To become or be made a psychoanalyst

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Independent studies of the Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute

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Psychoanalysis is unique in that competence in the field can be achieved only through applying the method to oneself. Different psychoanalytic schools differ in their understanding of the unconscious, about how to approach it, or how to define the specificity of the psychoanalytic interaction. Consequently there are differences in the criteria for the definition of the `good enough analysis´. There are many different opinions about how to select candidates, organize the curriculum, and determine the length of training. To define psychoanalytic talent is difficult; to define criteria to use for selection is of uncertain value; the problematic overlap between personal analysis and training is constantly present; and to achieve conditions in which learning and creativity can develop is complicated by trainee, supervisor and their relationship to the Institute. Confrontations about training are often heated and divergent, as well as repetitive. Systematic studies about psychoanalytic education are few. After a short discussion of the different

concerns about selection, personal versus training analysis and the ambiguities of the supervisory situation, I will review three studies on how psychoanalytic education – as viewed by trainers and trainees - is conducted and experienced at Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute.

The tripartite model - and its discontents

Psychoanalytic training was institutionalized in 1922 at the Berlin Congress. It was built on the tripartite model: *personal analysis* as the basis so as to learn the method first hand and get in touch with the influence of the unconscious on everyday personal and professional life; *didactic training* to learn the theory; and *supervision* to integrate experience and theory with the candidate's personality. It may be of service to remember that as soon as training becomes organized it poses a problem for trainer and trainees as to what the content of a training program should be, who should be selected for such training and according to what kinds of principles, and last but not least, what the most productive teaching methods might be. Various psychoanalytic schools differ in how to understand the unconscious, how to approach it, and how to define the specificity of the psychoanalytic interaction. Consequently there are differences in the criteria for the definition of the good enough analysis. There are many different opinions about how to select candidates, organize the curriculum and length of training, and confrontations about training are often heated and divergent, as

well as repetitive (Watillon 1993). Nevertheless, the majority of discussants stress the complexities of training for the `impossible profession´, the ambiguous position of the training analyst, and the difficulties of finding scientific or objective criteria for selection and evaluation.

To define psychoanalytic talent is difficult. In his report on the 4th IPA pre-congress Victor Calef regretted, that the study of the "good analyst" has not gotten off the ground. Only in 2002 did the Working Party on Psychoanalytic Education of the EPF start a study conducted by Filet & Szönyi who looked at how analytic competence is thought of and defined by different European psychoanalysts. In his study, Kappelle (1996) found that selection is strongly influenced through the interaction of applicant and selectors, selection methods are proved to be largely intuitive, and many of the respondents had difficulty in defining the criteria they used. Discussion regarding the place of personal or training analysis is continuous and divergent. In a majority of societies candidates had to have their analysis with a training analyst, and in those societies with a closed model, this analysis had to be concurrent with the analytic training and not terminated before completion of the training. There is an emphasis on the delicate nature of the task of conducting training analyses: one is analyzing a future colleague with whom the analyst already has or will have all kinds of extra-analytic contacts, connections, and bonds. It is then necessary to select analysts who have the experience and understanding of these complications

as well as the ethical standing to deal with them.

There are societies who prefer to abolish the title of training analyst and to leave it to candidates to choose an experienced analyst for training purposes. They hold that there is no generic difference between training and therapeutic analysis; analysis should be removed from the educational process and undertaken by any experienced analyst, as the qualities required to analyze anybody, whether a candidate or not, are not didactic. They warn against the problems that arise when power is in the hands of a group of analysts who are given the exclusive right to analyze candidates.

As I see it, the problematic overlap between analysis and training is constantly present. It has been referred to as syncretism, ambiguity, contamination, interference, dual role, dual objective, and dual loyalty. To become a training analyst is to not only fulfill a function, but also acquire the status of a higher authority. Conflicts are unavoidable, as analysts may act on innate aggressivity, rivalry, and acquisitiveness. Conflicts due to theoretical or ideological differences are often based on personal differences. Conflicts also arise from idealization of the analyst, the profession, and the analytic society. All of these conflicts are perpetuated by establishing two `classes´ of psychoanalysts. I am in support of the idea that a thoroughly trained analyst, with years of clinical experience (5 years minimum), and no history of ethical lapses or other professional misbehavior and inadequacy, should be

automatically qualified to conduct analyses of candidates.

The ambiguities of the supervisory situation

In Chapter 4, I discussed the difficulty of achieving a good context for supervision, the perceptions and motives of supervisors and the fear of candidates working together in what is an ambiguous situation (Szecsödy 1990, 1994, 1997). Within the supervisory interaction, the candidate is reconstructing the process he is part of. He has to expose himself to the supervisor who aids, teaches and judges him. The supervisor is directly responsible for providing optimal conditions for learning while safeguarding optimal care for the patient. I also outlined the contrast between the experiential model and the didactic model of supervision. The supervisor's model and conscious, intentional influence on the supervision and the supervisee, together with what is unconscious, ought to be given more attention than it has previously received. Supervisors may utilize their position of power and, without being aware of it, be tempted to interpret problems in terms of resistance, anxiety, or limitations in patient and candidate, rather than observing and recognizing their own difficulties in teaching. "To feel affirmed as a good teacher is a legitimate need of the supervisor, that is, an appropriate narcissistic need which can evolve into supertransference only when it becomes excessive" (Teitelbaum 1990, p. 245). The supervisor may then become overprotective or excessively critical,

may use his theories as unimpeachable dogma and identify with the myth that the supervisor always knows best. We need to devote more resources to studying the supervisory process and learning how to train the supervisors (Szecsödy 1994, Szecsödy 1999).

The capacity to take responsibility is an important quality in the candidate and future analyst. Candidates' involvement in their assessment is essential. Greater freedom to question and explore, together with a wider circle of input and feedback, can contribute significantly not just to the candidate's individual professional development but also to the organization's increased flexibility and growth. We need to devote more attention to making explicit our educational goals and the rationale behind them. And we need to encourage research.

Three studies on the training conducted at the Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute

Stimulated by the preparations made for a study by COMPSED (Committee of Psychoanalytic Education), the Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute became interested in doing a pilot-study for which we had the opportunity to cooperate with the Institution of Psychology, Stockholm University where students were willing to work on this research and write their graduation theses on collected material (M. and C. Andersen 2001, Lindgren 2002, Johansson 2003). The three studies addressed these

questions:

a) What are the essential qualities and competencies candidates have to develop through training?

b) What are the underlying, governing ideas behind the structure of the institute?

c) How are these ideas practiced in the structure and procedures of training?

d) What are the specific advantages and drawbacks of the training system?

I will now summarize my impression of the findings of the three studies.

1. Psychoanalytic Identity is Fostered by the Psychoanalytic Community- a Study of Psychoanalytic Education

The authors chose to focus on how psychoanalytic professional identity and its development is conceived of and experienced by candidates at the Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute (M. Andersen & C. Andersen (2001). Of the group of 19 candidates (9 in the second year and 10 in the fourth year of training) 4 of the second year and 5 of the fourth year volunteered to be interviewed.

The authors found that the admission procedure is seen as a valuable learning experience. One of the reasons candidates apply for training is the

wish to belong to a group with a shared interest in and fascination with psychoanalytic thinking and theory. The candidates are highly appreciative of their training – and define the training system as superb. They feel that training is permeated with the psychoanalytic way of thinking and conduct; and that it is open, tolerant and reflective. Relations within the group, the Institute and the Society are complex and complicated, and it is therefore important to have a specific climate that facilitates growth and learning. A candidate in supervision and in seminars is in an ambiguous situation, wanting to give a good impression and yet be open and honest about shortcomings and peculiarities, and therefore vulnerable to the subjectivity of those who judge. Much value is put on how well the candidates perform with their analysands, but the supervisory relationship is continuously open for joint evaluation. Candidates are present when their progress is discussed before the supervisory committee during training as well as at graduation. Evaluation of supervisor and supervisee seems to be mutual throughout training.

The candidates do gradually acquire psychoanalytic language, concepts, and theoretical foundation. They feel that seminars should be arranged in chronological order to understand the dynamics of psychoanalytic theory. Knowledge gives them a sense of identity. To learn and acquire clinical competence is central, even for those who expect to use psychoanalytic knowledge in other fields and in outreach to the community. The primary

task for training is to bring about the personal and professional development of the candidates as people who conduct analyses. Analysts have to possess certain qualities such as curiosity, capacity to contain anxiety and be attentive to others, impulse-control, creativity, honesty, well developed reflective functioning, self-awareness and self-knowledge. If they lack these qualities, applicants are seen as unsuitable. The competencies to be acquired are closely connected to the qualities they should possess to be selected as candidates and qualified as analysts. Most of those interviewed did not differentiate professional from personal identity. They work with their whole person and personality. They regard developing certain traits in their personality is the most important part of training. They are aware of a discrepancy between what they learn and gain competence in and how they can use it professionally in the future. They see the aim for the Institute is to transmit traditional psychoanalytic knowledge to future generations.

In their discussion, the authors of the study emphasize the role of idealization in the problematic position of candidates and as teachers. They give the caveat that information from individuals should not be used as facts defining the group as a whole. Nevertheless, the candidates that were interviewed all showed an idealized picture of analysis and analysts before entering training and this, as well as the reverence they have for their elders suggests an ever-present idealization.

2: The Culture of the Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute

In this study (Lindgren 2002) the author interviewed 7 members of the Swedish Psychoanalytic Institute. She found an interesting discrepancy between the clearly stipulated regulations for how training should be organized and the non-existent rules for how teachers conduct their seminars. Individual teachers have great freedom to plan and conduct their seminars. Newcomers build on oral information and tradition, or choose to improvise. It is unclear how seminar leaders are chosen. Individual ambition and engagement in the administration of the organization of the Institute and society do carry weight, but there is no formal regulation governing the method of teacher selection. It is seen as most important to gear the training to provide for the future of psychoanalysis in general, maintain its corpus of knowledge, and assure its influence in time to come. But this need not hinder some experimentation with new and different pedagogic methods and changes in theory and methodology. Nevertheless, how energy is divided between preserving tradition or changing is thought to "depend on available resources" not on pedagogic merit. Those who have contributed to professional publications and are willing and eager to take part in the scientific meetings and discussions of the Society locally or internationally are well regarded.

All concerned express a sincere desire to work hard on the maintenance

of psychoanalysis for the future and to face up to the ever-smaller space society reserves for it. To be deeply involved in the training, possess a strong, relentless work-morale, repay the devotion of former teachers and colleagues with the same passionate involvement in the administration of that training, are important qualities. A central metaphor for the culture of the Institute seems to be that of "gratitude" among members and candidates. All the work on the various committees is voluntary. Teachers and supervisors receive relatively low fees. Most of the seminars, administrative meetings, and post-graduate training events, are carried out in the evenings, during so-called free time.

Theory, praxis, and analytic identity are still based on and connected to their origins in Freud. There is an implicit feeling of continuity and maintenance of historical heritage within the Institute but rather few names of important individuals are mentioned. This may suggest more complex and conflictual underlying dynamics that cannot be openly expressed and worked with. Nonetheless, preparations before, and discussions during, a site visit from an IPA ad hoc committee in the early1980s was seen as a turning point that changed a rather orthodox, patriarchal system advocating pure analysis, into a much more open and tolerant climate, where differences are debatable and where the atmosphere is scientific and less tribal and confessional. The cultural climate of the society is pluralistic and open.

The primary task of the Institute is to train psychoanalysts. Some thought has been given to whether to open the Institute for others who wish to receive theoretical training for non-clinical but applied purposes, and a discussion has started. Though members of the Institute are aware of the difficulties that aspiring clinicians will meet in finding analysands, there are no apparent plans to modify the profile of training to meet the changing clinical field. Admission is still strongly influenced by the high value put on those applicants who are willing to commit themselves to becoming psychoanalytically active clinicians. A rather intriguing question then is: Why is it that, although all of those interviewed strongly emphasize the value of working for the future of psychoanalysis, they have no serious plans to modify training according to the changing climate in which psychoanalysts of the future will have to work? The impression from the first study of candidates – who feel they have been "chosen" and must keep up an idealized image of psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts—is also evident in this study of members.

3. Comprehension of psychoanalytic education

Johansson's (2002) explorative questionnaire study analyses the answers to a questionnaire sent to candidates, teachers-supervisors, and

members of the Society who are not actually involved with training. A questionnaire was sent out to 12 candidates, (7 answered, 4 commented) 12 teachers/supervisors (6 answered 2 commented) and 16 members of the Society who are not acutely involved with training (5 answered, 4 commented). Most commentators complained that answering the questionnaire was too time-consuming.

Analytic training does resemble a kind of trade school, master clinicians meeting apprentices, with the goal of training them. Many respondents claim that they do not have enough perspective on the overall organization of training. They believe, however, that discussions in seminars, supervision, and personal analysis together will enable a candidate to acquire knowledge and identity as a psychoanalyst. Though candidates are encouraged to use their knowledge not only as clinicians but also in becoming theoreticians and in applying psychoanalysis to other sciences, culture, and social organizations, their training and evaluation are mainly focused on them as clinicians. Quite a few mention that they favor the clear, "continuous and coherent structure of training – that has a containing function." Nonetheless some feel that "the didactic part of training is too closed and clogged" and most are in favor of having more elective courses. Even though teachers are of the opinion that having a shared common base for theory is a must, a majority recommend an 80/20 or 70/30 percent balance between fixed/elective courses. Some believe that candidates should be involved in

the planning of training.

According to candidates, integrating psychoanalytic theory with one's personality is pivotal so as to expand the potential for self-reflection and empathy as well as to deepen critical and exploratory capacity. Some mention the courage to stand up for one's beliefs and take risks in discussions with colleagues. They find training rather expensive, and they view their future as actively working psychoanalysts as uncertain. They are aware of the actual crisis of psychoanalysis, and connect it with the perceived threat to the method from the public and other professionals. They see isolation as dangerous, and urge psychoanalytic societies to turn towards the outside. Plans for outreach are important, but so is the imperative to safeguard psychoanalytic knowledge. Candidates, members and teachers emphasize that personality, training, ideology, social forces and economic factors are deeply intertwined. They find it difficult to separate them or set up a hierarch of importance among the factors. Still most candidates put personality in first place. Interestingly, economic and social influence seem to be undervalued – supporting findings from the earlier studies, that having been chosen to become a psychoanalyst, personality and personal experience define how practice is formed. There may be problems of equality and gender – which are not openly discussed.

None of the supervisors mention any "virtues" or "values" that

candidates should acquire. They identify psychoanalytic knowledge and the capacity to reflect and understand one's role in interactions as important competencies to be acquired. The development of a psychoanalytic identity is an important goal for training, and training clinicians is seen to be the primary task of the Institute.

The status of training analysts is not questioned as much as appears in the literature. The answers give as many pros as cons about maintaining training analyst status. Appointment as a training analyst secures quality for the analysand and brings prestige to the training analyst but the status produces an unnecessary hierarchy in the institute. Most of all it can create problems when an admitted candidate has to interrupt a personal analysis and start anew with a training analyst.

All respondents emphasize the advantages of deepening understanding about supervision and having an organized training. This is seen as important and positive but is viewed by some as a strait jacket.

The survey posed the question: should the program include training in psychoanalytical psychotherapy? Most candidates emphasize that this is a difficult question. Nevertheless a majority could accept the idea of including psychotherapeutic technique in the training program and even consider it advantageous, while some see it as a drawback. Supervisors and teachers are

divided on the question. Not a few stress the importance of keeping training clean, not mixing the analytic model and technique with a psychotherapeutic one. They feel that "it could produce confusion." They believe that "the personal identification with becoming a psychoanalyst is important." Others see advantages, in "counteracting polarization, and idealization." They feel that "it may clarify the differences," and that it reflects reality "as many of us work both with psychoanalysis as well as psychotherapy." Only a few analytic candidates thought that having supervision on twice-a-week psychotherapy cases could have a particular value, as it would make it possible to study, reflect upon the experience of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, and enable them to understand how they work, relate, and use theory, transference and counter-transference in both settings.

Summary of Findings

Training given by the institute is highly regarded by both candidates and teachers/ supervisors. They praise the warm and open atmosphere, the mutual and continuous evaluations, and the deep involvement of all. According to those involved, training is well grounded in theory and tradition. Nonetheless most do not have a sufficiently clear picture of training as a whole. The candidates feel chosen to belong to a special group who share an interest and fascination with psychoanalytic thinking and theory." Both candidates and trainers see the development of a psychoanalytic identity as

the goal of training, where the competencies to be acquired are equated with important personality qualities. Admission is still strongly influenced by the high value put on those applicants who are willing to commit themselves to becoming psychoanalytically active clinicians. They will nevertheless be in situations that call for using psychoanalytic knowledge in other fields and in outreach to the community, but how to prepare them for those applications is not clear. A rather intriguing question then is: why is it that, although all of those interviewed strongly emphasize the value of working for the future of psychoanalysis, there is no serious plan to modify training according to the changing climate in which psychoanalysts of the future will have to work?

To pinpoint the role of training is a difficult task. It raises complex questions, and to collect data poses serious methodological problems. Nevertheless we need to develop ways of studying it. We need studies like the three I have described to help us to reflect and think, instead of sticking to our internal conflicts and continuing the fight between those who wish to preserve the old methods and those who urge for change.

The intimacy and confidentiality of the analytic situation, the unclear definitions of professional maturation and optimal competence, the dependence on "masters" with whom the candidates wish to identify, and the complex interconnections and dependencies within the analytic institute and society must be noted and understood in any study of psychoanalytic training.

There seems to be no clear differentiation between the task of achieving psychoanalytic identity and developing the essential competencies for being a psychoanalyst. The fantasy that psychoanalysts are exceptional people stands in the way of radical changes in training that are necessary to develop that competence and safeguard a place for psychoanalysis in the future. The urge to be part of the psychoanalytic ethic, the culture of gratitude within the institute, and the devotion to training psychoanalytic clinicians for the future preserve an idealized, mystical image of psychoanalysis, and that blocks change. To study how to deal with the present and future of psychoanalysis, we should reconstruct and re-examine our institutional history.

Reconstructing our institutional history

It is often said that psychoanalysis faces a crisis. Crisis derives from the Greek Krinein meaning to decide or separate. In Chinese the word crisis is made up of two ideograms: danger and opportunity. Crisis can be an important factor in change. It is important to see, that the crisis of confidence in analysis that we talk about in 2012 is not new; it is recurrent. I wish to give only a few illustrations. From the 1974 Fall Meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Emde reported:

> "Unprecedented pressures are impinging today on psychoanalysis, in terms of both its professional and scientific aspects. There is demand for quicker results and broader involvement with greater numbers of people. Third-party payments are already evidencing prejudices against

> psychiatric treatment, especially on an outpatient and long-term basis. There are also financial pressures in training and practice and a reputed falling-off of analytic patients"(Emde 1975, p.584).

The 1996 report of the IPA's House of Delegates highlighted the crucial importance of dealing with the crisis faced by psychoanalysis as a treatment method. This situation is even more exaggerated now. There is a downward trend worldwide in the maintenance of psychoanalytic practice. Fewer candidates apply to the institutes and fewer patients ask for or can afford psychoanalytic treatment. Candidates in training find it increasingly hard to find analysands to treat under supervision. Many highly talented and creative candidates become discouraged and disenchanted by the shortcomings of training and the attitudes in the professional psychoanalytic community.

Though we face a crisis, only rarely is psychoanalytic training accompanied by systematic research on process and outcome. Even scarcer are systematic studies on psychoanalytic training and courses for candidates on research. It is often claimed that the tripartite system of psychoanalytic education is the best available. Yet, we know that it stifles creativity and genuine questioning. Balint (1948) sharply criticized psychoanalytic education, including the supervisory process, for being analogous to a "primitive initiation ceremony". In 1974 at the above-mentioned meeting of the APA it was already being strongly recommended that we should foster in our institutes and societies a more scholarly atmosphere in which members,

faculty and candidates can work together to understand, challenge, and extend psychoanalytic method and theory, and where the study of self and active learning is the students' responsibility. A closer collaboration with the universities was advocated, and throughout, a persistent interest was expressed in a systematic evaluation of the tripartite system, including the curriculum, selection of candidates, supervision, and the training analysis itself. In 1998, according to a report from Schachter and Luborsky, there were only six Institutes of the APA where research was in the curriculum of training. In 1999, Thomä and Kächele still had to stress in their memorandum on reform of psychoanalytic training, submitted to the Executive Council of the IPA (1999 published in the IPA Newsletter) that we should build our psychoanalytic education on the "teaching, research and treatment triad" in order to keep psychoanalysis alive for the future.

Auchinloss and Michels (2003) argue that the excessive authoritarianism in education arises not from the existence of hierarchical structures per se, but from two other factors – the condensation of all important functions into the single monolithic position of the training analyst and the lack of agreed upon methodology for determining the validity of theoretical propositions. The solution they propose is "strengthening the intellectual, scholarly and research context within which psychoanalytic education takes place" (p. 387) – a proposition very close to the one from 1974. Auchincloss and Michels (2003) assert to "use the classroom to

encourage attitudes of searching enquiry and questioning authority – attitudes of the sort that we encourage in our patients every day" (p. 399). We should continuously discover and rediscover the determinants of the organization of our institutes and the nature of the relationships they offer to candidates and trainers.

There are also some important events that can increase our hope for the future. In 1997 the IPA installed a research fund to which the research committee received over 80 applications, of which a third were judged to be of such an excellent quality to warrant funding. There are ongoing studies on the efficacy of psychoanalysis; on the specificity of the psychoanalytic process and its effect; on comparing the process and effect of psychoanalytic therapy conducted by the same therapist at different frequency (4-5 times and 1-2 times a week) on how training influences candidates; on how supervision may be conducted by fax, internet and video and how that compares to face-to-face supervision. At IPA congresses research receives more and more space. At the last two EFP congresses, workshops were organized on the theme: How can clinicians use psychoanalytic research? Under the presidency of David Tuckett, the European Psychoanalytic Federation has formed Working Parties on Clinical and Theoretical Issues, and on Psychoanalytic Education. They have the task of "describing the types of working psychoanalytically," "assessing the effectiveness of working psychoanalytically" and "creating transparent means to assess training outcomes,

and publishing studies of the effectiveness of different educational systems."

We have to modify the existing organization by restructuring previously held knowledge, point of views and theory, and technique and standards of psychoanalytic practice. The question is this: Can and will research, like the studies described here, help us to reflect and think, instead of sticking to our internal conflicts and continuing the fight between those who wish to preserve the old methods and those who urge for change. My sincere hope is that it might stimulate us to continue our discussion and raise further questions for systematic research. As more and more analysts engage in research, within, connected to, or parallel to their clinical work, the psychoanalysis can become a discipline that does not have to rely on past authority, and instead is one that is completely committed to a process of adaptation based on continual reflection of its own nature and structure. Research, reflection, and review of our methods and our institutions will show us the way to keep psychoanalysis alive as theoretical system and treatment method into the future.

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