

36<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting of APA Division of Psychoanalysis (39)  
“Hot & Bothered. Coming Together Without Falling Apart”  
V. Tsolas (NY), G.M. Genga (Milan), M.G. Pediconi (Urbino), L. Flabbi (Washington D.C.)  
“What Healing Has To Do with Termination? Endings and Interruptions”  
Atlanta, Georgia (USA), April 7, 2016

## **What Healing Has to Do with Termination?**

### **Endings and Interruptions**

Vaia Tsolas, Glauco Maria Genga, Maria Gabriella Pediconi, Luca Flabbi – APA, Atlanta 2016

The panel has been presented during the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting of Division of Psychoanalysis (39) of APA (Atlanta, Georgia, April 6-10, 2016) entitled *Hot&Bothered. Coming Together Without Falling Apart*.

This panel addresses links between termination and healing as elemental concepts of classical and Lacanian theory and fundamental tools of psychoanalysis. Termination is often viewed as the endpoint of analysis, synonymous with healing. We propose that termination can be the springboard for lifelong processes of growth and creativity after termination.

**Vaia Tsolas, PhD**

*The Shadowing of the Object.*

**Terminations in the Analytic Process**

**Glauco Maria Genga, MD**

*Healing as a Problem? Or as a Challenge?*

**Freud's Psychoanalytic Technique Concepts: A Brief Summary**

**Maria Gabriella Pediconi, MA**

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**Fundamental Concepts of Classical and Lacanian Theory about Healing**

**Luca Flabbi, PhD**

*Healing: a Process, a Tool, an Aim?*

**Applications**

## **THE SHADOWING OF THE OBJECT.**

### **Terminations in the Analytic Process**

**by Vaia Tsolas<sup>1</sup>**

When Persephone came to see me I knew I was dealing with a goddess. Her last name betrayed her background and family history. I was curious though to meet the person behind the name and public image. To my surprise, she entered my office not as a goddess, but rather as a scared animal who had to gaze and conquer the new territory as if under the threat of being devoured by a lioness at any minute. She told me about her ambivalent separation from a long term boyfriend whom she could not completely leave behind, opting instead to come and go between her mother's house and his. She spoke of needing my help to find her own inner place, her own 'home' where she could finally begin the life she imagined for herself. Panic and depression were her long term companions in life. She had something to say about the origin of these feelings. She sobbed when she spoke about not getting enough from her mother and about her self hatred in comparing herself to her sisters who were favored by her parents.

Her gaze was intense and I felt relieved when Persephone began to use the couch after our initial consultations. “I like the couch because I can look inward instead of responding to you,” she said.

She was eager to start analysis and to dig into herself to find what made her run away from the sense of her own being, her creativity and her 'vocation' in life. She was a painter, but she felt embarrassed about her paintings when she compared her art to her father's, a giant of film directing. She told me her family were all successful artists, and she was the one who couldn't make it, but rather remained small, pathetic and lost. Despite the family wealth and fame that could get her into the best schools, her sense of herself remained incurable. Persephone described her boyfriend as her mirror image from whom she wanted to run away, but to whom she returned, unable to escape.

In Greek mythology, Persephone is kidnapped by the lord of the underworld, Hades. Her mother, Demeter, wants her back and retaliates by keeping the crops from growing, thus forcing Zeus to intervene. Persephone also fights Hades by refusing to eat, but she can't resist pomegranate. The rule is that eating food from the underworld binds you to living there. The six seeds she eats translate into six months of living with Hades and away from her mother. These months are colder since Demeter is mourning the separation from her daughter.

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'Every day I am thinking of how to get away from this relationship. It is not about if ... it is about when. What else? It was nice going to Boston. We were doing a show a day. It was fun to see us making people happy. It is a great component of my life and I felt grateful. One of the other painters told me that when she makes a mistake, she goes 'Oh! My god I have learned something.' It is not about fearing that I expose myself. But I go, 'Oh my god! I just exposed myself.'

'I had a dream last night that there were grasshoppers in my tea. I woke up and I thought I should make a tea and there were grasshoppers in there. I am happy it is May. The beginning of a new month. A new season. I am sorry I am lost in my head. I was thinking of my schedule and the possibility of a new painting. And thinking of where to go next. I was thinking of the light being beautiful and it is not cold out. All the new possibilities. I would like to share my studio. It will be nice to have someone else to share space with me. What I think about this is worrying. Can you give me a trigger word?'

“You would like a grasshopper in your tea,” I repeated.

'You have the keys and I can work with whatever you give me. I don't want to be here a year from now and to have this be the same, nothing having been changed. My friend, K. was in analysis and she is still fighting with her own daemons. She is destructive, neurotic. I would like to see myself. I love being a painter. I know I am with my boyfriend because he deeply loves me. And allows me to feel loved. The problem with us is that I don't love him. I don't feel he can take care of me the way I want to be taken care of. There is a roughness to him. It makes me feel unsafe. I use all these big words. I wonder how you hear this. And I am not asking you. But you have experience in hearing this. Because you are so good in hearing. I want away from him. That is my gut instinct. I don't like him. It is awful.'

Persephone wanted to get away from Hades as fast as she could and return to the heavenly feelings of reunion with an ideal version of herself/mother, a mother/self who felt too lofty to get a grasp of, or to hold on to for long enough. During the first three months, she invested me with qualities of this idealized mother. 'You are my back bone' she said. "I know you will be there when I am about to fall.' However, her memories of her own mother were the opposite. 'She was too depressed or too preoccupied with her own life and my father to take care of me.' She described her mother as lacking in herself this back bone that she was envisioning me to have. The image of her mother was painted as talented and successful, but nonetheless weak, submissive and deferential when it came to her father, a dominant and moody man who needed her mother's slavery to his whims in order to feel whole himself. But this was not the whole story. Her sisters got the best of her parents, she said, and by the time Persephone was born, there was not much goodness left for her; it was like her parents were too old, too worn out, leaving her a broken mirror in which to reflect on herself.

Lacan writes, 'What I have called the mirror stage is interesting in that it manifests the affective dynamism by which the subject originally identifies himself with the visual Gestalt of his own

body: in relation to the still very profound lack of co-ordination of his own motility, it represents an ideal of unity.' This ideal of unity comes from the mother's gaze. Persephone's mirroring in her mother's gaze seemed to be far from being a source of idealization and cohesion. It was as if it was shadowed by the mother's own fragmented mirror through which the mother aspired to seek repair and self-rejection in the idealization of her phallic husband. Persephone came to receive through this mirror the maternal projection and identification of self hatred and abjection.

Persephone was desperate to find in me the unifying image which would allow her to love herself for the first time. However, when I left for summer vacation after our first three months of work, Persephone, to her surprise, fell into depression, insomnia and difficulty working and functioning. She decided to enter couple's therapy in the hope of fixing her boyfriend instead.

The only resistance is the resistance of the analyst, Lacan states. I was duped by being invested with the qualities of an ideal Other that took me by surprise when Persephone resumed analysis after the break and appeared indifferent to my return. I felt displaced by the couple's therapist and abruptly dropped. I was quick to interpret how difficult the break must have felt and referred to a childhood memory - she refused to come out of her room when her mother would ask her to join them when the father came back from his trips. In retrospect, my reaching for an explanation as well as my later increase in the frequency of my analytic interpretations along the same lines, might have been a way to protect myself from the narcissistic displacement of being the One.

Persephone started skipping sessions, coming late or coming an hour early. She seemed impatient that analysis could take this long before she felt better. Her boyfriend was not changing quickly enough either. She decided that this time she needed to find her own place for real. She looked in three different areas, one close to her yoga teacher, one close to her couple's therapist and one close to me. In the countertransference, my feeling that I was just one of the three and had to compete to be the special one was so loud that I had to wonder about her competition with her sisters for her father's affection. One day, she was enraged by her boyfriend. She asked me if it was OK with me that she do some yoga to release some of that aggression. Before, I could even think to respond, Persephone was on the floor practicing her yoga poses.

'Sorry to get it out in your office,' she announced, as she sobbed when she finally managed to get herself to the couch. She then talked about meeting her boyfriend last night, and about his being both drunk and intolerable. But this was not all she felt enraged about. 'Nothing is working!'

That is the theme of my life, she said. I felt sad for her but disconnected. I couldn't hear her associations as I was working too hard to understand what she was trying to say.

I liked it, she said referring to her yoga earlier. It helped me.

'You apologized,' I murmured.

'I did? I didn't remember... I am angry for a lot of a reasons. He is not the boyfriend I want. I don't feel he is helping me in my life. Any suggestions to clear my mind before I go to my work

today?' she asked. She continued talking about how ineffective she feels. I said that it is much the same here, that she gives too much, but takes little back and that makes her angry and guilty.

She disagreed that she didn't get enough from me but spoke instead of being aggressive and bossy. It is precisely because she is ineffective that she gets more bossy.

'Am I giving you mixed messages,' she asked?

'I am angry that I am going to be alone with no family.'

Lacan, in associating aggression and narcissism, states that 'it is the ego as an imaginary function of the self, as a unity of the subject alienated from itself, of the ego as that in which the subject can recognize itself at first only in abolishing the alter ego of the ego, which as such develops the very distinct dimension of aggression that is called from now on: aggressivity.' Lacan builds further on Freud's theory of aggression and self destructiveness by asserting that aggressivity is an inner conflict between the subject and his own ego.

Persephone felt suicidal in the following sessions. She also felt a coward killing herself in a violent way. She wanted to do it peacefully and politely. She told her mother over lunch about her plans of euthanasia. She asked for one last time to meet with everyone in her family to get what she lacked her entire life. In this conversation, she realized with pain what she always knew but denied; that the answer to her question to the Other 'can you afford losing me' was quite ambivalent. She wept and wept but still her feelings of failure and inadequacy could not be washed away. She started missing sessions and the question she had posed to her mother had come into the transference. It was difficult to get to my office she said and also, she had many more important things to do, thus communicating to me the pain of being ignored and not prioritized.' I want to see outside my own brain. I want to see outside of me. I want to feel less lost and to be more clear' she emphasized in these ambivalent comings and goings to my office.

I responded aggressively, becoming more interpretive to her and to this ambivalent engagement to her analysis; I interpreted her maternal transference to me as the devalued object as well as the transference of the parental couple where I was either the inadequate dependent wife or the unsatisfied critical phallic father or the lost, abandoned part of herself. As I continued and increased my interpretations, the more empty headed Persephone felt. In this chain of reactivity, I had tasted the pomegranate seeds of Hades and was bound to join the familial ghosts.

It took me by surprise when Persephone told me that she was going on a trip because her sister offered her own apartment for a month abroad. 'I can taste her life for a month. Why not? I am not doing anything important here anyway,' she told me. It sounded as if Persephone had two choices at that moment; stay in her analysis looking at the pile of shit inside her as she said or leaving that pile with me and inhabiting someone's life, especially that of one of her sisters whom she had greatly envied for her entire life. It was just a break from herself she said turning a deaf ear to my annoyance that leaving herself behind was only illusory. She promised to come back because I always had been and continued to be her back bone.

Upon her return Persephone called to announce she was taking a break to try some alternatives to analysis. Few years later, she called me again to ask for a psychopharm referral. Is she still searching for a new idealized maternal shell to carry herself? Knowing her, probably she is. What was the danger she was running away from? The Hades of her internal deadness she came to encounter in the mirroring of her analysis; the toxicity of the maternal hatred being reactivated in the transference-countertransference paradigm; her sense of having annihilated with her envy and aggression? Any of the above, all of the above? I could not say.

But if there is one thing I can say with certainty it is what Persephone told me:

'I would like to step out of my script. 'It is rebirth that I am looking to find.' As Julia Kristeva suggests in her book 'powers of horror', 'I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish myself.'” Persephone's premature termination of one year of analytic work was a matter of life and death and that Persephone was clear about.

In retrospect, I followed Persephone's life-death struggle in the countertransference and was kidnapped by the shadow of the meek mother who cannot protect her daughter from the overpowering Hades. I defended against this shadow by increasing the flow of analytic interpretations after the summer break. Were these enactments that contributed to the early termination or do I underestimate transference by taking the blame for the early termination? In cathecting and decathecting the object in the narcissistic transference, and in her alterations between manic activity and melancholic states, Persephone's attempts to expel the shadow of the object into me spoke, so she could free herself and love herself for the first time. Her comings and goings, her missing sessions, all these repetitive mini-terminations in the analytic process revealed how relentlessly the repetition compulsion's overriding the pleasure principle led to premature termination.

In sum, the danger that she was running from in the transference was the dual annihilation of self and object, a danger that represented her unconscious loyalty to the death bearing identification with the primary object. Why does Persephone eat those seeds when she knows full well the tragic consequences? The eating of the seeds is the repetition of termination in which she gives birth to herself by destroying the object without whose love she cannot live. In her abrupt termination the taste of those seeds frightened me and prompted me to join her in the countertransference.

## HEALING AS A PROBLEM? OR AS A CHALLENGE?

### Freud's Psychoanalytic Technique Concepts: A Brief Summary

by Glauco Maria Genga

I would like to start by recalling the title of our panel and saying that, in proposing this topic, the four of us decided, in a sense, to “take the bull by the horns”.

What am I calling the “bull”? The theme itself of *healing in psychoanalysis*.

I prefer to call it this way instead of *psychoanalytic healing*: healing can never be separated, or divided, according to professional fields. It either is or is not.

#### 1. About Healing in Psychoanalysis.

I find important what Francesco Conrotto, an Italian psychoanalyst, writes about it:

“The word *healing* is not frequently used in contemporary psychoanalysis. I would even say that it is surrounded by an air of embarrassment, as if the word itself revealed a naivety, evoking a suspect of *naïveté* that everybody wants to keep away. The progressive overshadowing of the concept of *psychoanalytic healing*, until its almost complete oblivion, began in the 70s when it started to run out the therapeutic optimism. This optimism had characterized the decades from the 40s to 60s, which followed the pessimism of the last years of Freud's life. (...) We carefully avoid using this concept and, even more, the word *healing*, everyone colluding, in fact, of making use of the most anodyne and intellectually more presentable term *transformation*.”<sup>2</sup>

I agree with him: *transformation* or *change* are much more generic words.<sup>3</sup>

I quote Conrotto again: “In Freud's works you do not find an equal reluctance towards the word *healing* - that indeed is used repeatedly and at different times during the development of his theory.”<sup>4</sup>

In fact, Freud writes about the *Wolf Man*: “I have found the history of this patient's *recovery* scarcely less interesting than that of his illness.” (My emphasis)<sup>5</sup>

Is healing a problem? If yes, is it so for the patient or for the analyst? And why?

What we do every day behind the couch, session after session, is not at all a small task.

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<sup>2</sup> See F. Conrotto, *Trasformazione del criterio di 'guarigione psicoanalitica' nel pensiero di Freud*, in: *Analisi curabile e incurabile. Sulla guarigione psicoanalitica*, M. Balsamo (editor), Franco Angeli, 2000, pp. 61-63 (my translation).

<sup>3</sup> It is something so close to what we heard right yesterday from Nancy McWilliams in the opening session of this Conference.

<sup>4</sup> F. Conrotto, *ivi*, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> S. Freud, *Analysis Terminable And Interminable* (1937), S.E., v. 23, p. 218. In *Gesammelte Werke* (G.W.) we read: “Ich fand die *Heilungsgeschichte* dieses Patienten nicht viel weniger interessant als seine Krankengeschichte”, G.W., 16; 60. (My emphasis)

I will focus on the relationship between the end of the analysis and the healing, from the point of view of the theory of technique.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Psychic Work and Representation of Danger.

I will recall the importance of Freud's term *working-through*: it means *work*. We know that in every phenomenon of psychic life the subject really works:

- in the dream-work,
- in the work of mourning,
- in the symptom, which is a compromise-formation,
- in the production of a slip.
- even in the inhibition, fixation and resistance, we can find forms of psychic work.<sup>7</sup>

In our consulting rooms, each patient, since the first interview, is invited to work: first, to identify and report her symptoms, sincerely and unreservedly. Shortly thereafter, from the couch, she is invited to follow the *free associations*, which means not to fixate on symptoms.<sup>8</sup>

So, in turn, even the psychoanalyst is working:

- with suspended attention,
- interpretations
- in those interventions which Freud called *constructions*.

It is important for the analyst to know how to distinguish between symptoms, inhibitions and anxiety, as taught by Freud, who first identified precisely the set of these three elements, that make up each form of psychopathology.<sup>9</sup>

In dealing with them, Freud pays special attention to the fact that the patient has a representation of himself facing situations that appear as dangers. But are these real dangers? Or are they only part of the imagination? In fact, a danger can have a dual source: it may arise from external reality, as well as from psychic reality of the subject, that is by her own thoughts. A characteristic of neurosis is to represent dangers where there are none.

The question arises: where does the sense of danger - that the patient experiences in analysis - come from?

Furthermore, the patient can represent or perceive even healing as a danger. So I ask: how can this happen if healing goes hand in hand with a recovery of valid and solid defenses? They have to take over the repression.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> My contribution will primarily move around the concepts of neurosis, analyzability and healing.

<sup>7</sup> G.B. Contri, founder and President of the *Società Amici del Pensiero 'Sigmund Freud'*, to which I belong, wrote about a *work against* the Unconscious, as well as a *work with* the Unconscious" (G.B. Contri, *Lexikon psicoanalitico e Enciclopedia*, Sic Edizioni, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> We could say that in more than fifty years, Freud wrote in a sense about the "bearable lightness of talking". It is very different from the "unbearable lightness of being": do you remember the title of the famous novel by Milan Kundera?

<sup>9</sup> S. Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1925), S.E., v. 20.

<sup>10</sup> S. Freud, *Negation*, (1925), S.E., v. 19.

The answer to the question - how can it be that healing is treated as a danger? - is what determines if the goal of the analysis is fulfilled. Answering it requires that the analyst is able to identify and recognize the signals of healing.

I am emphasizing this point to invite you not to take it for granted. Is the therapist willing to gather the signals of healing coming from the patient? Or does the analyst feel the patient's success as a threat to abandon the therapy?

Here is a brief clinical example. One of my patients told me the following experience from the couch. While he was in college, he was very disturbed by his symptoms that were causing much delay in his studies. It was taking him ten years to graduate from college in math and science. He had therefore embarked on a treatment (a group therapy, in fact) for the most part of those years. But after his graduation, he was told by the therapist that he was wrong to graduate before the end of the treatment. This reproach left him confused and the memory comes back now, from the couch, after so many years. Personally, I think that it was a wrong, silly and definitively a bad reproach.

The fact that a patient succeeds in achieving a certain goal, in this case graduation from college, should always be considered a positive sign. How can a success in the patient's life be contrary to the therapy itself? Here there was a therapist's error.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Freud's Question: “What is A Danger?”

In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* Freud asks: “What is a danger?”<sup>12</sup>

Freud focuses on the psychological definition of the concept of danger. He tries to identify the elements that enable a subject to sense a danger.

Freud shows how we need a new theoretical point of reference for our orientation. He does this by discussing and disputing Otto Rank's theories about the anguish of birth. Freud states: “In the act of birth there is a real danger to life. We know what this means objectively; but in a psychological sense it says nothing at all to us. We cannot possibly suppose that the fetus has any sort of knowledge that there is a possibility of its life being destroyed. (...) What elements in all this will be made use of as the sign of a danger-situation?”<sup>13</sup>

In Freud's words: “the reason why the infant in arms wants to perceive the presence of its mother is only because it already knows by experience that she satisfies all its needs without delay. (...) It is the absence of the mother that is now the danger.”<sup>14</sup>

The mother, or whoever cares for the child, thus becomes the first *object of love* for the baby. And about the *loss of object* as a determinant of anxiety, I am calling your attention to the fact that here, Freud takes another step: “All we need to do is a slight modification in that it is no longer a matter of feeling the want of, or actually losing the object itself, but of *losing the object's*

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<sup>11</sup> The analyst always supports the patient's successes, even when she has to go abroad for her job. This will certainly lead to new agreements on timing and frequency of the sessions, but it is not be a breakdown. So, what can we call interruption?

<sup>12</sup> S. Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1925), S.E., v. 20, p. 143.

<sup>13</sup> S. Freud, *ivi*, p. 135.

<sup>14</sup> S. Freud, *ivi*, p. 138.

love (...). Loss of love plays much the same part in hysteria as the threat of castration does in phobias and fear of the super-ego in obsessional neurosis.”<sup>15</sup>

I quoted this passage because it makes a statement of several phenomena that are surprising and otherwise inexplicable, among which, the negative therapeutic reaction, that belongs to the resistance.

We know that the horse runs faster when the stable is near. Although the animal is tired, its race is guided by instinct. And when it senses the stable (which means food and rest), its speed increases. But it is not the same for a human being, for which the approaching of the goal requires a bigger exercise of individual skills, that is an increased amount of psychic work leading to satisfaction. In the absence of an *instinct*, the chance to experience satisfaction is only a matter of *drive*. The Freudian term is *Trieb*.<sup>16</sup>

Coming now to the analytic situation, the *fundamental norm* we propose to the patient allows her to retrace the paths already used for her motions, i.e. the *defenses* already tested in the past to cope with her needs.

These defenses, however, resulted in a certain dose of repression<sup>17</sup> of dangers in early childhood: the loss of the mother's, or parents', or caregivers' love.

Now the same risk presents itself as the danger of loss of love from the analyst. The *free associations* create a delicate situation, especially for the analyst himself,<sup>18</sup> who in this way “is hiding as a person to reappear as a character who is everyone and no one, and that ‘answers’ through the mirror, thus allowing the emergence of a relationship where past and present blend together *with an emotional intensity that has no equal in life*.”<sup>19</sup> (My emphasis)

According to Freud, the patient “will of himself form such an attachment and link the doctor up with one of the *imagos* of the people by whom he was accustomed to be treated with affection.”<sup>20</sup>

It may happen that the patient finds himself entangled in a representation of the relationship with the analyst, in which the idealization of the latter leads him to want to be *totally equal* to him. This is false love, falling in love, according to the important distinction drawn by Freud. The analyst, once he has noticed this, must not support this misunderstanding.

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<sup>15</sup> S. Freud, *ivi*, p. 143.

<sup>16</sup> About the translation of *Trieb* see J. Laplanche, J.B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, p. 214.

<sup>17</sup> Repression, or removal: about the translation of *Verdrängung*, see Laplanche-Pontalis, *ivi*, p. 390.

<sup>18</sup> The term *neutrality* does not appear in the Freudian vocabulary. It was introduced by James Strachey in the *Standard Edition*. He used it in 1924 to translate the word *Indifferenz* that Freud had used in *Observations on Transference-love* (SE, XII, p. 157 ss). Joan Riviere had earlier proposed the term *indifference* to translate the same German word. The translation that appears in Italian edition (*Opere*, Boringhieri) has “impassivity” (cfr. OSF, vol. 7, p. 367). Anna Freud did not use the term *neutrality*, but nevertheless she helped to build the concept, referring to the ‘opaque mirror’ metaphor.

<sup>19</sup> See A. Saraval, *La tecnica classica e la sua evoluzione*, in A.A. Semi (editor), *Trattato di Psicoanalisi*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 1988.

<sup>20</sup> S. Freud, *Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through* (1914) S.E., v. 12, pp. 139-140.

#### 4. Two Short Examples from my Clinical Practice: an Obsessive Patient and a Hysterical Patient.

The first one was a young patient who had started the analysis because of a strong inhibition in his love life and of the desire to become an analyst himself.

Later, he reported from the couch an imagine that had tormented him at the beginning of the analysis. He was afraid to proceed with free associations by imagining that this would lead to a strong confrontation with the analyst. This idea provoked a strong anguish, like - he said - as if he was driving a car and suddenly he was in front of a moving obstacle, initially confused, but then increasingly clear: another car, identical to his, was coming towards him, so that braking became almost impossible. He explained that the danger (the crash) later proved inconsistent and just a figment of his imagination. He envisioned that the confrontation could be only a thin reflective film, entirely misleading, which he needed to puncture and pass through in order for the danger to become obsolete and the road ahead to become once again free and viable!

A trap, in fact. Characteristic of the obsessive personality.

Here is a striking example of the danger, as if it were coming from external reality, while things were not like that at all. The analyst, for his part, never encouraged the collision or the duel. He limited his interventions as to not be found as the patient's enemy. Otherwise he would have been restricted and blocked by the patient's resistance. Through the analyst's silence, the interruption remained a mere figment and the patient was able to go on, finish the analysis and become an analyst in turn.

The second example deals with hysterical neurosis (a diagnostic category which we analysts should never give up). In this case the same difficulty presents itself in a completely different way.

We know that hysteria is characterized by the presence of physical symptoms, sometimes changing over time, and all without any organic source. I will not dwell now on describing them. I want to highlight another trait of hysteria: the ability to disappoint the other, including the analyst, or not to come to an appointment after having scheduled it.

“Wait for me, but I'm not coming”:<sup>21</sup> this can be considered a typical sentence, or the same slogan of every hysterical subject: his or her Manifesto.

I remember one of my young patients, who often disappeared from treatment over the course of several years, gradually restricting her personal life.

Her parents had separated many years before and her father lived alone. When her mother died, she became owner of the apartment where she lived, severed a romantic relationship and resigned from her workplace. I invited her to look for a new job, but she remained indifferent. She left the house less and less, spending many hours in front of the mirror, scratching her face and then claiming to be unpresentable! In reality, her face was completely normal and she also had a graceful appearance! She was avoiding leaving the house as much as possible, on the pretext of wanting to avoid the danger of meeting her father, who had never hurt her.

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<sup>21</sup> I translate in this way the sentence “Aspettami, io non vengo”, used several times by G.B. Contri during his lectures.

Over the years, her absences from the sessions increased: sometimes she telephoned me after a few days to ask me for a new appointment but then she did not show up. *Stop and go*.

I realized I did not have to speak in her place. Finally, I told her that in this way it was better not to continue the treatment, she would not yield any result. She began to show up at my office without any appointment, demanding my attention with pretexts. One time, I found myself forced to threaten to call the police to move her away from the landing in front of the door of my studio.

Eventually I decided to write her a letter in which I recalled that her analysis was already over and she was now facing a crossroads: either continue in her isolation and her obstinacy; or turn the page, taking care of herself, of her house and of her relationships, also looking for a new job. I would not have accepted further threats.

I have not heard from her since then, and I think that this treatment, with such an unusual outcome, was successful in its own way.

## 5. Conclusions.

I would like to end by quoting the Italian psychoanalyst G.B. Contri, who brilliantly observed: “In mental illness, healing, as long as it has not already occurred, is not perceived as an asset, but as an evil. In illness there is no desire to heal. This suggests: the desire of healing is a novelty brought into being by the psychoanalytic technique.”<sup>22</sup>

We can say that every healing process has problematic aspects. The brilliant title of Freud’s essay, *The Economic Problem of Masochism* (1924), can lead us to think that healing too is an economic problem for every individual. But this is true only within the pathology. In fact, from the “economic point of view” healing is not the problem but rather the solution. So I think that every analyst is a real partisan of healing and offers herself to the patients, giving them a lift from neurosis to healing.

I say it now in other words, even as my little tribute to the valuable work of an important citizen of this city that hosts our Conference: Martin Luther King, Jr. The psychopathology is really like a thick and hard wall, so the analyst has to be and to work a bit like Joshua, who... fit the battle of Jericho, sounding the trumpet: “Go blow those ram horns / And the wall came tumblin’ down.”. We do not know what technique Joshua used, but we know what is the Freudian technique, also called *fundamental norm*.

Perhaps the challenge for us and for everybody is this one: why ten sessions are not enough to heal?

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<sup>22</sup> See G.B. Contri, *Il bene dell’analista*, in: *Da inconscio a inconscio*, AA.VV., Alfredo Guida Editore, 1994.

**BEYOND TERMINATION**  
**Fundamental Concepts of Classical and Lacanian Theory about Healing**

by Maria Gabriella Pediconi

Now. According to Freud who was a *reporter of the Unconscious*, I'll address, in my paper, the distinction between:

- on the one hand *interruptions* and the acting out of *disowning*, that are in opposition to the ending of treatment
- on the other hand I'll consider *termination* as a process that put us at the threshold of *healing*.

Then. Using some clinical vignettes, I'll present a brief excursus about the Lacanian theory of *object-a* and its influence on termination and healing.

Lastly. I'll develop some ideas to the possible *certainty of the analyst*.

**1. Freud Today: Psychoanalysis of Daily Life**

A very famous actor won the biggest prize he had waited for for many years: the Academy Award for best actor! After his sixth nomination at the prestigious ceremony, finally his hard work and professional career have been rewarded. It is real: he is the best actor now! Then he went off to the restaurant with followers and friends to enjoy the glory. *But ...*

But the best actor forgot the trophy at the restaurant! The desired symbol, the expected prize, the merited recognition, the legitimate glory: he forgot it at the restaurant! Of course the actor wouldn't deliberately want to forget his Oscar. But the slip is significant, it is neither an error nor a casual action. We can observe, with Freud, the pertinence between the slip and the life event in which the individual, the famous actor, was involved. The slip evokes in us some contents from the actor's thinking – called the Unconscious by Freud. It evokes some contents not only in us but also in the individual who has done it. To pick up on the slip is an occasion to learn some significant things which were previously unknown. Indeed the contents have been hidden before that precise moment: hidden but precious. In the case of the famous actor we know how hard he worked to earn his Oscar. He admitted he was *stunned* and *overwhelmed* by this victory. Leaving the trophy at the restaurant, just for a short moment, he can realize that his merit is not based on the awards. And he provokes the whole of Hollywood: «The trophy is only an object and I can even forget it at the restaurant.»

With this vignette I introduce to you my continuity with Freud's work. He was a *reporter of the Unconscious*. He observed unconscious daily life actions of: his patients, his friends, his famous contemporaries, even of himself. We psychoanalysts inherited his same work when we

watch television, when we read the newspaper and even when we work in the consulting room: we are the reporters of unconscious actions and transformations. It is impossible for me to speak about our topic *What Healing has to do with Termination Endings and Interruptions* without this fundamental background.

## 2. Turning Points

When a patient decides to start analytic treatment she is at a delicate moment of her life. It is a turning point: not the first but a decisive one. When a patient comes near the end of treatment she finds a new turning point. It should be endings for new beginnings. In this case we recognize the healing process as the goal of analysis. It represents the point of arrival of two distinct works: on the one hand the working through of the patient, on the other hand the floating attention of the analyst. Here healing is a process based on two asymmetric positions and elaborations. But contrary to medical treatment, in the case of psychoanalytic therapy healing is never the effect of a direct intervention of the professional on the patient, it is never a one-directional procedure.

The turning point is also for the analyst when: «the analyst realizes that he cannot do the good even if he knows it does exist.» (GB Contri, *Il pensiero di natura*, 1994) In other Freudian words in *The Ego and the Id* (1922): «it must be honestly confessed that here we have another limitation to the effectiveness of analysis; after all, analysis does not set out to make pathological reactions impossible, but to give the patient's ego freedom to decide one way or another.» (SE XIX, p. 50). Here there is a favorable limitation, then. Psychoanalysis does not eliminate the disease, but produces the conditions for a new freedom of the patient. The analyst cannot give healing to the patient, neither directly nor strategically, but the patient cannot access healing without the partnership of the analyst.

## 3. On the Threshold of Termination

Termination is a chronological term. Very often in the affective world of human beings termination does not correspond to a good outcome of experience, especially if the experience was complicated or distressing. Termination is good when it introduces a solution with satisfaction; it is bad when it involves a suspension with pain or anguish. So the endpoint of analysis is not synonymous with healing: we can find terminations without healing, interruptions and even a false healing.

By way of three clinical sketches I'll describe now three configurations at the end of treatment: *termination crossing*, *interruptions*, *abrupt departure*. Take note, in particular, of the termination.

*The crossing of termination.* He has been coming willingly for more than ten years. Tormented by a compulsion for seeing children with naked chests, he prefers duties and avoids pleasure. The analysis has allowed him to hold on a good job as specialized technician, to arrange a good daily life as a single man with a good social life and occasional respectful contacts with his parents and

relatives. But the fear of women continues like a creeping and distressing fear: it seems inflexible. He had learnt for years from his own dreams that the obsessions for kids were a cover to escape the women of his family, his mother and his grandmother. Now he recognizes that some women, colleagues and friends, get close to him and appreciate him, but an unreasonable anguish prohibits the women from having a place in his life. Many times he has dreamt of his own wedding: he was ready, but in the end a detail stopped him on the threshold of the church or at the door of the restaurant: a creased shirt, a broken car, the delay of a relative.

After years of treatment, the Ego is at a delicate turning point: he can take the new way, only glimpsed but not yet known, or carry on the distorted illusion of his obsessions. The analyst is aware that termination is close but she cannot take the right - but not mandatory – way instead of him.

*The consuming stop-and-go.* At the beginning of her analysis she was convinced she was bipolar: she usually introduced herself to anybody by means of this definition. Many troubled sessions were dedicated to organizing her own story: mourning for her mother, fury against her father, ambivalence for her brother who was addicted to psychiatric drugs. Each time she reaches some significant contents she has learnt to find a refuge in religious hallucinations. But in these occasions the analyst was different from any others, she offered no comfort to her about her illness: “today you are talking nonsense, we’ll see next time”, the analyst said and closed the session. After the hallucinations depression came, then hatred against the analyst and the breakdown of treatment. Like a model, the sequence repeated itself several times. Finally she confessed her invidious identification: “How is it possible that the analyst doesn’t seek revenge?” The patient would like to be like her analyst, would even desire to be the analyst.

Here we see the stop-and-go of idealization&denial that run after each other. In this case idealization occupies the place of the turning point: the patient puts the analyst in the place of a wishful object, the same loved object which continues to produce unbearable scandal. The termination here, if possible, will involve the end of idealization.

*The logical hate of disowning.* She was at the end of her university studies, blocked at the last exams, overwhelmed by anguish, but very convinced about her treatment. She insisted on beginning before her degree was completed, she fiercely wanted this analyst or nobody else: now she has found the right professional who will be able to understand and correct the numerous errors of other physicians, psychologists, and psychiatrists. The other professionals were not able to understand who she was, but now the analyst should come to know her thoroughly. The analyst must understand immediately, emphatically, magically. The analyst must see her thoughts almost without words. The analyst must even recognize what inner turmoil occupied her mind until the compulsion of self-mutilation. The analyst must solve the anguish that blocked her at the last exams. The analyst must... But the first sessions were terrible: there was nothing magic, the silence was a prison, the analyst was not a fairy, the memories were unbearable, like the pins with which she injured herself when she was a little more than a child.

One day she did not come, and never came back again. The analyst cannot do anything with this final refusal. Both the analyst and the treatment are destroyed by disowning.

We have seen three ways of termination:

- *Termination* as an on-going process;
- *Interruptions* as an ambivalent stop-and-go;
- *Abrupt departure* stating a disowning of the work done.

At the end of analysis the results will be very different in terms of well-being, love, work and social life.

#### 4. Lacan's Impasse on Healing

When dealing with *false healing* both Freud and Lacan describe psychosis as such a case: with the aesthetic refuge in the alienated world reality is lost forever.

Analyzing the barred structure of psychosis Lacan defines the analytic act in general: it is the ground in which three of his four *discourses* can finally come, happen and move into. The *analytic discourse* is composed by the same materials as other *discourses*, but it allows for the chance of *transforming* the materials into movable thoughts for new combinations. What termination can happen with this transformation? Termination is marked by the *fall of object-a*. But the clear definition of *object-a* remains almost impossible to see, because it is realized by its own fall.

Following the work of Giacomo Contri, the most important scholar of Lacan in Italy, it is important to characterize here what object-a is. It means objection in general; not only real objection which is motivated by external reality, but also the imaginary and symbolic ones. According to Lacan, it consists of the indefinable and irreparable gap between psychic reality and external reality, it is checkmate but not reasonable. It is a gap which behaves as a permanent threat which produces the instigating power of the superego, dangerous as much as the controlling superego is.

I'll suggest that this is the point of Lacan's *impasse*. Here are two of Lacan's quotes in which we track similar hesitation.

- In *Radiofonie*: he jokes with the verb “guérir” (to heal) by means of the homophone “gai-rir” (gaily laughing).
- In *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function* he concludes: «In the subject to subject recourse we preserve, psychoanalysis can accompany the patient to the ecstatic limit of the “*Thou art that*”, where the cipher of his mortal destiny is revealed to him, but it is not in our sole power as practitioners to bring him to the point where the true journey begins.»<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ed. Norton, 2006, p. 81 (translated by Bruce Fink)

Lacan remains impassible at the end of the patient's treatment, when the fall of *object-a* concerns the analyst himself, seen as the main representative embodiment of the falling *object-a*.

How can *object-a* fall, then? I'll use another vignette about a turning point in order to show the possible fall of objection as a positive passage of the last part of analysis.

A patient calls half an hour before the session and says she is in her car, rather close to the analyst's office but she is feeling anxious. The analyst pays attention: over the many years of analysis this patient's calls have been very very rare. The patient says: «As I left my house I smelt gas and I must go home and check the boiler.» After a little silence the analyst invites the woman to come to the session. She comes and repeats the story: she smelt gas on her way out and thought it was late and so she decided to do something about it later, when she came back. On her way in the car she became more and more anxious and imagined more and more catastrophic scenes. The repression – which is well described by the sentence “I'll think about it later!” - did not work any longer. On the couch her anxiety flows into words and transforms itself into a surprise: she tells the analyst about a very good dream concerning the alliance with her father, an alliance threatened by false prophets disguised in the clothes of financial dealers. Here we see the contents against which the catastrophic superego would have organized the objection.

## 5. What Logical Certainty for the Psychoanalyst

In the last paragraph of my paper I have to tell you about a discovery I made during the preparation of these notes. In Freud's German writings we find two terms he used for the concept of healing. The terms are: *Genesung* and *Heilung*. As you see the German *Heilung* shares the same root of the English *healing*. But... But within the *Standard Edition*, the complete translation of Freud's works in English, edited by James Strachey, one of the first followers of Freud, the term healing is not there! The translation missed the term and clouds the concept of healing. Within the *Standard Edition* we find only the terms: *recovery* or *cure*. But Freud distinguished precisely the healing process from the process of cure. According to him, the healing process is not only as a recovery process. Indeed the analyst as well as the patient is able to realize when their partnership hosts a new happening and when it does not. Each of them can describe the benefits of treatment, but not merely a recovery. If termination is only a chronological line in which the ending concerns the setting, the healing concerns the Ego. The subject, who is transformed session by session during the treatment, is again able to personalize the production of satisfaction: she restarts the creation of love and social ties, the main components of civilization beyond the conformism of the superego.

From here we begin to see the logical certainty for the psychoanalyst. It is a logical certainty because the analyst knows that it is possible for anybody even if he hasn't met anybody healed yet.

The logical certainty is: thinking realizes itself by means of a partnership. In other words: the act of thinking regularly looks for a partner. In this direction we can observe the *interpretation of dreams as well as the interpretation of lapses as an anticipation of healing*. In this last passage I

come back to the beginning of this paper. The Freudian pages about lapses are very important to understand the nature of Freudian discoveries. They can be summarized by this idea: *thinking checks and corrects itself by means of thinking itself, with measurable effects on the body, on relationships and civilization*. Treatment is not only learning but it is a start of a new set up of an embodied life acted overall by means of words and appointments. Healing is the place of a re-legitimate *drive* (the Freudian concept of *Trieb*) exerted by thoughts, words, actions and omissions. Healing is the surprise of the conquest of an independent life as a civil life in which the individual operates in order to gain satisfaction as well as partnership. Treatment itself, when it works, is a case of a partnership of love.

«Our healings are always healings by love.» Freud said during a *Wednesday Conversations* with his first followers, according to the *Minutes* written by Numberg and Federn.

Neville Symington, like any other psychoanalyst, recalls and updates Freud when in his book of 2006 he writes: «When a discrete piece of knowledge is suddenly seen fitting into a wider unified pattern – the mind is illuminated with a healing light.» (*A Healing Conversation. How Healing Happens*, p. 22)

In the end. Healing, when it happens, is never grandiose. Instead it is: step by step, surprising, affordable, prudent and industrious. Both for the analyst and the patient.

## HEALING: A PROCESS, A TOOL, AN AIM?

### Applications

by Luca Flabbi

### 1. Introduction

Let me start by recalling the main definitions we have been using in this panel to describe the possible outcomes of an analysis:

- 1) *Termination* as an on-going process constituted by *steps forward* in the healing process;
- 2) *Interruptions* or erratic departures and returns expressing an ambivalent *stop-and-go*;
- 3) The abrupt *departure* stating a *disowning* of the work done.

By outcome we mean that it takes place at the end of an analysis, may "terminate" (in the sense of 'end of the line') an analysis. By anticipating something I will say later, we can say that these three outcomes are the possible products (or outputs) of an analysis.

### 2. The fundamental question

The fundamental question about them is:

*Why 2) and 3) when the benefit of 1) is clear?*

Let me clarify what I mean by *benefit*. A useful criteria to judge benefit is *economic efficiency*: 1) is convenient with respect to 2) and 3) because makes a much better (efficient) use of the resources invested by the individual (or subject, or, in this particular application, the analyst and the analysand). Equivalently, we can state that 2) and 3) are a massive waste of resources. Resources which include: financial commitments, time allocations, acts and thoughts. They could have all been used more productively elsewhere if the outcomes at the termination of an analysis end up being *stop-and-go* or *disowning*. Attaining *steps forward* in the healing process is the objective of any analysis (of any life, really) and the source of satisfaction and pleasure. The opposite also holds: any experience of satisfaction, any fulfillment of pleasure is a *step forward* in the healing process.

Let me also clarify what I mean by *clear* in my stating of the fundamental question. I use *clear* to describe something which is *logically consistent*. I therefore claim that the only outcome logically consistent with starting and continuing an analysis is outcome 1): termination. Only a termination, as opposed to interruptions and departure, is leveraging on the analytical process in order to make a step forward in the healing process.

Starting and engaging in an analysis means *investing resources*, resources which mainly (and at least) include:

- 1) *Time Investments*: how many activities involve a substantial weekly time investment? Not too many: professional engagements, a few life passions, our most important relationships.
- 2) *Financial Investment*: how many activities involve a monetary investment with the potential of requiring major life changes? Again very few and extremely important and significant for our life. The possible life changes implied by the monetary investment in the analytical process are clearly part of the work conducted during an analysis. We know that when they are not present because the analysand is solidly well-off, we miss an opportunity.<sup>24</sup>
- 3) *Thoughts Investment*: Thinking - or, better, recuperating the act of thinking we were born with - is the main act that the analytical setting is attempting to favor. All the elements of the analytical setting are organized in order to favor thoughts, to predispose to the act of thinking. Since thoughts are our most precious (as in unique, inestimable) resource, deciding to invest them in the analytical process is the ultimate commitment to the healing process.

Given this massive investment, it would be illogical to engage in it if not for an important and valuable result. If the result is not reached, we end up with a variety of outcomes, outcomes that can all be characterized by a common element: *failure*.<sup>25</sup>

Failure of the investment in the analytical process is not fundamentally different from failure of a financial or capital (physical or human) investment. The only difference is that the successful (or not) outcome of the analytical process is fully dependent on our individual competence while the success of a financial or capital investment may occasionally be determined by external circumstances.

Failure of a financial investment or of an entrepreneurial activity does not mean you are *finished*. It does not mean all the resources have been *wasted*. It simply means that the *output* is significantly lower than the *input*. This ratio, or proportionality, or accounting exercise applies to a financial investment just as it applies to the investment in time, money and thoughts required by engaging in an analysis. The simple accounting exercise of comparing inputs (time, money, thoughts) with outputs (step forward, stop and go, disowning) is the main exercise required in judging the termination of analysis. It is also extremely useful to restart the healing process in case of failure. The ability and willingness to do it is an unmistakable sign of effective working-through and of openness to healing.

### 3. The Benefit of Termination

The other panelists discussions on technique and on clinical cases have already provided useful material to answer the fundamental question: why 2) and 3) and not 1)? In the rest of my discussion, I want to go back to the benefit of 1). Defining the benefit of 1) also provides a definition of 1) itself.

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<sup>24</sup> Ideally, it would be useful to have a variation in prices able to favor this opportunity. A price such that the individual has the opportunity to consider significant, but still feasible, life changes.

<sup>25</sup> Failure is a dynamic concept. A given act may be judged a failure in the moment the outcome is realized. However, nothing prevent the same act to be used as input in a renewed outcome realized later on and that may turn out to be a success.

If one clear sign of healing is the ability and willingness to compare inputs and outputs (to compare *investments* and *returns*, if you want to use the language of a financial or capital investment), then the same proportionality can be used to describe the termination of an analysis in relation to the healing process.

This definition of termination emphasizes, among other things, that the end of an analysis is not to be interpreted as the realization of a duality, a duality based on the attempt of switching from one sphere or state (pathology) to another (sanity). It is not a matter of switching a mechanism on and off, of moving from a dark side to a light one, of crossing from a bottom to a top. It is a matter of transforming a given input in a different output. The working-through process which is favored, predisposed, magnified by the analytical work is the act through which the analysand starts a renewed process, a process we should be correct to identify as a *production process*.

The healing process of the step forward and the ineffective and inefficient process of the stop-and-go and of the disowning are *all* production processes. They are just *different* production processes, i.e. they generate different outputs when given the same amount and combination of inputs.

The *termination* of an analysis registers the moment in which the individual is able to recognize if the input she is investing in any daily activity generates an output that made the investment worth it. Of course, this does not mean that every daily investment will be successful but it means she is now able to assess, to *judge* when they are.

The erratic departures and returns of the *stop and go*, instead, makes it very difficult to identify the quantity and quality of the output because they do not allow the investment to complete its production process. As a result, the judgment is blurred and the proportionality difficult to assess. Blurring and confusion will, in turn, provide fertile new material for the doubts, repetitions, and vicious cycles characterizing the ambivalent stop-and-go.

There is only one more damaging (more inefficient, less logically consistent, closer to failure) outcome than this ambivalent stop-and-go: it is the *disowning* of the entire process realized in outcome 3). *Disowning* means negating that a production process ever took place. Admitting that a production process is taking place is equivalent to admitting that valuable resources are invested. Admitting that valuable resources are invested requires the analysand (or, really, any individual engaging in disowning the possibility of personal satisfaction) to answer where those resources went and why they were devoted to such an activity. But providing such an answer is equivalent to admitting, judging, recognizing that those specific meetings conforming to the analytical setting are producing something; and this is exactly what it must be negated to reach the abrupt departure described in outcome 3).

Judging a production process by comparing input and output also shows that the issue of the *guérir* can be redeemed from the Lacanian *gai-rire*.<sup>26</sup> It is more difficult to dismiss with a laugh

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<sup>26</sup> J. Lacan, *Radiophonie*, Scilicet, 2/3, 1970.

the possibility of healing when the act which is required is so straightforward and accessible as that of judging a difference between inputs and outputs. It is a judgment that requires nothing more than the individual competence provided to any individual from birth. The same subject that provides and combines the input and that experiences the outputs is also the subject better qualified to judge them. No production process can take place without the competence to judge it. The reason is simple: the competence to judge is the same competence that invests the inputs and produces the output. There is no authority "external" to the individual that can (or should) do that. When that happens, and the individual believes it, both processes (production and judgment) are interrupted and frustrated.

Can we identify the foundational and common elements of a successful production process? Yes, and they have been at the center of the psychoanalytical quest from its inception. They can be summarized in two items:<sup>27</sup>

- 1) Excitement (or Libido);
- 2) The other as indispensable partner in reaching satisfaction. Where the other simply denotes another individual also endowed with the competence of judging and assessing a production process.

Recapitulating these two items is exactly what the analytical process is designed to do: reinstating the faith in the possibility and reality of excitement and proposing the analyst as partner. A partner that can only continue to be a partner even after the termination of the analysis, even after the outcome of the process is 1). If at the end of the analysis, the analysand and the analyst do not continue their lives as partner (i.e. as common contributors to a production function generating satisfaction for both of them) then we are in outcome 2) and 3) and not in outcome 1).<sup>28</sup>

A partner is not an image, a fiction, a ghost, a *semblant*. A partner works in a production process and we can count and show evidence of her contribution as valuable and indispensable input. Counting and showing evidence does not mean causation or deterministic or probabilistic necessity as experienced in the natural science or in technological processes. The difference is that the evaluation of the output in a partnership remains an act of judgment, judgment implemented by the individual competence. It is not the deterministic or probabilistic algorithm used to evaluate the output of a chemical reactions or the return of a financial investment.

#### 4. Psychoanalysis and Social Sciences

This different judgment is what sets apart psychoanalysis from other social sciences. All social sciences are based on the same question and it is the same question posed by psychoanalysis itself: no science focusing on human behavior can avoid this question or dispose with it. It is the

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<sup>27</sup> Both Freud and Lacan are obvious references. Here I am referring in particular to the elaboration proposed by Contri (See G. B. Contri, *Il Pensiero di Natura*, Sic: Milan, 2006) where the "indispensable" of the second statement is logically derived from a fundamental law common to all human beings since birth.

<sup>28</sup> In this sense we can claim that the psychoanalyst is not a professional as the M.D. (or the lawyer, the economist, the car mechanic) is a professional. There is no professional of the individual competence. The analytical process is a relationship between *two* individual competences; a relationship that when it works, it never ends.

question of what does it mean to be an individual human being. In psychoanalysis, the competence to answer this question is traced back to the individual herself, to her individual competence. In most other social science, it is linked to some authority "external" to the individual, an authority which is supposedly able to compute (pending the availability of the right amount of information) the differential between input and output and it can therefore assess the success of the production function. In this sense we can say that the individual of the other social science is fully *calcolable*. This property has the convenient implication of providing systematic and comparable empirical evidence. Evidence that can then be organized in a statistical structure that can formalize observed regularities. This operation is by definition not implementable in psychoanalysis.

Economics is an example among these other social sciences where the *calcolable* individual is in evident display. The interesting feature of human behavior in Economics is that each individual acting and choosing in the economy (the economic *agent*) behaves not only as *calcolable* individual but as agent herself able to implement the calculation.<sup>29</sup> How and to what degree economic agents are able to implement the calculation depends on certain factors such as the amount of information available, the structure of the market, the presence of constraints. This is the focus of much recent research in the field.<sup>30</sup> Still, the central tenet that this is a description and a theory of human behavior that can generate aggregate and specific outcomes that we can then measure and compare with statistical methods is not in doubt.

If this *calcolable* and calculating agent is the model of human behavior then the three definitions of possible outcomes of an analysis that we have presented do not have much value. In Economics, every agent is trying to reach outcome 1) (*Termination*) and if sometimes we register outcomes that are observationally equivalent to 2) (*Interruptions*) and 3) (*Departure*), it is just because the calculation mechanism has some "error". An error that is not generated by a conflict, a contradiction, a different judgment but by a mistake of the algorithm, like a bug in a line of computer code.

## 5. Conclusion

Conversely, Psychoanalysis has at its core the understanding that the *freedom* of individual judgment is of uttermost importance. Psychopathology is neither an error nor a bug but a road taken by a subject potentially free to choose and judge. Reestablishing and supporting this freedom to choose *any* road is the only objective of a psychoanalysis. If the social science Psychoanalysis (or a given psychoanalyst working with a specific subject) may provide some evidence that one road leads to psychopathology while another does not, still it cannot convince anyone about the road to be taken; nor it can take as granted (as economics does) that a free and

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<sup>29</sup> This approach dates back to the Marginal Revolution of the late 19th century which has become the mainstream approach in economics since the mid-20th century.

<sup>30</sup> Notable new approaches are Game Theory, enriching the calculating mechanism by including strategic behavior, and Behavioral Economics, challenging some of the main predictions of the behavior just described but without, in my view, abandoning the *calcolable-agent* approach.

fully informed agent will take the more convenient (more productive) road. Freud was already very clear on this point. As mentioned by one of the previous speaker, in 1922 Freud wrote:

"analysis does not set out to make pathological reactions impossible, but to give the patient's ego *freedom* to decide one way or another."<sup>31</sup>

Reinstating the freedom to judge and choose about our own personal satisfaction: no other social science has this ambition. That is why the termination (outcome 1)) of an analysis is a conclusion but not the end: it is the conclusion of a production process but one that is generating not a static output but a dynamic input to be used in future successful production processes.

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<sup>31</sup> S. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 1922 (SE XIX, pg. 50)