted, the other woman felt better.

### SECRETS IN THE MAGICAL PILLOW

Two months before termination, Pattie reported an important dream about the woman in the Nazi uniform who had appeared in a dream in Step Two. Although in this dream the woman seemed to be a sophisticated and elegant lady, Pattie recognized her. She gave Pattie a basket of foreign language dictionaries (German, French, Russian, and perhaps even Turkish). Pattie thought this was a great gift and had no fear of the donor. She knew that she represented me. This time I was a different kind of mother, still somewhat distant and controlling, but a helper. I was associated with Sigmund Freud since some of the dictionaries were in German. His work had been translated into many languages, and I had given her the language of psychoanalysis to communicate with her unconscious. Her associations led to “my pillow” that she was going to give me. In the dream I gave her a gift in return. The day residue of the dream was her asking her mother to take the pillow to a shop for finishing. She said it was not ready at Christmas because she still had ambivalent feelings for me at that time. Now she was ready to give it to me. She spoke of the paintings in my office, which were from different countries, one being Mexican. She could not have any associations with it. She supposed that some others were the work of a patient or



patients who had left them with me to remember them by. She, too, was creating something to give me. It was like baring her soul.

She picked up with this when starting her next hour. Speaking of the pillow, she said, “You have to accept it. I have to give it to you.” “I don’t want you to forget me,” she continued. “I don’t think you will throw it away. You can take it home, but I think you will keep it in your office as you keep the paintings.”

I thanked her for wanting to give me a gift, and said I appreciated the work that went into it; from what she had told me, the design was very complicated, requiring careful work. But I asked why she would think I needed a pillow to remember her by. If this were the case, the pillow contained magic, and if we were to leave a magical object unanalyzed between us it could be an agency of regression. I suggested that she might have some “last secret” locked up in it.

### **The Terrible Turk**

She then recalled that I had once referred to myself as “the terrible Turk.” I vaguely remember this. It was in the first year of her treatment, when she was filled with paranoid anxiety about me. I had tolerated her externalizations and projections and tried to be playful so she would not perceive them as dangerous when they returned to haunt her. She said that for a year after this she had mentally called me “TTT”—The Terrible Turk. She made up rhymes about this while driving to her sessions, such as “TTT is tea and pee.” She was being playful with the terrible Turk image and her externalizations and projections in order to tame them through identification with my playful self. Nonetheless, a potential for real danger lay under this playfulness.

She said that the design on my pillow looked like a battle between crusaders and turbaned Turks. I suggested that one last secret locked in the pillow might be her negative feelings for me. If she gave me a symbolic representation of a battle between us, she would not need to speak of aggression between us.

I recalled her “aggressive love affair” with her father. Although she had said she was now free of him, I wondered if we needed to understand our relationship in terms of its reflecting that with her father. Since she had a pair of pillows, one of which I could rest my head on while she rested hers on the other—we would be sharing twin pillows as she and her father had shared twin beds.

She confirmed my thoughts, saying that she had taken my pillow with her on her last trip to Europe with her father and Steve. She was amazed to realize the meaning of this odd behavior: On her first European trip to buy horses she had “gone to bed” with her father, and on the second, she wanted to go to bed with my pillow—symbolically, with me. However, to defend against incest in the transference, once she was at the airport in Europe she lost the one piece of baggage that had the pillow in it. (It was later found and sent on to her.)

At her next session, she had a most friendly smile and greeted me with a friendly “Hi!” “Let’s go back to the pillow story,” she said. “I have thought more about it, and about what you said yesterday about my taking it to Europe. What is not finished in our work is contained in the pillow. I agree with you.” So we went on to analyze her “last secrets.”

She recalled having seen a mouth in the design on my couch when she first started work with me. She had been afraid of sliding down into it when she lay on the couch. She had been preoccupied with her mother’s image and its reflection in me for some time—until the first dream of the SS woman. Sometimes she thought of me as a man and thought that lying on the couch had sexual connotations. Later, after the first dream of the SS woman, she would imagine my coming up to her as she lay on it, but she never thought of my really attacking her. She had entertained ideas like this as her treatment continued, but until now had never spoken of them to me. She had in fact thought for several years of giving me the pillow, but had not spoken of it then.

She had fantasized recently that I would reach out and touch her while she lay on the couch. It would be “a good touch,” she said, and imagined my hugging her to show that I thought her to be a desirable woman. After she had this fantasy, she went to a party and flirted with a young man who was attractive and danced with her. His date confronted them with the accusation that he wanted to take Pattie to bed. Pattie thought this out of line, and he said to his date that he would not do such a thing. When she insisted that he had planned to bed Pattie, Pattie told her that he might indeed have had such an idea, but that “it takes two to tango,” using a phrase she had picked up from me, and that she would not sleep with anyone she did not know well. Leaving the couple, she felt very proud at feeling no guilt, asserting herself, and acting calm and scrupulous.

## Preoedipal Secrets

Pattie thought the pillow was like the bottle she had kept for years—a token of triumph over her separation anxiety. For Pattie, my keeping the pillow would preserve her forever in my eyes: Her oedipal secrets, concealed in the pillow, were analyzed, and she was now bringing her preoedipal secret into consciousness. At one level, if I accepted and kept the pillow, the dependent child Pattie would stay “alive” in me since I would be the one to be stuck with the pillow as she had originally been stuck with her stolen bottle.

I decided to tell her about the paintings in the office, which I had moved to after my sister’s illness. They had not been part of the decor of my original office. Since we were close to termination, I did not want them to remain a mystery to her, and I also wanted her to see me as a real object uncontaminated with transference blurring.

I told her one was Mexican. She said that she had imagined her peacocks in the painting, substituting peacocks for the doves in the picture. Another painting, which had not been given me by a patient, depicted a butterfly over a forest. We now understood one aspect of her using butterfly symbolism to refer to gaining freedom from her archaic introjects. I told her that all the other paintings had been done by one of my nieces, but that it did not surprise me that she had concluded they were the work of a disturbed patient, because in some the faces seemed fearful and anxious. I reminded her of a time when she had sensed my anxiety (see Step Four), and I had reassured her that I had enough control of my faculties to continue working with her. I explained that my sister had been gravely ill when her daughter had made the paintings in question, and because she, too, was deeply worried, they no doubt reflected her troubled state of mind. Calling her attention to some very soothing colors and sensual figures in another of her paintings, I said that the artist had been capable of expressing other emotions as well.

I asked if she would be surprised if I told her I was not in the habit of accepting gifts from my patients, not because I failed to appreciate them, but because I thought the analysis of the wish to give a gift was more important. She said she was not surprised, but before the hour ended she insisted that I accept her gift. She wanted to leave an open door leading back to her neurosis.

## REVIEWING OLD IMAGES

The next day she wanted reassurance that my caring for her was genuine. She wanted me to be her loving father without incest. She recalled again the hotel room in Europe where she had shared beds with her father. "You know, it was horrible," she said. "I felt discomfort. I didn't enjoy that experience!"

She said she loved me; it was the first time she had verbalized this freely and openly. She explained that if she knew that I loved her in return as she wanted her father to do, she could imagine leaving me. After this session she visited her lesbian friend briefly. As she drove home she thought of vermin in her genitalia, but was able to put the thought out of her mind and to analyze why she had gone to see the woman after the session in which she professed love for me. She realized that mature heterosexual love still frightened her with the possibility of disappointment and failure. Thus she had briefly regressed to the mother (the lesbian) to defend against her adult heterosexuality. I noted with pleasure her capacity for self-analysis.

She told me that something else had changed in her—she no longer blamed her parents for everything. She bought valentine cards for them, the first such cards she had given since she was in the eighth grade.

### **Return to Splitting**

Pattie's visiting her split images, "the big bad blob," and the femme fatale, started when she saw a film about a woman with a split personality working by day in an office and plying her trade as a streetwalker by night. Fascinated, Pattie rented a videotape of the film and watched it three times in one day. "I am not alone in the world. Others also are attempting to merge opposite things in themselves," she said. In the film a man's love helps the heroine to mend her personality's split and to become a sexual woman without being a prostitute. But before her "cure" she kills a fanatical, harsh preacher who also lusted after her. He represented for Pattie the oedipal father and her harsh superego.

Associating with this, Pattie realized that she had unconsciously felt that it was her blossoming femininity when she was 8 that had depressed her father, just as the heroine of the film made the preacher crazy. She now recalled that her worst fear during the initial years of her treatment was boring

me (making me depressed).

I pointed out that nothing she did changed her father's depression, and she unconsciously kept feeling responsible. Then she suggested that when we separated I might be sad and not be able to handle it. For a long time, the idea of this kept her from wanting to get well (blossom). I told her it was possible that I would feel sad when we separated, and that she would feel the same. I asked if she could tolerate such feelings without turning them into depression.

In the next session she continued to review her illness, her treatment, and the "last secrets." She was trying hard to see me as outside her transference neurosis.

She recalled having moved to the farm about eight years previously. She could stay with horses for a long time because they were not human and it was less hurtful to relate to them. She recalled how at that time she had found small tasks extremely onerous. For example, if she dropped a key, the effort of finding it was blown out of all proportion. "I am no longer frustrated with little things," she said.

### THE ANALYST AS A NEW OBJECT

Pattie wanted to know how I manage my life. I was an analyst, the medical director of a general hospital, and she thought I traveled a good deal to give lectures. She asked how I delegated work to others; this was something that her father did not do easily.

She wondered about my family. She knew I had children. Once she had thought of my wife as a Barbie doll, but did so no longer. This had transference implications that required review. In her childhood bargain with her mother, the doll for which she had given up her pacifier had been a Barbie doll. Now she was surrendering the magic in her last such object—the pillow—voluntarily. I no longer had to own a Barbie doll. Instead of confiding details of my life outside my sessions with her, I told her that since she had been seeing me for years she did know much about me, and that while she might have some interest in knowing what my house looked like and so on, what was important was her knowing me through our verbal and nonverbal communication in our sessions. I told her that if she searched her mind she would find that she knew more about me than she thought, and she admitted that this was true.

## GIVING UP THE PENIS

As we started her last month in treatment she came to a session with one foot bandaged and said that she had had a plantar wart removed. She had been told that the wart contained a virus. It was large, and when it had been excised by a laser she thought it resembled a snail in a shell, or a conch. She asked to take it home, and did so, keeping it on her dressing table. That night she dreamt of a famous male singer she doted on, who had, in fact, been a patient at the hospital in which she herself had been treated. In the dream she went with him to a fortress-like house with a broken gate surrounded by vines and bushes. While they were in the house the man took her vaginal secretion, put it in a test tube, and examined it, saying that it was not cancerous. This activity was carried out as though sexual relations were taking place, but it was "too clinical." Her associations revealed that the removal of the wart, which she described as "making a hole in my body," stood for her attempt to give up her penis. She had made such attempts in the past as she progressed in treatment. What was different now was her ready acceptance of her desire to have a penis and her ability to look *without* anxiety at the conflict between surrendering and not surrendering it. Moreover, she now showed real excitement at symbolically feminizing herself, reflecting where she was in this phase of her life. The gate surrounded by underbrush in her dream was her vagina; now it was opened. The hole in her body and the shell (a beautiful conch) represented the female genitalia. She was not yet sure how "well" her vagina was, but it was being treated "clinically."

The next day she noticed that the "snail" on her dressing table had shrunk, and in the afternoon it was gone. Apparently someone, probably her mother, who was at the farm at the time, had thrown it away while dusting. For a day or so she entertained the notion that it might reappear. It amused her to think that her unconscious processes made it hard for her to bid goodbye to her penis. She spoke of having had in the past a "prick-like personality," but said she was different now, more tactful and feminine. She gave me an example of how she had acted nicely in a social situation "maybe because I had my wart removed."

At the end of one session she "forgot" her purse, leaving it on the couch. I called this to her attention, adding that she was symbolically leaving her vagina behind for my "clinical" examination. I suggested that she herself would know if her vagina were functional.

## REVIEWING THE PATHOGENIC TRAUMA

At her next session, hearing a small airplane overhead, Pattie fancied that it carried a banner advertising “Pattie’s Sex Appeal.” She continued the saga of her “battle wound” (the removal of the wart) for the next few weeks. Her foot hurt, and since she worked in a stable and was thus exposed to infection, her physician prescribed antibiotics and some painkiller that made her sleepy on the couch and induced a trance-like state. I could not determine whether her withdrawn appearance was entirely due to therapeutic regression, but in any case, the symbolism attached to the wounded foot now changed: Her mind and her associations to the bandage on her foot now related to her visiting her dominant pathogenic trauma—her mother’s emphasis on caring for Mary and her orthopedic difficulty. Through her identification with the young Mary, and by examining this identification she was separating herself from the childhood environment she had experienced as noxious. Without any suggestion from me she tried to talk to her mother about how the latter recalled the childhood of the two sisters. Her mother was now able to recall—and confess to Pattie—that she had felt guilt over Mary’s rotated hips; she spoke of having learned that this could be corrected, but of her distress over seeing Mary obliged to wear a brace.

### **Again, the Magical Pillow**

Recalling that her mother collected bibelots, including figurines, she wondered if they represented Mary in her mother’s mind. She also wondered whether her keeping the plastic bottle and her own habit of collecting things came from her identification with her mother. Then she returned to the pillow, another inanimate object with magical properties. She expressed appreciation for my having analyzed the meaning of the pillow instead of simply accepting it as a gift, which “would have belittled our relationship—made our relationship less.” She was greatly saddened by our impending separation.

## REVIEWING THE EXTERNAL REALITY

Three weeks before we were to terminate I changed the hour of Pattie’s appointment with me. She “misunderstood” the hour and came to her session early. When she did not find me in the usual place, she walked up to the office in the main hospital where her treatment had started. I happened to be there and understood her mistake about the time to be due to her wish to return to the place where our relationship had begun—to say goodbye to it. She was pleased when I agreed to have our session in that

office and recalled its appearance in the past. "There was a copper vase over there, and over there a jade tree." Her memory was accurate, although when we worked there the chaotic state of her mind did not allow her to perceive the reality of the room. She dreamt that night of being in her old neighborhood "having fun as a kid."

She was seeing one of her former lovers, who worked at the farm from time to time. She liked him, but not as a lover, and kept the relationship platonic, going with him as a friend to the movies and other places. Steve still worked on the farm, and when she was asked at a social gathering whether she knew him, she found herself saying proudly "Oh, yes. He works for me." She was the boss.

She came to an agreement with her father about her share of the profits of their horse operation. The farm manager and his wife still occupied a house on the farm, and her father now gave him notice to report to Pattie. "After my wart was cut off, my father respects me more!" she said jokingly. I noted that she was identifying with her perception of me as manager of a hospital.

### **Grieving after Termination**

As termination approached she still expressed the wish to have a steady boyfriend and a loving relationship with a man before leaving treatment. She wanted to get married but wished to loosen her attachment to me before she could find a loving man. I helped her understand that she might continue grieving for months over separating from me, and I suggested that she be aware of this.

### **REVIEWING THE PATHOGENIC FANTASY**

In the final week of her treatment, Pattie recaptured for the last time her dominant pathogenic fantasy. She had a dream and analyzed it with humor. One day after her session she asked to use my telephone to make a collect long-distance call. Since there are no other telephones in the building except in the three offices of faculty members, I agreed since I was about to leave anyway. This was an unusual request, but she seemed to feel some urgency about making the call. She said later that as she used the telephone she noticed a pair of scissors in a holder next to the instrument, and this contributed the day residue of a long dream she would have in which at first she was a princess in a big mansion which was invaded by strangers who partied loudly, and, in a sense, pushed her out. With the help of a man, she



went back to what had been the mansion but was now but a modest, solidly built stone house. There she encountered a woman with scissors in her hand who tried to cut Pattie's hair. The scissors were sharp at first but became blunt. Pattie said that this dream was a review of her treatment: It indicated her wish to be her father's princess, as well as the presence of hidden grandiosity at the time she began treatment. The invaders of the house were her siblings. I had helped her return to the house and modify it. The woman with the scissors was the mother who used to cut Pattie's hair when she was small, hurting her as she cut it. (Her mother had also used scissors to cut her pacifier to bits.) This was a form of punishment that was eventually blunted.

During our discussion of what this punishment was, Pattie began to laugh. She had just realized the deeper wish contained in the dream. Her telephone call from my office had been to Mary, and Pattie found herself telling her sister that she was alone in her analyst's office and was using his telephone. It was then that she had noticed the scissors. In her dream, the woman with scissors also represented her aggressive self; she wanted to thrust the scissors into her mother's womb to kill Mary. When she told Mary that she was in her analyst's room alone she was expressing her wish to be the mother's/analyst's only child, after murdering Mary and the other siblings. The cutting of her hair and pacifier was her punishment for her murderous rage. This was an old story to her now, and instead of taking it as seriously as in the past, and with terror, she now could be not only amazed but amused by it.

### LAST MOURNING AND CELEBRATION

Pattie's parents took her to dinner the day before we terminated, and they celebrated "her graduation," as she put it. She thanked them for having helped her financially with her treatment, toasted them, and told them that her work with me had made her "wiser, smarter, and able to deal with life better than most people in the world." Her parents in turn told her how pleased they were with her progress.

She wore a black shirt to her last appointment by way of mourning. On the couch she reported her last dream, about a white stucco house, which represented her analyzed self-representation. The house had "nice grass around it, and a pond, too. It had many, many beautiful arches" (representations of her feminine body). "There were horses near the house, and I fed them." She felt happy when she awakened

and recalled this dream. "I expected to be very sad today," she said. "But I cried yesterday. It was O.K. to cry. I felt cleansed. Now I feel better because of it. I have no self-pity and no frustration."

During her last session she decided to get up off the couch and face me. She was rather shy and talked humorously of seeing many horses in her last dream. "I started with them; I am finishing with them," she mused.

She said she had wanted to wear a grey outfit for her last session, symbolizing the statement I had made long ago (see Step Two) about how the melding of black and white (her opposing object and self-representations) made grey. Then she thought it was more important to symbolize her mourning since it was her dominant feeling at the time. So she chose to wear black.

She said there was still much that she wanted to achieve. She was excited over being on her own, but anxious also. I recited a Turkish proverb: "When you see the village you are looking for, you do not need a guide any longer." She smiled, and as she left the room she gave me a brief hug.