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Historiography and psychoanalysis

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Abstract
The act of writing the history of psychoanalysis poses crucial questions with regard to the openness of society. This article examines the fundamental issues faced by researchers when they set about writing the history of psychoanalysis in a specific country. The significance of reconstructing features of the psychoanalytical practice is discussed. The opposition that exists between the current academic ideals and those of the psychoanalytic societies is outlined with reference to the changes that society has undergone, particularly during the past 30 years. In this context, the stance maintained by psychoanalysts with regard to psychiatry, academic psychology, and the university education of psychotherapists is defined. Government accreditation processes for psychologists and psychotherapists are likewise illustrated in the light of the opinions held by psychoanalysts at different moments in time.

Key words: *Archives, France, history of psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, Sweden, university*

This article addresses some of the central questions and issues that tend to arise during scholarly attempts at documenting the history of psychoanalysis. My intent is to illuminate the potential issues brought to the fore in any given country while recording the history of psychoanalysis. This piece was prompted by my own efforts with regard to the history of psychoanalysis in Sweden, a task that has occupied my thoughts for more than a decade. I have taken the opportunity to discuss these thoughts whenever I have found myself in an academic environment, or among researchers or psychoanalysts, in Gothenburg as well as in Paris.

During the past 15 years, for the most part in Paris, the historian Elisabeth Roudinesco and I have discussed the problems associated with writing the history of psychoanalysis. It was Elisabeth who, in the early 1990s, prompted me to take on the task of writing the history of psychoanalysis in Sweden. She paid her last visit to Gothenburg in September 2006, where we had a public discussion on the theme "the historiography of psychoanalyses." Over the same period of time, I also shared my thoughts with Sven-Eric Liedman, who, for the past 27 years, has supervised research studies at the department of History of Ideas and Sciences at the University of Gothenburg. Our talks inspired me to carry out my work with the history of psychoanalysis in Sweden. I have also regularly had discussions on historiography with the Swedish historian of psychology, Ingemar Nilsson, active at the same department as myself and Liedman.

Four overall aspects that ought to be taken into consideration when describing the history of psychoanalysis will be discussed here. To begin with, the historian must form an opinion of psychoanalysis from both an external and an internal perspective, and then examine the consequences of the differences that appear. As a theory, psychoanalysis has regularly drawn external and, to a large extent, destructive criticism. When looking at psychoanalysis over time, a picture of inner conflicts emerges. In many countries, these conflicts have clearly marked its path and make scientific assessment a difficult task.

Second, the historian must consider the fact that the training of psychoanalysts takes place within private associations, and not in educational institutions regulated by the state. Hence, there is no accredited authorization for members of the psychoanalytic profession, and no formal qualifications for psychoanalysts exist. This results in a certain lack of

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clarity as to who are entitled to call themselves psychoanalysts. Thus, psychoanalytic associations and their members often have a complex and ambiguous relationship to the ideals of the academic world. At the same time, the often-questioned position of the private association, combined with the universal and profoundly human need for recognition, creates highly charged, sometimes explosive, personal ties between the various members of the groups and with the representatives of academic institutions.

Third, certain specific characteristics of the psychoanalytic theory must be taken into account: It is both a theory pertaining to man as a cultural being, and a theory pertaining to the treatment of psychological distress. In other words, it is both a theory and a practice. This in itself complex aspect is expressed by the fact that the psychoanalytic transmission of knowledge is effected verbally as well as by way of the written word, and of the two, the oral exchange is the most essential part. All in all, this compels historians to devote themselves to serious efforts involving in-depth interviews, a thorough investigation of the available archives, and a comprehensive analysis of the written material.

The transmission of psychoanalytic knowledge brings the question of training and education to the fore. My article also addresses the fact that psychoanalytic training is distinguished by a close relationship between the aspiring psychoanalyst and his or her more experienced teachers and supervisors, with particular reference to the very special bond between the trainee/analysand and the training analyst. Here, the importance of the oral transmission of knowledge becomes clearly apparent. Right from the start, the training analysis itself and the supervision of these sessions—both essential parts of the training process—are in conflict with standard academic educational structures. No third, independent or unbiased party is present to observe what takes place during this phase of the training, which amounts to a procedure that goes contrary to the ideals and demands of publicly regulated courses of education. Instead, the prevailing ideal in psychoanalytic theory emphasizes this close relationship as the starting point and necessary prerequisite to obtain a deeper knowledge of the candidate's unconscious wishes and conflicts.

The fourth aspect is the question of the archives. This will be discussed, as will its relationship to the three other abovementioned aspects. The archives, which can be defined as the actual physical space in which written records and other kinds of testimonials of the psychoanalytic movement have been preserved, have a crucial function in understanding the history of psychoanalysis. All four of these aspects have their implications with regard to historiography.

Presently, psychoanalysis has been introduced in approximately 35 countries, but its history has been recorded in only a few of these, such as France, Sweden, and the USA. In several countries, the accounts are only partial or fragmental. There are several difficulties inherent in portraying the history of psychoanalysis, and the work is time-consuming and demands much patience. I will, in line with the structure outlined above, describe how these difficulties are manifested and, at the same time, provide some explanations of their origin and nature.

I will attempt to decipher some of the issues within the aforementioned problem areas with the help of dichotomies and oppositions that characterize both psychoanalysis and the work involved in reconstructing the history of psychoanalysis. The first dichotomy is the one that exists between external and internal problems. Let us begin with the external circumstances.

An assessment of psychoanalysis

Initially, it must be established that anyone who takes an interest in psychoanalysis in any of its configurations addresses a theory that is regularly attacked and subjected to unyielding criticism by academicians, particularly those with a foundation in the natural sciences. This criticism comes from sources such as psychiatrists rooted in biologistic thinking, academic psychologists, analytic philosophers, and, furthermore, journalists from different subject fields; the list is by no means complete. Other groups or individuals regularly engage in the criticism of psychoanalysis. These critics have, for reasons not always altogether clear, taken upon themselves the task of repudiating Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) as well as any psychoanalyst who, in one way or another, makes references to the founder of psychoanalysis. These critics appear to be on a mission: to fervently refute psychoanalysis.

At the same time, there is another group—often belonging to an individual psychoanalytic society or organization—that sees it as their duty to defend psychoanalysis against any and every form of criticism. They make references to psychoanalysis, to Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Jacques Lacan, the neo-Freudians or Heinz Kohut (1913–1981) and a few others, but cannot, or will not, discuss the relevance of psychoanalysis, its place in the history of ideas and its limitations.

The actual or perceived shortcomings of psychoanalysis are seen as an insurmountable threat. These defenders of psychoanalysis fail to realize that every theory has evolved in a historical context. In addition

to this, they appear to have difficulty understanding that parts of the theory are coloured by variable economic, ideological, and social circumstances. More challenging still for these defence attorneys of psychoanalysis is putting psychoanalytic theory in its context with regard to the history of ideas, and recognizing the precursors of the theory of the unconscious. They have also found it difficult to acknowledge the fact that other authors, such as those within the fields of science or literature, have written about issues and questions that psychoanalysts see as belonging to their special sphere of interest and expertise. Accordingly, psychoanalytic theory has not had enough exposure to the changing reality it is supposed to understand, and, as a result, theoretical work has become stagnant. It has become difficult for the defenders of psychoanalysis to comment on current and essential issues. In addition to this, they do not know how to respond to new empirical findings.

Between these two factions, the critics and the defenders of psychoanalysis, there is a long history of mutual suspicion and destructive criticism. In the eyes of an independent researcher, their clashes appear to be sadly lacking in intellectual vitality, and they rarely appear to be an expression of a scientifically interesting dispute or an exchange of ideas. Both sides seem more interested in fortifying their own position, and they exhibit a lack of interest in the thoughts and writings of the other side. Those on the outside tend to be biased against psychoanalytic theory and, in line with their preconceived ideas, discard it too rashly. Those on the inside appear to have lost their powers of discrimination, and seem unable to put the psychoanalytic theory in its historical context. The two groups complement each other, yet there is no true scientific or intellectual exchange.

Conflicts

Yet another task the historian must undertake is to try to understand the conflicts that have arisen, and still arise, in the wake of psychoanalysis. These conflicts involve the previously described unproductive disputes between psychoanalysts and those on the outside who have decided to take exception to psychoanalysis. In part, we are talking about conflicts between psychoanalysts. With regard to psychoanalytic associations, these conflicts have occasionally resulted in a rift within these societies and the rise of new societies. Internal upheaval is expressed by certain members or factions breaking away from the society. Conflicts of this nature exist in most countries where psychoanalysis has been introduced. So, let us attempt to paint a broad overview of the situations in France and in Sweden.

Psychoanalysis was introduced into France during the 1920s, and in 1926, the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA)-associated and still active *Société psychanalytique de Paris* (SPP) was formed. In France, the foremost source of conflict stems from the early 1950s, due to the controversy arising between those who chose to follow Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) on his path in developing a new and original contribution to psychoanalytic theory, and those who chose not to do so.

In 1953, the *Société Française de psychanalyse* was founded as a result of a dispute between psychoanalysts within the SPP concerning lay-analysis, that is whether it should be possible to work as a psychoanalyst without being trained as a medical doctor. (This conflict we know has been important within the psychoanalytic movement from the 1920s and onwards, Sigmund Freud raising the issue as early as in 1926 in *The question of lay analysis* (1926/1940–1952).) For 10 productive years between 1953 and 1963, psychoanalysts with different points of view then worked together.

This structure subsisted until the next inevitable institutional division presented itself, and the French psychoanalysts concerned found themselves again unable to work within the same society. This was a division in which the controversy surrounding Lacan played a decisive role, and which finally resulted in the banning of Lacan as a training analyst (in Stockholm, 1963). In 1964, some psychoanalysts chose to join the then newly founded French, IPA-associated, society *L'Association psychanalytique de France*. Others chose to follow Lacan and joined the *École freudienne de Paris* (EFP), a society he founded in the same year. Five years later, individuals from Lacan's newly-founded society joined forces with other professionals from outside the circle around Lacan, and founded the *Organisation psychanalytique de langue française*. This has continued to be known as *Quatrième Groupe*, the designation by which it was initially described. After the dissolution of the EFP in 1980, a number of psychoanalytic societies and schools appeared in France. At the time this article was written, some 20 established psychoanalytic societies presently exist in France; most were founded in the 1980s and are based in Paris.

In Sweden, the conflicts of the 1950s led, in the 1960s, to a division of the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society into two separate societies. A holistically inspired society emerged from the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society. Owing to internal and organizational conflicts within the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society, a working group was formed in 1963. Their efforts led, in 1968, to the formal formation of the Swedish Society for Holistic Psychotherapy and

Psychoanalysis (*Svenska Föreningen för Holistisk Psykoterapi och Psykoanalys*). The original society (which kept its old name) remained associated with the IPA, while the new society emerged as a non IPA-associated psychoanalytic society. At the 2001 International Psychoanalytic Congress in Nice, the society—which by then had 75 members—applied for IPA membership. It did so under a new name, *Svenska psykoanalytiska sällskapet* (the Swedish Psychoanalytic Association). The application was presented to the IPA after a period of collaboration with the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society in scientific matters during the 1990s. The association was granted membership as a Provisional Society within the IPA in 2001. It had previously been associated with the International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies. Now, in 2007, the possibility of the two Swedish psychoanalytic societies uniting and becoming one association is being discussed.

Obviously, the internal conflicts have taken different expressions in different countries and at different times.[1] However, they share a common denominator: the fact that various transference relationships have been impossible to analyse. Instead, relations have become charged with emotion, often to the point at which people have felt offended and pressured to the limit. Disappointment and resentment directed at former colleagues have forced the combatant psychoanalysts to go their separate ways. Many times, as pointed out earlier, this has resulted in the forming of new psychoanalytic societies. In accordance with the title of Elisabeth Roudinesco's two books about psychoanalysis in France, the 20th century could justly be characterized as the "One-hundred-year battle".

Writing the history of psychoanalysis is consequently often writing about a theory, represented by persons who are, or have been, in conflict with each other. Several of these conflicts are often described as controversy over theoretical or technical matters. Some of these conflicts have their actual basis in theoretical opposition, although not all of them do. The individual players—the psychoanalysts involved—are often convinced that the point of contention has crucial importance. I maintain, however, that it is highly doubtful whether the majority of these conflicts are indeed of a theoretical nature. This consequently leaves the historian with a range of questions to consider, such as: What is concealed behind a particular theoretical conflict? And what is its actual content?

It is of great importance to recognize that no historian can avoid being influenced by a situation marked by contention and controversy, particularly when coupled with the concept that one must adopt a stance, either for or against, regarding a specific issue (although, naturally, historians are not the only individuals affected by such a situation). Under such premises, it is also reasonable to apply psychoanalytic thinking and assume that significant portions of this influence act out on an unconscious level. However, the fact that an influence is operative on the unconscious does not make it any less effective or dramatic. Anyone attempting to record the history of psychoanalysis should keep this in mind.

Universities and psychoanalysis

The relationship between academia[2] and the psychoanalytic societies has also been marred by all sorts of conflict. In most countries, there are stories about psychoanalysts who have felt themselves to be ill-treated by the academic power elite. In many cases, psychoanalysts have experienced a sense of being oppressed or restrained by academia. Their reactions have ranged from dissociating themselves completely from the university sphere, to nourishing a fervent hope of gaining a place in the academic world of research, or in some cases, even both.

Thus, it is important to take fundamental differences into account, with regard to the predominant academic tradition among psychiatrists and psychologists, which principally verifies and falsifies hypotheses, compared with the approach within the psychoanalytic sphere. Psychoanalytical theory is not regarded as being an evidence-based theory. These two traditions are based on separate scientific ideals and different ways of dealing with the question of truth.

The fact that the training of psychoanalysts takes place outside the bounds of the university, in societies run by the psychoanalysts themselves, and not infrequently by leaders with a vested interest in the institution, has created a climate of suspicion on the part of people outside these societies. The additional fact that Sigmund Freud, and his heirs, attached a fundamental value to what is known as training analysis—the analysis undertaken by the aspiring psychoanalyst under the tutelage of an older, experienced psychoanalyst—as a means of achieving professional skills, has also cast a measure of suspicion on the profession, since this essential part of the training does not incorporate any monitoring processes conducted by a third party. An additional aspect to consider is that the training analysis process generally has a great deal of impact on the future of the aspiring psychoanalyst.

The predominant academic and scientific tradition is marked by a pronounced appreciation of objectivity and impartiality, and the ambition to make as clear a distinction as possible between what

is true or false. In addition to this, there is an insistence on either verifiable or falsifiable hypotheses. This tradition depends on, and puts its faith in, experiments, control groups, observation, testing or similar instruments to produce responses to hypotheses and questions. Its representatives frequently take exception to psychoanalysis. Reservations may exist as to whether the personal, individual clinical experience can indeed generate universally applicable knowledge, a body of knowledge that goes beyond the particular case at hand. In some cases, these reservations are replaced by a firm conviction that such individual cases can in no circumstances provide evidence to support a theory. Representatives of traditional scientific thinking find it difficult to see the capacity for generalized knowledge that this mode of procedure gives rise to.

For a long period of time, psychoanalysts have taken no interest in the standards and demands of the academic world, and have not infrequently looked down on anyone who has adopted those ideals. The exclusive ideal has been to work full time as a psychoanalyst in private practice and to be as independent as possible, that is to have little or no connection with academia or public ventures. During certain periods, this ideal of independence prevailed within certain individual psychoanalytic societies, and psychoanalysts whose activities were linked to the public sphere were regarded with suspicion. In several societies, psychoanalysts have failed to see the value inherent in their members having various orientations and different types of assignment. There has been a tendency to look at private practice as opposed to employment within the public sphere. The lack of governmental accreditation with regard to the psychoanalytic profession has also been an important factor.

Psychoanalysts and accreditation

Any individual committing fully to a psychoanalytic journey needs to realize that this process will involve certain risks, a fact that is true for most commitments where something is at stake. The individual who makes a sincere attempt will find that becoming a psychoanalyst is not only time-consuming and expensive; it also requires a substantial amount of commitment and courage. Moreover, there are no guarantees that the venture will end in success.

This does not distinguish psychoanalysis from other psychotherapeutic pursuits,[3] but the stakes with regard to time and money invested are generally higher during the psychoanalytic training experience compared with the corresponding training process for a psychotherapist.

Therefore, it can be argued that psychoanalytic training involves a greater risk. In several countries, psychoanalysts have periodically found themselves facing opposition from society and the establishment, which, again, is the case at the beginning of the 21st century.

The position of psychoanalysis has changed over time, as we know. Its situation has varied in different ways in different countries. After the Second World War, psychoanalysis gained a strong position in the USA, where it was integrated into academic psychiatry. In Sweden as well, psychoanalysis had a prominent position between 1960 and 1990. In spite of this favorable situation, Swedish psychoanalysts failed to build a foundation for their successors, a point of departure from which they could partake in a fruitful scientific exchange of ideas in times of change. In France, the untiring work of Jacques Lacan to create a dialogue with a number of other disciplines has accomplished the following: in France today, psychoanalysis still holds a strong position and a given place in public debate.

Of significance in the present context is also the fact that any account of the history of psychoanalysis is simultaneously the history of a profession without any official authorization/accreditation. This matter has split psychoanalysts into two camps, and here another dichotomy becomes apparent. Some forces have worked to establish a governmental authorization process for psychoanalysts. Others have maintained that any need for governmental authorization and/or approval in this respect is irreconcilable with psychoanalytic theory and ethics. In France, there is an ongoing discussion between the adherents of these two positions, a discussion that also aspires to understand and clarify the difference between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. In Sweden, during the 1950s, a group of psychoanalysts from the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society lobbied for an accreditation of the psychoanalytical profession that would be issued by the government. Although their efforts came to nothing at that time, the idea of establishing such an authorization for psychoanalysts has not been completely abandoned within the psychoanalytic community.

It should be mentioned that the majority of Swedish psychoanalysts are either medical doctors or psychologists as well; these two professions represent the most common educational foundation for psychoanalysts in Sweden, as in many other countries. Consequently, psychoanalysts have, in most cases, been able to support their authority with the help of another registered profession. In the beginning, most psychoanalysts were physicians. Today, many members of the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society are physicians, but, since 1978, many

have been as likely to be psychologists and registered psychotherapists. The latter form of authorization has existed since 1985. However, these professional authorizations have very little relevance when it comes to the view held by psychoanalytic societies on who has the right to call themselves a psychoanalyst.

Within these societies, the view is often expressed that psychoanalysis and psychotherapy are two different things. Nevertheless, since 1985, most Swedish psychoanalysts have been equipped with some form of double authorization. Furthermore, the two Swedish psychoanalytic societies both provide training for psychotherapists leading to a governmental accreditation in that profession, so the relationship between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy is still somewhat unresolved in Sweden. Thus, a Swedish psychoanalyst is typically either a physician and a registered psychotherapist, or a psychologist and a registered psychotherapist.

This situation presents certain finer points that must be considered. Throughout the entire 20th century, the majority of psychoanalysts have been highly critical of psychologists and psychotherapists, and of those psychiatrists who do not incorporate psychoanalysis into their profession. This criticism reflects the thought that these occupational titles indicate the existence of separate disciplines with disparate concepts of truth. Their therapeutic goals may also be described being different. These alleged differences notwithstanding, there have been significant financial and prestige benefits in store for psychoanalysts who are also physicians. Being a physician has, in various situations, been useful. To some extent, this also applies to registered psychologists, even if, due to the lesser amount of prestige attached to the latter profession, and a generally lower income level, the benefits are less obvious.

Furthermore, in the history of psychoanalysis—as illustrated by a Swedish example I have discussed in earlier publications (Johansson, 1999, pp. 611–618; 2006, pp. 13–16)—one often comes across categorizations such as "a *real* psychoanalyst," as opposed to "a so-called psychoanalyst," or a person who "calls himself a psychoanalyst" but who "is not really a psychoanalyst" but "merely a psychodynamic psychotherapist", according to the speaker. Here too, we have two parallel structures. There have been examples of psychoanalysts who, within a particular society, have taken upon themselves to informally determine which members "truly" work and think as psychoanalysts, and which members have strayed too far from what is considered to be authentic psychoanalytic practice, thereby allowing the ideals and demands of society to trigger concessions that are too great.

According to commentators from inside these circles, there are individuals who call themselves psychoanalysts but who in fact are not "real" psychoanalysts, even though they have completed the formal training stipulated by the society, and even though they are approved by its decision-making authority. It is also not uncommon for members of a particular society to entertain the fundamental idea that their own members, who are trained within their society or within another "approved" society, are the "real" psychoanalysts, whereas others merely use the title of psychoanalyst without truly being one (Norman, 1992, pp. 268–277).

This type of behavior has emerged in times when psychoanalysts have been in demand, and there has been a pronounced interest in psychoanalysis. Categorizations of this type tend to recede in urgency when psychoanalysis finds itself less in demand and more called into question. A decline in demand may express itself as a lack of opportunity, making it difficult for young, not yet established psychoanalysts to find a sufficient number of analysands. At the same time, however, established psychoanalysts appear to be less productive and passionate with regard to the psychoanalytic adventure and the responsibility for the psychoanalytical heritage and genealogical transmission, that is, in acting for the future of psychoanalysis. The abovementioned internal deauthorization is a part of the course of psychoanalytic history; it needs to become—for the historian as well as for members of the psychoanalytic societies—an object of intellectual analysis and not repression. It remains to be seen what the future will bring in this respect.

The transmission of knowledge—theory and practice

An important aspect, and one that frequently generates opposition, is the fact that psychoanalysis is both a theory and a practice. Psychoanalysis offers both a theory about the treatment of individuals with psychological distress, and a theory of how we, as human beings, try to find various ways of expressing ourselves, both in solitude and in the company of others. Through this ambiguity, psychoanalysis becomes a theory that, in part, deals with man as an enigmatic creature experiencing a sense of lack, who is thus compelled to gain access to culture. Additionally, it is a therapeutic technique that, in spite of a prevailing climate of resistance, has been designed in relation to psychoanalytic theory, in other words a practice that generates empirical information.

In this context, it is important to remember that researchers who devote their time to writing the

history of psychoanalysis will end up focusing mainly on clinicians who have applied themselves to writing as well. Consequently, when studying the history of psychoanalysis, one should study how psychoanalysis was introduced in a particular country by way of its cultural avenues, universities, philosophy, and literature: the intellectual introduction of psychoanalysis. On the other hand, one should also study its introduction by way of treatment aspects; what one might call the medical introduction. During the first half of the last century, this medical introduction was principally associated with psychiatry, but after the Second World War, clinical psychology and psychotherapy also opened up other medical introductions. This ambiguity makes it imperative for the historian to possess a broad base of in-depth expertise. In order to understand psychoanalysis, it is vital to process the intellectual and the medical introduction with the same level of knowledge.

The division between theory and practice is also present in connection with psychoanalytic training. The candidates study a variety of classic psychoanalytic texts, they receive supervision and tutoring with regard to their own work with patients, and, last but not least, they undergo a training analysis. In this way, the body of knowledge pertaining to psychoanalysis is transmitted by way of both the written and the spoken word. This is, as previously mentioned, another important factor to consider, one which complicates the historiography process. In order to obtain a balanced and nuanced picture of the history of psychoanalysis with regard to how it relates to the present situation, scholars are required to reconstruct and analyse the underlying theories as well as the practical applications.

Historians must analyse relevant theoretical texts or other documents that are important from a historical point of view—such as transcripts, regulations, letters, and other written communications—originating from the period of interest, and interview people who are part of this history as well. Archives can be the best option with regard to regulations and the documentation of society matters. Consequently, researchers need access to the relevant archives. In other words, historical work consists of textual analysis, a conscientious interview process and the thorough exploration of archives. I will return to these aspects in greater detail later on.

Textual analysis

An important and complex issue, and one that is relevant in all research pursuits, concerns the assessment of the significance of individual texts. This is another instance in which, when writing the history of psychoanalysis, academic standards pertaining to the treatment of scientific criteria and the need for transparency may be in conflict with the standards and criteria of the psychoanalytic societies. The fact that a substantial proportion of the books and articles written by psychoanalysts have not generally been subjected to scrutiny by university-based professionals or close examination by any other public agency can further complicate the issue. It is not uncommon that texts that are held in high esteem by psychoanalytic societies and the psychoanalysts who hold leading positions within them are not attributed the same value by the university.

Such cases can be found in every country where psychoanalysis is established. On an international level, several examples exist. Melanie Klein (1882–1960) and Sándor Ferénczi (1873–1933) are two psychoanalysts who are highly regarded by many currently practicing psychoanalysts as contributors of crucial knowledge when it comes to understanding the inner world of children, the darker sides of the human psyche, and the possibility of change through psychotherapeutic treatment. However, their contributions are largely disregarded by most classical, medical, and psychological departments at universities around the world. This discrepancy is not without significance for scholars facing the task of writing the history of psychoanalysis. Numerous similar examples, as well as national instances, abound. This requires independent thinking on the part of historians during textual analysis.

Interviews and assessment

Another significant issue is the evaluation of the achievements of a particular psychoanalyst with regard to his or her practice. What has he or she accomplished as a practicing psychoanalyst, training analyst, teacher, and supervisor? How should this person's input be assessed? The historian is faced with the delicate task of trying to chisel out a balanced opinion of a body of work that, in part, can only be evaluated by studying individual testimonies, and for which confirmation from an independent third party is non-existent. This task will instead fall upon the historian. Paul Roazen (1936–2005) was a pioneer in the field of interviewing subjects who, in different ways, had experience of psychoanalytical practice. In both *Brother animal. The story of Freud and Tausk* (1969) and *Freud and his followers* (1971), he shows the importance of interviews in the reconstruction of psychoanalytical history.

At the same time, one should remember that any scholar writing about the history of psychoanalysis will be focusing on clinicians who have also been

writers. The latter aspect—the main focus on psychoanalysts who have been published—is a prerequisite for anyone who intends to partake in an academic context. In reconstructing the history of psychoanalysis, one writes about subjects who have recorded their observations and conclusions in writing and who, in addition to this, have had a clinical practice. Thus, it comes down to making an assessment of the sum of activities and achievements of a particular psychoanalyst.

Some individuals who clearly have a place in the history of psychoanalysis in France and who have also been published are: Françoise Dolto (1908–1988), Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), Serge Leclaire (1924–1994), Maud Mannoni (1923–1998), and François Perrier (1922–1990). In Sweden, five comparable examples are Ola Andersson (1919–1990), Stefi Pedersen (1908–1980), Lajos Székely (1904–1995), Alfhild Tamm (1876–1959), and Pehr Henrik Törngren (1908–1965). All of these individuals engaged in clinical practice and wrote books and/or articles.

Yet it is vital to keep in mind that all the various texts written by practicing psychoanalysts are not necessarily of the same value or consequence as their practical work; that is the work they have accomplished as psychoanalysts in private practice, and the position they have achieved in this respect. Under these premises, most of the psychoanalysts who deserve consideration have also held a position of some importance within a psychoanalytic society and, consequently, at an educational institution. In my opinion, the institutional experience of the various subjects appears to colour the evaluation of the importance of a particular psychoanalyst as a scientifically important writer. In other words, the very fact that he or she has been an influential person invested with real or imaginary importance and power within an organization paves the way for a more positive evaluation of his or her scientific achievements than would have been the case had this person's position been less prominent. Additionally, it is not uncommon for individual psychoanalysts to rewrite their own history against a backdrop made up of the institutional disputes in which they have been involved, thus rendering it difficult indeed to produce a balanced account of the historical matter at hand.

Similar processes do, of course, occur in the academic world as well. However, I maintain that the structures that exist to counteract these tendencies are more fragile within the psychoanalytic societies. Obviously, some psychoanalysts leave a more significant imprint by way of their writings than through their practice. A Swedish example is Ola Andersson; his efforts are characterized by a more unusual set of circumstances that generally do not lead to a retrospective inflation of the value of the researcher's work by analysands, students or patients.

Then, as we know, it happens that an individual psychoanalyst succeeds in achieving results of decisive importance for an analysand in the course of the latter's training analysis. Psychoanalysis can sometimes amount to a life-changing experience. For natural reasons, it is extremely difficult for the trainee to express an objective, unbiased, and judicious opinion about articles or books written by this training analyst. A person's judgment is always filtered through his or her personal experience, and this is also true of the transference process. This transference can be symbolic as well as imaginary—structured according to what French psychoanalysts called the "symbolic transference" or coloured mainly by the imaginary field. In the first instance, there is a need for judiciousness and the assessment of veracity. In the second instance, the personal experience and its impact is pivotal—aspects that may interfere with impartiality and correctness, and make it difficult for the person to act in a suitably discerning manner.

There are, of course, intermediate forms between these extremes. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon that when interviewing analysands, pupils or relatives of an individual psychoanalyst, the historian will sometimes hear opinions that have lost touch with the demand for consensus that is normative within the university and/or in the public sphere. In such circumstances, the historian needs to be aware of these pitfalls to reach a sound assessment.

Archives: their place in relation to historical research

Yet another important factor connected to the writing of the history of psychoanalysis is, as mentioned previously, the question of archives. The status of the archives can be regarded in relation to the previously discussed conflicts, and the ambiguous position of psychoanalysis: the fact that it is a theory about what I call "the mysterious human being" as well as a form of treatment, supported by a theory and with its own distinctively elaborated technique. Several archives have been closed to researchers who are not members of a particular psychoanalytic society. Within the school founded by Lacan—formally dissolved in 1980—the archival material is even more difficult to assess. For example, Elisabeth Roudinesco (personal communication) ran into a number of difficulties when she tried to gain access to archival material while writing the history of psychoanalysis in France: she was repeatedly met with silence, and her letters were left unanswered.

Researchers who have gained access to archives associated with a national psychoanalytic society have done so with the assistance of members in leading positions, individuals who have entrusted them with the material even though they are not members of the society in question. Furthermore, those responsible for Freud's remaining letters have chosen to keep part of his correspondence secret. Consequently, a portion of Freud's history is still subject to censorship today. Many national psychoanalytic societies keep their archives closed to non-members and independent researchers, and have done so for an extensive period of time. The Sigmund Freud Archives in Washington DC have been closed in a similar way. Reviewers and researchers are waiting for the complete correspondence between Freud and his wife, Martha, to be published. Until fairly recently, the correspondence between Freud and his daughter, the psychoanalyst Anna Freud (1895–1982), and the complete correspondence between Freud and two of his pupils—Karl Abraham (1877–1925) and Max Eitingon (1881–1943)—was not available. Although more than 67 years have passed since the death of Sigmund Freud, his correspondence has not ceased to attract interest.

Furthermore, there is good reason to assume that most uncensored archives are not to be found at the national societies. The material has often been dispersed and is in the possession of various members. To be granted access to these particular sources, the historian needs to obtain the trust of the owner of the archive. The custodian of the material must be motivated by an obligation towards transparency and the disclosure of the truth in order to put his personal archive at the historian's disposal. With some luck and a number of convincing credentials, the scholar can gain access to uncensored and extremely rewarding archives that will provide information of significant value.[4] Obviously, historians will always be subject to random factors and an uncertain outcome. (For reasons of privacy, there are obvious limitations with respect to information regarding analysands and patients. A psychoanalyst may have made certain written records that cannot be stored in archives. This limitation is not an issue. The problem is rather the pervasive climate of secrecy within and pertaining to the societies, and which runs counter to the principle of public access to official records.) In all research of this kind, there is always an element of chance.

Conclusion

Every truly effective account of history evolves as the result of an interaction between proximity and distance. Too much proximity tends to turn the historical account into a tribute, a congratulatory chronicle. Too much distance always entails the risk of the historian becoming a mere onlooker, an observer with an outside perspective who never connects with the cardinal points of the theory, practice or movement that is to be studied, analysed, and chronicled. If this is the case, the historian will be unable to understand what has been at stake for the different players involved.

A researcher writing the history of psychoanalysis faces an accentuation of these risks, for all the reasons described above. In the history of psychoanalysis, there are all too many examples of congratulatory chronicles as well as historiographies characterized by a sterile stance and a distance from the subject matter that renders it uninteresting. In both cases, the historian's personal and/or political ambitions have come to the forefront, and his potential for scientific discrimination has consequently receded. The Swedish psychoanalyst and associate professor, Ola Andersson (1962), the Swiss-Canadian researcher Henri F. Ellenberger (1970), and the American researcher Nathan J. Hale (1971, 1995) are three brilliant exceptions.

There are those who successfully make their way through this emotionally charged territory, attempting to record the history of psychoanalysis in a way that will give it its proper place: the place that the actual circumstances allow, free from idealization as well as diabolical denigration.

To this should be added the fact that the historian needs to prepare himself for the highly charged emotions his work will stir up when published. Critics will be annoyed that the historian has not sufficiently noticed the importance of X and the qualities of X's publications, or they will criticize him or her for giving undue credit to Y and Y's theoretical work. Most likely, however, some individuals will be grateful. They will find the efforts meaningful, and they will be relieved that a portion of history, of which they are part, has been recorded in spite of all difficulties. For the next generation of psychoanalysts, written history will be a vital reference point in an always uncertain future. And at present, the future seems more uncertain than ever.

Notes

1. In the same way that every country is subject to a specific and unique introduction of psychoanalysis, the evolution of the same will also have its own distinctive national form. Different countries may also resemble each other: there may be similarities in terms of content of the discussions raised by the new discipline, as well as a resemblance regarding the expressions of resistance towards it. Naturally, these likenesses

may also be reflected in the psychoanalytic historiography of different countries.

2. It is inevitable that, in a changing society like ours, the university as an institution must also change. There are regularly indications that its natural position as a guarantor for sound and objective knowledge, intellectual integrity and high standards is being undermined. The consequences of this are unimaginable. However, this is not the subject of my article. My point of departure is that the university has been, and still fundamentally is, a place where new knowledge is produced under intellectually respectable circumstances.
3. This article will not discuss the particulars regarding the various forms of psychotherapy, nor the way in which they may involve risk-taking. The author of this article is presently working on a book about the history of psychotherapy in Gothenburg, and will pursue this subject matter in his forthcoming book.
4. While I was occupied with writing an account of the history of psychoanalysis, I had access to some uncensored archives of great interest for a historian. I thank Nils and Gunnar Harding for their generosity in making the archive of their father, Gösta Harding, available to me. Likewise, I would like to mention Edith Székely, who is a psychoanalyst. She opened the archive of her husband, Lajos Székely, to me. In addition to this, the psychoanalyst Annastina Rilton gave me access to several important archival documents. The board of the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society allowed me to work undisturbed in the archive of the society. Their obliging attitude was very helpful and conducive to my research.

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