

Response to McLaren and Barton Papers  
by  
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Friday Afternoon Ethics Panel on Power in Analysis and Training  
April 15, 2011

I would like to respond briefly to these two interesting presentations. First Everett McLaren's "Finding my Grandfather's Tools."

Everett directs our attention away from the gross ethical violations that usually get our attention in societies to the more subtle ways we employ power in our work—how we use or misuse the “tools of our trade.” In his dream, he realizes that his grandfather's tools—the implements of his masculine lineage and ancestry, found in a trunk in his dream—can be used constructively or destructively. He points out that we are asked to carry and contain a huge weight of responsibility in our work as analysts....the weight of powerful projections, the vicarious trauma of hearing our patients' horrific stories, the “workout” we get from trying to relate compassionately to narcissistic patients such as the one he describes. On the one hand we are given more power than we want by our patients' projections and on the other hand, a power-differential inheres in the very nature of the analytic relationship--its a-symmetry—the fact that we are the helpers and the patient is the helpee.

This power differential and the fact that we may use it sometimes to leverage a certain situation in one direction or another according to our own needs or inclinations, creates guilt in us, which is one of the burdens we carry. As I read Everett's interesting vignette, I think this is what he is feeling—at least in part—about his “scuffing up” the man who came to see him.

His case reminded me of several situations in my own practice where I have felt provoked by a patient's defenses and didn't know it, acting out an “interpretation” or intervention before I reflected on it. Jung reminds us that power and love are a pair of antinomies and that where power reigns, love is absent and that when love is present, power disappears. Everett's patient presents very little that would evoke Everett's compassion, love, or empathy. On the contrary, he is highly defended against any genuine access to his own woundedness or vulnerability. He blames others for his own pain, covers over his own abysmally low self-esteem, feels entitled to help without admitting any genuine need for help, and fits the narcissistic profile of what Harold Searles calls the “King-baby” or “Queen-baby”. These defenses appear to be deeply embedded in his character pathology. He is living

them and has constructed a maladapted life around them. In his first two sessions with Everett, he shows no awareness of this while busily trying to manipulate Everett around his fee, telling provocative stories about his violence to his own child, about his perverse sexuality, etc.

When a patient like this comes to us for help and then denies any need for help or vulnerability, presenting only his pathological defenses, inevitably it provokes our anger. I think this happens because we can't reach the patient. Genuine in-depth contact with a human, vulnerable core in the patient is prevented by the patient's defenses and I think when our erotic urges for relatedness and contact are frustrated, we get irritated. Everett doesn't mention that he feels angry, although he is clearly provoked and says how much he "enjoys using the analytic sythe". He wants to "wake him up"....cuff him alongside the head....penetrate his armor with his Zorro's sword....and then does so by giving this man an unvarnished series of interpretations that Everett later describes as the hard "truth" of this man's situation...i.e., "that his attitude needed to change...that he was refusing what the Self demanded of him...that he wasn't acting from the needs of his soul but rather from what the world owed him" etc. A bit of a stern lecture, but in the interest, as Everett says, of "using his masculine power with discernment and focus"...and in the interest of the "truth."

Then Everett feels badly about it and to his great credit and courage reflects "what was I serving in this work? Did my response serve my own need—or the patient's?" In these reflective questions, Everett is taking a giant step beyond Jung himself who actually enjoyed his power over patients and actively manipulated them. I remember for example a case in MDR where Jung administered what he called a giant "horse pill" to a young male patient who was too close to his mother. In another case, Jung told M.L von Franz, whom he was supervising on a very difficult case, to "throw that lying witch out of analysis." So we don't get a lot of help from our great ancestor when it comes to a differentiated use of power in analysis.

One way to understand Everett's guilty feelings in this case, (and here I'm taking some liberties for which I hope Everett will forgive me) is that they might have to do with his being provoked—in the moment-- out of his analytic stance of reflection—by his own irritation and frustration. The paradigm he's operating from is that the patient has the "wrong attitude," is hiding from the truth of his situation and needs to be "woken up" by a tough but caring use of the masculine penetrating interpretation. This is one way to think about this patient and his situation, but it's not the only way.

Another way would be to realize that this man's character defenses are profound and organized narcissistically to manipulate the world and prevent any access to his own pain and suffering. If such a patient is to be helped it will take a long long time and will eventually require the "tough love" and penetration that Everett administered, but in the containing context of a trusting relationship developed over time in analysis. Two sessions do not provide an analytic container. So Everett never had a chance to use his sword analytically to penetrate this man's armor in the service of a deeper relatedness.

In summary, I would say (and I'm now reflecting on my own enactments as well) over-use or mis-use of power in our work is often the enacted form of insufficiently conscious anger. We are the inheritors of a "self-realization" psychological theory. There is very little talk about defenses in Jungian theory or how they provoke us and how they are to be worked with. Winnicott, who knew all about primitive defenses, claimed that we were entitled to hate our patients so long as we then "neutralized" this hate and used it effectively in the interest of relatedness. There is very little help with this in our Jungian tradition.

I'd like now to turn to Wynette Barton's paper "Power in Training" and to use her paper as a springboard for some of my own reflections on power in *our* training.

Wynette reminds us of something very important:....that power is as old as humanity....that we house, in our own persons, its positive and negative poles, and that we must "continue to explore the ways we hide power, and hide from power, the ways we love it and hate it, and the ways we disguise it in order to pretend it doesn't exist."

I want to take up Wynette's challenge here and talk about the ways power may be hiding in our training program in subtle and disguised ways—helping us to pretend that it doesn't really exist. Here I want to pause a moment and acknowledge the fire in my belly about these reflections and that the points I want to make are one-sided and probably unfair to efforts being made by many people to reduce power abuses in our Society and in our training. But having supervised many candidates in the IRSJA over the past 20 years, and having witnessed their struggles in training, I have a point of view that is informed by many of hours of experience. So I want to tell you some of what I see in the "shadow" of our group--hiding in all the goodness that is also here.

One sure sign of power hiding somewhere in an institution's life is the presence of distracting levels of *anxiety* in the less powerful minority of that society. In our

society, the less powerful minority is the candidate body and my personal impression is that our candidates' anxiety is recurrently, and unnecessarily, very very high. Not in the first two years of the program usually....and not in the first year or so of Control, after the Propaedeuticum exams and before the Diploma exams. These pre-or post-examination years are often relatively free of anxiety and candidates thrive in them.

Yet even in these years there's a pervasive, low-grade apprehension, inflamed by stories of failed exams, negative evaluations, year-long delays and other humiliating "failures" by other candidates. This anxiety is exacerbated by confusion about what candidates will confront in an exam—what material they will be expected to know-- or who they will be examined by. Different analysts want different things—some want object-relations, some want a classical discussion, some are developmentalists etc.

Now a certain amount of anxiety—especially around the Propaedeuticum exams—is inevitable and even necessary, it is said....because the experience is initiatory and there is no successful initiation without anxiety. This "inevitable" initiatory process is even written into the Training manual as a stated reality—not quite an intention, mind you, but the clear implication is that training involves initiation and we senior analysts are the initiation masters. This idea is used to rationalize the often overwhelming levels of anxiety our exams and evaluations create in our candidates. It is understood to be just "part of the process."

Some of the problems with this initiation model are highlighted by William Ventimiglia in his article called "Supervision and the Circumcised Heart."<sup>i</sup> Using circumcision as a metaphor for the experience of candidates in training, he says:

What impresses me personally about the metaphor is the tremendous power differential that is set up - power based on promises of admission to adult membership in a professional society on one hand, and fear of shame, humiliation, failure, loss, or professional standing, and even loss of self on the other hand. We all want to be members of a chosen people. As children we need to feel "chosen" by the parents who conceived us. Likewise as adults, there is a deep, life-long need to be special and to build for ourselves a secure base in the family of a professional society. However, there is an equally real fear, especially for trainees: a fear of separation, a fear of exclusion, and a fear of condemnation for either *real or imagined and projected* personal inadequacies - meaning shadow contents that training analysts may not

adequately appreciate. Trainees submit to the alchemical *olutio* and *mortificatio* of their training in an act of trust with profound vulnerability.

Training requires circumcision, but there is always a risk that the process will go wrong, or go too far. The process may fall victim to the unconscious of the elders...a psychological sacrifice can and does go wrong. There is the risk that what is dissolved will be the trainee's authenticity - his or her "true self" - and that there may not be a *coagulatio*, or a putting of Jack and Jill back together again. That is one reason why training candidates sometimes learn to grow a formidable persona that mirrors the philosophy and needs of their elder-in-power rather than risk more vulnerability. The elders are narcissistically supported and gratified, but the initiation turns destructive. This is one reason for unspoken terror and rage in training candidates. We run the risk of training clinicians who are unaware of the possibility of living and working out of the Self. The pearl without price is lost. (p. 24).

"The initiation turns destructive," says Ventimiglia. I'd like to reflect for a moment on this issue of "initiation" which is explicitly mentioned as a necessary reality in our Training Manual. My personal opinion is that framing our training as *initiation* is an inflation on our part and a place where the power shadow of our organization may be hiding. I would like to say that it is not "we" who initiate, but *life* that initiates and life is difficult enough without us setting out to re-create what primal peoples around the world established as "thresholds" or "rites of passage" for their young people. As Jungians, we may tend to idealize these early cultures, but I wouldn't want to live in one and I don't like participating in creating one in modern day America...then calling it professional training! One of the advanced candidates in my Colloquium this year just got the diagnosis of stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Now *she* is undergoing an initiation. Initiation into the mysteries is part of life. Certainly our training, with its repeated evaluations of "psychological readiness" and its many pass/fail "thresholds" constellates the archetype of initiation. It's inevitable. But I want to say that it's none of our business! As I see it, our business is not to create or rationalize initiatory anxiety. We are not passing teenagers through our program and we are not running a mystery school for adults either.

Now some of you will say I'm exaggerating the level of anxiety in our program, and this of course is an arguable point, but I see it everywhere. It comes up in the obsessive levels of preoccupation around the Propedeuticum exams, worry about being stopped or delayed at the last stages of the program around Cases or Thesis, the humiliation and frustration of failing and then failing again-- as candidates try desperately to "get it right."

There are two aspects of our training that seem (to me) to be the focus of candidates' anxiety.

1. The first is the extent to which we have taken on the prerogative of evaluating the psychological maturity and personal integration and integrity of our candidates. In the Training Manual, this personal, psychological evaluative function is said to be our duty *at every stage in the program*. In fact this evaluation starts two stages prior to the program....at the candidate's application to a local seminar. At this stage, I believe personal evaluation is essential. The same is true at admissions. Personal maturity, integration and integrity *must* be a focus of admissions procedures. And we have a much improved admissions process which includes significantly more in-depth contact with applicants. Those that get in have truly been vetted by a careful, considerate process. So why, we might ask, with such an extensive admissions process, preceded by evaluative scrutiny by local seminars over a period of years, do we insist on evaluating candidates throughout the program? Do we have such little faith in our admissions process or our local seminars?

Once in the program, evaluation of candidates continues--at the end of every year in the Seminar by the seminar faculty....at the end of every year by the Review Committee, which is empowered to "mentor candidates in their personal development and interaction with the society, and "determine their psychological readiness to move forward." Evaluation occurs in every Propaedeuticum exam where not only content is examined but "personal solidity to contain and handle the stress of exam processes." I have seen letters from Review Committees to candidates that read like psychopathology reports in a hospital or clinic, referencing things like affect tolerance, defenses, eye-contact etc.

Now if this evaluation were done in a spirit of mutual exploration of psyche, it would be different. But the fact is that people are held up by such evaluations....delayed in their progress through the program—evaluated and found wanting--psychologically. And this can mean major interruption in life plans—tens of thousands of dollars for every year of delay. Not infrequently candidates will come to IRSJA meetings with the support of their local seminars for advancement only to be delayed by their Review committee because of "un-readiness." And this "unreadiness" is decided in *one interview* per year. How can we evaluate a candidate's psychological maturity and "readiness" in one interview a year?

So much emphasis on evaluation makes the candidates feel that they are the objects of suspicion by senior analysts. It erodes the morale of the program. It is a parental,

not to say paternalistic system—not a professional one-- and I believe it is one of the places where the power shadow is hiding.

Of course we cannot avoid evaluation. But we can focus on the candidates' clinical development, maturity in the use of the tools of our trade, integration of theory and practice, knowledge of Jungian theory etc. Not on their personal psychology or what we pick up in one stress-interview a year, and not with such judgments linked to punitive actions which delay their progress through the program, demoralize them, and lead to significant financial and other hardships.

2. The second factor contributing to anxiety in the program is the fact that exams can be failed for arbitrary reasons. I know that great care and concern has gone into examining on the part of the training committee and great efforts have been made to be consistent and careful. But we are a far-flung organization. Examiners represent many different orientations--classical, developmental, object-relations etc. A question on the dream exam can represent any one of these orientations and a candidate may be unprepared or simply miss the point on a particular day. Candidates can be forced to re-write their cases to meet the competing expectations of 3 committee members all with a different orientation. Given our inclusiveness and heterogeneity, this is perhaps inevitable and would never be a problem except that the delay is for another year....and possibly another year....of analysis, of supervision and of training seminars--with all the fees involved....fees that we senior analysts collect. I don't mean that this is our motivation, but someone looking from outside at a program like ours that repeatedly delays its students' progress and keeps them paying fees for sometimes 10 or 12 years, might wonder. We don't "intend" to do this, but is this ethical training practice?

It is these continual delays that concern me and that result (I propose) in power abuses. It is possible to get through our program in 4 years, but most people take many more--up to 14--and everyone I've interviewed this weekend has been stopped at least once and usually several times--up to 5 or 6 extra years of training. It is one thing if candidates choose to go through training slowly; another if it is mandated again and again.

Wynette says in her paper that...

"as we think about power, we must necessarily think about the power of rules, or rules as a form of power. In a democratic society, rules and laws are not only to avoid chaos. They are meant to curtail the power of the few, the strongest, the loudest of voice and opinion, and give equal protection and

opportunity to the less powerful; but rules themselves can become oppressors."

Our training manual is very long and has many rules. I may be mistaken, but not many of them are "meant to curtail the power of the....strongest and give equal protection to the less powerful." There's not much about appeal procedures available for candidates who fall prey to the rules and their cumulative, anxiety producing power. The rules seem to be the focus. It is daunting. It's not only daunting to candidates. The complexities of the training enterprise--setting up committees, delivering exams, grading exams, coordinating admissions, communicating with local seminars, planning meetings....it's a huge challenge for analysts as well...not to say exhausting.

At the center of this enterprise is what I sense as a very high ideal...the ideal of what it takes to be a good Jungian analyst. Requirements proliferate around this ideal which seems to grow from year to year. Tripping up candidates is often made necessary because they don't approximate this ideal....not yet...maybe next year. Given our high ambitions, it is hard to get into this program and it is hard to get out of it.

I also have high ideals about the work we do as Jungian analysts. I believe we have the best model of the psyche-in-depth of any analytic school. I believe that the world needs this model and this understanding and also needs more Jungian analysts who hold it sacred as they practice. I supervise Psychiatric residents at the University of New Mexico medical school and some of these young men and women catch fire with Jungian ideas. Sometimes they ask me about training.

But regretfully, I can't recommend our training to them. As deep as our training can be--as uplifting and wonderful as our graduation ceremonies are--as moved as I regularly am by the clinical work our candidates demonstrate in supervisory seminars--as much as I love the IRSJA as a society and the conversations that go on here. All these things notwithstanding, our training is simply too much--too long, too expensive, and too exhausting.

And yet, I deeply believe in what we're *trying* to do here. Even the holding of this power-in-training workshop is one of the unique opportunities for dialogue that this Society affords. Where else could I spout off like this?

So I'd like to help improve our training--not just criticize it.

Here are two constructive suggestions--things we could do that would be very simple to execute and would have profoundly beneficial effects, in my opinion.

1. Channel our emphasis on evaluation of candidates' psychology into our admissions procedures....make them even more thorough if we must...possibly add an auditor year until we're satisfied that a candidate "has what it takes." Then support them through training and make sure they graduate in the 4 or 5 years our program should take....no more endless delays...no more shaming evaluations along the way.
2. Make our exams less arbitrary and have clear criteria for what constitutes a "pass"--especially at the Propaedeuticum level. If someone does fail an exam, let them take it again over the summer with their local seminar or with some other local seminar to assure more objectivity. Let them take it in the Fall for a 3rd time if necessary, with the emphasis to get them through the program without delay. Let the Review Committees mentor candidates along the way instead of evaluating and stopping them.

Those are two small suggestions that would make a big difference.

I thank you for this opportunity to express these concerns and suggestions and I hope these ideas will spark further discussion.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> Ventimiglia, William. "Supervision and the Circumcised Heart." *Journal of Jungian Theory and Practice* 2, (Spring 2000): pp. 23-30.